

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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SOMETHING NEW

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THE CRAVING for something new — a mild sensation at least, if not a positive thrill — is almost universal. “To see, to sense something new, that is progress,” says the man whose motto itself proclaims: “Try everything once.” To see a new sight, to hear a new speaker, to contact a strange person, or to visit a strange place are all described as new experiences.

The word “experience” is very thoughtlessly used. If simply *going through* incidents of life were experience, this world would be full of sages. Is there a life, a single human life, that is not crowded with incidents? Even if we leave aside the incidents of routine, are there not sufficient major incidents in the life of any man or woman to make him or her wise if they were experiences and not merely incidents? An incident is not an experience, it is but passing through an experience without learning its lessons; therefore we have to go through similar incidents again and yet again.

People’s lives are crowded with incidents — daily, hourly. The eyes do not behold any sight twice — every time it is a new sight. Not the same tone of voice has the speaker twice — each time it is different. People eat more than once a day through a whole lifetime, but how many register the difference in their own palate which has actually taken place with every meal? And if this is true of sense-incidents, what shall we say of mind-incidents? Even the reading of a newspaper could yield experience, but people go through their newspaper to register a few reported incidents, and then forget all about them. People read novels to kill time or to enjoy sensations. The art of reading leisurely so that

the reader feels the joy and uplift of that experience, is little known. To keep up with new publications, people run through volumes.

This going-through process is mechanical. People in their passage through life have gathered a vast collection of incidents when the hour of death strikes. The meaning of those incidents, the message and the lesson of each, are learnt after the death of the body. In bodily existence the soul passes through experiences; after death it actually assimilates those experiences. *Devachan*, the Land of the Gods, is the name given to that state of consciousness in which the soul assimilates the incidents of earthly life. That assimilation is the real work of Gods, *i.e.*, human souls freed from desires which vitalize the senses and organs.

Theosophical philosophy teaches that man progresses more quickly if, instead of collecting incidents to be sorted out and learned from after death, he endeavours to experience the incidents now and here. Life becomes very rich once this possibility is seen; routine is not routine, for the mighty magic of *Prakriti* ever produces new phenomena, and never, never repeats itself. One of the lessons of Chelaship is to forgo the bliss of *Devachan*; and that can only be done if we cease to crave for something new for the senses and begin to see the freshness and the newness of the old familiar things by the power of the soul. The finding of spiritual values in the commonplace yields a joy that is not of this earth. New faculties are built and old ones are made more capable when, by study and practice of the Immemorial Philosophy, we learn to experience every incident, to assimilate every experience. This is to live in a world full of new surprises, new adventures — all the time something new.

And each new thing is old, old, very old.

PEOPLE are always talking about originality; but what do they mean? As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us; and this goes on to the end. And after all, what can we call our own, except energy, strength, and will? If I could give an account of all that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in my favour.

—GOETHE

BUDDHA AND SHANKARA

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

THIS MONTH of May is sacred to the memory of great and holy people. The anniversary of the passing of H. P. Blavatsky was celebrated on the 8th. The anniversary of India's great Sage, Sri Shankaracharya, also falls during this month. And on the 17th is to be celebrated the Triple Festival connected with the life of the Great Buddha, the Enlightened One.

Between Buddha and Shankara there is a very intimate connection. The work of each was complementary to that of the other. They were not opponents; they did not teach contrary doctrines. Shankara, who came after the Buddha, taught the same essential Wisdom so that it was said of him that he was a Buddha in disguise — a statement which contains a great and important truth of Esoteric Tradition.

The chief difference between them was neither in the Teachings they imparted, nor in the Goal of Life they held out — freedom from evil and realization of the Divinity which shines in the heart of each human being. The main difference lay in the audiences they approached. The Buddha preached in the language of the masses and all and sundry learnt from him. Shankara, who followed him, taught to the particular class who would not listen to the Buddha. This needs to be made clear.

The Buddha caught in his clear Spirit the light of the ancient *Upanishads* — the Esoteric or Hidden lore of India. He sought to awaken all men and women and to kindle in their hearts the Light of that Wisdom. He made no distinctions and sought to break down the barriers of caste and priestly privilege. How splendid was his success is a matter of history. But in fulfilling this holy mission the Buddha met with opposition from the Brahmana caste, the hereditary custodians of the secret learning. The Buddha was not of that caste; born a Kshatriya, he renounced the crown and the sword for the yellow robe and the begging-bowl of the *Sannyasin*; and by the purity of his life, by deep learning and by mighty sacrifice he proved himself a veritable Brahmana. It would seem that immediately after his passing the Brahmana caste itself was in sore need of the purifying Waters of Knowledge which flowed from the lips of the Buddha.

To serve the Brahmana caste Shankara came — but not only for that. In serving that caste he was serving India from whose shores the

Buddha's teachings were to disappear. He saw how the Brahmana caste could supply a body of men, fitted by a training which affects character beneficently, to master the high knowledge and to sustain the moral effort that had made the glory of India's Golden Age, the *Satya Yuga*.

Gautama, the Buddha, taught out of direct experience to all, without any recourse to the Shastraic authorities. Shankara also taught out of direct experience, but he attracted — or shall we say enticed? — the Brahmanas by commenting on the *Upanishads* and the *Gita*. These commentaries rendered the ancient but then forgotten knowledge into the thought and the language of the Brahmana of his day.

Gautama preached to the masses, while to his own Chelas — the *Bhikkhus* of the *Sangha* or the Monks of his Order — he imparted special teachings. Shankara followed a similar course. He wrote a series of preparatory catechisms, a study of which would lead the earnest aspirant to special teachings, to impart which he founded *Mathas*; these have now become famous.

The system formed by Shankara within the Brahmana caste largely continues at the present day, though its power is vanishing. Unless the *Mathas* come to the rescue of the fast degenerating higher-caste Hindus and give the knowledge which keeps the mind pure and enables the heart to sacrifice and to renounce, Hinduism is bound to suffer. What India needs today is ritual, not of religion, but of life; therefore the ethics of Buddha and Shankara, rooted in great metaphysical and philosophical principles, are all-important.

Both the Sages stand head and shoulders above the world's philosophers. The value, the magical value, of their metaphysics really consists in the principles of ethics, in the rules of conduct which they unfolded. As philosophers, Buddha and Shankara were not only intellectual giants; they were Yogis who perceived and observed the universe face to face, and understood it; Mystics who realized the Great Self; Occultists who were masters of death and therefore of Life. Having mastered Life, they knew the meaning of pain and of the bondage of sin, and out of deep compassion they renounced the repose of *Nirvana* to help their fellow men to overcome agony and to unfold the Power that is Peace. Great altruists that they were, their first concern was to teach mankind how to escape from the iron cage of passion and pride, *ahamkara* and *abhiman*.

The Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path; Shankara, the Four

Qualifications. To uproot desire, *Tanha* or *Kama*, which produces pain and sorrow, is to triumph over sin; to walk the Noble Eightfold Way is to experience the Bliss of *Nirvana*, the Power of the Spirit, the Peace which the mortal mind ever craves for. The eight steps of the Noble Path are well known:

(1) *Right Views*: Unless we have right thoughts, or correct mental concepts, *i.e.*, a right mental attitude to life, we cannot make a start. The war against our weaknesses has to be waged in the mind — the fight *is* in the mind. Correct knowledge of guiding principles comes from the philosophy which the Buddha taught, and even a little of it saves us from a great deal of suffering.

(2) *Right Intention*: Thoughts lead to resolves and true knowledge purifies our intentions and makes them correct.

(3) *Right Speech* follows. People talk at random, lapse into small chit-chat, then into gossip, then into falsehood. Holy and noble subjects are not, as they should be, the basis of conversation and discussion. Words are the living bodies of the living thoughts which are their souls.

(4) *Right Action*: Only when we have uttered in right speech our noble intentions rooted in correct views, do we begin to perform Right Actions. Ordinarily we are enmeshed in wrong actions. *Doing* good is difficult and can never succeed until and unless thinking and speaking good precede.

(5) *Right Livelihood*: Earning one's bread was regarded by the Buddha as a spiritual step. It is the field in which we have ample opportunity to curb our greed and to create grace. For what influences the ordinary man most of all is the profession he follows. Not only for gaining one's bread and butter is it necessary to engage in business, whether in high or low status, but also to learn to serve the public through it. Those who say that the Buddhist religion is only for monks should take note of this fifth step of the Noble Path of Soul Life.

(6) *Right Effort*: Earning of livelihood is compulsory. If we do not earn, we may not eat. Nowadays it is not so. The ideals of inheritance and of charity have become grossly vitiated. The Buddha made a distinction. Besides earning one's livelihood one must endeavour to bring out the innate latent powers of mind and of heart. Deliberate moulding of habits, deliberate shaping of manners, deliberate building of character are duties, and the previous stage of Right Livelihood reveals the necessity of the cultivation of these.

