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ON MENTAL DISCIPLINE	3
FOOD FOR THOUGHT	9
KACHA AND DEVAYANI—I	
THE SYMBOLOGY OF SERPENT AND DRAGON—III	15
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE	21
FRAGMENT ONE—XVIII	
ON PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM—I	26
ON TRUSTEESHIP	31
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	33

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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ON MENTAL DISCIPLINE

AN important aspect of mental discipline is one's attitude of mind. What is attitude? Attitude may be defined as a settled opinion or way of thinking, which gets reflected in person's behaviour. Attitude is the way we look at life. Dennis S. Brown, a motivational speaker, rightly remarks, “The only difference between a good day and a bad day is your attitude.”

Our attitudes are based on the way we perceive things, and our perceptions are coloured by our conceptions. We have grown up with the feeling of a sense of separateness, and consequently with tendencies of intolerance, selfishness, arrogance, and so on. Let us identify our prejudices, biases and wrong viewpoints and try to correct them. Our thoughts, feelings and beliefs, as well as past and present experiences, may be regarded as the basic building blocks of our attitudes.

Even ordinarily, if we are studying, say, physics or chemistry or psychology or biology, for each subject we are required to cultivate a particular attitude of mind. For instance, in the booklet, “Some Observations on the Study of *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky,” Shri B. P. Wadia writes that there are those who wish to study this book for the development of psychic or abnormal powers, while others seek mental self-improvement, which will enable them to manage the competitive life on this earth in a more efficient manner. There are those who wish to learn so that they may teach. In order to approach this book with the right attitude of mind, it is important

to know that the book can be understood by cultivating the faculty of intuition, and that, in turn, can be developed by the right use of the Law of Analogy and Correspondence. An attempt should be made by the reader to contact the Mind of the author, and for that one has to prepare one's mind by making it empty of all thoughts and bring it at peace with itself and all the world. One must approach the study with a feeling of willingness, in fact, eagerness, to grapple with a difficult subject. In the case of group study, each mind must be concentrated and in harmony with other minds, avoiding creating cross-currents by unnecessary debate and discussion. If this book is approached with the right attitude of mind, then the person will discover, in due course, that his own spiritual progress is aided and his capacity to learn and teach others has been greatly strengthened.

Mr. Judge observes that we need to cultivate a particular kind of mental attitude for understanding the occult, *i.e.*, the hidden or secret side of nature, which will enable one to look into the realities of things and enable the mind to escape from the mere formalities and conventions of life, though outwardly obeying them all. When there is a realisation that "Man is a copy of the Universe and has in himself a portion of the Supreme Being" or Divinity, it will lead to appreciation of the Unity of all Beings, and that in turn will leave the mind more pure and free to act. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 194)

From the Theosophical point of view, the hidden and the occult refer to that which is behind or at the core of manifestation and which is unseen by us. However, since we are told that there are no unsolvable mysteries anywhere, it implies that what to us is the "unseen" or "hidden" side of Nature can be seen by those who have developed the power required for seeing it. One of the fundamental propositions of Oriental philosophy says, "Nature is triune: there is a visible, objective nature; an invisible, indwelling, energizing nature, the exact model of the other, and its vital principle; and, above these two, *spirit*, source of all forces, alone eternal, and indestructible. The lower two constantly change; the higher third does not" (*Isis*, II, 587-88). In other words, everything existing in

the world of matter, be it a lump of clay or a blade of grass, has three distinct aspects and can be viewed from three different angles of perception, namely, the physical, the astral and the spiritual. If we try to understand astral and spiritual realms by reference to the physical, it will be like trying to understand the force of steam by studying the properties and behaviour of ice.

Science believes that there are no mysteries in nature that cannot be revealed by the microscope, the telescope and the many other gadgets of the modern laboratory, and therefore, for them, the supersensuous world does not exist, although there is testimony of the sages of all times. To be convinced of the existence of the supersensuous world, they will have to wait for the awakening in them of a whole new set of senses. “Dreams” are proof of the existence of the inner world. In sleep, we seem to see and hear and feel as vividly as with the physical senses. The story of R. L. Stevenson’s *Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* was suggested by a dream, as also Coleridge’s “Kubla Khan” had its origin in the world of dreams. If we ask: From where did the inspiration come to these writers? What senses did they use? The answer received will go to support the existence of the astral world.

However, behind the changing shadows of the astral and the physical world lies the unchanging light of the spiritual. If divinity is omnipresent, it is to be seen within any and all forms. Any form of matter has within itself three types of substances, the refined, the subtle and the gross, and in each of these functions, respectively, the spiritual, the astral and the physical forces. It is easy to see that every form has its roots in the divine or archetypal world, and its true essence becomes known only when one knows its physical, astral and spiritual pedigree. Hence, the whole of nature is often described as a treasure house hidden from view because it is locked by the triple lock of the divine mysteries. These mysteries of nature are revealed to those “who help nature and work on with her.” Man is a microcosm (little universe) within the Macrocosm. Instead of conquering nature, he must learn to help her.

In order to know the hidden truth behind the physical man and the universe, one must cultivate the tendency to question conventionality and cultivate the feeling of oneness in one's mind and heart. In the Preface to *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. observes that "the occult side of Nature has never been approached by the Science of modern civilization," and for making this approach, she gives the key to science, namely, "Esoteric philosophy proves the necessity of an absolute Divine Principle in Nature." Throughout the *Bhagavad-Gita*, we are reminded that the Divine Principle is acting in all. Meditation upon this knowledge will open our eyes to the truth of brotherhood that exists between all creatures, between the earth and the stars and the planets, between the tiny grain of sand and the vast universe. It helps us to realize that every action, conscious or unconscious, affects the whole of Nature.

Mr. Judge points out that the major obstacle for a mind that is trying to grasp the truth is *phantasy*, or "the reappearance of thoughts and images due to recollection or memory." Whenever we try to control and fix the mind upon an object or idea, the natural restlessness of the mind becomes prominent, and memory of many objects, things, persons, etc., brings up before the mind various pictures and thoughts pertaining to them. That goes to show that the storing of a multiplicity of useless and frequently recurring thoughts is an obstacle to the acquisition of truth. We must be vigilant about the impressions that are made on our minds. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 194-95)

In the article "Phantasy and Psychism" (*Theosophy*, Vol. 17), *phantasy* is defined as "the faculty by which images, thoughts, impressions, are evoked from the storehouse of conscious or unconscious memory and automatically rearranged and dramatized into a never-ending series of stories or pictures...." Or, it may take the form of meaningless arguments or speculations about other people's business, and so on. For most of us, when our attention is not held by some work, such arguments, speculations, pictures, stories, etc., form the whole of our mental life. We may say that

phantasy is the power to rearrange elements already existing in the lower mind. Whatever we see, read, hear, from newspapers, novels or through gossip, these impressions accumulate and tend to have self-reproductive power. We must minimize the collection of useless impressions. Phantasy is automatic and operates without the control of the Ego. Day-dreaming is a mild form of phantasy wherein the Ego has weak and intermittent control. Phantasy implies supremacy of the lower mind, and it is the chief obstacle to meditation and to concentrated thought.

