

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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KARMA AND HUMAN RELATIONS

GOOD human relations have the power to alter the world. Some people are unable to establish satisfying relationship with another human being. Once, an intelligent and good-looking woman told Rom Landau, the author of *Human Relations*, that she had made success of everything in life, except, human relations. In spite of having all else in life, she was unable to make a long, enduring bond, a genuine companionship with another person. Landau points out that today we increasingly suffer from strained relationships. Hours of watching television or surfing of the Internet cannot take the place of heart to heart conversation with a friend, wife or son. A perfect relationship is based on deep love and understanding, and in it there is blending of opposing and complementary characteristics of two people involved.

We meet and interact with people, at home, in the office, in the neighbourhood, on the road. The number of people we interact with is limited, and with some there is instantaneous attraction, while with few others we may experience a feeling of repulsion or dislike. What is it that determines our affinities? Is our birth in a given family, race or nation, a mere chance? It is under Karma that Ego is drawn to particular parents, family, race and nation. An Ego seeking birth is drawn to a family for one or more of the following reasons:

(a) Having generated causes for good or evil together as

members of a family, justice demands that the same Egos come together again to meet the effects they produced together in the past. In no other way may the effects be worked out and Karmic adjustment effected. (b) The Ego may be attracted to a family because most of its predominant tendencies and character are similar to and in harmony with those of the family. Thus, following the avenue of entrance into life that offers least resistance, the Ego is born in such a family. (c) The circumstances obtainable in a particular family may offer the best possible opportunity to the Ego for the gaining of such experiences as would strengthen its character and develop virtues and overcome vices. (d) The Ego's birth into a family may well be punishment by way of Karmic retribution for past transgression—the very punishment containing the opportunities to restore imbalance created by the Ego in the past, and learn the lessons of life which otherwise would not be learned.

Thus, even when the Ego has not, directly or indirectly, contributed in the past in creating the race, family or national situation, it can still choose to take birth in a family and surroundings that are most in harmony with its karmic tendencies. Knowing this, the ancients tried to develop very pure family lines such that over many centuries that family line would have the power to repel the evil or mediocre Egos which do not come up to the standard of that family stream. There were pure family lines of true Brahmins, with genuine love for knowledge and high moral values. They aspired to produce saviours and regenerators of humanity.

Our parents, brothers, sisters, all come to us under karma. Sometimes the karma of the Ego is just strong enough to make him take birth into a family, but then, new karma operates and the child is adopted by rich parents, and is thus thrown into different surroundings. Not only when we love someone but also when we hate someone, we could be thrown into a closer relation with that person in the next life, say, as a wife, husband, brother, son, etc. The evil child may be born to good parents, because parents and child are indissolubly connected through their past actions. It is a

chance for redemption to the child and the occasion of punishment to the parents. There is an incident of a Buddhist person in Ceylon who hated the British, only to discover that his own son exhibited the qualities of Englishmen. He preferred bread to rice; he could handle fork and spoon; he had an urge to hunt animals and drive cars. He had a vague memory that he was a British pilot during World War II and his plane crashed near Ceylon. Many of his claims were verified and found to be true.

An unruly and adamant child can bring about a great transformation in the parents, because in handling such a child parents may learn the lesson in patience. Similarly, parents can influence the children for good. Sometimes an Ego can choose to take birth to drunken and poor parents, not only to learn fortitude and sympathy, but also to set an example in virtue and patience to the people around. *Light on the Path* suggests: "No man is your enemy: no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers."

No man becomes our friend in the present life by reason of our behaviour in the present life alone. If he was our enemy in the previous life he will be now, even if we do him service and be good to him, because these tendencies always last for more than three lives. So, towards those who are hostile to us, if we practise charity, kindness, and love, then this tendency of enmity will be one-third lessened in every life. On the other hand, if we continue to be hostile, we put off the day of reconciliation by three more lives.

In any human relationship, when we overcome aversion or attachment for a person, but if that person in turn does not overcome his aversion and attachment for us, then irrational and one-sided likes and dislikes develop. It is like the case of Lord Buddha and his cousin Devadatta. Buddha was full of charity towards Devadatta, and yet Devadatta continued to be inimical to him. We have to remember that we can have no attachment for a thing or a person we do not think about. When mind loses interest and stops clinging to the object or the person, with affection or dislike, there will no longer be a karmic link between us and that person or the object.

Our affinities save and also damn us. Often, past affinities may draw us into friendship with a drunkard or gambler, who could be the cause of our downfall. On the other hand, through past affinities, one person can help to hasten the spiritual progress of another. Mr. Judge explains: Suppose in some past life a person had established a deep and interior intimacy with a friend. Death separates them, and in subsequent lives he pursues pleasures while this friend seeks truth and wisdom. After many lives they meet again and the old intimacy asserts itself. Then the former friend has a strange power to touch his inward life, and wake him up to search for truth. Through unexpended affinity, nature works his salvation.

Do not sit on judgment of any person, because the *inner state* of the person is known only to the Law of Karma. There is the instance of a lady who moved into the new neighbourhood and was labelled "proud" and of "loose character." Later, they came to know that she was shy and afraid but not proud. The man who visited her almost every day was her lawyer, since her divorce case was going on. We, sometimes, sit on judgment even when we do not have enough data on hand. It is even more difficult to know the *inner state* of the person and the motive behind his actions. When we criticize another person, even mentally, the elementals get coalesced with that thought, creating an entity. By condemning, we create a focus in ourselves such that the elementals will carry that very fault to us. After a while, we would find ourselves doing that very thing for which we had criticized another person. For instance, when a person has committed violence, we hear people say that he should be beaten, he should be whipped publicly, etc. In condemning violence, we are ourselves on the edge of becoming violent. Hence Mr. Judge writes:

If you fix your thoughts upon a person in anger, or in critical, uncharitable judgment, you attract to yourself a number of those elementals that belong to, generate, and are generated by this particular fault or failing, and they precipitate themselves upon you. Hence, through the

injustice of your merely human condemnation, which cannot know the source and causes of the action of another, you at once become a sharer of his fault or failing by your own act, and the spirit expelled returns "with seven devils worse than himself."

A person sunk in evil or vices must be regarded as someone whose boots have become heavy with mud, and must be given a helping hand to come out of the situation. Mr. Judge goes a step further and suggests a meditation in which we are asked not just to feel sympathetic but to *identify* ourselves with our friends and enemies; the poor, wicked and the ignorant. Such meditation is useful, because when a dear friend deserts you and stabs you deep, you shall take heart, knowing that he is yourself!

If we are not greedy or hot-tempered, *in this life*, it is no guarantee that we may not have been so in our past lives or will not be so in our future lives. *Light on the Path* reminds us, "Remember, the sin and shame of the world are your sin and shame." None of us acts in isolation. We are all united on inner and invisible planes, and are continually affecting each other through our thoughts, feelings and actions. To ignore the suffering of another by saying, "it is his karma!" is gross misunderstanding of the doctrine of Karma. If a person meets with an accident and we are the only one present at the scene, then under karma, it is our duty to help him. If a person comes to us asking for money, or seeking solace, or to solve a legal or moral problem, then it is our duty to help. Many people in India felt that the miserable plight of the untouchables was owing to their own karma, so for a long time no one came forward to take up their cause. This was a blot on the so-called Hindu religion.