(7) *Right Mindfulness*: Living as we do in the world, we have to learn to *mind* our business. Men and women generally go through the routine of life haphazardly. The sins of thoughtlessness are more numerous than those of wickedness. People often complain about the wandering mind and they want to possess concentrated minds. They fail to obtain these because concentration *follows* right mindfulness. Unless we are attentive in small things we cannot have concentration in big things. He who cannot be attentive in learning the multiplication table will not flower into a great mathematician. Only Right Attentiveness leads to:

(8) *Right Concentration*: Concentration means coming together to a centre, not outside of us, but *within* us.

In many different ways, suited to different stages of human evolution, are these eight steps explained. Here we have given but their simplest aspects.

Turn now to Shankara's Four Qualifications: *Viveka*, *Vairagya*, *Shatka-Sampatti* and *Mumukshuta*. They are expounded in the small but sparkling gem called *Viveka-Chudamani*, *The Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*.

(1) *Viveka* is discrimination — discrimination between the Eternal and the non-eternal. These two are not distant, somewhere far away, but here, near at hand. Both the Eternal and the non-eternal envelop everything, and we have to discriminate between them in eating and drinking, in waking and sleeping, in all the affairs of life.

(2) *Vairagya* is dispassion or desirelessness, and freedom from self-indulgence. When we indulge the self of senses we follow the non-eternal; when we free ourselves from the senses it is because the Eternal has been glimpsed, however dimly.

(3) *Shatka-Sampatti* are the six virtues: (a) *Sama*: quietude in holding the mind steadily on the object of attention; (b) *Dama*: control or mastering of the powers of perception and of action, holding them from running away; (c) *Uparati*: cessation from leaning on outer things and external objects; (d) *Titiksha*: endurance of afflictions without rebelling against them and without lamentation or grumbling; (e) *Shraddha*: faith or firm conviction of the truth about the Soul, the Science of the Soul and the Teachers of that Science; (f) *Samadhana*: Self-settledness in the Pure Eternal in an increasing measure till permanency therein is attained.

(4) *Mumukshuta* is aspiration and ardent longing to realize the real nature of the Divine Self.

Once again, we have presented here but simple aspects of the Four Qualifications. The reader will see the similarity between them and the Buddha's Eightfold Path.

It is more fashionable today to discuss the erudite doctrines of Buddhistic philosophy — the twelve *Nidanas* or the Chain of Causation; the five *Skandhas* or groups of attributes; the doctrine of *Attavada* — Soul or no-Soul; and none of these is properly and adequately understood because the *Pancha Sila*, the Five Don'ts (kill not, steal not, lie not, lust not, drug not) are not practised and the Eight Steps are not taken. How can a mind without purification attain that translucent state which is essential for a true comprehension of these deep metaphysical realities? Similarly, many are the students of Vedanta who discuss somewhat confusedly Shankara's teachings about *Maya*, *Avidya*, *Brahman*, etc., yet fail to satisfy their own minds, which cannot comprehend these truths without a prior practice of the Four Qualifications.

The India of today needs the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha, the Four Qualifications of Shankara. They supply the waters of knowledge which fertilize the fields of life, uproot the weeds of our lower nature and enable us to grow the fragrant flowers and the sweet fruits of spirituality. May these two Mighty Ones regenerate us and protect us from the curse of non-spiritual influences, be those influences of the womb of religious superstition or of that of foreign materialism! May we all prove worthy of the Blessing of Gautama, the Buddha, and of Shankara, the Acharya!

CONDEMN no man in his absence; and when forced to reprove, do so to his face, but gently, and in words full of charity and compassion. For the human heart is like the Kusuli plant: it opens its cup to the sweet morning dew, and closes it before a heavy shower of rain.

—BUDDHIST PRECEPT

motive. The more a man gets involved in things of matter, the more closely does he establish a contact with the turbulent element (*Rajas*) of matter, opening himself wide to the entanglements of lust. By constant association with this turbulent property of matter, the man loosens his hold upon the spiritual.

“Lust” has its empire and dominion over the senses and organs, the thinking faculty and even the discriminating part of the man. It has therefore the power to force him away from the path of meditation; turn him from altruism and justice and inject into his decisions the taint of an unquenchable longing for rewards. Lust finds a ready inlet into the man’s citadel through his senses and organs and rebels most vehemently against the man’s efforts to liberate these from its domain. Since knowledge and spiritual discernment are impossible to man in the presence of “lust,” his preliminary efforts have to be directed towards its removal from hitherto entrenched positions. This, no instrumentation fabricated of matter will be able to achieve. As in the case of Arjuna, the Mahabharata war has to be fought with celestial weapons. The dominating force and the harnessing endeavour must arise from that part of the man which is unaffected by matter and things of matter.

“Lust” alone is described in the *Gita* as “this sin which is the destroyer of knowledge and of spiritual discernment” (III. 41). It is said to have dominion over the senses, the thinking principle and even the discriminating faculty. It has the means to cloud discrimination and delude the Lord of the body. It therefore follows that though resistance can be offered at each of these points, the force to scotch and then to kill it must come from the immortal and unchanging aspect of the man. No mortal aspect of matter has the power to resist and overpower the force of spirit. Therefore says the *Gita* (III. 42):

The senses and organs are esteemed great, but the thinking self is greater than they. The discriminating principle (*Buddhi*) is greater than the thinking self, and that which is greater than the discriminating principle is He (the Supreme Spirit, the true Ego).

Herein lies an instruction which is not often taken to heart. It in effect lays down the line of control. The senses must submit their data to the reasoning faculty which in turn must bring its findings for the higher scrutiny that discrimination can bring to bear upon the information. The result of study through these various instruments must then be brought before the Real Self that overbroods the whole. The directive received from It has then to travel down the same stairways until

it reaches the senses and the organs, which on receiving the divine guidance have the duty to act in obedience to its behests. In this ascending and descending pathway, there can be no place or relevance for human intention (VI. 2). To the man who has not reached beyond intellection to Buddhi (Discrimination), the living existence of the Self remains only an exercise of a mental imaging, the product of a belief rooted in faith. But this faith is not blind. There exists the testimony of the Wise in all ages. This self must have a voice, this Self must have the omniscience that can give one unerring answer to any problem and can therefore repel lust and its progeny ignorance in the same manner that light eradicates darkness.

That its voice is not heard by the many or that the Self is rarely referred to in the pronouncements of those whom the age calls learned is no proof of its non-existence. In this age, the thinking self is so extolled, its powers so coveted that even the discriminating faculty finds but few votaries. There are very few persons — hardly any in public life — who have the power to discern the true from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting. With this faculty dulled and even atrophied, the dividing line between the gold of life and the tinsel glitter of things is barely perceived. Vice is condoned (the modern term is “permissive”) and is oftentimes hailed as a virtue and a necessity. The abomination behind vivisection is not seen and the wanton slaughter of animals and even of men is glossed over under the name of “sport,” “war” and “scientific experiment.” The modern man gives such false values to asceticism, truthfulness, poverty (not insolvency) and obedience that public assessment of merit in human endeavour is no longer correct.

Even if the thinking be flawless and the discrimination true, the man reaches no high estate until he makes his obeisance to the sovereign Lord within. This SELF has its own programme for the incarnated ray. The lessons and the experiences for this life have all been planned during the grand prospective review that precedes birth. Deviation from these is obstructive of the spiritual effort, a departure from the discipline set for the incarnation. The Supreme alone has to be recognized as the asylum and the friend. The importance given to the programme set for the incarnation can be judged from the statement: “It is better to do one’s own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another’s duty well. It is better to perish in the performance of one’s own duty; the duty of another is full of danger.” (III. 35)

THE TIDE OF LIFE

(ANNOTATED BY H. P. BLAVATSKY)

[This second and concluding portion of Charles Johnston's article analysing the inner meaning of the first chapter of *Genesis* is reprinted from *The Path*, May 1888. H.P.B. appended a number of footnotes to various statements by the writer. The first part of the article appeared in our April issue.—EDS.]

II

—Where the daisies are rose-scented,
And the rose herself has got
Perfume which on earth is not.

FORM exists on an ideal plane, as a purely abstract conception; into this region, and the similar one of Number, pure mathematics have penetrated.¹ Modern speculations,² as well as the ancient cabalists, have asserted that every geometrical form as well as every number, has a definite, innate relation to some particular entity on the other planes, to some colour or tone, for instance; and there is good reason to believe that this holds true of all the planes, that the entities on each of them are bound to the entities on all the others by certain spiritual relations which run like threads of gold through the different planes, binding them all together in one Divine Unity.³ From the standpoint of the terrestrial Globe, the first modification of the last emanation, Primor-

¹ It is through the power to see and use these "abstract" forms that the Adept is able to evolve before our eyes any object desired—a miracle to the Christian, a fraud for the materialist. Countless myriads of forms are in that ideal sphere, and matter exists in the astral light, or even in the atmosphere, that has passed through all forms possible for us to conceive of. All that the Adept has to do is to select the "abstract form" desired, then to hold it before him with a force and intensity unknown to the men of this hurried age, while he draws into its boundaries the matter required to make it visible. How easy this to state, how difficult to believe; yet quite true, as many a theosophist very well knows. The oftener this is done with any one form, the easier it becomes. And so it is with nature: her ease of production grows like a habit.—H.P.B.

² *Geometrical Psychology*, Miss Louisa Cook.