Mr. Judge puts it thus: “The greatest foe and that most frequently present is memory, or recollection. This was at one time called *phantasy*. The moment the mind is restrained in concentration for the purpose of meditation, that moment, the images, the impressions, the sensations of the past begin to troop through the brain and tend to instantly and constantly disturb the concentration. Hence, the need for less selfishness, less personality, less dwelling on objects and desiring them—or sensation. If the mind be full of impressions, there is also a self-productive power in it which takes hold of these seeds of thought and enlivens them. Recollection is the collecting together of impressions, and so it constitutes the first and the greatest obstruction to meditation.” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*, Foreword)

Does the mind actually do anything when it takes up a thought and seeks for more light? Mr. Judge explains that when we seek a deeper understanding of any philosophical or ethical idea, then a thread, a finger, or a long darting current flies out from our brain-mind, and it goes in all directions and touches all other minds to receive the required clarification and information. This thread from the mind of a seeker is described as a messenger going from the mind of a seeker, with a question, as it were, and touching the mind of another. If that mind has an answer or information, then it gives it up. This thread, or wire, from the seeker’s mind flies and touches other minds till it gets the answer from the other mind. Thus, every time we sit down to think earnestly on some ethical or philosophical matter, a thread goes from our mind and touches other minds, bringing varieties of thought. Depending upon

one's purity or impurity, the thoughts and ideas so received may be correct or incorrect. When one seeks the right philosophy and not mere adherence to dogmas and lives an unselfish and altruistic life, such a mind will reject the wrong ideas. What should be the mind's attitude and the kind of preparedness to draw the *right* answer from the mind that has information has been expressed thus: "Unselfishness, Altruism in theory and practice, desire to do the will of the Higher Self...devotion to the human race. Subsidiary to these are discipline, correct thinking, and good education."

But the mind of a superstitious and dogmatic person is likely to attract and receive incorrect ideas, which are in line with his own thinking. This is how systems of thought are made and kept going, even though they may be foolish, incorrect and pernicious. Mr. Judge calls this subconscious telepathy. He points out that often a simple person might be in possession of general truths of nature, which he is unable to express. Often, scientific discoveries are the result of learned minds picking up their ideas from the minds of such simple persons and then giving them out to the world. Thus, besides accepting ideas from newspapers, magazines and books, we are receiving ideas and illumination from other minds on an unseen plane, showing that truly, there is very little *original* thought. And yet, in our competitive world, out of selfish desire for power and gain, we seek to hide rather than share our knowledge and ideas. As a result, quite unconsciously, a wall is built around the minds of such people, which does not yield any idea to the messenger from a seeking mind (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 196-199). It is man's responsibility to raise "the entire mass of manifested matter up to the stature, nature, and dignity of conscious god-hood," because as man uses the matter, he affects it by leaving upon it good or bad impressions and thus accelerating or retarding the progress of lower kingdoms.

ONE can have no smaller or greater mastery than mastery of oneself.

—LEONARDO DA VINCI

FOOD FOR THOUGHT KACHA AND DEVAYANI—I

THE story of “Kacha and Devayani” belongs to Hindu mythology. It is primarily narrated in the *Adi Parva* (the first book) of the epic *Mahabharata*, as well as in ancient texts like the *Matsya Purana* and *Agni Purana*. This tragic mythological love story is one of the most thought-provoking narratives in ancient Indian literature, which explores themes like the conflict between duty and desire, between gods (*Devas*) and demons (*Asuras*), love and betrayal, and the quest for immortality. In ancient times, there was perpetual war between the *Devas* and *Asuras* for the lordship of the three worlds. Brihaspati was the preceptor of the *devas*, who was well-versed in the knowledge of the Vedas, while Shukracharya was the guru of the *asuras*. The *asuras* had the advantage that Shukracharya alone possessed the secret of Sanjivini Mantra, also called *Mrita Sanjivani Vidya*, which could recall the dead to life. As a result, whenever the *devas* managed to overpower the *asuras* in battles, they were revived by Shukracharya so that they could attack the abode of the gods again with new energy. Although Brihaspati was the guru of the *Devas* as well as of Shukracharya, he lacked the knowledge of Sanjivini Mantra.

The *Devas* gradually realized that no victory could be permanent unless they also gained access to the *Mrita Sanjivani Vidya*. After careful consideration, a difficult decision was made. Brihaspati’s son, Kacha, would enter Shukracharya’s ashram and persuade him to take him as a pupil. Once admitted to intimacy and confidence, he was to learn the Sanjivini Mantra from him without raising any suspicion.

Kacha acceded to their request and set out to meet Shukracharya. Kacha went to the house of Shukracharya, and after due salutation, addressed him thus: “I am Kacha, the grandson of the sage Angiras and the son of Brihaspati. I am a *brahmachari* (celibate) seeking knowledge under your tutelage.” It was a law that the wise teacher

should not refuse a worthy pupil who sought knowledge of him. So, Shukracharya agreed and said, “Kacha, you belong to a good family. I accept you as my pupil the more willingly, for by doing so I shall also be showing my respect for Brihaspati.”

Kacha spent many years under Shukracharya, performing various prescribed duties in the household of his master. Shukracharya had a lovely daughter, Devayani, and he was extremely fond of her. Kacha devoted himself to pleasing and serving her with song and dance and succeeded in winning her affection, without detriment to the vows of brahmacharya. When the *Asuras* came to know of this, they were suspicious of Kacha, fearing that he may learn the secrets of the Sanjivani Mantra by tricking Shukracharya.

One day, Kacha went to the forest, grazing the cattle of his master. The *Asuras* attacked him, tore his body to pieces, and threw them to the dogs. When the cattle returned without Kacha, Devayani grew anxious and told her father that the cattle had come back by themselves. “I fear some mishap has befallen Kacha. I cannot live without him.” She asked her father to trace Kacha using his divine powers. Shukracharya soon realised that his *Asura* students had killed Kacha in the forest. Using his Sanjivani Vidya, he immediately brought him back to life to ease his distressed daughter. When Devayani asked him the reason for his delay, Kacha told him that as he was grazing the cattle the *Asuras* suddenly attacked and slew him. He did not know how he came back to life.

The *Asuras* were very disappointed. However, they killed Kacha again when they were able to catch him alone in the forest. Once again Shukracharya revived him out of love for his daughter. Since the *Asuras* were aware that Shukracharya would always bring Kacha back to life, the third time they killed Kacha, they burnt his body, mixed the ashes with wine, and served it to Shukracharya, who drank it, suspecting nothing. Once more the cows returned home alone, and once again Devayani approached her father, requesting him to do something. Shukracharya tried to console his daughter, saying that he had tried again and again to bring back Kacha to life,

but the *Asuras* were bent upon killing him. As death comes to all, it was not proper for a wise soul like her to lament. Devayani said that Kacha was blameless and served us with devotion. She loved him dearly and would not be able to live without him. She expressed her wish to die and began to fast.

Then Shukracharya employed the Sanjivani Vidya and asked Kacha to appear. Kacha had regained life, but he was inside Shukracharya's stomach. Shukracharya asked him, "How did you get into my stomach? Is this also the work of the *Asuras*?" Kacha narrated the whole story. Shukracharya became angry at the deceit practised on him in his wine and proclaimed for the benefit of humanity: "Virtue will desert the man who through lack of wisdom drinks wine. He will be an object of scorn to all. This is my message to humanity, which should be regarded as an imperative scriptural injunction." Shukracharya told Devayani that if he were to revive Kacha, only one of them would survive, as Kacha would tear through his stomach when he came back to life. Devayani insisted that she wanted them both to be alive and could not live in a world without either of them.

As Shukracharya sought a way out of the difficulty, the real explanation of it all flashed on him. He said to Kacha, "O son of Brihaspati, I now see with what object you came....and verily, you have secured it! I must bring you out to life for the sake of Devayani, but equally for her sake, I must not die either." He passed on the secrets of the Sanjivani Mantra to Kacha, and after Kacha emerged by tearing open his guru's stomach, he at once brought Shukracharya back to life by means of his newly acquired *Sanjivini Vidya*. Kacha bowed down to Shukracharya and said: "The teacher who imparts wisdom to the ignorant is a father. Besides, I have issued from your body, so you are my mother too.

