

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE CRAZE FOR THE NEW

OUR world and civilization are characterized by an insatiable desire for the "new." Very quickly things get out-dated. We are wearied of and lose interest in gadgets, products, amusements, and even people! Never have we witnessed so many varieties in eatables, perfumes, clothes, etc., as in the recent past. Have we become more innovative or are we manufacturing "new" brands only to cater to the senses—which crave for different sensations? Every few months there is a new brand of soap, shampoo, coffee and biscuits, from the same manufacturer, carrying a tag, "new and improved." The "new" product definitely appears in a "new" container or a wrapper, but with very little change in the ingredients or quality. The motto of the buyer is, "Variety is the spice of life." Why do we need a *new* soap, a *new* shampoo, a *new* car, when the old still serves the purpose? Even when experience shows that no brand of soap makes your skin glowing, nor any cream makes your face fair in seven days (unless mixed with bleaching ingredients!), we crazily buy every new brand of soap, shampoo, lotion, that is found in the market, for the sheer thrill of the "new." When it comes to gadgets, jumping to buy a new model involves a lot of wastage. A car is meant for transporting us from one place to another. Do we really need to discard the old model for the *new*, unless it is more fuel efficient, or meets our specific need, such as ease to drive? Gadgets are bought and changed frequently, more as status symbols. With fast changing

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technologies there is a "new" model of car, computer, mobile, washing machine, every few months leaving no alternative for "repair." The old becomes out-dated far too soon and there is no choice but to discard the old, although you know that you have no need of, and will not be able to take advantage of the "new, improved and advanced" features of the new model. At times we are only too eager and happy to discard the old and get the new. People like Gandhiji, who followed the principle of simplicity, were of the opinion that till a thing served the purpose, it should not be discarded. It is said that once when he had misplaced a small piece of pencil, someone offered him a new pencil, which he refused to accept, but searched high and low till he found that pencil stub.

We, who are too eager to discard inanimate things, in exchange for the new, seem to be doing the same for people. The marriage vows of "till death do us part," are quickly forgotten by the couple, so that after a few years of marriage, there is a search for a "new" partner. Of course, there is always somebody nicer than the present partner, but then instead of searching for a "new" partner, we may as well try to find something "new" in the same partner. The greatest mistake we could make would be that of discarding or "dumping" people once that they have served the purpose. A few years back it was not heard of, but today, it has become so common and acceptable to "dump" old parents in old-age homes. It was claimed by Mr. A. P. Sinnett that H.P.B. was deserted by the Masters after they had used her for many years as their agent and channel of communication. Such desertion, thought Mr. Sinnett, would be advisable, as he did not approve of H.P.B.'s methods of conducting the movement in India. However, such was not the truth, as a Master of wisdom emphatically wrote to him, that "ingratitude is not among our vices." Mr. Judge says that such desertion would be unimaginable disloyalty on the part of the Masters, because they are above all things loyal to those who serve them and who sacrifice health, position and their entire lives to their work. How could anyone discard a tool, which is not made of iron, but of a wonderful human heart and soul,

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especially like H.P.B., the moment one had done with it?

In an incident narrated in the Buddhist literature, once Buddha saw in a monastery a monk lying in his own excrement. On enquiring, Buddha found that the monk was suffering from dysentery. Lord Buddha asked why there was no one to take care of him? The monk replied, "I am useless to the brethren, therefore, the brethren do not take care of me." Sadly, it implies that people are interested in you only so long as you are useful to them. It also implies that then they no longer see you as a *person* but as a *thing*. We have to learn to value people not for their talents and capacities but as human beings. Especially, this is crucial in a *sangha* or spiritual community, where there must be kindness, awareness, sympathy and sensitivity among fellow members, which is the basis for *Kalyan Mitrata* or spiritual friendship, writes Sangharakshita, a Buddhist teacher. The same may be applicable to our *Sangha*, made up of U.L.T. centres. In a U.L.T. centre, if the student gets old and unable to attend the meeting, the attitude of other students should not be, "out of sight, out of mind." Busy as we may be, some time must be spared to reach out to the absent companion.