³ Here is the key so much desired by enterprising—indeed all—students. It is by means of these correlations of colour, sound, form, number, and substance—that the trained will of the Initiate rules and uses the denizens of the elemental world. Many theosophists have had slight conscious relations with elementals, but always without their will acting, and, upon trying to make elementals see, hear, or act for them, a total indifference on the part of the nature spirits is all they have got in return. These failures are due to the fact that the elemental cannot understand the thought of the person; it can only be reached when the exact scale of being to which it belongs is vibrated, whether it be that of colour, form, sound, or whatever else.—H.P.B.

dial Earth, is the mineral kingdom, in which the primal earthy matter is modified by the element of Form. There is every reason to believe that, if any existing mineral or metal could be reduced to the condition of "primordial earth," it could be re-formed into any other mineral or metal. The specialization of minerals, or "formation of the mineral kingdom," is perhaps marked in the *Genesis* cosmogony by the words—

The Elohim called the dry land Earth,

Name and Form being cognate attributes of a specialized entity. As we have seen the gradual evolution of form in the descent from spirit to matter, so the gradual dissipation of form will be seen in the ascent from matter to spirit. The crystal, for example, retains its form always unchanged, and the form of the tree is more lasting than that of the bird or animal. The second modification of the Earth element, still from the standpoint of the world, is the vegetable kingdom, in which to form and substance is added molecular motion, or vitality, called in Brahman cosmologies *Jiva*.

This vitality, or capacity for molecular change, corresponds, as we have seen, to the water element; one of the elements, in ascending order of spirituality, being picked up by each of the successive kingdoms of ascending evolution. The formation of the vegetable kingdom is marked in the *Genesis* cosmogony by the words—

The earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed, and tree bearing fruit,

words which point to a perfectly natural evolutionary process under the energizing power of spirit—the physical aspect of which is the "Tendency to Evolution" of the Scientists—and not that violent and unnatural process termed a "creative act."

We may remark, by the way, that the three divisions of the vegetable kingdom in this cosmogony correspond to three perfectly well defined geological epochs, that of the Cryptogams, of the Phenogams, and of the Fruit-trees, examples of which are respectively ferns, pines, and orange-trees.⁴

These two changes of matter are looked at, as we have said, from the standpoint of the Earth. The cosmogony now pauses, and, in order to make its account of Evolution complete, inserts here the first change

⁴ For further information on this point readers are referred to *The Colour-Sense* by Grant Allen.

of the same element from a different point of view, that of astronomy. This first change is the congregation of the primal nebulous matter into suns and planets, marked by the words—

The Elohim said, Let there be Lights in the firmament, the sun, moon, and stars being subsequently particularized. From our previous views of the Elemental Light we shall be fully prepared to infer that, just as what we call sonant bodies seem not to be real sound-creators, but merely sound-reflectors, so these “Lights in the firmament” may not be real light-creators, but merely light-reflectors; and this view is borne out by the fact that in this cosmogony the formation of Light precedes that of the Light-givers. Leaving the astronomical standpoint, let us consider the next step in upward evolution.

To the shape, substance, and vitality of the plant — drawn respectively from the Elements of Form, Earth, and Water — the animal kingdom adds locomotion, corresponding to Air element, one attribute of which we have seen to be that locomotion, or movement as a whole, which distinguishes the animal from the plant. Thus we see another link of the ascending chain of the elements picked up. The earliest representatives of this kingdom are, as modern science has shown, the *protozoa* — water-animalcules. Their formation is correctly placed first in the *Genesis* cosmogony, marked by the words—

The Elohim said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature which hath life.

Here we again find words which distinctly mark a perfectly natural process of development. Just as we had the earth “bringing forth grass” — or “sprouting forth sproutage,” to translate it more literally — we now have the waters “bringing forth the moving creature which hath life,” as soon as proper cosmic and elemental conditions were presented. If the proper cosmic and elemental conditions could be artificially produced, we have every reason to believe the “tendency of Evolution,” or the “downward pressure of spirit,” might again cause the waters to produce the “moving creature which hath life” — the *monera* — in fact, that what is unscientifically termed “spontaneous generation” might take place. After this follows the formation of fish, birds and beasts — the vertebrates or “back boned” creatures; the invertebrates being grouped under the two general heads of the “moving creatures in the water” and the “creeping things upon the earth.” In the account of the production of the animal kingdom and of the birds, we have terms used which

could only apply to a natural process of development, and not to a "creative act."

The Elohim said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after its nature, cattle, and the beasts of the earth.

The Animal Kingdom adds to the plant the quality of locomotion under the stimulus of instincts — which corresponds, as we have seen, to the air-element. A slight consideration of the nature of this locomotion under stimulus will show that we are justified in assigning this quality, with its distinctive element, to the principle of *Kama* in certain Eastern classifications.⁵ Could this principle — or, rather, the specialized portion of the air-element embodying it — be isolated from the lower elements, we should have a sort of aeriform vehicle, or ethereal body, depending for its form on the attractions specializing it. Of such an isolated air-body we shall speak when we come to treat of the elements.

Three times has the earth *brought forth* — plants, fishes, animals. But at this point we perceive a change. Evolution so far, from the mineral, through the vegetable, up to the animal, appears as an ascending arc. In this the cosmogony of *Genesis* agrees with the sacred theories of the East, as well as with the views of modern science. But in Man we find a turning point, at which the ancient cosmogonies agree in branching off from modern science. The sacred theories of the East teach that man is the result of two converging curves of evolution, the one curve ascending through the vegetable and animal kingdom and marking the evolution of the physical body, while the other curve descends from a superphysical, spiritual race, called by some the "Progenitors" or "*Pitris*," by others the "Planetary Spirits" or "Descending *Dhyan Chohans*." This curve marks the downward evolution of man's spiritual nature, the development of the soul.⁶

⁵ *Vide Esoteric Buddhism*, chapter on "The Constitution of Man."

⁶ There is an important point in the teachings of the Secret Doctrine which has been continually neglected. The above described evolution—the spiritual falling into the physical, or from mineral up to man, takes place only during the first of the two subsequent Rounds. At the beginning of the fourth "Round" in the middle of which begins the turning point upward—*i.e.*, from the physical up to the spiritual, man is said to appear before anything else on earth, the vegetation which covered the earth belonging to the third Round, and being quite ethereal, transparent. The first man (Humanity) is Ethereal too, for he is but the shadow (*Chhaya*) "in the image" of his progenitors, because he is the "astral body" or image of his *Pitar* (father). This is why in India gods are said to have no shadows. After which and from this primeval race, evolution supplies man with a "coat of skin" from the terrestrial elements and kingdom—mineral, vegetable and animal.—H.P.B.

As we should expect from the Oriental character and high antiquity of the cosmogony of *Genesis* — dating as it does from a time when the “downward evolution of the soul” had not progressed so far as it now has, and when man had not yet lost his spiritual insight — we find this doctrine of man’s divine progenitors clearly visible. In the case of the plants, animals, and marine creatures, we found terms applied which could only be used of a regular, unbroken process. When we reach Man, a new and striking expression is introduced—

The Elohim created man in their image, in the image of the
Elohim created they man.

The pressure of the descending evolution of the Planetary Spirits or Elohim — seeking for objective, physical existence — upon the previously formed animal kingdom, caused the evolution of a fitting physical vehicle from the highest representatives of that kingdom. Hence we get physical man as we know him, descended on the one side from the animal kingdom, and on the other from his divine progenitors, the Planetary Spirits. We have compared this dual evolution to two converging curves. A too great attraction towards the material, physical side of man’s nature keeps the modern materialist from seeing more than one of these curves. The modern scientist is colour-blind to spirit, to him man is merely—

A quintessence of dust.

But to intuitional minds at the present day, as to our more spiritual ancestors, both curves are visible; besides the physical man they could see the spiritual man—

In action like an angel; in apprehension like a God.

To return to the standpoint from which we viewed the previous kingdoms, we perceive that the introduction of this new factor in evolution corresponds to the addition from above of a new element in the series of ascending spirituality. With man is added the Fire-Element, in its aspect of the divine light of reason. It corresponds to *manas* in Eastern systems. Another aspect of *manas*, considered idealistically this time, by virtue of which it “creates for itself an external world of delight,”⁷ would correspond to the quality of colour in the fire element. Of the earliest races of men we learn that they were purely frugivorous and perhaps androgyne.

⁷ Vide Shankaracharya’s *Viveka Chudamani*.

With the formation of man the cosmogony of *Genesis* closes. We are justified in supposing that, as the union of form with the elements of Earth, Water, Air and Fire produced the objective Mineral, Vegetable, Animal, and Human kingdoms, so these elements, divorced from Form, should have their appropriate kingdoms of beings, or forms of life, if we can use this term for something so widely different from all ordinary forms of life. These subjective kingdoms of the four elements would correspond to the Rosicrucian conceptions of "primordial earth" and the "Fire, Air and Water Elementals."