Kacha remained for many more years under the tutelage of Shukracharya. When the period of his vow ended, he took leave of his master to return to the world of the gods. As he was about to depart, Devayani humbly addressed him thus: "O grandchild of

Angiras, you have won my heart by your blameless life, your great attainments and nobility of birth. I have loved you long and tenderly, even while you were faithfully following your vows of a *brahmacharin*. You should now reciprocate my love and make me happy by marrying me.” But Kacha said: “O Faultless One, you are my master’s daughter and ever worthy of my respect. I got back my life by being born out of your father’s body. Hence, I am your brother. It is not proper for you, my sister, to ask me to wed you.”

Devayani sought in vain to persuade him. “You are the son of Brihaspati,” said she, “and not of my father. If I have been the cause of your coming back to life, it was because I have always loved you. It is not fit that you should give up one like me sinless and devoted to you.” Kacha insisted that he was her brother and proceeded to the abode of Indra, the king of gods.

Devayani’s disappointment on hearing these words from Kacha soon turned into rage. She cursed him, “You used the one who was sinless in her devotion to you. You will never be able to use the Sanjivani Mantra.” In return, an angry Kacha said that she had cursed him for no fault of his, and hence, she would never marry a rishi’s son. Kacha also proclaimed that he would teach his fellow gods the mantra, even if he couldn’t use it himself. Thus, Kacha departed to Indra’s abode, his mission completed but his heart broken, never to see Devayani again.

This story belongs to Hindu mythology. The word “Myth” is derived from the Greek *mythos*, which means “story” or “tale.” A myth, however, is not just any story but a fabulous statement (story) containing some important truth. Most myths are stories about things that happened a long time ago. They appear fantastic, fabulous, and even product of erratic fancy, at times, and that is why, came to be regarded as fiction. Professor C. S. Lewis observes that it is always very difficult to express a concrete experience in words because the moment one tries to capture it in words, it disappears, and myth is a partial solution to this dilemma. Myth becomes a bridge, which connects the abstract with the concrete.

H. P. Blavatsky observes that myths are not *divine revelation*, that is unquestionable. “Mythology was a primitive mode of *thinking* the early thought. It was founded on natural facts, and is still verifiable in phenomena” (*S.D.*, I, 304). However, myths are based on actual historical facts. In Indian myths and allegories there is actual history or events hidden. For instance, if we take myths of giants or *Rakshasas* then this is no fiction. It refers to human beings of the Atlanto-Lemurian race.

The knowledge possessed by ancient Indians is divided into *Sruti* or Revelation; *Smriti* or Laws and Tradition; *Itihasa* and *Purana*, *i.e.*, History and Mythology.

In the beginning of the story, we read about conflicts between *Devas* and *Asuras*. *The Secret Doctrine* mentions twelve great orders of Creative Powers. Of these, seven orders of Creative Powers are esoteric. This host of Creative Powers may be divided into divine Spiritual, semi-Spiritual and ethereal beings. Of the seven orders of Creative Powers, the Quaternary or the four hierarchies are considered to be Chief. These are connected with the “four bodies and three faculties of Brahma. (*S.D.*, I, 213)

Brahma represents the collectivity of *Prajapatis*. In *Vishnu Purana*, mention is made of Brahma assuming “four bodies and three qualities” for the purpose of creation. The three faculties or qualities seem to represent the three qualities of *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. H.P.B. mentions that these four bodies and three qualities represent seven principles of the manifested Brahma or manifested Universe and correspond to seven principles in man, but exoterically they are only four. These four bodies of Brahma are Dawn (*Jyotsna*), Night (*Ratri*), Day (*Ahan*) and Twilight (*Sandhya*), through which four types of beings were produced by Brahma.

The Demons or *Asuras* were the first to be produced by Brahma, by assuming the body of Night. H.P.B. explains that in the Rig-Veda, the *Asuras* are shown as *spiritual divine beings*, because the term *Asura* is derived from “*asu*” means “breath.” Hence, they are the “breath of God,” and in that sense they mean the Supreme Spirit

or the seventh principle in man or *Atman*. It is later on, in theology and dogmatic religions, that *Asuras* became *A-sura* or no-gods, and are shown to issue from the “thigh” and not from the “breath” of Brahma. Then Brahma assumed another form, that of the “Day.” From the body of the Day he is said to have produced gods, who are endowed with the quality of passivity or negative goodness. From the body of Twilight and from his side, Brahma produced the *Pitris*. Lastly, from the body of Dawn was produced Humanity. (*S.D.*, II, 59-60)

By day the “gods” are most powerful, and by night the demons are most powerful, says the Vishnu Purana. H.P.B. tells us that it is an allegorical statement. Demons are the *Asuras* or intellectual gods, who oppose the useless gods of ritualism, and are enemies of rituals and sacrifices. “Gods are powerful by day” may mean powerful in protecting and following the dead-letter form of worship and scriptures, while demons are preservers of sacred and secret aspects of knowledge that destroy spiritual ignorance (*S.D.*, II, 165). It is because the latter-day Brahmins preferred to have ceremonies, rituals and propitiation of Gods that they called these Gods *A-suras*, who opposed them in their form-worship.

In the allegory of Tara, Soma and Brihaspati (Jupiter), Brihaspati represents *dead-letter* and ritualistic or ceremonial worship. Tara, his wife, symbolizes a person who, although wedded to dogmatic worship, longs for true wisdom. She is *carried away* by Soma—who initiates her into mysteries, *Gupta Vidya* or esoteric Wisdom. This is represented by saying that the union of Tara and Soma was Budha—(Greek Hermes or Mercury), *i.e.*, God of Wisdom. Thus, the incarnated consciousness of the aspiring soul unites with Buddhi, giving rise to wisdom. This caused War in Heaven between gods and Asuras. Soma was supported by Venus or Shukracharya, the leader of the *Asuras*, while the gods along with Indra sided with Brihaspati.

(*To be continued*)

THE SYMBOLOGY OF SERPENT AND DRAGON

III

AS a symbol, both the Serpent and the Tree had many aspects and occult meanings, and the Serpent was connected almost indissolubly and emblematically with the “Tree of Life.” In the beginning, the Tree and Serpent jointly symbolized Immortal Being, writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, I, 405-06)

Christian theology states that evil came into the world because the first man and woman (Adam and Eve) ate the forbidden fruit in the Garden of Eden, and because of Adam’s sin, every other human being is and has been a sinner. H.P.B. explains that Adam and Eve represent a stage in human evolution when the hermaphrodite man separated into male and female sexes. Since the mind of man was not yet lighted up or activated, the “Sons of Wisdom” or the Dhyān-Chohans, who later endowed the human race with the light of mind, had warned humanity to leave alone the fruit forbidden by Nature. In other words, humanity was warned to leave alone physical procreation through the union of the sexes until its physiological nature had adjusted its instincts in the right direction. But some of the humanity disobeyed the warning and begat progeny. Being still mindless during the period of separation, it begot, moreover, anomalous offspring by uniting with huge she-animals. Thus, the warning proved of no value. Men realized the *unfitness*—*we must not say sin*—of what they had done, only when too late: after the angelic monads from higher spheres had incarnated in and endowed them with understanding, writes H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 267). Here, the “forbidden fruit” represents “physical procreation.”

However, the “forbidden fruit” is also the fruit of the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,” eating which would endow humanity with Divine Creative Wisdom.