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

collective and distributive Karma. We have contributed in making the humanity as we find it today. A son may decide to walk out of a house where the father earns money by unfair means. But he must know that it is not so simple to disconnect himself from the family because he would not have been born into that family if he had not contributed in making the family as he finds it today. Family, Racial and National Karma are collective Karma which influence every unit constituting the whole through the law of distribution.

“No man can sin alone or bear the consequences of sin alone.” We either accelerate or retard the progress of the race, by ever so little measure, through our good or bad actions. For instance, living in this century, we enjoy amenities like better transport, computers, and electrical gadgets. But it also means having to bear with crime, pollution and corruption. This is the collective aspect of karma, where we bear the consequences by virtue of being part of the whole. We must always remember that we are indebted to many people, even for our morning cup of tea and bread. Since there are plumbers, electricians and servants, we save time and energy. We must contribute in our turn by utilizing the time saved for the good of others.

When a person renounces interest in the fruits of actions, he is not bound by actions, because then, he does not offer an individual focus, where karmic effects could return. He only introduces beneficent causes into collective karma of humanity. He is like a writer who has made a deal that all money that comes to him as royalty must be distributed as charity. He is then not forced to take birth, but voluntarily, complying with the law of cycles, can take birth at appropriate times to help humanity. Such are the Great Beings, known as Mahatmas or Elder Brothers of Humanity. For these generous-hearted Beings, the whole of manifestation is like a *small* family.

ALL who would win joy, must share it; happiness was born a twin.

—LORD BYRON

THEOSOPHY AND HUMAN WELFARE

They also serve who only stand and wait.

—MILTON

IF a man have a genuine inclination for Theosophy, he will, sooner or later, join a group or institution which is dedicated to the Cause. Once a student gravitates to such a centre and sees the impersonal work which is there carried on, he yearns to be able to contribute his mite. He recognizes that he can serve in higher or humbler positions and that he who expects a reward labours under an error. He may start from humbler positions but the vital question is whether he has the ambition to shoulder others out and climb from the humbler to the higher. Theosophy cannot and therefore does not encourage personal ambitions and he who harbours them is soon found out. Such an one is apt to forget that the merit of service does not lie in the work so much as in the purity of energy that is poured into it. It is always good to remind oneself that the humblest of intellect can be pressed into Theosophical service and can help in the propagation of the tenets of Theosophy so that as many as can hear and hearing understand are given the opportunity of having an access to the philosophy. Any man has the power to become better and therefore nobler if he gains possession of the Truth. It therefore becomes the responsibility of all persons calling themselves Theosophists to clothe the knowledge in presentable garb and keep it alive and readily available to all those who are in need of it.

Where three or more students so gather for service, the strength of the group lies in the cohesive force which each one exudes. Differences have to be smoothed out by such skilful handling as not to allow any tender spots to remain. If one of the group comes under a moral or intellectual fog, not only sympathy but ready help to overcome the condition has to be made available. A faltering faith can be revived and buttressed, a mental despondency healed and a wound medicated. All this is provided for in the philosophy

and its texts become *materia medica* to cure psychic and mental disorders. In worldly matters one group clashes against another group; while within the same group unity waxes and wanes according as passions are stilled or whipped to fury. Passion, anger and greed are dangerous manifestations that have been known to wreck movements. They are the enemies of men on earth and attack him most who seeks to liberate himself from their thralldom. The student of Theosophy may successfully withstand their onslaught on the outer physical plane but may be caught and captivated on the hidden planes of thought and feeling. He dare not consider himself too soon a thing apart from the mass, because while incarnating he brings with him from the vast storehouse of unexpended Karma the bitter essences of vice encouraged and wickedness left unchallenged. If this is his burden, his companions are equally sore-beset and they must all learn to muster a sufficient degree of joint co-operative effort to overcome a force which if faced alone would crush the puny opposition on the instant.

This much should be clear that he who criticizes and condemns has not even a dim knowledge of the compassion that is the chief attribute of his own Higher Self. The fact that a student still cherishes fame, eminence and power shows that he has hardly any merit with which to reach beyond matter and claim kinship with his inner god. The Soul has to learn to possess the restrained power that athletes show when awaiting the sound of the starting gun. Is it not possible that in one's own case progress demands that one mark time and consolidate and yet be ready for prompt and instant action? It may perhaps also be that his seeming relegation to the unwanted ranks has a purpose and that he is being given a valuable chance to gather his strength for the culminating moment when it will be most needed for the furtherance of the Cause. Perhaps, it is all a test to see whether professions of brotherhood can stand scratches.

In Theosophy, each man, should he so aspire, can find a vacant place to fill. Has he the strength of character and the patience to search for it, or is it that to cut short this search he covets another's

place because it seems the more gainful or perchance the more suited to catch the public eye? Even in such things as Theosophical endeavour a man may raise himself to the level of his incompetence and find in his mouth the bitter taste of frustration. It is therefore always well to merge oneself in the mass and in an impersonal joint effort find one's place in the common good.

The average man does not take adversity with a smile. He resents it. To him it is an unwelcome imposition and he believes that the hands which smite him are cruel and malicious. Theosophy demonstrates that everything which befalls man comes to him because he invited it on himself and that at some stage he in fact desired it. The agency through which these unwelcome effects manifest are but the channels through which the law of Karma operates. The student-server has to understand this and act in accordance unless he chooses to remain a mere student and qualifies not to become a server. Much of the rancour and bad blood between pupils would vanish if they understood that the blame is in themselves and that effects inevitably follow causes.

As a living, active medium through which Theosophy may speak and manifest, the student has to be himself well-oriented to the Philosophy. If his study has been deep, if his heart and reason have both accepted its tenets his beliefs get moulded under three general heads. These are: (1) that during the infancy of mankind, unbroken oral teachings were revealed by living divine beings to the elect among men; (2) that this teaching has reached us unaltered; and (3) that the Masters of Wisdom are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching.

The quality of service which flows from these three beliefs is vastly different from any other form of service. That such service must ultimately revolve round cosmic ultimates is seen in the fact of the truths remaining constant over successive world cataclysms and the rise and fall of cycles of astronomical durations. Firm-rooted in these three beliefs, the student must sooner or later realize that the experience of service governed by these Truths and garnered over

aeons and *manvantaras* exists and that each sincere aspirant, if he but try, can enter the old, old current of thought and float with the stream of effort. The aspirant's labour is not wasted, however hard the toil and painful the effort, because his hours of stress and agony may help the faltering steps of future disciples towards the right path and the true service. In such a context, service attains a meaning not usually attached to the word. The disciple may be rooted to the spot, utter no word, be lost to external sights and sounds, and yet he may be intensely busy in service. His mind, like a becalmed and boundless ocean, can stretch itself out in shoreless space and so stretching may perform its acts of beneficence. Even the act of sitting out of a dense fog is service, for it sets an example to others and demonstrates that patience has its reward in time. Men have been known to stampede during mental and psychic fogs.