We may go further than this, and, carrying on our inference, postulate for the spiritual ether, and even for the divine Logos, their appropriate qualities of being. To a conception somewhat similar to what the last of these would involve, the Gnostics gave the name of *Æons*; for the first --- the ether-being --- we have the Indian titles of *gandharva* --- celestial musician --- or *Deva*. But having gone thus far, we are driven a step further. We have already seen all the links in the chain of elements in ascending spirituality picked up one by one by the ascending tide of Evolution, up to the elemental fire; let us advance a step, and postulate that the other two emanations or planes --- the Ether-Spirit and the Logos --- should ultimately be picked up by the Evolutionary tide. With the resumption of the first, instead of a human being we should have a "Spiritual Man," and from a reunion with the Logos we should have a "Divine Man, Perfected and Eternal," or, giving to these conceptions the names already appropriated to them in the East, we should have in the first case a *Mahatma*, in the second a perfect *Buddha*.

It is now time to point out that the pure elements of Ether, Fire, Air, Water and Earth are not these bodies as we know them. The five classes of objects (corresponding to these five elements) known to us, being all on the physical plane, all belong properly to a single category, and may be called for the sake of distinction the Mundane Elements. To make this clearer, let us suppose that Mundane Earth --- the mineral kingdom in its various forms --- is composed of five parts of the element earth, while Mundane Water (everything cognized by the sense of taste) is composed of four parts of the element of earth added to one part of the element of water. Similarly the Air-element known to us on the physical plane (corresponding, as we have seen, to the sense of touch) is composed of four parts of the earth element, with one part of the pure elemental air added; and the Fire and Ether elements as known

to our physical or waking consciousness are each composed of four parts — with one part of fire and ether respectively added.

These considerations will prepare us to believe that the real elements are purer and more spiritual than their representatives on the physical plane,⁸ and that they will be represented by different compounds on each plane (or as it is called in some works, *planet*) on the water plane (or planet): for instance, what we may for convenience term Undine earth will be represented by four parts of the water element and one part of the earth element; Undine water will be five parts elemental water; while Undine air will be composed of four parts elemental water, added to one part elemental air, and so on.

The composition of the elements as present on each plane or planet may similarly be deduced by observing carefully the principle which governs these combinations. We should warn our readers that these examples are given by way of illustration, and not as representing accurately and numerically the combined elements as they actually occur; they are really formed on a much more complex principle.⁹

In our illustrations we have, for convenience sake, confined ourselves to the five objective elements, though of course it must not be forgotten that the energizing spirit runs through the whole series on every plane.

The pure spiritual or elemental ether is the macrocosmic counterpart of that principle of the microcosm termed *Buddhi* by eastern mystics.¹⁰

The Logos corresponds to *Atma* in the same speculations.

We have seen that to the four principles — Form or *Linga*, *Vitality* or *Jiva*, Substance or *Sthula Sarira*, motion under desire or *Kama* — of the animal, Man has added a fifth, corresponding to the macrocosmic elemental Fire — human reason, or *Manas*.

Our speculations as to the two superhuman Kingdoms are also in

⁸ This is one reason for calling the objective phenomenal world an “illusion.” It is an illusion and ever impermanent because the matter of which the objects are composed continually returns to the primordial condition of matter, where it is invisible to mortal eyes. The earth, water, air, and fire that we think we see are respectively only the effects produced on our senses by the primordial matter held in either of the combinations that bring about the vibration properly belonging to those classes: the moment the combination is entirely broken, the phenomena cease and we see the objects no more.—H.P.B.

⁹ *Vide Man : Fragments of Forgotten History*, p. 13, note.

¹⁰ *Vide Esoteric Buddhism*.

harmony with these eastern theories; the element of *Buddhi* being added to form the *Mahatma*; and *Atma* completing the *Buddha*, perfected and divine.

The perfect Buddha, though not possessing a physical body, or, indeed, being united to principles on any of the objective planes, will still retain the spiritual counterparts of these principles, corresponding to groups of experiences gained on each plane. It is by these spiritual principles that the *Buddha* is richer than the *Æon*; it is in virtue of them that the *Ascending* excels the *Descending Planetary Spirit*, or *Dhyan Chohan*. These spiritual principles constitute the end and aim of evolution, and justify the cosmic expansion and involution.

The evolutionary tide, in generating the higher kingdoms, has flowed, as we have seen, from the earth-element towards pure Spirit. In obedience to this tendency, man in achieving his apotheosis must, gradually losing his hold on the world of Matter, add to his treasure in the worlds divine; until humanity becomes ever freer, stronger, and more perfect and returns at last, refreshed, to his home in the bosom of the perfect God.

—CHARLES JOHNSTON, F.T.S.

You should never betray your authentic traditions. But, on the other hand, you should not devote yourself passively to the routine perpetuation of the currents that come out of the past. The traditions which you hold most dear and which you must preserve are not those which might prevent you from making true progress. They are on the contrary those which throw open your soul to the forces of the future. You should be proud of your past. You should be faithful to your past but faithfulness to so noble a pact commits you to improve it, that is, to renew it. You should try to accomplish that which was carried out at every great epoch of your history by those who bequeathed it to you. It is your task to bring into being a present worthy in its turn to be bequeathed as tradition to your inheritors.

—JAIME TORRES BODET

THE LUMINOUS SHIELD

[This story by H. P. Blavatsky appeared originally in *The Sun* (New York), January 2, 1876. It was later revised by her, and it is this revised version that is reprinted here.—EDS.]

WE WERE a small and select party of light-hearted travellers. We had arrived at Constantinople a week before from Greece, and had devoted fourteen hours a day ever since to toiling up and down the steep heights of Pera, visiting bazaars, climbing to the tops of minarets and fighting our way through armies of hungry dogs, the traditional masters of the streets of Stamboul. Nomadic life is infectious, they say, and no civilization is strong enough to destroy the charm of unrestrained freedom when it has once been tasted. The gipsy cannot be tempted from his tent, and even the common tramp finds a fascination in his comfortless and precarious existence, that prevents him taking to any fixed abode and occupation. To guard my spaniel Ralph from falling a victim to this infection, and joining the canine Bedouins that infested the streets, was my chief care during our stay in Constantinople. He was a fine fellow, my constant companion and cherished friend. Afraid of losing him, I kept a strict watch over his movements; for the first three days, however, he behaved like a tolerably well-educated quadruped, and remained faithfully at my heels. At every impudent attack from his Mahomedan cousins, whether intended as a hostile demonstration or an overture of friendship, his only reply would be to draw in his tail between his legs, and with an air of dignified modesty seek protection under the wing of one or other of our party.

As he had thus from the first shown so decided an aversion to bad company, I began to feel assured of his discretion, and by the end of the third day I had considerably relaxed my vigilance. This carelessness on my part, however, was soon punished, and I was made to regret my misplaced confidence. In an unguarded moment he listened to the voice of some four-footed siren, and the last I saw of him was the end of his bushy tail, vanishing round the corner of a dirty, winding little back street.

Greatly annoyed, I passed the remainder of the day in a vain search after my dumb companion. I offered twenty, thirty, forty francs reward for him. About as many vagabond Maltese began a regular chase, and towards evening we were invaded in our hotel by the whole troop, every man of them with a more or less mangy cur in his arms, which he tried to persuade me was my lost dog. The more I denied, the more solemnly

they insisted, one of them actually going down on his knees, snatching from his bosom an old corroded metal image of the Virgin, and swearing a solemn oath that the Queen of Heaven herself had kindly appeared to him to point out the right animal. The tumult had increased to such an extent that it looked as if Ralph's disappearance was going to be the cause of a small riot, and finally our landlord had to send for a couple of Kavasses from the nearest police station, and have this regiment of bipeds and quadrupeds expelled by main force. I began to be convinced that I should never see my dog again, and I was the more despondent since the porter of the hotel, a semi-respectable old brigand, who, to judge by appearances, had not passed more than half-a-dozen years at the galleys, gravely assured me that all my pains were useless, as my spaniel was undoubtedly dead and devoured too by this time, the Turkish dogs being very fond of their more toothsome English brothers.

All this discussion had taken place in the street at the door of the hotel, and I was about to give up the search for that night at least, and enter the hotel, when an old Greek lady, a Phanariote who had been hearing the fracas from the steps of a door close by, approached our disconsolate group and suggested to Miss H——, one of our party, that we should enquire of the dervishes concerning the fate of Ralph.

"And what can the dervishes know about my dog?" said I, in no mood to joke, ridiculous as the proposition appeared.

"The holy men know all, Kyrea (Madam)," said she, somewhat mysteriously. "Last week I was robbed of my new satin pelisse, that my son had just brought me from Broussa, and, as you all see, I have recovered it and have it on my back now."

"Indeed? Then the holy men have also managed to metamorphose your new pelisse into an old one by all appearances," said one of the gentlemen who accompanied us, pointing as he spoke to a large rent in the back, which had been clumsily repaired with pins.

"And that is just the most wonderful part of the whole story," quietly answered the Phanariote, not in the least disconcerted. "They showed me in the shining circle the quarter of the town, the house, and even the room in which the Jew who had stolen my pelisse was just about to rip it up and cut it into pieces. My son and I had barely time to run over to the Kalindjikoulosek quarter, and to save my property. We caught the thief in the very act, and we both recognized him as the man shown to us by the dervishes in the magic moon. He confessed the theft and is now in prison."