We read in the second and third chapters of *Genesis* that Adam and Eve lived in the “Garden of Eden,” considered an earthly paradise. In *Genesis*, Eden refers to Wisdom, and therefore it refers to a state like that of Nirvana or a paradise of Bliss. In another sense

it refers to Intellectual man, the container of the Eden, in which grows the tree of Knowledge of good and Evil, and man is the *Knower* of it. (*S.D.*, II, 204)

Adam and Eve are asked by the Lord God to eat the fruit of any tree but the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,” and if they did, they would die. Then comes the Serpent, who tells them that, in fact, if they ate the fruit of that Tree, then they would be like Gods, and they would know what is good and what is evil. On eating the fruit, their eyes were opened, and H.P.B. points out that they knew many more things besides becoming aware that they were naked.

On p. 215 (*S.D.*, II), we read that those who do not understand the esoteric meaning of the first four chapters of *Genesis* are not able to understand that in disobeying the Lord God, they (Adam and Eve) did not commit any sin and that the tempting “Serpent” was the Lord God himself, who is Ophis, the Logos, and hence the bearer of Divine Wisdom, and taught mankind to become creators in their turn. Thus, one meaning of eating the “forbidden fruit” of the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil” means humanity acquiring the light of mind after the separation of the sexes and being endowed with Divine Creative Wisdom.

On p. 243 (*S.D.*, I), H.P.B. writes that the Serpent, who tempted Adam and Eve to eat the forbidden fruit of the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,” was the real creator and benefactor of Spiritual Mankind, because it was this Serpent who opened the eyes of the automaton (mindless man) created by Jehovah (lunar *pitris*), and he was the first to whisper that when man eats the fruit, he will become as God, knowing good and evil.

The Lord God saw that the two of them had acquired the knowledge of good and evil and had become as gods. But then God drove Adam and Eve out of the Garden of Eden, *lest they should eat also of the fruit of the Tree of Life, and live forever*. The eating of the fruit of the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil” seems to represent the lighting up of *Manas*. It led to the union of *Manasic* with *Kamic* nature and endowed man with the secret of

procreative power on the earthly plane, as also with secrets of creation on the *Kriyasaktic* plane (*S.D.*, II, 282-83). It opened the possibility of man acquiring immortality or self-conscious godhood if man ate the fruit of the “Tree of Life.” However, before that could happen, Adam and Eve were driven away from the Garden of Eden, and outside Eden was placed a Cherubim and a flaming sword, which represents evil passions, that would keep man away from the Tree of Life, *i.e.*, attaining immortality.

H.P.B. says that in the light of the above, we can understand the symbology of the Serpent, the “Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil,” and also the “Tree of Life.” These were symbols borrowed from India, where the Banyan Tree is considered sacred, and Vishnu is supposed to have taught humanity philosophy and sciences under the shade of the Banyan Tree, which is called “Tree of Knowledge” and “Tree of Life.” It is under the shade of a Banyan tree that the Gurus initiate their pupils into the mysteries of life and death and also teach the first lessons of immortality. (*S.D.*, II, 215)

In *Isis* (I, 151-52), we read that in the *Edda*, which is a collection of Scandinavian myths, the visible universe springs from the branches of the mundane tree, the Yggdrasil, which is the “tree of the universe, of time and of life,” comparable to the Ashwattha tree of the Hindus, which represents the never-ending stream of conditioned existence or Macro-cosmos.

On p. 98 (*S.D.*, II) we read about the “Serpent” dwelling among the luxuriant branches of mundane trees. The Macrocosmic tree is the “Serpent of Eternity and of absolute Wisdom” itself, while the serpents who dwell in the Microcosmic tree are the Serpents of manifested Wisdom. We may perhaps regard the Universal Mind to represent the “Serpent of Eternity and of Absolute Wisdom,” of which Mahat is a periodical aspect, and which is then transformed into human Manas by developing into self-consciousness. Hence, it is Mahat and Manas which may be regarded as Serpents of manifested Wisdom. We are also told that the “tree” is the man himself, and the Serpent dwelling in each is the conscious *manas*,

which is the connecting link between the Spirit and Matter or between the higher trinity and lower quaternary.

The Ashwattha tree, though it normally refers to the Peepal tree, is often identified with the Banyan tree also. As described in the *Gita*, the Ashwattha represents an ever-changing, phenomenal world. It grows with its roots above and its branches below. It implies that the manifested world is an illusory world, which is the reflection of that which is a reality. This manifested world is made up of *Prakriti* or *maya*, and therefore, it is impermanent. The roots represent the Spiritual World, the First Cause or the Logos. Beyond the noumenal and phenomenal world is *Parabrahmam*. According to Theosophy, the Ashwattha tree symbolizes evolution, showing that all in the manifested world descend from the Highest, the *Parabrahmam*. *Parabrahmam* (or *Brahman*) is the Seed. The First Cause (*Brahma* or *Iswara*) is the Root; *Mahat* or the Universal Soul is the Trunk. The Branches of which are great egoism, and the gross elements are represented by smaller branches. Egoism is Egoship or *Ahamship*, which leads to every error. This shows step by step the evolution of the Cosmos, and that is what is represented by the Sephirothal Tree also.

But one has to go beyond the roots to unite oneself with Krishna, the *Brahman* who is greater than the First Cause and is indestructible. We are asked to cut the tree (in the *Gita*, with the strong axe of dispassion) with the axe of secret wisdom. When the mind is free from *Kama* (passions and desires), it becomes an organ of free will in man and also the guide of the highest mental faculties. It means one has to free oneself from attachment to sense-objects and sense life. Also, we need to cut the trunk, which represents egotism. The personal Ego seeks to keep things as they are, resists change and challenges of life, and thus brings about stagnation instead of progress.

He, who is able to cut down this tree with the strong axe of dispassion (or secret wisdom) and go beyond the roots, will not have to incarnate during this “age” of *Brahma*. Each human being, when he is able to overcome the illusion of the manifested universe,

becomes the “Tree of Life,” or the Adept possessed of Wisdom. As free-willed beings, each one of us can grow either into a “Tree of Life” (Adept of the right-hand path) or a “withering tree” (Adept of the left-hand path). The Wise Men or the Adepts who were initiated into the mysteries of Nature by the highest angels were called “Dragons” or “Serpents of Wisdom.”

On p. 410 (*S.D.*, II), H.P.B. mentions the theological dogma, according to which Adam and Eve ate the forbidden fruit, in which the woman was tempted by the Serpent, and she in turn persuaded Adam to eat the forbidden fruit, and they thus committed the sin, for which they were cursed. The “forbidden fruit” seems to refer to sexual intercourse. When God sees their transgression, he punishes the woman by saying that she will bear pain in childbirth, and man will have to toil and sweat for earning his living. H.P.B. writes that the curse of Karma was not called down upon Adam and Eve for seeking *natural* union, because that is what all the mindless animal world does in its proper seasons. On p. 216 fn. (*S.D.*, II) H.P.B. points out that the curse was for the *breaking of the law*.

Sex and Speech are the two avenues through which we lay waste our divinity. Sexual power is a creative power. In the course of evolution, men of the Fourth Root Race (Atlantean Race) abused this creative power—wasting the life-essence for bestial and personal gratification. To the serpent God said, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman,” “and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.” H.P.B. explains the true meaning that the “seed of woman” represents “lust” and the “seed of serpent” represents *knowledge and wisdom*. These two are always in conflict and opposition.

In the esoteric philosophy, there is a direct and intimate connection between the Pineal Gland and genitalia. These two are creative poles, and when one is positive and active, a proportionate negative and passive condition is produced in the other. When the North Pole or the Pineal Gland is active, it creates the children of ideas and thoughts; when the South Pole of the generative organ is active, children of flesh are created.