As the meaning of service deepens, it no longer takes count of personalities. Brotherhood of course remains, but that too with dedication becomes more and more abstract. The toiling pilgrim has still to be searched for and his needs catered to; but the whole exercise is undertaken for the Master (the outer and the inner) and the perennial philosophy. It becomes the primary duty of the student to preserve the teachings from defilement and to hand them down without any gloss or change as an heirloom to successive generations. True it is that in the initial years he receives but a few truths as custodian and server so that he may familiarize himself in methods of secrecy, preservation, propagation and ensoulment. This is part of his training for the work ahead when in centuries yet to come he becomes a companion for the Master and a soldier for the Cause.

THE WORLD is moved not only by the mighty shoves of the heroes, but also by the aggregate of the tiny pushes of each honest worker.

—HELEN KELLER

TIME—SOME REFLECTIONS

GENERALLY we reckon time in hours, minutes and seconds, following the rotation of the earth around its own axis. When the earth goes around the sun, it is one year, which gives us four seasons. But apart from this, there is a sense of time that is subjective. Besides defining time by the motion of the earth, we can define it in our conception. *Time is something created entirely by ourselves*, says a Master of Wisdom. Time seems to fly in happier moments, while it seems to drag on, ever so slowly, during painful experiences. Thus, one moment of intense agony may appear as an eternity to one person, while months and years may seem to fly like one brief moment to a person surrounded by bliss.

“Mahatmas have the knowledge of the very foundations of nature—they know what the ultimate divisions of time are and what are the meaning and the times of the cycles” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 5). In *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, Book III, *Vibhuti Pada* we are given the description of various powers that a Yogi comes to possess by practising *sanyama*. *Sanyama* is practice of concentration, contemplation and meditation, all three at once. When Yogi practises *Sanyama* with regard to moment and the continuous flow of moments, he comes to possess discrimination, which in turn leads to subtle knowledge, *i.e.*, knowledge not limited by space and time (Book III, Aphorism 53). Mr. Judge comments that in this aphorism Patanjali speaks of the ultimate divisions of time, *i.e.*, moments (*kshana*) and the order in which these moments precede and succeed. The *kshana* or moment, that cannot be further subdivided, is smaller than a second, nanosecond or picosecond of science. It may be looked upon as minutest particle of time. We are aware of, and can distinguish, such periods as days or hours. There are born mathematicians who can perceive the succession of minutes and can tell without a watch how many minutes would have elapsed between any two given points in time. A yogi is able to distinguish between succession of *moments*.

In his comments on the above-mentioned aphorism, Shri B.K.S. Iyengar writes that moments succeed each other in sequence, and these sequences put together constitute time. Thus, moments are like spokes in the wheel of time. The movement of moments, in present, past and future, constitutes chronological time. The yogi remains attentive to the moment and does not allow his attention to slip into the movement of moments and thus conquers chronological time.

In other words, "Time is an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but lies asleep" (*S.D.*, I, 37). H.P.B. implies that time is but a by-product of consciousness. In the experience of the mystic, past, present, and future merge in the Eternal Now. Aldous Huxley writes:

But, alas, when he [mystic] emerges from his ecstasy, he finds the current still flowing—realizes that it has been flowing even while he imagined that he had altogether abolished it.

A Master of Wisdom says that "past, present and future" are clumsy words. The subdivisions, which seem natural, are man-made and purely subjective. It is impossible to point out the dividing line between the past and present, or the present and future. Even as we say, "now," it has moved into the past. Our divisions of time are relative to the observer's point of view.

Teachers, down the ages, and especially, the new age gurus advise us to live in the present moment. Shri Iyengar points out that we are so habituated to fly from the present that the experience of trying to stay in the present moment, even for an hour, could be daunting. If we can live in the moment, whether it is good, bad or indifferent, without longing or sighing, then we are free.

We seem to live life carrying with us a heavy load of past baggage. We seldom appreciate situations and people as they present

themselves from moment to moment. Our reactions are predominantly based on a storehouse of memory, impressions and preconceived notions. For instance, when a person greets us, our reaction—consciously or unconsciously—is based on the image of him stored in our memory. Memory is based on experience. Should we allow it to have such an overriding influence on our response and our capacity to meet life afresh? We seldom live in the present. We live life oscillating between past and future. *The Voice of the Silence* advises: "Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost." It is said that past is gone and static, nothing we do can change it; but future is before us and dynamic, everything we do will affect it. The suggestion is to forget the emotional experiences attached to the past events that tend to take control of our mind and colour the present and the future. Once we have extracted the lesson from an event we must let it pass without brooding over it. Our capacity to do good in the present is adversely affected, when we dwell too much over the past, which drags us down from our present level of consciousness. H.P.B. writes:

For the occultist...the Future and the Past are both included in each moment of their lives, hence in the eternal PRESENT. The past is a torrent madly rushing by, that we face incessantly, without one second of interval; every wave of it, and every drop in it, being an event, whether great or small. Yet, no sooner have we faced it, and whether it brings joy or sorrow, whether it elevates us or knocks us off our feet, than it is carried away and disappears behind us, to be lost sooner or later in the great Sea of Oblivion. It depends on us to make every such event non-existent to ourselves by obliterating it from our memory; or else to create of our past sorrows Promethean Vultures. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 28*, p. 4)

Paradoxically, a person desiring to cultivate concentration has to be aware of his mental processes, so that not even a fleeting impression or a passing thought might be missed. We must learn to

be able to go backward into our days and go over carefully and in detail all that happened and all that we permitted to pass through our mind. We shall succeed in recollecting all thoughts and impressions only if we have been vigilant and aware all through the waking hours.

Karma is not subject to time, and therefore he who knows what is the ultimate division of time in this Universe knows karma. (*Aphorism No. 6*)

Cycles are the clocks of karma. Cycles are not arbitrary divisions of time, but they mark the periodic return of our impressions and actions. Cycles mark the moments of cause and effect. Having the knowledge of Karma and Cycles, the yogi can predict a future event.

One of the most practical applications of the concept of time is in understanding the value of cycles. By paying attention to cyclic return of impressions, we can save time and effort in training of mind and body. If we eat at regular times, our digestive system is ready and active so that the food is digested well. If we study at a fixed time every day, then the mind comes ready for work so that more work gets done. Our “blues” or depression comes in cycles. In *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24*, Mr. Judge mentions that if we maintained a diary we would observe that depression occurs at regular intervals of time. When the depressive cycle returns, we must compel ourselves to feel joyous, even against our will—or at least try to feel the joy of others. We may do this next day or even two days later. We would then have implanted joyous impressions, so that when the depression returns, it brings along with it the impressions of joy and they would counteract each other’s momentum. Soon we would succeed in establishing a joyous cycle.

But why stop at moods and feelings? The law of Karma postulates that an impulse, action or thought returns to the sender in the course of time. The law of Reincarnation lays down that man comes into this world, lives a life and then dies to come back in due time in a new body and personality. In the state between death and rebirth,

the soul goes to heaven or *Devachan* and assimilates the good garnered during earth life so as to come back enriched in the next life. Average stay in *Devachan* is said to be 1000 to 1500 years. Time taken by the Ego for assimilation in *Devachan* is proportionately more than the time spent on earth in garnering experiences. It takes only a few minutes to eat our food but its digestion takes much longer time—about seven to eight hours.

We have to regard each life as a *precious* cyclic opportunity, which is going to come again only after 1000 to 1500 years. It is only proper to question every action and every aspiration: “Is this the thing I will take with me to *Devachan*?”