Although none of us had the least comprehension of what she meant by the magic moon and the shining circle, and were all thoroughly mystified by her account of the divining powers of the "holy men," we still felt somehow satisfied from her manner that the story was not altogether a fabrication, and since she had at all events apparently succeeded in recovering her property through being somehow assisted by the dervishes, we determined to go the following morning and see for ourselves, for what had helped her might help us likewise.

The monotonous cry of the Muezzins from the tops of the minarets had just proclaimed the hour of noon as we, descending from the heights of Pera to the port of Galata, with difficulty managed to elbow our way through the unsavoury crowds of the commercial quarter of the town. Before we reached the docks we had been half deafened by the shouts and incessant ear-piercing cries and the Babel-like confusion of tongues. In this part of the city it is useless to expect to be guided by either house numbers, or names of streets. The location of any desired place is indicated by its proximity to some other more conspicuous building, such as a mosque, bath, or European shop; for the rest, one has to trust to Allah and his prophet.

It was with the greatest difficulty, therefore, that we finally discovered the British ship-chandler's store, at the rear of which we were to find the place of our destination. Our hotel guide was as ignorant of the dervishes' abode as we were ourselves; but at last a small Greek, in all the simplicity of primitive undress, consented for a modest copper *baksheesh* to lead us to the dancers.

When we arrived we were shown into a vast and gloomy hall that looked like a deserted stable. It was long and narrow, the floor was thickly strewn with sand as in a riding school, and it was lighted only by small windows placed at some height from the ground. The dervishes had finished their morning performances, and were evidently resting from their exhausting labours. They looked completely prostrated, some lying about in corners, others sitting on their heels staring vacantly into space, engaged, as we were informed, in meditation on their invisible deity. They appeared to have lost all power of sight and hearing, for none of them responded to our questions until a great gaunt figure, wearing a tall cap that made him look at least seven feet high, emerged from an obscure corner. Informing us that he was their chief, the giant gave us to understand that the saintly brethren, being in the habit of receiving orders for additional ceremonies from Allah himself, must on no account

be disturbed. But when our interpreter had explained to him the object of our visit, which concerned himself alone, as he was the sole custodian of the "divining rod," his objections vanished and he extended his hand for alms. Upon being gratified, he intimated that only two of our party could be admitted at one time into the confidence of the future, and led the way, followed by Miss H—— and myself.

Plunging after him into what seemed to be a half subterranean passage, we were led to the foot of a tall ladder leading to a chamber under the roof. We scrambled up after our guide, and at the top we found ourselves in a wretched garret of moderate size, with bare walls and destitute of furniture. The floor was carpeted with a thick layer of dust, and cobwebs festooned the walls in neglected confusion. In the corner we saw something that I at first mistook for a bundle of old rags; but the heap presently moved and got on its legs, advanced to the middle of the room and stood before us, the most extraordinary looking creature that I ever beheld. Its sex was female, but whether she was a woman or child it was impossible to decide. She was a hideous-looking dwarf, with an enormous head, the shoulders of a grenadier, with a waist in proportion; the whole supported by two short, lean, spider-like legs that seemed unequal to the task of bearing the weight of the monstrous body. She had a grinning countenance like the face of a satyr, and it was ornamented with letters and signs from the *Koran* painted in bright yellow. On her forehead was a blood-red crescent; her head was crowned with a dusty *tarboosh*, or fez; her legs were arrayed in large Turkish trousers, and some dirty white muslin wrapped round her body barely sufficed to conceal its hideous deformities. This creature rather let herself drop than sat down in the middle of the floor, and as her weight descended on the rickety boards it sent up a cloud of dust that set us coughing and sneezing. This was the famous Tatmos, known as the Damascus Oracle!

Without losing time in idle talk, the dervish produced a piece of chalk, and traced around the girl a circle about six feet in diameter. Fetching from behind the door twelve small copper lamps which he filled with some dark liquid from a small bottle which he drew from his bosom, he placed them symmetrically around the magic circle. He then broke a chip of wood from a panel of the half-ruined door, which bore the marks of many a similar depredation, and, holding the chip between his thumb and finger he began blowing on it at regular intervals, alternating the blowing with mutterings of some kind of weird incantation, till

suddenly, and without any apparent cause for its ignition, there appeared a spark on the chip and it blazed up like a dry match. The dervish then lit the twelve lamps at this self-generated flame.

During this process, Tatmos, who had sat till then altogether unconcerned and motionless, removed her yellow slippers from her naked feet, and throwing them into a corner, disclosed, as an additional beauty, a sixth toe on each deformed foot. The dervish now reached over into the circle and seizing the dwarf's ankles gave her a jerk, as if he had been lifting a bag of corn, and raised her clear off the ground, then, stepping back a pace, held her head downward. He shook her as one might a sack to pack its contents, the motion being regular and easy. He then swung her to and fro like a pendulum until the necessary momentum was acquired, when letting go one foot and seizing the other with both hands, he made a powerful muscular effort and whirled her round in the air as if she had been an Indian club.

My companion had shrunk back in alarm to the farthest corner. Round and round the dervish swung his living burden, she remaining perfectly passive. The motion increased in rapidity until the eye could hardly follow the body in its circuit. This continued for perhaps two or three minutes, until, gradually slackening the motion, he at length stopped it altogether, and in an instant had landed the girl on her knees in the middle of the lamp-lit circle. Such was the Eastern mode of mesmerization as practised among the dervishes.

And now the dwarf seemed entirely oblivious of external objects and in a deep trance. Her head and jaw dropped on her chest, her eyes were glazed and staring, and altogether her appearance was even more hideous than before. The dervish then carefully closed the shutters of the only window, and we should have been in total obscurity but that there was a hole bored in it, through which entered a bright ray of sunlight that shot through the darkened room and shone upon the girl. He arranged her drooping head so that the ray should fall upon the crown, after which, motioning us to remain silent, he folded his arms upon his bosom, and, fixing his gaze upon the bright spot, became as motionless as a stone image. I, too, riveted my eyes on the same spot, wondering what was to happen next, and how all this strange ceremony was to help me to find Ralph.

By degrees, the bright patch, as if it had drawn through the sun-beam a greater splendour from without and condensed it within its own area, shaped itself into a brilliant star, sending out rays in every direc-

tion as from a focus.

A curious optical effect then occurred: the room, which had been previously partially lighted by the sunbeam, grew darker and darker as the star increased in radiance, until we found ourselves in an Egyptian gloom. The star twinkled, trembled and turned, at first with a slow gyratory motion, then faster and faster, increasing its circumference at every rotation until it formed a brilliant disk, and we no longer saw the dwarf, who seemed absorbed into its light. Having gradually attained an extremely rapid velocity, as the girl had done when whirled by the dervish, the motion began to decrease and finally merged into a feeble vibration, like the shimmer of moon-beams on rippling water. Then it flickered for a moment longer, emitted a few last flashes, and assuming the density and iridescence of an immense opal, it remained motionless. The disk now radiated a moon-like lustre, soft and silvery, but instead of illuminating the garret, it seemed only to intensify the darkness. The edge of the circle was not penumbrous, but on the contrary sharply defined like that of a silver shield.

All being now ready, the dervish without uttering a word, or removing his gaze from the disk, stretched out a hand, and taking hold of mine, he drew me to his side and pointed to the luminous shield. Looking at the place indicated, we saw large patches appear like those on the moon. These gradually formed themselves into figures that began moving about in high relief in their natural colours. They neither appeared like a photograph nor an engraving; still less like the reflection of images on a mirror, but as if the disk were a cameo, and they were raised above its surface and then endowed with life and motion. To my astonishment and my friend's consternation, we recognized the bridge leading from Galata to Stamboul spanning the Golden Horn from the new to the old city. There were the people hurrying to and fro, steamers and gay caiques gliding on the blue Bosphorus; the many coloured buildings, villas and palaces reflected in the water; and the whole picture illuminated by the noonday sun. It passed like a panorama, but so vivid was the impression that we could not tell whether it or ourselves were in motion. All was bustle and life, but not a sound broke the oppressive stillness. It was noiseless as a dream. It was a phantom picture. Street after street and quarter after quarter succeeded one another; there was the bazaar, with its narrow, roofed passages, the small shops on either side, the coffee houses with gravely smoking Turks; and as either they glided past us or we past them, one of the smokers upset

the narghile and coffee of another, and a volley of soundless invectives caused us great amusement. So we travelled with the picture until we came to a large building that I recognized as the palace of the Minister of Finance. In a ditch behind the house, and close to a mosque, lying in a pool of mud with his silken coat all bedraggled, lay my poor Ralph! Panting and crouching down as if exhausted, he seemed to be in a dying condition; and near him were gathered some sorry-looking curs who lay blinking in the sun and snapping at the flies!

I had seen all that I desired, although I had not breathed a word about the dog to the dervish, and had come more out of curiosity than with the idea of any success. I was impatient to leave at once and recover Ralph, but as my companion besought me to remain a little while longer, I reluctantly consented. The scene faded away, and Miss H—— placed herself in turn by the side of the dervish.

“I will think of *him*,” she whispered in my ear with the eager tone that young ladies generally assume when talking of the worshipped *him*.