On pp. 410-11 (*S.D.*, II), H.P.B. points out that Nature has never intended that woman should bring forth her young ones in sorrow. However, during the evolution of the Fourth or Atlantean Race, there came enmity between “her seed and the serpent’s seed” because the Atlanteans turned the holy mystery of procreation into animal gratification by abusing this creative power—wasting the life-essence for bestial and personal gratification and also by uniting with “she-animals” in full consciousness. The result of such excessive sensuality and sexual indulgence under Karma was the loss of the “third eye,” and the healthy and gigantic bodies with great powers and intellect of the Atlantean Race were slowly replaced by dwarfed and weakened human beings. In the Fifth Race, man has now become “a helpless, scrofulous being, and has now become the wealthiest heir on the globe to constitutional and hereditary diseases, the most consciously and intelligently bestial of all animals!”

The serpent has been considered both good and evil, and therefore has been worshipped and stoned at the same time. It was used for the purpose of oracles and also by a necromancer who worshipped the dead. The serpent “is evil in substance and its personification.” When it is considered materially and literally, it is considered evil, just as matter which creates illusion, is considered evil. It is considered evil also because it is taken to be a personification of traits such as cunningness, vindictiveness, etc. On the other hand, the serpent or dragon is taken to symbolize “the being who excels in intelligence,” and in Greek, “he who sees and watches.” These qualifications were originally applied to human beings who were symbolised by dragons and serpents. They are called the *Dragons of Wisdom* in China, and they were the first disciples of the Dhyanis, who were their instructors. This symbol referred to primitive adepts of the Third Race and later of the Fourth and Fifth Races. (*S.D.*, II, 209)

(To be concluded)

THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE

FRAGMENT ONE—XVIII

“ETERNAL LIFE’S pure waters, clear and crystal, with the monsoon tempest’s muddy torrents cannot mingle.”

“Heaven’s dew-drop glittering in the morn’s first sunbeam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire.”

Here, pure waters and muddy waters seem to represent the quality of consciousness. The reincarnating Ego or Buddhi-Manas is pure consciousness, which sends out a ray at every incarnation to function through the body as a human soul. Once incarnated, it becomes dual, tending towards Kama (desire nature) or towards the Higher Mind. Only that portion of the incarnated ego which is involved in good and pure thoughts, feelings, desires and actions can merge with the Higher Ego after death. There is no mixing of the lower with the Higher Ego.

In *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, Mr. Judge writes, “Man, made of thoughts, occupant only of many bodies from time to time, is eternally thinking. His chains are through thought, his release due to nothing else. His mind is immediately tinted or altered by whatever object it is directed to.”

Patanjali designates the Higher Mind or reincarnating Ego as the soul, and the Mind or the lower mind is the instrument of the soul. This mind gets modified by the data brought to it by the senses. The mind at once takes the shape of an idea aroused by the sensory data—the eye seeing something or reading something, or the ears hearing the sound or uttered words. In the Preface to *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, the mind is called the “internal organ,” and “it is compared to water in respect of its readiness to adapt itself to the form of whatever mould it may enter.” Just as the water appears rounded when poured into a round vessel and squared when poured into a square vessel, so also, the mind moulds itself according to the object and, “at the same time, reflects it and its properties to the soul.”

Mr. Judge explains that in ordinary life, when the mind is not concentrated, it is modified by the multiplicity of objects brought before it, and the soul, viewing these objects through the organ of the mind, is, as it were, altered into that form. Soul may be thought of as a statue made of pure white marble. If that statue is seen in crimson light, it will appear to be crimson. So it is true of the soul when it sees things through the instrumentality of the mind. Mind is the “tempter” and “redeemer.” Mind is normally entangled in passions and desires, in personal thoughts, feelings, actions, and hence engenders *skandhas*, which bind the soul to earth.

Reincarnating Ego also refers to *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*, the higher principles. “Eternal life’s pure waters, clear and crystal” or “Heaven’s dew-drop” refers to the pure reincarnating consciousness and all its powers and energies, which, when used for the lower purposes, get defiled and lose their pure state. The first thing that is necessary to do is to keep one’s thoughts clean. We are what we think. Whatever we are—physically, mentally, psychically, spiritually, or whatever circumstances we find ourselves in—they are the results of our own thoughts. “All that we are” is what we exhibit to others as our peculiar property or character, which we have acquired as a result of our thoughts. “Sow a thought, reap an act. Sow an act, reap a habit. Sow a habit and reap a character.”

It is only by becoming vigilant all the time during waking life that the mind can remain clean. As we read in John Milton’s *Paradise Lost* (Book 5): “*Evil into the mind of God or Man, may come and go, so unapproved, and leave, no spot or blame behind.*” In Milton’s theology, the mind is a battleground. So long as a person or “a god or angel” *rejects* the dark impulse, their purity remains intact.

“Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee. Beware, Disciple, suffer not, e’en though it be their shadow, to approach. For it will grow, increase in size and power, and then this thing of darkness will absorb

thy being before thou hast well realized the black foul monster's presence."

The "unclean" or base thoughts should not be allowed to linger because they have the recurring power, and at each return, they will be stronger. We observe that watching obscene movies or reading trash books leaves impressions in our minds, which surface in our unguarded moments and throw us off-balance. They take root and grow. Be warned by the mere approach, root them out, and think the opposite thoughts. For this, one must have some good stock ready at hand. One has to cultivate the habit of reading good books, of being in the company of good people, and train the mind to dwell on spiritual ideas.

When unwholesome thoughts enter our minds, we can observe them as an outside invasion and not be identified with them or brood over them. By brooding over them, we give them a power that they do not ordinarily have. Two thoughts cannot occupy the same plane [or mind] at the same time. We must cultivate the power of positive thinking by learning to displace negative thoughts with positive thoughts. When we say "positive" thoughts, we mean positive or affirmative formulation; *i.e.*, instead of saying, "I will never be angry," let us say, "I will always be calm." More than that, "positive" thoughts are the *thoughts arising from the wholesome state of mind*. Thus, we can replace thoughts of envy with *mudita* or sympathetic joy, *i.e.*, sharing the joy of others. We must seek to replace thoughts of hatred and anger with thoughts of love and charity. The Buddha says that those who express thoughts of revenge tie their mind with the intention of retaliation. We actually experience a kind of "knot" in our mind and heart when we entertain revengeful thoughts. As against this, when we practise love and charity, we are in a totally different state of mind.

Positive thoughts and feelings call forth the best efforts so that the thing that seemed impossible moves into the area of the possible. When we make a positive formulation, *it is a direct affirmation of the will*. Once we take the positive mental position, saying, "I can

do it” or “It can happen,” the whole of the emotional nature must be brought in perfect harmony with this. Behind Will stands desire. When the desire is intense, the Will comes into action. Mr. Judge says that when you ardently desire to do some good thing, “your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of. Then rejoice that another had been so fortunate as to make such a meritorious Karma.”

If we do not deal with our unwholesome thoughts, then they can easily translate themselves into unwholesome *tendencies* and actions. In an ordinary person, the good and bad tendencies exist as complex collective forces, but when one decides to achieve some spiritual goal, these tendencies separate out into good and bad tendencies—into *Kaurava* and *Pandava* armies. Whenever one aspires towards a higher life, the good tendencies flourish, but it is a death sentence for the bad tendencies. Like Arjuna in the *Gita*, every individual who resolves to develop his better nature faces opposition from the lower tendencies and faculties, “which have their camp and base of action upon the Astral and other hidden planes.” The threshold has to be crossed before entering a room or a house. It is as if someone sitting at the threshold of the house or a room prevents you from going in. Likewise, in moving from the familiar, personal, and often base nature to the unfamiliar and spiritual nature, we have to face and conquer, at the threshold, the evil in our own nature. This is called a “dweller of the threshold.”