Shiva is called *Kala-bhairav*. *Bhairav* is that which makes you “Bhiru” (afraid) and we are all afraid of time, which snatches away things and people most dear to us. Krishna too, says, “I am Time matured, come hither for the destruction of these creatures.” (*Gita*, XI)

Infinite time, or *Kala*, is the symbol of One Reality or Absolute. Absolute is beyond time. Being beyond time and space, It is described as “Swan out of time” in its transcendental aspect. “Swan in time” represents the immanent aspect of Absolute, also called *Ishwara*. Anything in manifestation is subject to threefold limitations. For instance, a rose is limited in space, as it cannot be at two places at the same time. It is limited in time, because there was a time when this rose did not exist, so also, at some future time this rose will cease to exist. Similarly, rose has certain qualities which makes it rose, distinct from all other objects, *i.e.*, rose has only “roseness.”

Light on the Path says that “Time” is a great deluder. A spiritual aspirant who experiences divine discontent is described as someone to whom the sense of space is like the bars of an iron cage, while sense of time is like the strokes of sledge hammer. His consciousness struggles to soar upward, breaking free from the confines of space and time. He wants to break these limitations and experience timelessness, where the oscillation between pain and pleasure ceases.

THOUGHTS ON “THROUGH THE GATES OF GOLD”

IV

SPIRITUAL life is not gloomy or dry. There is sweetness and light in it. The disciple will experience and sense it. As he progresses, his sensitivity increases. An average man enjoys his food, women and wine. His tongue recognizes the value of sweetness or spiciness of food. What does he know of sweetness of physical beauty, sweetness of temper and character? To the reflective and sensitive, there is an experience of sweetness of a higher order and of finer essence. As he progresses, he gets closer to the very source from which flows sweetness, light and energy. His sensitivity increases and he is able to experience finer and more refined shades of sensations.

But before this fountain can be tasted, or any other spring reached, any source found, a heavy weight has to be lifted from the heart, an iron bar which holds it down and prevents it from arising in its strength. (*Through the Gates of Gold*, pp. 44-45)

In the Heart resides the spiritual consciousness. Shri Krishna tells Arjuna: “I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings” (*Gita*, X). “There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master-Ishwara” (*Gita*, XVIII). *Chhandogya*, *Katha* and *Mundaka* Upanishads also speak of this “knot of the heart,” which must be untied. To understand this we have to understand the nature of true heart. In *Chhandogya* Upanishad we are told that there is this city of Brahman—the body—and in it the palace, the small lotus of the heart, and in it there is a small space. Both heaven and earth are contained within it, both fire and air, both sun and moon, both lightning and stars; and whatever has been or will be, all that is, is contained within that space. Our muscular heart is a physical organ that represents this “true heart,” which is also the heart of every being. In it dwells the real Self, the Spiritual consciousness, as a king lives in the palace within the city, surrounded by his

subjects, officials, chiefs, servants and the whole kingdom. The space in the heart is not small. It is really as large as the universal ether. Whatever we see in the outside world and whatever we *cannot* see in the outside world—all those things are inside our heart. Thus, each man is in himself a little universe.

What is the heavy weight that has to be lifted from the heart, the iron bar that holds it down and prevents it from arising in its strength? This iron bar imprisons and holds back the heart. Hence, Upanishads call it the “knot of the heart.” This knot must be loosed to free our heart. “This knot is the astringent power of self—of egotism—idea of separateness,” says Mr. Judge. We are ignorant of our true nature. For most of us, our sense of self does not go any deeper than the personality. We identify ourselves with our appearance, intellect, emotions, special abilities, qualification and position in office or in society. Other people know us by these attributes. We may change as we grow old in terms of appearance, physical characteristics, strength and stamina. And yet, we firmly believe ourselves to be all this, by which people recognize us.

The almost universal habit of putting oneself forward arises from this attachment to the personality. This attachment is the result of the strong sense of separateness. We are ready to sacrifice others’ interest for our own comfort, joy and convenience. H.P.B. says that the instinct for self-preservation is very strong among living beings, and therefore it is the noblest impulse that makes a person override this instinct and give up his life to save another.

Egotism or strong sense of selfhood separates man from man. Its work is perceived in our tendency to follow the Darwinian principle of “survival of the fittest” and “struggle for existence.” Man wants to enjoy life, to progress and rule over others. There is fierce competition. He wants to succeed by hook or crook. Ambition drives him on—ambition for wealth, fame, power and love. Egotism or sense of separateness is like a personal devil, sitting in its firm fortress, protected by sentries at various outer posts. Egotism or pride works at various subtle levels. It has many strongholds. If we conquer it at

one level then it surfaces at another, subtler level. Its presence is easy to detect when it is of a gross nature. Love for enjoyment of senses, desires for material and worldly things, desire for amassing wealth and desire for fame are easy to detect and may be overcome through will and fierce fight, but it is only a small victory. He may be unaware of other, not so obvious desires such as desire for power, desire to love and be loved as a great benefactor of mankind. Each of these is the stronghold of the devil in man. He may engage himself in the work of humanity, or undertake religious observances, disciplining of his senses, and consider himself superior to others. Behind fervent work for humanity there lurks pride, sense of superiority—a holier than thou attitude. He may refrain from being at the forefront, but may like to mastermind the work from behind the scene. In such a case, he has fallen prey to his ambition for power. The enemy forces take on new and subtler forms where their presence is difficult to detect. The most difficult to overcome is the desire to love, and to be loved. This innocent and seemingly natural desire is rooted in egotism. To love unconditionally, whether or not your love is required or returned, is not easy. Thus, one has to fight the enemy from the outermost gates to the inner, until the final Great War is fought in the centre of the fort, and won.

It is said that the two most potent enemies to fight in the spiritual battle and last to get conquered are sexual desire and Egotism. Between these two, egotism, pride or the sense of separateness is the most difficult to surmount. Mr. Judge writes:

The question of sex is not the most difficult. The personal one is still harder. I mean the purely personal, that relating to "me." The sexual really relates only to a low plane gratification. If Nature can beat you there, then she need not try the other, and *vice versa*; if she fails on the personal she may attempt the other but then with small chance of success. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*)

There are many stories of sages and spiritually advanced beings who, even after making great progress, display pride or egotism. It

may surface as "holier than thou" attitude or as pride for one's intellectual, psychic or spiritual achievements. A spiritual aspirant may think that he is working to benefit humanity but if there is a thought that in helping humanity he will gain merit, it shows that he was indirectly seeking his own benefit. A subtler form of selfishness is exhibited by one who chooses *Moksha*, or the Path of Liberation, *i.e.*, enters the peace and bliss of *Nirvana* with no concern for suffering humanity.