There is a long stretch of sand and a blue sea with white waves dancing in the sun, and a great steamer is ploughing her way along past a desolate shore, leaving a milky track behind her. The deck is full of life, the men are busy forward, the cook with white cap and apron is coming out of the galley, uniformed officers are moving about, passengers fill the quarter-deck, lounging, flirting or reading, and a young man we both recognize comes forward and leans over the taffrail. It is — *him*!

Miss H—— gives a little gasp, blushes and smiles, and concentrates her thoughts again. The picture of the steamer vanishes; the magic moon remains for a few moments blank. But new spots appear on its luminous face; we see a library slowly emerging from its depths — a library with green carpet and hangings, and book-shelves round the sides of the room. Seated in an armchair at a table under a hanging lamp, is an old gentleman writing. His grey hair is brushed back from his forehead, his face is smooth-shaven and his countenance has an expression of benignity.

The dervish made a hasty motion to enjoin silence; the light on the disk quivers, but resumes its steady brilliancy, and again its surface is imageless for a second.

We are back in Constantinople now and out of the pearly depths of the shield forms our own apartment in the hotel. There are our papers and books on the bureau, my friend's travelling hat in a corner, her ribbons hanging on the glass, and lying on the bed the very dress she

had changed when starting out on our expedition. No detail was lacking to make the identification complete; and as if to prove that we were not seeing something conjured up in our imagination, there lay upon the dressing-table two unopened letters, the handwriting on which was clearly recognized by my friend. They were from a very dear relative of hers, from whom she had expected to hear when in Athens, but had been disappointed. The scene faded away and we now saw her brother's room with himself lying upon the lounge, and a servant bathing his head, whence, to our horror, blood was trickling. We had left the boy in perfect health but an hour before; and upon seeing this picture my companion uttered a cry of alarm, and seizing me by the hand dragged me to the door. We rejoined our guide and friends in the long hall and hurried back to the hotel.

Young H—— had fallen downstairs and cut his forehead rather badly; in our room, on the dressing-table were the two letters which had arrived in our absence. They had been forwarded from Athens. Ordering a carriage, I at once drove to the Ministry of Finance, and alighting with the guide, hurriedly made for the ditch I had seen for the first time in the shining disk. In the middle of the pool, badly mangled, half-famished, but still alive, lay my beautiful spaniel Ralph, and near him were the blinking curs, unconcernedly snapping at the flies.

I HAVE lived in the pursuit of a vision, both personal and social. Personal: to care for what is noble, for what is beautiful, for what is gentle; to allow moments of insight to give wisdom at more mundane times. Social: to see in imagination the society that is to be created, where individuals grow freely, and where hate and greed and envy die because there is nothing to nourish them.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL

STUDIES IN MAGIC

VII. — WITCHCRAFT

Psychic capacities held perfectly under control, checked and directed by the Manasic principle, are valuable aids in development. But these capacities running riot, controlling instead of controlled, using instead of being used, lead the Student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

WHEN we look at science and technical development in what has come to be known as the Age of Faith, we find that their sphere was an extremely limited one; and the less usual phenomena of existence, which could not be accounted for by the “natural” laws known then, were attributed to the miraculous interventions of saints or devils. In popular tradition, therefore, any notable skill or achievement was regarded as outside the sphere of natural phenomena, and hence the result of magic. Were not the early scientists like Roger Bacon attributed with magical skills? Even statesmen like Cardinal Wolsey were credited with magical rings and “serviceable devils,” and poets like Virgil were men of great magical powers. It is not difficult to comprehend such a state of the popular mind, for even early this century wireless was regarded as something magical.

Scholarly distinctions between and definitions of various kinds of magic, sorcery, witchcraft, etc., are simply not valid when they are applied to the superstitious beliefs of people, savage or civilized, Eastern or Western. For, it is evident that diverse elements go to make up the superstitions concerning the idea of *bhuts*, ghosts, goblins and *pisachas*, and the matter becomes more complex when we come to the idea of witchcraft and witches. Witch-hunting became a common pastime in the West for several centuries, and when the age of enlightenment put an end to it, Jews and political groups served the states' interest in their prosecuting games of forced confessions and torture of scapegoats.

Barbara Rosen, who has done a thorough job of collecting and arranging in sequence the various pamphlets, reports and accounts of the experience, interpretation, trials and punishment of so-called witches in mediaeval England, for the Stratford Library series, remarks:

The very word “witch” describes a state of mind on the part of the speaker rather than any generally accepted conception of a type, and that state of mind is an exceedingly primitive and

confused one. Witch, wizard, wise woman, magician, necromancer, any learned Elizabethan will define them and distinguish between them; unfortunately, few of the lists agree with each other, or have much to do with what the nonreading public, the witches and the bewitched, thought and did about the subject.

The main difference between witchcraft and magic is that the former is supposed to rest entirely on infernal aid, while the other is a power obtained by a deep acquaintance with the principles of Nature, so that her phenomena are imitated and even rivalled. Witchcraft implies a kind of sorcery, more especially associated with women, who, it is alleged, by entering into a compact with infernal agencies are enabled to alter the course of the otherwise immutable law by which Nature is governed: to raise tempests, to transform themselves into different shapes, to afflict and torment those who offend them, and, in short, by virtue of this supposed compact, to do whatsoever they please. This idea has prevailed in all ages and in all countries, and one has to look into some of the scriptures for the earliest accounts of this phenomenon.

The idea of the devil, or Satan, as the Principle of evil, Christianity took over from Judaism, and as long as this idea prevailed, inexplicable psychic phenomena, mysterious diseases, plagues, etc., were all attributed to the devil or to the influence of demoniac spirits. The attitude of the Church pushed the devil to a pre-eminent position, so that in the course of time his kingdom increased; and in the Middle Ages, strengthened by a chain of learned maxims and dogmatic sophistries, his influence spread through both the high and low ranks of society. By the end of the fifteenth century, witchcraft and the black arts had attained a strong position. It was a tragic spectacle that Christianity, with all its weapons of State and ecclesiastical armoury, felt itself insecure, and in spite of its fire and sword seemed to be surrounded by a regular demon host.

Faith in demons, and particularly in evil spirits, was prevalent among people from times past, and unbounded powers were ascribed to them, which not only were supposed to influence the mind, but also nature and physical life. Superstition imagined all possible ways of gaining the favour of these demons, and of transferring their noxious influence upon others by permitted or unpermitted means, or of using these supernatural powers for any purposes. In short, magic was turned into a black art, and its true significance and worth in the noble and original sense was lost. The inclination in man for evil tended towards the forces

of darkness within and without, and became in itself an evil spirit. In the Epistle to the Galatians, St. Paul admonishes:

Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and suchlike; of the which I tell you before, as I have told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance; against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. (V. 19-24)

The magic of the Middle Ages may be classed under three categories. The first was based on sorcery and made a pact with the devil. The second was practised with the stellar influences, with sympathy and antipathy; it depended much on the effect of different words, and on other magical customs. The third was a mystic magic, whose votaries sought to annihilate sensuality by piety, purification of the heart and contemplation; and even to reach perfection by these means.

What rank the magic of those times acquired may be conceived from the fact that not merely secret doctors and common people, but even kings and emperors, were addicted to it. The Emperor Frederick II, in the thirteenth century, is said to have used the magic arts; Rudolph II and Charles V were also devoted to such studies; Maximilian I and the Grand Elector of Brandenburg, Joachim I, had Johannes Trithemius as teacher of astrology and magic. In France, Catherine de Medici was extremely addicted to magic. James I of England wrote a book on magic.

The magical arts were not, in old time, attributed to the influence of the powers of darkness, but to people who were in familiar intercourse with the gods and demons. But to the Christian it was the devil's craft. As Grimm says:

The real magician is the upward-striving man. By the side of his health-bringing practice a pernicious one developed itself. The original cause of all magic must have proceeded from the very bosom of the holiest, the united wisdom of all heathenism, operating on the worship of the gods and the art of poetry. Sacrifices and singing passed over into representations of magic; priests and poets, men admitted to the confidence of the gods, and participants of divine inspiration, soon merged into the diviner and sorcerer.

This is still evident from the etymology of the old Saxon word "Wikken," which means to divine or prophesy. There is no good in the world which has not its opposite, or which may not become mischievous through its abuse. Ennemoser, deploring the confusions of the understanding arising out of the teaching of Christianity, and the abuses of reason leading to the most insensate actions, writes:

Instead of the true faith producing the noblest fruits of wisdom, power, and love, there arose the winter of a devouring superstition and of the most maniacal fanaticism! It is, in fact, wonderful how the doctrines of religion can lead the human mind so completely into error and inconsistency. . . . Plebeians and nobles, young and old, put more living faith in a supernatural world of spirits than in God and physical nature. . . . The belief in sorcery, and in compacts with the devil, rose to such a pitch of madness and of universal confusion of the Christian world, that men attributed to the devil the violent possession of innocent as well as guilty men; and therefore, took the field promiscuously against the defenceless, the unhappy, and the insane; sought and found upon them all the tokens of sorcery, and suspended over them all kinds of torments; and, finally, drove many hundred thousands of vainly resisting wretches to death by fire and sword.