Each one of us is forming our individual Dweller. At first, our selfish, personal and unkind thoughts, feelings and actions do not seem to produce any effect on us. We produce and forget them. Although we forget them, these are not wiped out but remain in the invisible astral sphere or zone that surrounds us. Coalescing with other similar thoughts, feelings and actions, in time, a form is built, which is magnetically linked to us. At first, it will not reveal itself as a shape, but may infuse in the aspirant a sense of horror, or a feeling of fear. But later, it will take a definite shape.

Every time we foster good aspirations, every time we use our Will to overcome sloth, every time we are able to overcome fear, superstition, blind belief, every time we respond to insult, anger or ill-will with kindness, charity and forgiveness, we are building the weapons to fight the foes in the final battle. Every time we listen to our conscience, we are using one of our most potent weapons for the fight, but most of the time we tend to ignore the message which comes from the Inner Ruler.

We would do well to nip our weaknesses in the bud. We must watch for the occasions when, in however small a degree, we let sloth overcome Will. We must find out what desires predominate in us, for personal, selfish desires, more than any other thing, come in the way of exercising Spiritual Will. Each one of us has the germ of the vices and weaknesses which are in our family, community, nation or race. When an individual becomes aware of these weaknesses, even traces of them which he might possess, and takes steps to purify them, he is able to lessen their cumulative strength. On the other hand, it is equally true that if one assumes a lax attitude towards unwholesome thoughts and desires, they accumulate and gain strength and assume a shape, and become a “black foul monster,” which then takes complete control of the person. “A clear conscience, purity of magnetism and cleanliness of body are the very best protection,” writes Shri B. P. Wadia.

(To be continued)

By all means they try to hold me secure who love me in this world.

But it is otherwise with thy love which is greater than theirs, and thou keepest me free.

Lest I forget them they never venture to leave me alone.

But day passes by after day and thou art not seen.

If I call not thee in my prayers, if I keep not thee in my heart, thy love for me still waits for my love.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

“FREE LOVE”

ON PHILOSOPHICAL ANARCHISM

I

[Reprinted from *The Theosophical Movement*, September 1958]

“Humanity is a great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed physically and morally. Unless, however, it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals.

Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto. This Sloka [Stanza IV, Sloka 4, of the *Book of Dzyan*] gives again a brief analysis of the Hierarchies of the Dhyān Chohans, called Devas (gods) in India, or the conscious intelligent powers in Nature. To this Hierarchy correspond the actual types into which humanity may be divided; for humanity, as a whole, is in reality a materialized though as yet imperfect expression thereof.

Freedom, or Liberty, is but a vain word just now all over the civilized globe; freedom is but a cunning synonym for oppression of the people in the name of the people, and it exists for castes, never for units.”

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

“ANARCHY” and “anarchist” represent, to most, evil and bloodshed. The ordinary man feels that horror is entombed in these words, as in the words “Devil” and “Satan.” The root of the words points to the concept “without authority.” An anarchist is one who is “opposed to all government.” This is the view which the populace have; but “anarchism” and “anarchist” have a philosophical history, like the terms “Devil” and “Satan.”

In her article on “The Fall of Ideals” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 27*) H. P. Blavatsky describes Satan as “the ideal synthesis of all discordant forces and each separate human vice or passion is but an atom of his totality.” She adds, however:

In the very depths of the heart of this HUMAN Satanic totality burns the divine spark, all negations notwithstanding. It is called LOVE FOR HUMANITY, an ardent aspiration for a universal reign of Justice—hence

a latent desire for light, harmony and goodness.

Similarly, the Greek term “*anarchos*,” from which are derived the words “anarchist” and “anarchism,” has a philosophical implication.

The French philosopher Proudhon (1809-1865) was the first to apply, in 1840, the term “anarchy” to his political philosophy—but not in its revolutionary sense. He used it as representing the highest perception of socio-political organization.

Personally, Proudhon was one of the most remarkable figures of modern France. His life was marked by the severest simplicity; he was affectionate in his domestic relations, a loyal friend, and strictly upright in conduct. (*The Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. XVIII, p. 634)

He aimed at “a superior conception of political and economic laws.” He was practical and so he distinguished between “the transition and the perfection of achievement,” and he knew and recognized that society could not be changed offhand by a “ready-made and complete scheme of reform.”

Proudhon was the first to apply the name of anarchy to the “no-government” state of society; this was in 1840. But the idea has a much longer history. According to Kropotkin, himself a great and well-known expounder of the philosophy of Anarchism, Zeno (342-267 or 270 B.C.) was “the best exponent of Anarchist philosophy in ancient Greece” (*Encyclopedia Britannica*, Vol. I, p. 874). Kropotkin further says:

He repudiated the omnipotence of the State, its intervention and regimentation, and proclaimed the sovereignty of the moral law of the individual—remarking already that, while the necessary instinct of self-preservation leads man to egotism, nature has supplied a corrective to it by providing man with another instinct—that of sociability. When men are reasonable enough to follow their natural instincts, they will unite across the frontiers and constitute the Cosmos. They will have no need of law-courts or police, will have no temples and no public worship, and use no money—free gifts taking the place of the exchanges. Unfortunately, the writings of

Zeno have not reached us and are only known through fragmentary quotations. However, the fact that his very wording is similar to the wording now in use, shows how deeply is laid the tendency of human nature of which he was the mouthpiece.

Kropotkin also named other teachers of this philosophy of Anarchism in medieval times. But according to him it was William Godwin who in 1793 was “the first to formulate the political and economical conceptions of Anarchism.” What did Godwin teach? According to the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Vol. X, p. 465):

Believing in the perfectibility of the race, that there are no innate principles, and therefore no original propensity to evil, he considered that “our virtues and our vices may be traced to the incidents which make the history of our lives, and if these incidents could be divested of every improper tendency, vice would be extirpated from the world.” All control of man by man was more or less intolerable, and the day would come when each man, doing what seems right in his own eyes, would also be doing what is in fact best for the community, because all will be guided by principles of pure reason. In a day when the penal code was still extremely severe, he argued gravely against all punishments, not only that of death. Property was to belong to him who most wanted it; accumulated property was a monstrous injustice. Hence marriage, which is law, is the worst of all laws, and as property the worst of all properties. Perhaps no one received the whole teaching of the book. But it gave cohesion and voice to philosophic radicalism. Godwin himself in after days modified his communistic views, but his strong feeling for individualism, his hatred of all restrictions on liberty, his trust in man, his faith in the power of reason remained.

We have purposely quoted at length the early expressions of Anarchism as a philosophy before Proudhon christened it. How these noble ideas degenerated in the hot heads of lesser men and became violent weapons of tyranny and bloodshed can be read in any history book of the period.

Has ancient Indian tradition something to offer us so that we may be in a better position to evaluate the truth underlying Anarchism? In the *Mahabharata* the origin of the science of politics

is given, in the *Shanti Parva* (Section 59), where it is named “*Dandaniti*,” and it is described as divine in source. Students of esoteric lore may study this section with great profit, to gain light on the subject. In the same *Shanti Parva*, we come upon the following passage:

In the early years of the Krita-Yuga, there was no sovereignty, no king, no government, no ruler. All men used to protect one another righteously. [This is the age or *régime* of the Perfection of Innocence with which all phases of evolution begin, as indicated by H.P.B. in her monumental works. —Editors.] After some time, however, they found the task of righteously protecting each other painful. Error began to assail their hearts. Having become subject to error, the perceptions of men became clouded, and, as a consequence, their virtues began to decline. Love of acquisition got hold of them, and they became covetous. When they had become subject to covetousness another passion, namely wrath, soon possessed their minds. Once subject to wrath, they lost all consideration of what ought to be done and what should be avoided. Thus, unrestrained licence set in. Men began to do what they liked and to utter what they chose. All distinctions between virtue and vice came to an end. When such confusion possessed the souls of men, the knowledge of the Supreme Being disappeared, and with the disappearance of the highest knowledge, righteousness was utterly lost. The gods were then overcome with grief and fear, and approached Brahma for protection and advice....Brahma then created by a fiat of his will a son named Virajas. This son, born of the energy of Brahma, was made the ruler of the world.