It is the *sadhana*—line of life's work to ever move closer and closer to the very centre of heart which is the very source, the fountain-head of all the force, wisdom and power. Vain it is to make search without. No knowledge will reach us from anywhere but this small lotus of the heart. If the lotus bud is tied with a string, then even though there are sun and moon rays, it will not bloom. So also there is the "knot of the heart," delusions of our mind, preconceived ideas, our running after this or that objects for happiness, and false doctrines which teach us to depend on this or that person, or dogma. We function from limited perspective. We assert our will to obtain the object of our desire. The false desires cover the true desires of the Self. We use its force and powers to limited purposes of our own personality and are necessarily subjected to the great law of Karma. Our personal desires and "will" clashes with those of others, who likewise seek their own pleasures. It is in transcending this limited sense of "I" and reaching the very centre and assuming the charge of our kingdom that we touch the very fount, the source of all sweetness, of power and infinite happiness. No longer is there any conflict. Then, our will is in line with the divine will. All that we desire comes true immediately. This involves a process of purification of our desires. Thus:

When desire is for the purely abstract—when it has lost all trace or tinge of "self"—then it has become pure. The first step towards this purity is to kill out the desire for the things of matter, since these can only be enjoyed by the separated personality. The second is to cease from desiring

for oneself even such abstractions as power, knowledge, love, happiness, or fame; for they are but selfishness after all. Life itself teaches these lessons; for all such objects of desire are found Dead Sea fruit in the moment of attainment. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 7*)

(*To be continued*)

A VAGABOND mind running hither and thither among the varying and false delights of the world is tired out, not satisfied, by its vain exertion; while starved, it counts as little whatever it gormandizes upon compared with what remains to be devoured, and ever it craves the things removed from it not less anxiously than it joyfully has and holds those that are at hand. For who is there who can gain the whole world? And although a man can never be certain when with anguish he may lose even the little, which he has gained with toil, he is certain, nevertheless, that some time or other he will lose it. Thus a perverted will strains eagerly after a direct short-cut to the *best* and hurries on to that whereby it may be filled. Yea, in truth, by such tortuous routes as these does vanity amuse itself, does iniquity deceive itself. So if you would attain to the fulfilment of what you wish for, that is, if you would lay hold upon that which, once grasped, leaves no more to be desired—what is the necessity of putting the rest to the test? You run along bypaths and you will die long before you attain the object of your desires along this circuitous route.

—ST. BERNARD

SHAKESPEARE—THE INTELLECTUAL SPHINX

"Shakespeare's deep and accurate science in mental philosophy" (Coleridge) has proved more beneficent to the true philosopher in the study of the human heart—therefore, in the promotion of truth—than the more accurate, but certainly less deep, science of any Fellow of the Royal Institution.

THESE words appear in the editorial entitled "What's in a Name?" which opens Volume I of *Lucifer*. In them we glimpse the Occult World's estimate of the message of Shakespeare. This remark should be placed side by side with another in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 419) which runs: "Aeschylus, like Shakespeare, was and will ever remain the intellectual 'Sphinx' of the ages." These two statements are more fully comprehended in the light of Mr. Judge's remark: "The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number."

The student who brings the light of his great philosophy to bear on the works of Shakespeare will not find it an easy task to unravel the mystery locked up in allegory, symbol and character portrayal of the great plays. The very medium of poetic drama used is indicative of the fact that the teachings which the Adepts planned to give were not to be imparted in a direct manner. Their intention must have been to provoke thought, to relieve heart perplexities purposefully engendered, by pointing to moral verities—all by a correct use of Suggestion; thus to clarify and to elevate human perception, and so to raise the moral sense of the masses, and prepare individuals for a more direct contact in the future with the truths of Occult psychology. Again, the very fact that Shakespeare remained unconscious of the Nirmanakayic influence which his genius attracted shows that we must not expect the unadulterated expression of Divine Wisdom in all he created.

There is no doubt that Literature has been one of the major channels used by the Great Fraternity to instruct the human race; at

one time it appears to have been the most direct method used to change the *Manas* and *Buddhi* of the race. In later ages epics and dramas, ballads and fables were used indirectly to impart knowledge of the Eternal Verities. Theosophy instructs the humanity of our cycle by direct presentation, as is clearly evident from the message recorded by H.P.B. and explained by W. Q. Judge. And today, perhaps, more use is made by the Adepts of the avenue of Science than of that of Literature. Such a passage as the following from *Light on the Path* hints at this:

I hold that scientific men are the pioneers of modern thought. The days of literature and of art, when poets and sculptors saw the divine light, and put it into their own great language—these days lie buried in the long past with the ante-Phidian sculptors and the pre-Homeric poets. The mysteries no longer rule the world of thought and beauty; human life is the governing power, not that which lies beyond it. But the scientific workers are progressing, not so much by their own will as by sheer force of circumstances, towards the far line which divides things interpretable from things uninterpretable. Every fresh discovery drives them a step onward. Therefore do I very highly esteem the knowledge obtained by work and experiment.

But intuitive knowledge is an entirely different thing. It is not acquired in any way, but is, so to speak, a faculty of the soul; not the animal soul, that which becomes a ghost after death, when lust or liking or the memory of ill-deeds holds it to the neighbourhood of human beings, but the divine soul which animates all the external forms of the individualized being.

For this reason, most likely, H.P.B. gave so much space in her great books to a consideration of the faults and the foibles of Science, at the same time pointing out the turns which the physiologist and the psychologist, the physicist and the chemist, should take on the path of research to make real progress. But, at the same time, in

more than one place both H.P.B. and Mr. Judge stressed the value of literature in transforming the mind of the race and the influence of Theosophy on modern literature. And more; Mahatma K.H. in one place refers to “the Adept who writes stories with H.P.B.” In the light of such a remark *Nightmare Tales*, *The Idyll of the White Lotus*, *The Dream of Ravan*, and the stories by Bryan Kinnavan become endowed with a definite purpose. Such are more than literature which entertains.

And so, the Theosophical student of the present generation may well be advised to look at the firmament of Literature from another point of view—to imbibe the Adept influence which radiates therefrom. In that firmament are the Zodiac and also stars of various magnitudes, and among the latter is Shakespeare—a veritable Sirius.

Of the five great plays, *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*, the third and the fourth are studies in human character and psychology; they deal with problems which remain unsolved by modern psychology, and will so remain till its votaries adopt the knowledge enshrined in Asiatic psychology. The remaining three are excellent studies in abnormal psychical phenomena: insanity, soothsaying and witchery as they influence individuals and, through them, the course of public events; but the careful reader will find in each something more than that.

These five studies bring out also another fact which has its lesson for the Theosophical server. An Adept has written with approval of Shakespeare’s method of handling old legends, etc. Once the Master K.H. wrote:

There is not a book but is the shadow of some other book, the concrete image, very often, of the *astral body* of it in some other work upon the same or approximate subject. I agree entirely with Dr. Cromwell when he says that “true talent will become original in the very act of engaging itself with the ideas of others”; nay, will often *convert the dross* of previous authors into the golden ore that shines forth to the world as its own peculiar creation. “From a series of

extravagant and weak Italian romances, Shakespear took the plots, the characters, and the major part of the incidents of those dramatic works which have exalted his name, as an original writer, above that of every other in the annals of literature.”

It would be worth his while for the Theosophical student to note the nature of the sources. Dr. Cromwell’s quotation names Italian *novella*; these may look to us somewhat unimportant and as pertaining to a day of small beginnings; but let us not overlook that we have had a Shakespeare to transform them; in the fourteenth century they served their purpose, and not a negligible one. Among the writers of the *novella* were Boccaccio, Baudello and Cinthico. While Shakespeare went to this source chiefly for creating his comedies, we must not overlook that no less a drama than *Othello* is indebted to Giraldi Cinthico, who was a Professor of Philosophy at Ferrara and whose *Hecatommithi* (Hundred Tales) contains the story of the Moor of Venice. A comparison between the story and the drama will reveal to the student of Occultism not only how great a genius was Shakespeare, but will also show part of the technique used by the Adepts in influencing Shakespeare.