The *Hexen-Hammer* contains extraordinary memorials of that time of wonder, and of the highest possible pitch of mental blindness and of horrible superstition which the human race ever arrived at on the earth. The whole of nature was converted into a world of sorcery; no one any longer believed his own senses; life was a sport of demons; no one thought any more of fixed laws of nature; all was miracle effected by supernatural spirit, but which had not the spirit of Christ — love, as a result, but the terrors and tyranny of hell.

Thus the idea of magic at that time became totally different from its original one — that of the art of inquiring into the secret powers of nature to use them to advantage. Now all extraordinary natural phenomena passed for the work of the devil. The whole Christian world, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, was so sunk in the idea of witchcraft that every natural occurrence was thought to be the work of witches — as lightning and hail, milk turning sour, the loss of swine, all sorts of diseases in men and cattle, cramps, lameness, swellings, impotence, etc. In 1484, the witch persecution was formally introduced by a

bull of Pope Innocent VIII, and in 1489 appeared a publication under public authority, under the title *Malleus Maleficarum* — the *Witch-Hammer* — which became the code of action in the witch persecutions.

The highest law with the theologians was that of Moses: "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live" (*Exodus*, xxii. 18). *Malleus Maleficarum*, running to 625 pages, is an ominous book, a farrago of utter nonsense, of theological, sophistical, and juridical absurdity; and it is a sad commentary on the folly and ignorance of the times that it should become the general code of law for four centuries; for, till the end of the seventeenth century, witch-prosecutions were still in progress and the death-fires were not extinguished. Of all the witch persecutions, the trial and burning of the Maid of Orleans, as that of Socrates in an earlier age, is a golden page in the annals of martyrdom; for by her death at the stake she has lighted a flame which still shines, signifying the triumph of a defiant soul. As Schiller makes her say in his drama *The Maid of Orleans*:

Even though hell itself should take the field,
It shall not make my courage quail or waver,
Die that which is but mortal!

Barbara Rosen explains why women were usually the victims of witch-hunt:

More women than men were called witches because witchcraft deals predominantly with the concerns of women, and their world was a much more closed and mysterious society to men in the fifteenth century than it is now. Woman was regarded as deficient in the rational faculties. Her physical changes and functions were mysterious, particularly that of childbirth, which was assisted by women only, and about which doctors were astonishingly ignorant. Organized religion made little of this most crucial of female concerns till there was a child to be baptised. . . . Neglected by both religion and science, there is no doubt that women did use charms and spells and imitative magic (*e.g.*, unlocking all the locks in a house) at this time; the queries made at ecclesiastical visitations made it clear that midwives were suspected of witchcraft more frequently than any other women. There still lurks a kind of primitive fear of the midwife; childbirth can never appear to a man (particularly a celibate) quite natural and may therefore be subconsciously associated with the magical. Once the religious or civil laws codify magical acts and produce a unified picture of the witch as rebel to God, a vast number of harmless women can

be caught by the simple threads of traditional magic and medicine, enmeshed and finally destroyed by confessions under torture.

Belief in witchcraft in those days, was grown on the fertile soil of ignorance, and ploughed by Christian demonology and fertilized by the wars and diseases of the time which demanded scapegoats. It was killed, not by persecution and inquisition, which only served to spread abroad the very idea that it sought to crush, but by the enlightenment brought by education, rational thought, and the spirit of inquiry. Rightly has Paracelsus pointed out:

Mental diseases have nothing to do with evil spirits or devils.

One should not study how to exorcize the devil but how to cure the insane.

During the height of this reign of ignorance, many cruel laws were enacted, by the operation of which thousands of innocent persons, friendless, oppressed with age, poverty and disease, were condemned and burnt for powers which they did not possess, for injuries which they did not inflict, and for crimes which they did not commit. Strangely enough, it was in Spain, the home of the Inquisition, that the witch-hunt was least active. There was a spirit of doubt and inquiry, so different from the frenzy and credulity of central Europe. When the secular authorities instituted a witch prosecution in Navarre in 1526, a congregation of the Inquisition seriously debated the root question of the reality of witchcraft and whether the witches did really commit the offences to which they confessed. The Inquisitor Salazar Frias in his report to the Suprema gave many instances to show that witches were the subjects of delusions and that many confessions had been extracted under torture. Salazar concluded:

I have not found even indications from which to infer [after examining 1,800 cases] that a single act of witchcraft has really occurred. . . . This enlightenment has greatly strengthened my former suspicions that the evidence of accomplices, without external proof from other parties, is insufficient to justify even arrest. . . . I also feel certain that, under present conditions, there is no need of fresh edicts or the prolongation of those existing, but rather that, in the diseased state of the public mind, every agitation of the matter is harmful and increases the evil. I deduce the importance of silence and reserve from the experience that there were neither witches nor bewitched until they were talked and written about.

Such outspoken persons, who understood the powers of pain to obscure rather than illuminate truth, were few and far between in that

benighted age. Jews, heretics and witches were all groups, on to which society could easily project its fear and guilts; for nothing satisfied human frailty than seeing the devil in one's unloved neighbour.

It is easy to perceive by what slow degrees and what labour the mind was opened and the understanding enlightened by the light of truth. A great number of scientific men and other thinkers have won renown by their cure of the witch-mania, by breaking the bonds of ignorance, teaching people to discriminate between witchcraft and the operations of nature. Paracelsus, Van Helmont, Bacon, Wier, Becker, Thomasius, Spee, Molitor, Tartaretti, Reginald Scott, Dell'Ossa, Reiche, Hauber, etc., are the writers who, bold and enterprising, stood forth undauntedly against the monstrous tyranny of the devil, and brought the witch-mania to an end.

Is witchcraft but an exploded superstition? It is undeniable that, on the pretext of stamping out witchcraft, many shocking crimes have been committed against innocent men, women and children, under the impetus of mob frenzy. It does not follow, however, that the idea of witchcraft is to be dismissed as a childish fancy, beneath the notice of the modern mind. Witchcraft has always existed, as it exists now, and it has its dangers. There are psychic powers, still latent in most men, developed in a few, and those powers can be turned to either good or evil uses.

The witch cult, as it gradually formed, was a degraded jumble of old religions and nature-theories, and witchcraft was the application of these. Both were abominable perversions and almost incredible befoulings of what was in origin true philosophy and science. H. P. Blavatsky, citing several authorities in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 352-56), shows that witch and wizard first meant a woman and a man of wisdom. Usage limited this meaning for a time to those who possessed knowledge unusual but not unlawful; and then further limited it to those who gained their knowledge by some "express or implicit sociation or confederacy with some *bad spirits*." Thus witch came to be "the name of such as raise magical spectres to deceive men's sight... the name of women and men who have a *bad spirit* in them." To explain what was meant by "bad spirit" she says:

When, through vice, fearful crimes and animal passions, a disembodied spirit has fallen to the eighth sphere—the allegorical Hades... a strong aspiration to retrieve his calamities... will draw him once more into the earth's atmosphere... His instincts will make him seek with avidity contact with living persons... These

spirits are the invisible but too tangible magnetic vampires. . . . Origen held all the daemons which possessed the demoniacs mentioned in the *New Testament* to be [this kind of] *human* "spirits." . . . They are the blood-daemons of Porphyry, the *larvae* and *lemures* of the ancients. [They are] the *subjective* daemons so well known to mediaeval ecstasies, nuns, and monks . . . and to certain sensitive clairvoyants; the fiendish instruments which sent so many unfortunate and weak victims to the rack and stake.

Such weak men and women through their mediumistic passivity became the dupes and slaves of the daemons or "familiar spirits" who had taken control of them.

Therefore the words *obsessed* or *possessed* are synonyms of the word *witch*. . . . Jesus, Apollonius, and some of the apostles, had the power to cast out *devils* [or such "familiar spirits"], by purifying the atmosphere *within* and *without* the patient, so as to force the unwelcome tenant to flight.

But the pitiful possessed creatures were not the only kind of witches, nor were they the only basis of the multifarious witch lore of the middle ages. H. P. Blavatsky also called attention to the fact that

there has existed from the beginning of time, a mysterious science discussed by many, but known only to a few. The use of it is a . . . desire to cling more closely to our parent-spirit; abuse of it is sorcery, witchcraft, *black magic*. . . .

The word "witchcraft" ought, once for all, to be understood in the sense which properly belongs to it. Witchcraft may be either conscious or unconscious. Certain wicked and dangerous results may be obtained through the mesmeric powers of a so-called sorcerer, who misuses his potential fluid; or again they may be achieved through an easy access of malicious tricky "spirits" (so much the worse if human) to the atmosphere surrounding a medium. How many thousands of such irresponsible innocent victims have met infamous deaths through the tricks of those elementaries! (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 117-18 fn.)

(*To be continued*)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It is claimed that the oldest nearly complete skull of early man yet discovered was found in the African desert east of lake Rudolph in Kenya. The fossil, believed to be 2.5 million years old, was discovered by an expedition headed by Dr. Glynn Isaac and Richard Leakey, son of the late Dr. Louis S. B. Leakey, reports the National Geographic Society of America. The skull, broken into fragments, was found within a layer of volcanic ash estimated to be 2.6 million years old. The discovery is considered remarkable since the skull resembles modern man's, lacking the preorbital ridges and sloping brow found in *Homo Erectus* and *Australopithecus* (*Science Digest*, January 1973).