Compare this with Milton’s view in his *Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, wherein he says that all men were born free, that wrong sprang up through Adam’s sin, and that, to avert their own complete destruction, men agreed “by common league to bind each other from mutual injury and jointly to defend themselves against any that gave disturbance to such agreement.”

But what has the Theosophy of H. P. Blavatsky to say on these ideas?

The purpose of all evolution, according to Theosophy, is to bring man to the realization of his divinity, not merely latent, but divinity which shall have become fully patent. Man, by and through the process of evolution, becomes God, knows Himself and His universe, can and does use the Power of His Will, can and does create a universe all His own, which He fills with His Love and guides with His Wisdom. In other words, the purpose of evolution is the unfoldment of man, through the stage of Superman, to that Perfection which is embodied in the *shastraic* conception of the Supreme *Purusha*. Man is striving to become a Perfect Individual—free in mind, morals and activities. The purpose of all evolution is to enable him to attain to that exalted status. The various branches of the tree of evolution serve the one purpose—to give man the necessary shelter while he is engaged in the herculean labour of growth into a perfect Individuality.

The aim of political evolution on our globe seems to be the production of the Free Man, who will live and love and labour among Free Men, uninterfered with by State laws of any kind or description. Our emancipated Free Man will have unfolded his divinity to the extent which will enable him to understand and apply the laws of his being to his own good, and without injury to anyone else. He will not require the aid of any set of rules or regulations, laws or enactments, made by others; further, the laws of his life, which will be the outcome and the manifestation of his unfoldment, however different from those of his neighbour, will not interfere with the latter's existence. Our Free Men will each have a different outlook on life and the world; but each of them, in his individual freedom, living according to his own enlightened conscience and the set of laws and rules which he has made for himself, will live without interfering with or harming his fellow Free Men. Their enlightened consciences will have given them their points of view and their outlook, in terms of which they will have made for themselves their own concepts of the laws of life and their own corresponding rules of conduct.

(To be continued)

ON TRUSTEESHIP

You borrow everything you give so long as you are conscious of giving. In truth you can give naught which is yours. You only give to men what you keep in trust for men.

—*The Book of Mirdad*, by Mikhail Naimy

THE ORDINARY man and many a student of Theosophy, who give of their possessions to another, expect thanks and appreciation from the recipient: a return and future reward for their gift.

Then there are those who give freely from what they possess, and without expectation of any compensation for their generosity. Having imbibed the teaching of the *Gita*, they look not for a reward and are unattached to the fruit of action. They have learnt that the motive for action is in the action itself and not in the event.

But there is another and still higher way to share with others what are generally called one's "possessions," namely, to give, out of a sense of duty or the fulfilment of a moral obligation, "that which we owe to our fellow-men, neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves." H.P.B. defines duty as "that which *is due* to Humanity." From the Theosophical point of view, we are trustees of everything we have received under Karma, debtors to the whole of Life, and it is our bounden duty to share with others what we have received. If we neglect to pay our debts, if we repudiate our obligations, we generate a Karma which will bring to ourselves adverse consequences. H.P.B. is very emphatic on this point. She says in *The Key to Theosophy*, with reference to what we owe to Humanity, that "this is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation."

Why do we not realize that, in fact, we can call nothing our own, that in reality we do not possess anything, but are merely trustees of the common property of the whole of Humanity? Because we look upon ourselves as isolated beings, instead of as a part of the integral

Whole. Selfishness and the want of Self-sacrifice, the notion of “mine” and “thine,” is the result of the heresy of the belief in the separateness of the human Soul from the One Universal Soul. The basis of Theosophy is that Humanity is a unit and the weal or woe of one is our weal or woe. Therefore, “It is only by the close brotherly union of men’s inner Selves, of soul-solidarity, of the growth and development of that feeling which makes one suffer when one thinks of the suffering of others that the reign of Justice and equality for all can ever be inaugurated.”

The sharing with others of what we have Karmically received is thus but an opportunity to render a service, due to them, which calls for no acknowledgment, no recompense. Says Marcus Aurelius:

“What more dost thou want when thou hast done a man a service? Art thou not content that thou hast done something conformable to thy nature, and dost thou seek to be paid for it, just as if the eye demanded a recompense for seeing or the feet for walking?”

The same idea is expressed by Mikhail Naimy in his *Book of Mirdad*:

“Is not this world a common treasury wherein each man, each thing, deposit all they have for the maintenance of all? Does the lark lend you its song, and the spring its sparkling water? Does the oak loan its shade, and the palm its honeyed dates? Does the sheep give you his wool, and the cow her milk for interest? Do the clouds sell you their rain, and the Sun, his warmth and light? What would be your life without these things and myriad other things? And who of you can tell which man, which thing, have deposited the most and which, the least in the treasury of the world?”

PAIN is temporary. It may last a minute, or an hour, or a day, or a year, but eventually it will subside and something else will take its place. If I quit, however, it lasts forever.

—LANCE ARMSTRONG

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Life is uncertain, and there is a somewhat mystifying saying, “We have to just accept uncertainties, yet be prepared.” Can we really be prepared for something about which we are unaware? And yet, we work very hard to ensure a secure future. For instance, we get educated, hunt for lucrative jobs, or establish a business which we seek to expand; we plan for a bright future and to earn a name, fame, and assets, and also to mitigate the risk of future eventualities. Moreover, instead of joint families we have nuclear families, with one or two children, who, after their basic education, go abroad for higher studies and may decide to settle down in far-off places. There are ambitious youngsters who move abroad, leaving behind their parents, who would have worked hard and faced difficulties with the sole intention of ensuring the welfare of their children. Both parents and their children age with time. Many have to face health issues and financial fluctuations. John Allen Paulos, an American professor of mathematics, says, “Uncertainty is the only certainty there is, and knowing how to live with insecurity is the only security.”

As the saying goes, “Time and tide wait for none.” We live in the present, re-living happy times of the “past,” completely unaware and unprepared for what the future has in store for us. When there is a sudden death of a loved one, for the family members, “besides the trauma of losing the loved one, being in the dark about the details of the financial portfolio held by that person would come as a double blow.” Being aware that unforeseen disasters are not in our control, “it is wise to keep family members or a trusted person informed about vital financial transactions” to avoid unpleasant developments within the family as well as prevent the well-informed but unscrupulous third parties from taking advantage, writes Rajiv Magal. (*Bhavan’s Journal*, April 16-30, 2026)

Since we will never be able to rule out uncertainty, we need to accept that it is part of life. Most of us live programmed lives, expecting our lives to go on, following the same daily routine with

unchanging sameness. However, we are rudely awakened and shaken up when the uncertainty of life hits us in the face at some time or other. We hear people say at the sudden death of someone: “I met him just yesterday. He was hale and hearty. I never expected that I would never see him again.” After being happily married for 10, 15 or 20 years, many have to undergo the unexpected trauma of separation or divorce. It takes only one earthquake or tsunami to reduce the rich and famous to the life of utter destitution and hardship. Such are the uncertainties of life, and they are not sheer chance. When there are sudden reverses of fortune or changes for the better, either in circumstances or character, it may be explained on the basis of Karma. It simply shows that one has come to a point in life where all previous causes operating in the present life have been exhausted, new karma, or that which is unexpended (stored up), must begin to operate.