But Italian *novella* were only one of three main sources. The second was history. *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* are examples thereof. The second of these affords a good opportunity to the Theosophical student to learn of the power of transforming historical and biographical facts into drama, romance, epic. It is well known that Shakespeare used Plutarch’s *Lives* and in creating his plays used the biographies of Caesar, Anthony and Brutus. The *Lives* themselves form an important tome of priceless value in understanding human character as well as in building one’s own. To the reader of these three lives who is familiar also with the plays of Shakespeare the question recurs: can we do without the *Lives* even with Shakespeare’s plays well preserved?

The third source to which Shakespeare went were the old legends and myths, especially the Scandinavian. *Hamlet* and *King Lear* are

examples. In Scandinavian literature there survives the legend of Amleth, and (this is of special interest to the Theosophical student) it had been worked up through the centuries, and Shakespeare made use not only of the original legend but also of the stories and even the plays based on it, the last of which was contemporary with Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. We have good reason to deduce that this seed legend must carry truths important to humanity for it to have been worked and reworked and finally to have been used by the Adept who influenced Shakespeare. Can it be that it contains the basic truth about the conjoint action of the weak will, Spiritistic influence and insanity in human consciousness? A careful study of the evolution of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* from the Scandinavian legend of Amleth might prove not only fascinating but useful to the student of the Occult, especially in learning about the ways the Adepts work. Also, it would make an instructive chapter in the history of European literature. Exactly similar is the way the legend of *Lir*, the Celtic Neptune, and his two cruel daughters, the rough Winds, and the third, the gentle Zephyr, became *King Lear* by the hand of Shakespeare; here again, between the folk-tale and the drama of Shakespeare there exist numerous versions of the story.

The magnificence of the creative genius of Shakespeare assigns to originality a new meaning. Emerson begins his essay on Shakespeare with words which relate to this subject and which need some reflection. He says: “Great men are more distinguished by range and extent, than by originality.” Are we not encountering here the same idea which *The Voice of the Silence* brings out, distinguishing between “Behold I know” and “Thus have I heard”? Notice the range and the extent of Shakespeare’s knowledge. His use of legal terminology was such (e.g., *Hamlet*, V.I) that some have conjectured that in his youth Shakespeare had been employed in an attorney’s office! But his medical knowledge was great too (See *King Lear*), though no one has suggested that he had intended to practise as a physician! Again, are we to suppose that Shakespeare was a mighty hunter because he uses the correct technical terms of

sport, especially of falconry, favourite among the Elizabethans, of hawking, of stag-hunting and of angling? And if we are not to assume that his knowledge of law, of medicine, of sport, was obtained by study and practice of these pastimes (!) what are we to assume about his knowledge of sorcery and ghost lore, and above all about his profound insight into human nature?

To the student of Occultism Shakespeare's knowledge of the superphysical must look amazing: think not only of the ghosts of *Hamlet*, *Julius Caesar*, *Macbeth*, *Richard III*, but also of the world of elementals, of fairies and elves of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and of the background of *The Tempest*. No, the "range and extent" of Shakespeare's knowledge, to which Emerson makes pointed reference, gives us a very definite clue to Adept influence. A real genius—possessor of that genius which is described by H.P.B. as true and innate, in contradistinction to "an abnormal expansion of our human intellect"—cuts a deep canal and he is a specialist of his type; but when a genius comes under Nirmanakayic influence there is the phenomenon of a consciousness that becomes myriad-minded. Is it not that quality which made the giant Dr. Johnson write this of Shakespeare?

Each change of many-coloured life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.

Charles Lamb, to whom students of Shakespeare owe not a little, wrote in his essay on "Grace before Meat":

Why have we none [no grace] for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton—a grace before Shakespeare—a devotional exercise before reading the *Faerie Queene*?

THIS above all: to thine own self be true.

—SHAKESPEARE

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

Question: There are instances of revival from the dead. There is a record of great beings such as, Jesus and Apollonius, resuscitating the dead. Is the revival and resuscitation of the dead possible? If so, how?

Answer: To understand revival and resuscitation of the dead we must understand real and apparent death. When are the "dead" really dead? What the physiologists would term "real death" is actually not so. A person is not dead when he is cold, stiff, pulseless, breathless and even showing signs of decomposition. The ancient philosophy teaches that death occurs at the instant when both the astral body (or life-principle) and the spirit leave the physical body *forever*. A person is not dead even when he is buried, till a certain point is reached. That point which an occultist calls as "real death" is, when the vital organs, such as heart, liver, brain, etc., have become so decomposed, that if reanimated, they could not perform their customary functions. But until that point is reached, the astral body, which is the design body for the physical, can be caused to re-enter the physical body, either by the effort of the spirit or through the will of an occultist—one who has knowledge and control over the potencies of nature. There are instances in medical history when the patient recovers spontaneously, and that is because the astral body has not parted from the physical body, only its external functions are suspended. In such a case, the person appearing to be dead is only in a state of lethargy or torpor. Such a state is called the state of "suspended animation." There are cases of suspended

animation as a result of asphyxia (suffocation) by drowning, the inhalation of gases and other causes.

Nothing in nature is sudden, so too, death is gradual. In *Isis Unveiled*, several instances of suspended animation have been narrated. The wife of a wealthy merchant in Moscow, lay in a cataleptic state for seventeen days. Since the decomposition had not set in, she was not buried and she revived at the end of seventeen days. A person in somnambulant trance, shows all signs of ordinary death. H.P.B. narrates the case of Colonel Townshend who threw himself in such somnambulant trance in the presence of medical men, who were convinced that he was dead. However, he revived after three hours. Thus, Demokritus rightly asserts that there exist no *certain* physical signs of real death.

And yet, instances such as daughter of king Jairus, recalled to life by Jesus, and the Corinthian bride resuscitated by Apollonius of Tyana, show that these beings had the knowledge and the skill to distinguish at a glance between real and apparent death. Before reviving the daughter of Jairus, Jesus said, "She is not dead but sleepeth." So too, Apollonius had said of the Corinthian bride, "She has *seemed* to die." There is also the instance of a dead man reviving, when the burial party was accosted by the robbers. Eliphaz Levi explains that since the people who had come to bury the person were frightened, through sympathy their fright was communicated to the dead person. Since his (astral) soul was still hovering in the vicinity and felt horrified at the idea of the dead body being desecrated, it re-entered the body. At death, the astral body exudes out of the physical body and hovers about the physical body until it decomposes. Under proper conditions it is possible for the astral soul to re-enter the physical body. One of the reasons for the recommendation to keep the dead body for 12 to 13 hours before burial or cremation, could be this possibility of revival.