Discoveries such as these always create problems for convinced Darwinists. The further back the antiquity of man gets pushed by archaeological finds, the more difficult it becomes to claim any sort of ape-ancestry for the human species. Arguing along these lines, H. P. Blavatsky remarks in *The Secret Doctrine*: "Conclusion: even though a *missing link* were found, the balance of evidence would remain more in favour of the ape *being a degenerated man* made dumb by some fortuitous circumstances, than tending to show that man descends from a Pithecoïd ancestor." (II. 717)

Owing to the very type of his development man *cannot descend* from either an ape or an ancestor common to both, but shows his origin from a type far superior to himself. And this type is the "Heavenly man" — the Dhyan Chohans, or the *Pitris* so-called, as shown in the first Part of this volume. On the other hand, the pithecoïds, the orang-outang, the gorilla, and the chimpanzee *can*, and, as the Occult Sciences teach, *do*, descend from the animalized Fourth human Root-Race, being the product of man and an extinct species of mammal — whose *remote* ancestors were themselves the product of Lemurian bestiality — which lived in the Miocene age. The ancestry of this semi-human monster is explained in the Stanzas as originating in the sin of the "Mindless" races of the middle Third Race period. (*S.D.*, II. 683)

Commenting on the find of the Kenya hominid, an editorial in *The Times of India* for March 2 remarks:

Like a child at a crowded fair which suddenly finds its parents missing, man's search for his ancestors continues. There is pathos as well as drama in this unending quest, for as soon as he stumbles on one set of data which seem to give him a lead, he dis-

covers another which makes nonsense of the first. Until recently the *Australopithecus* (southern ape) was considered Homo's direct ancestor and dated back to about a million years ago. . . . If the Kenya hominid is 2.5 million years old, the theory that man came on the terrestrial scene a million years ago has to be revised drastically; and taking it from there, the emergence of life on this planet, now placed around two billion years ago in the Pre-Cambrian era, must also be backdated. This might conflict with current theories concerning the formation and evolution of the earth itself, although as to the age of the earth's crust (5.3 billion years) there does not at present seem to be any controversy. A fascinating parallel to this backward journey in time may be seen in the estimate of the origin of the universe itself. First it was put at around seven billion years, later at nine; now it is 11.5 billion years, with another two or three billion years to go before the cosmic expansion halts and an era of contraction sets in. In view of these revisions it may not be illogical to suggest that man's search for such imponderables of the past will for ever remain endless.

At one time, Mars was thought to be lifeless. Now most scientists agree that some kind of life, though different from life as we know it here on earth, can exist on Mars. Martin Caidin, in his book *Destination Mars* (Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1972) writes:

It is not unreasonable to assume that what is impossible on Mars, and is so common to earth, may have its reverse situations. Many forms of terrestrial life are poor yardsticks for measuring the potential for life on other worlds. There are enough variations right here on our planet to make this point.

More than 30,000 feet down in the oceans, in the great Marianas Trench of the Pacific, there are different forms of life. Based upon "conditions as we know them," this should be flatly impossible. The atmospheric pressure acting upon our bodies amounts to some fifteen pounds per square inch. But seven miles within the oceans life exists and moves about quite well, *with a pressure of 16,000 pounds per square inch!*

Creatures abound in the seas where there has never been any natural light, and so they produce their own light from luminescence from their bodies.

To assume that plant life could not survive the severe condi-

tions of Mars because they could not survive according to our rules is to be unforgivably rigid and myopic....

The case for life beyond the earth becomes stronger with the study of meteorites that have landed on our planet. The meteorites have contained molecules that resemble the basic constituents that led to life on this world.... The discovery of these most primitive life forms in meteorites is tremendously significant. Dr. Melvin Calvin of the University of California believes this makes it almost certain that the formation of molecules has taken place not only here on earth, but elsewhere in our solar system. He points out that their formation involves *non-biological activity*.

Looking beyond the most common life forms — bacterial, vegetative and others — we find an amazing ability to survive appalling conditions. We know there are organisms on earth that can survive the worst conditions on Mars....

What about the severe temperatures of Mars, especially those bitter cold nights? Certain forms of bacteria get along quite well at temperatures of 170 degrees F. above zero, thriving in hot springs. At the other end of the scale there are highly advanced forms of plant life — trees in northern Siberia — that survive temperatures of 80 to 90 degrees F. below zero. Different types of Arctic plants manage to survive cruel winters where 70 degrees below is not uncommon. And there are other forms of life (bacteria, mosses, algae and lichens) *which can survive for long periods of time at temperatures lower than 400 degrees F. below zero.*

Now, plants as we understand them must breathe and consume oxygen. There just doesn't seem to be enough free oxygen in the Martian atmosphere to provide this gas for whatever plant life we believe may exist there. As plants are deprived of oxygen their breathing process falls off. But there are some types of earth plants that continue to breathe oxygen even when the pressure is as low as that found at 100,000 feet. Or equal to the surface of Mars.

Even if the pressure is lower than this figure, plants find a means of survival. They adopt what is known as anaerobic respiration — *they live without air*. They are the only known forms of life that can do this. Just so long as they are exposed to sunlight *they can produce their own oxygen* through photosynthesis. And if they can produce their own oxygen then their chances of existing on Mars are very good indeed. For they require only two

other essential ingredients — water vapour and carbon dioxide, and both have been confirmed by the Mariners to be present on Mars.

The question of whether life exists or not on one or another planet is of no importance to Theosophists who know that the planets themselves are alive for the reason that all matter is alive. The fundamental plan of life forms must necessarily vary with each globe. Says *The Secret Doctrine*: "How . . . can we hope to speculate with profit on the nature of globes which, in the economy of nature, must needs belong to states of consciousness other and quite different from *any* which man experiences here? . . . Still the fact remains that most of the planets, as the stars beyond our system, are inhabited." (*S.D.*, II. 701)

That trickery cannot be excluded from the séance-room experiments carried out by psychics, however "genuinely gifted" they may be, is the conclusion arrived at by Allen Spraggett, a Canadian journalist, in his book *Arthur Ford: The Man Who Talked with the Dead* (New American Library). Commenting on this book, *Time* magazine in its issue dated March 26, 1973, highlights the author's verdict that the Rev. Arthur Ford, a Disciples of Christ minister as well as a prominent medium, "for various reasons, scrutable and inscrutable, fell back on trickery when he felt he had to."

It will be recalled that Arthur Ford supposedly brought the controversial clergyman, Bishop James A. Pike, into communication with his suicide son, James Jr., and a number of other dead acquaintances. One such séance which caused considerable controversy was viewed by millions over the Canadian Television Network in September 1967. It was Spraggett who brought Pike and Ford together for this séance. (See "In the Light of Theosophy," May 1968.) Both Pike and Ford have since died.

Spraggett has written his biography in co-operation with William V. Rauscher, a close friend of Ford's and his literary legatee. Although the author believes in Ford's psychic powers, he says that Ford had the canny habit of cramming for many of his séances. *Time* continues:

In Pike's case, he came prepared with a headful of research about the bishop's past. Although Pike clearly believed that he was communicating with his son, Spraggett points out that the

most elementary investigation into the bishop's background could have given Ford all the information he needed to fake the "contact" — facts about the Pike family's Slavic origins or James Jr.'s precarious mental health. During the séance, Ford purportedly made contact with a former colleague of Pike's, the Rev. Louis W. Pitt. . . .

Why does a medium sometimes fall back on trickery? The power of a medium for the production of phenomena fluctuate from one hour to another, depending almost wholly "on the degree of receptivity, and chance polarization of the body of the medium by electro-magnetic and atmospheric currents" (*The Theosophist*, II. 232-33). Eastern psychology maintains that there is an intimate connection between the variations of terrestrial magnetism and the phenomena of mediumship. "Not only climate, but also occult influences daily felt . . . modify the physiological nature of man" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 211). So even the best of mediums cannot at times produce psychic manifestations and may feel tempted to resort to trickery when a séance has been prearranged and the sitters expect to be gratified.

Ours has been rightly described as the age of anxiety, with people living in urban societies being daily subjected to a variety of stresses (See "In the Light of Theosophy," April 1973.) Researchers now say that it is not so much the stress that is dangerous but the manner in which we react to stress situations. (*The Times of India*, March 31)

The physiology of stress has been studied in detail in recent years. Stress, it is said, causes an increased secretion of adrenalin, and its flow into the blood stream causes a faster beat of the heart, dilation of the blood vessels in the limbs and a consequently raised supply of oxygen to them. Normally this condition is "worked off," say the investigators by exercise, like prolonged running. A secondary effect is the accretion of fatty acids which can cause vascular and cardiac troubles.

What is the remedy? Practical suggestions include the deliberate avoidance of aggressive behaviour, prevention of obesity and taking regular exercises. Total relaxation is also recommended.

While there are several astonishing cases of the *effect* of anxiety on the body, its *cause* has to be sought on planes other than the physical