The great French engineer, de Lesseps, was raised to a high pitch of glory for many years of his life when he built the Suez Canal, but he was suddenly brought to disrepute and shame through the Panama Canal Scandal. We also have the example of Napoleon I, who rose to very great fame and then suddenly fell and died in exile and disgrace. When one kind of Karma ceases to operate, another set begins to precipitate. Through the uncertainties of life, we gradually acquire the wisdom to live one day at a time. We learn not to take people and circumstances for granted. We become acutely aware of the impermanence of things.

One may not be able to execute even the best of plans, and even if one is able to, it may not bring the desired fruit. Therefore, Mr. Judge says, “An occultist is never fixed on any particular mortal plan. So do not fix your mind as yet on any particular plan. Wait. All things come to him who waits in the right way.” Lord Buddha, the greatest psychologist of all time, remarks, “‘Here shall I pass the monsoon; there shall I dwell in winter and summer.’ This is foolish reflection. He does not consider obstacles of existence.”

Under the law of Karma, which works unerringly, impersonally and impartially, “the ocean of life washes to our feet and away again things that are both hard to lose and unpleasant to welcome, yet they all belong to life, all come from the Great Self,” says Mr. Judge. Instead of trying to keep the rod of uncertainty entirely at bay, by clever planning and maneuvering, one might learn to cultivate detached attachment, determined to “suffer or enjoy whatever the Higher Self has in store for one by way of discipline and experience.” The calculation, “Which way can I be safe?” does not work.

To embrace uncertainty whole-heartedly is to have faith in the Law. It means complete surrender to what the Law brings, knowing it to be necessary for one’s growth and experience, something that one’s Ego desires and requires.

Humans are called *Homo sapiens*. It is the scientific name given to our species. The observation that “physically, *Homo sapiens* is not that special in the animal world. But the species has discovered ways of finding food and beating the odds of survival in every habitat from jungle to Arctic wasteland,” has also come to obsess Alice Roberts, a surgeon and an anatomist, whose expertise spans anthropology, archaeology and palaeopathology. She was the editor-in-chief of the book *Humans: The evolution of a species*, which tells the story of human evolution. In an interview with Michael Marshall, a writer based in Devon, United Kingdom, when asked the reason for her journey into the human past, she observes that as a young surgeon she had seen the heart of a lamb, and subsequently, she traced the evolution of the human heart from that in a foetus to an adult, and at one point in time she was “forced to see humans as another mammal. And that is what we are. It really changed the way I look at us all.”

According to her, when we compare man with apes, we find that humans have one organ which is exceptional: the brain. How much difference does it make? She observes that “we have similar-sized

bodies to other apes, yet the human brain isn't just bigger; it's got more folds—packing in an awful lot of cortex into an already massive brain. We tend to say humans are over here and the rest of the natural world is over there. It totally influences the way we deal with it.” If we look at our culture and technology, then one admits that humans are exceptional, and yet at the same time, she says that she rails against *human exceptionalism*. She seems to explain the paradox by saying that if you look at individual bits of us, “you can see where it has come from; it has not just exploded into being. We are fundamentally, at the end of the day, animals.”

It appears that Alice Roberts is hinting at the evolution of human organs from animal organs because when asked, “How should we think about our bodies as products of evolution, about our history being written in our skeletons and our organs?” The answer given is, “There’s biochemistry going on in our cells that goes back to these earliest single-celled creatures living in the ancient oceans. If we look at our arms and legs, they go back about 360 million years, when the first amphibians crawl onto land, and fins have become limbs. We can see that change, map the bones of our arm, and see where they’ve come from in evolutionary terms. You can do that with every bit of the body.”

As regards the relationship of man with nature, she observes that she does not believe in any supernatural phenomena or in any divinity, but as a humanist she believes that she is part of the natural world and all other species are close cousins. “We understand that by virtue of the lifestyles we’re living, we are impacting negatively on biodiversity. Morally, we need to limit that impact. Because however insulated we feel from the natural world, we’re part of it.” (*New Scientist*, June 3, 2026)

Charles Darwin identified some dozen anatomic traits, viz., body hair, wisdom teeth and the coccyx, and described them as useless and hence no longer subject to natural selection. He argued that these superfluous features prove that man did not descend from “demigods” but from fur-insulated, plant-chewing animals with tails.

Today science has identified many more such useless body parts.

H.P.B. explains (*S.D.*, II, 683-85) that the “rudimentary” organs discovered by anatomists in the human form can be explained if we accept that all forms that we now see on our earth were derived by variations on the *basic types* originally thrown off by the MAN of the Third and Fourth Round several millions of years ago. Anthropologists were puzzled as to how to account for the presence of gill-clefts and tails in certain human foetuses. “The human type is the repertory of all potential organic forms, and the central point from which these latter radiate.” The human form was astral and ethereal in the far past and possessed these rudimentary organs, which became useful appendages for lower animals. In an attempt to build the present human form, these prototypes were *shed* in the course of astral development, and the same was preserved by Nature. The potentiality of every organ useful to animal life is locked up in Man. Before arriving at the present form, human evolution has involved various modes of reproduction, giving rise to a variety of forms. Thus: “The amphibia, birds, reptiles, fishes, etc., are the resultants of the Third Round, astral fossil forms stored up in the auric envelope of the Earth and projected into physical objectivity [later]. . . . “Evolution” has to deal with the progressive modifications, which palaeontology shows to have affected the lower animal and vegetable kingdoms in the course of geological time. It does not and from the nature of things cannot, touch on the subject of the pre-physical types which served as the basis for future differentiation.” (*S.D.*, II, 684)

We are told that through their thoughts, the adepts brought about changes in the master types or *basic types* that were in astral matter, and thus gradually brought about various forms in lower kingdoms. This was done in a purely astral period. Occult philosophy teaches that both earth and man were astral in nature for 300 million years. This was the period when the models or root-types for the animal and human bodies were being perfected. At the end of this long period, the process of hardening began, and the form of man was

the first to become solid. Both the oxen and the horses are hoofed, but one shows a split hoof while the other shows a toe. Now, the “basic type” from which these have descended as a result of alterations and additions worked out by the adepts could never be traced by science, as their basic type was still astral—of matter that is very fine in its texture.

Is man only a higher animal who has evolved from animals by a series of transformations? Theosophy posits triple lines of evolution, which are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point. These are the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual and the physical evolutions. The Monadic or spiritual evolution is concerned with the growth and development into still higher phases of activity of the Monad. Monad is defined as *Atma*, the One Life, mirrored in *Buddhi*, its vehicle. This Monad cannot progress or develop. It is the Great Spectator that has been observing the drama of evolution, unfolding from the elemental, mineral, vegetable and animal to finally reach the human stage. The *Atma-Buddhi-Manasic* triad is the Eternal Pilgrim, which is the experiencer, the sufferer, the enjoyer that has been learning and gaining experience in various kingdoms.

The work of evolution begins with the movement or the action of the force away from spirit. But there is another force which acts from the pole of existence or “matter” towards the pole called “spirit.” The whole system of nature is moving in the direction of the Spirit. It is this centripetal force which must ultimately prevail. “If an individual attempts to move in a direction other than that in which Nature is moving, that individual is sure to be crushed, sooner or later, by the enormous pressure of the opposing force....The only way therefore, in which happiness might be attained, is by merging one’s nature in the great Mother Nature, and following the direction in which she herself is moving....The effort to assimilate the individual with the universal law is popularly known as the practice of morality.” (*The Theosophist*, November 1883)