There is no miracle in such resuscitations. The clock has run down, it can be wound. If the death is absolute, so that the organs have not only ceased to act, but cannot be reanimated to perform

their functions, then "the whole universe would have to be thrown into chaos to resuscitate the corpse—a miracle would be demanded," writes H.P.B. A leaf once fallen off does not reattach itself to the branch. Thus, when a woman brought her dead son to Lord Buddha, instead of reviving him, he taught her the lesson of inevitability of death. It must have been the case of real or absolute death.

Question: When one accepts Theosophy does it mean he will have to disown his religion?

Answer: Once we understand the true nature of Theosophy, this fear will disappear on its own. Is Theosophy a religion? Are people converted to Theosophy? These are some of the questions to which we must have clear answers. Theosophy is not a religion, giving partial truth, but it is *religion itself*, seeking to bind the whole of manifestation into one grand whole, which is the real function of every religion. It is synonymous with everlasting Truth. Theosophy is WISDOM RELIGION.

The aim of Theosophy is to show that all religions are based on one and the same truth. The various sects are the twigs on the branches that represent the religions, and these branches have sprung from the same trunk, called the Wisdom Religion. The source of all the religions is the same, but all religions without exception are overlaid with superstition, corruption and dogmatism. All are true at the source, but false on the surface. In such a situation, to accept all that any religion offers would be a false kind of tolerance, and to reject a religion wholesale would also be unfair. We need to remove the cobwebs of superstition, mindless rituals and ceremonies, and dogmatism to reach at the truth. We have to lay aside the sense of religious superiority and exclusiveness.

Theosophy says that no Buddha, Christ or a prophet has ever tried to establish a religion. Each and every one of them was a reformer. Each one of them was *Protestant* in the true sense of the word. A *Protestant* is one who protests against the prevailing religious views, which are false. Each one of them exposed lies and corruption of the existing religious system of their time. They never

came to establish a *new* religion. For instance, Jesus only strove to restore Judaism to its pristine purity.

But how is it that each seems different from the other? If one goes through the history of any religion, one finds that in the first phase there is a teacher or a reformer who tries to restore the existing religion to pure form. But after the death of the reformer the disciples and their disciples try to systematize the teachings—which have mostly been passed on orally. Some misinterpretations and distortions may take place at this stage, unconsciously. Then step in the priests, who deliberately misinterpret the teachings in order to have sway over the laity.

In view of the above, it is easy to see that the study of Theosophy not only helps us to understand our own religion better, but also inculcates religious tolerance. One who desired to join the Theosophical Society was not asked to disown his religion, but the only condition for admission was that the person had to subscribe to the first object, *i.e.*, accept universal brotherhood. Any sincere student of Theosophy admits that his eyes are opened to wrong emphasis laid on rituals and ceremonies. He begins to understand the real, inner meaning of traditions and ceremonies. With the key found in the Theosophical teachings, he understands his own scriptures better.

In 1879, when H.P.B. came to India, she found that devotion of the younger Hindus to their own religious traditions was waning rapidly. Her purpose was to revive the spirit of ancient India, to replace sectarian pride with mutual understanding and respect, and to dissolve the barriers of caste and religious differences and bring about true philosophical inquiry. In this task, she largely succeeded. Many people in India admitted that H.P.B. could explain certain aspects of their religious scriptures, the key to which was lost. Theosophy makes a Hindu, a better Hindu, a Christian, a better Christian, and makes us aware that there are points of similarity in all the religions.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Archeologists seek to unlock the secrets of Stonehenge, the majestic monument in southern England, situated on Salisbury Plain, 80 miles southwest of London. It consists of sandstone blocks or sarsens and smaller bluestones—volcanic rock of a bluish tint with white flecks. The massive standing stones were set up some 5,000 years ago. When were the *first* standing stones placed at the ancient religious site? To find out that the Stonehenge experts, Tim Darvill, archeology professor at Bournemouth University and Geoff Wainwright, president of the society of antiquaries, will use modern carbon dating technique and analyze soil pollen and sea shells. The two archeologists believe that the bluestones, brought from Presili Hills in north Pembrokeshire, and which made up the first stone circles at Stonehenge, were thought to have magical curative properties. Some consider Stonehenge to be built by the legendary wizard Merlin, while others consider it a site for sacrifices linked to sun worship. The two archeologists believe that Stonehenge was the ancient equivalent of a health spa. “This was a place of healing for the soul and the body,” said Darvill. (*The Times of India*, April 2, 2008, courtesy *Reuters*)

H.P.B. points out that modern archeologists know little about the origin of the stone monuments, and that most of them are relics of the last Atlanteans. These weird, and often colossal monuments of unhewn stones are strewn over Asia, Europe, America, and Africa, in groups or rows. Stones of enormous size are found placed horizontally and variously upon two, three, four, and as in Poitou, upon six and seven blocks. People name them “devil’s altars,” druidic stones, and giant tombs. The stones of Carnac in the Morbihan, Brittany—nearly a mile in length and numbering 11,000 ranged in eleven rows—are twin sisters of those at Stonehenge. (*S.D.*, II, 752)

Architectural remains of religious monuments of every country reveal identity of parts and measurements, and they correspond with the Egyptian religious edifices. We may conclude that similar

religious rites must be celebrated in those places. Concerning Stonehenge, Dr. Stukely says that this structure was not erected upon Roman measure, because when that is used in measuring its parts, one is left with many fractions. When measurement of ancient cubic, which was also used by the Hebrews, Egyptians and Phoenicians, was applied, the figures become even. (*Isis*, I, 572)

Flinders Petrie points out that Stonehenge is believed to be built of the stone of the district, a red sandstone, or “sarsen” stone, locally called “grey wethers.” But some of the stones, especially those which are said to have been devoted to astronomical purposes, have been brought from a distance, probably the North of Ireland (*S.D.*, II, 344). About the ruins of Stonehenge, Carnac and West Hoadley, we are told:

In those regions—true forests of rocks—immense monoliths are found, “some weighing over 500,000 kilograms.” These “hinging stones” of Salisbury Plain are believed to be the remains of a Druidical temple. But the Druids were historical men and not Cyclopes, nor giants. Who then, *if not giants, could ever raise such masses* (especially those at Carnac and West Hoadley), range them in such symmetrical order that they should represent the planisphere, and place them in such wonderful equipoise that they seem to hardly touch the ground, are set in motion at the slightest touch of the finger, and would yet resist the efforts of twenty men who should attempt to displace them. (*S.D.*, II, 343)

The Celts had their *clacha-brath* the “Destiny or judgment-stone.” There have been the *divining*-stone, or “stone of the ordeal” and the oracle stone; the moving or animated stone of the Phoenicians and the rumbling stone of the Irish. The monstrous stones of Stonehenge were called in days of old *chior-gaur* (from *Cor*, “dance,” whence *chorea*, and *gaur*, a Giant), or the dance of giants. Had there been no Giants to move about such colossal rocks, there could never have been a Stonehenge, a Carnac (Brittany) and other such

Cyclopean structures (*S.D.*, II, 341-42). Giants refer to gigantic human beings of the Lemurian (Third Race) and the Atlantean or the Fourth Race. Thus:

It is with the so-called Druidical remains, such as Carnac in Brittany and Stonehenge in Great Britain, that the travelling Initiates...had to do. And these gigantic monuments are all symbolic records of the World's history. They are *not* Druidical, but *universal*. Nor did the Druids build them, for they were only the heirs to the cyclopean lore left to them by generations of mighty builders and “magicians,” both good and bad. (*S.D.*, II, 754)

Does Venus have life in its atmosphere? So far, no signs of life were detected on Venus. But according to latest research, “every 580 days when the Sun, Venus and Earth are in a line, microbes from Venus can be transferred to Earth. The planets Venus, Earth, Mars are surely interconnected biologically and life on earth represents a connected chain of being that extends to the remotest corners of the Cosmos,” says Professor Chandra Wickramasinghe of Cardiff University. Professor Wickramasinghe is a leading authority of the theory of “Panspermia” that says life on earth originated in deep space and was brought to earth through comets. Venus is considered to be a sister planet of earth and is the habitat of microbial, as well as, of evolved intelligent life. After 1960s scientists discovered that the surface of this planet was very hot and always covered with a thick layer of clouds of sulphuric acid droplets. (*The Times of India*, May 1, 2008)

Occult Philosophy teaches that Venus is the most occult, powerful and mysterious of all the planets, and has very prominent influence upon the earth. This planet is our earth's spiritual prototype. Every race is said to be born under the direct influence of one of the Planets. The First Race was born under the influence of Sun, while the later

part of Third Race, where the androgyne man separated into two sexes—male and female—is said to be under the direct influence of Venus. Venus is said to be “the little sun in which the solar orb stores his light.” It is well known that Venus receives from the sun thrice as much light and heat as the earth, and gives to the earth one-third of the supply she receives. Hence the earth and Venus are called “Twin-sisters.” This has an occult and astronomical meaning. “Every sin committed on Earth is felt by Usanas-sukra [Venus]. The Guru of the *Daityas* is the Guardian Spirit of the Earth and Men. Every change on Sukra is felt on, and reflected by, the Earth.” (*S.D.*, II, pp. 24 and 29-32)

Quoting Camille Flammarion, the well-known French Astronomer, H.P.B. writes that Venus would be less adapted for life such as exists on earth, because on Venus there are sudden changes of temperatures and its seasons are more extreme. But some forms of life as we know are possible on Venus, Mars and Mercury. All the three planets have very dense atmosphere. Their poles are covered with snows and their surfaces are hidden by clouds. The geographical configuration of their seas and continents, the variations of their seasons and climates are closely analogous. (*S.D.*, II, 707)

The blind, albino, cavefish, which thrive in the freshwater caves of northeastern Mexico, are evolved from their ancestors living near the water's surface. Roughly, one million years ago, after they descended into complete darkness, their eyesight withered, and now skin grows over their useless eyes. Studies revealed that blindness resulted from gene mutations. These gene mutations, responsible for the loss of vision, differed between the 29 populations of cavefish in existence today. This mutational variety suggested that breeding different cavefish lineages together might result in offspring that could see, because the genetic deficiencies of one group might be compensated for by working genes in another. Richard Borowsky,

evolutionary biologist of New York University, found that in such hybrid progeny of different cave population, there were at least some fish with smaller than normal yet functional eyes. (*Scientific American*, March 2008)

Occult philosophy teaches that all senses are but differentiations of the one sense-consciousness. There is only one sense acting through different organs of sensation. First, there is differentiation on the astral plane and then it continues on the physical plane. For instance, fishes living in dark subterranean waters are blind, but if they are put into a pond, they will develop eyes after a few generations. Even when they were blind, *i.e.*, when there was no physical organ of vision, they were endowed with *sense of sight*, and that is why they could find their prey in the dark and avoid obstacles and dangers.

Is perfectionism desirable? Psychologists find that perfectionism may be a self-defeating behaviour. It turns people into slaves of success—but keeps them focussed on failure, pushing people into lifetime of doubt and depression. “There is a difference between excellence and perfection. Excellence involves enjoying what you are doing, feeling good about what you have learned, and developing confidence. Perfection involves feeling bad about 98 and always finding mistakes, no matter how well you are doing,” writes Miriam Adderholdt, a psychology instructor at Davidson Community College in North Carolina. Perfectionism is a crime against humanity because it rigidifies behaviour, while what is crucial for survival is adaptability. Experts believe that perfectionists are not born but made, by parental pressure to achieve. Parents who would have been quite satisfied getting B or C grade in their childhood, would expect their child to get an A. Perfectionism reduces playfulness, creativity and innovation. Those in the grips of perfectionism are constantly focused on negative evaluation. “Perfectionism, then, is an endless

report card; it keeps people completely self-absorbed, engaged in perpetual self-evaluation—reaping relentless frustration and doomed to anxiety and depression.” Psychologist Randy Frost, a professor at Smith College, observes that perfectionists tend to interpret mistakes as equivalent to failure and believe that they will lose the respect of others because of their failure. Success is more a matter of how we handle our mistakes rather than getting everything right. When one is preoccupied with achieving perfection, one is not able to give one’s best performance. “Among the many paradoxes of perfectionism...it is ultimately self-destructive to devote all one’s psychic resources to oneself,” writes Hara Estroff Marano. (*Psychology Today*, March-April 2008)

There seems to be nothing wrong with the desire for achieving perfection, as long as we do not allow the pursuit for perfection to be an obsession. Practice makes a person perfect. In some fields and some skills we are able to achieve perfection very quickly, since we have brought with us the aptitude or skill from similar endeavours in our past lives. But this is not always the case. Our aim should be to do the task on hand to the best of our ability and find out ways and means of doing it better the next time. There is always a scope for improvement. When we are focussed on gradual improvement we are not anxious about achieving perfection, the ultimate goal, and yet a time comes when we succeed in reaching it.

The whole aim of spiritual life is achieving perfection—in physical, mental, emotional, moral and spiritual nature. “Be ye perfect, as your Father in Heaven is perfect.” But we are also told, “Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal.” There must be no desire for growth, but willingness to follow the discipline and to work in harmony with the divine within. Then one develops into luxuriance of purity rather than hardening by the forcible passion for personal stature, says *Light on the Path*.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE WHEEL OF SACRIFICE

HISTORY of religions shows that in the beginning man sought to secure favours of invisible powers, either through prayer or through sacrifice. Sacrifice is the most common feature of all religions. Sacrifice could be performed with various motives—for adoration, thanksgiving, bargaining, propitiation or expiation. When people have personal god idea they are tempted to make all sorts of animal and human sacrifices to appease that God. Such a God is normally worshipped by material means with a view to acquiring earthly good. In *Perennial Philosophy*, Aldous Huxley points out that God is Spirit and can only be worshipped in Spirit.

The word “sacrifice” is derived from Latin *sacrificium*, meaning, “to make holy.” In a sacrifice, the essence of what is being sacrificed is considered to be consumed in the Divine World. Thus, sacrifice is an attempt to maintain a link with the intangible, unseen world. The Indo-Iranians of the old believed that the world was created and sustained by various gods and goddesses and these divinities must be pleased through offerings. Sacrifice is inseparable from the ancient Indian tradition. The *Puranas*, *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* mention various *Yajnas* (sacrifices), such as, *Ashwamedha*, *Rajasuya*, etc. *Ashwamedha yajna* (horse-sacrifice) used to be performed for the fulfilment of desires, for obtaining victory over enemies and for all kinds of prosperity. King Dasaratha, Lord Rama’s