Wise was Solomon in saying that "there is no new thing under the Sun"; and everything that is "hath been already of old time, which was before us," writes H.P.B. It applies to the discoveries and to knowledge. Humanity seems to progress by discovering one thing after the other; but actually it only finds that which it had lost. Most of our modern inventions for which we feel proud are but rediscovery by modern thinkers and scientists, of the things, which were lost through wars, floods and fire, and with which people were acquainted three or four thousand year ago.

In the preface to the *Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. writes that the truths put forward in the book are not "new," being revealed for the first time. She merely reiterates the age old wisdom that is found scattered throughout thousands of volumes embodying the scriptures of Asiatic and early European religions. She has "unveiled," to an extent, the tenets which were hidden under glyphs and symbols, and put them

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together in a harmonious unbroken whole. The Ancient source, which speaks of the source of Theosophy, states that this knowledge is the accumulated wisdom of the ages. It is the result of observations made by initiated sages and seers, of the workings of the laws of nature in every department and kingdom of nature—physical, psychic and spiritual, passed on from one generation of sages and seers to the next, in an unbroken continuity.

Does it mean that exactly the same tenets were passed on without making any additions? Spiritual experiences of the Adepts always add to the existing knowledge. It must be understood that these additions are not by way of putting something *new* which may have been overlooked by the earlier generations of Adepts, nor is it as though a *new* conclusion has been reached by an Adept or even a group of Adepts, so that the earlier conclusion must now be revised. It is, as we always say, "a complete system of knowledge." This goes well with the esoteric tradition where a guru always wants that after a while the *chela* (disciple) must be able to make his own contribution, in addition to merely preserving the knowledge. Once the disciple reaches the point in his understanding where the guru was, he must exert himself and make the teachings clearer so that others who follow him can quickly grasp. He must learn to look deeper than the level he was taken to by the guru. Also, depending upon the need of the cycle, the same ideas are given in new form. H.P.B. agrees with Biffe, who says that "the essential is forever the same. Whether we cut away the marble inward that hides the statue in the block, or pile stone upon stone outward till the temple is completed, our NEW result is only an *old idea*." (*Isis*, pp. v-vi)

We are told that in the last quarter of every century there will be a messenger who will bring the message leading to spiritual revival. Often the question is asked, where is the *new* messenger and what is the *new* message promised for the last quarter of the twentieth century? A Master of wisdom has said that enough material has been given in the *Secret Doctrine* to last for coming seventy five and more years. Mr. Judge points out that we must study and

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assimilate the material given in the *Secret Doctrine*, for the welfare of humanity. If more knowledge is given out without giving time for assimilation, the result would be similar to indigestion. In the article, "Something New!" H.P.B. points out that our age is as greedy to set up new idols as it is to overthrow old gods; as ready to give lavish hospitality to new ideas as to kick out the theories that seem to them to be out-dated. The "new" ideas are welcome so long as they come from some scientific "authority" and agree with one or another of the public prejudices and preconceptions. (*Lucifer*, July 1889)

Every new volume, every new issue of our magazine, THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, reiterates old ideas clothed in new words or new forms to suit the needs of people. Often, change of form, use of plainer language, is essential to facilitate understanding. In the comments on *Light on the Path* the author says that she is ready to put parts of this occult teachings, into *new* and plainer language, because sometimes for those who are ready and receptive, one language is generally easier than the rest.

The real "new" is not change in the external appearance but change from the inside. When we seek to bring about political or social reform without bringing about a reform in human nature, it is like putting *new* wine into *old* bottles. People must be made aware of their true natures and their duty to all men. A gardener, who wishes to remove poisonous plants from his flower-bed, must tear them out by the roots instead of cutting them off from the surface of the soil. The new volume, as well as the old volumes of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, have sought to bring about inward change, by changing the Mind and *Buddhi* of the Race.

To see a new sight, to hear a new speaker, to meet a new person or visit a new place are described as "new" experiences. The markets are flooded with new books every week and people read them to kill time or enjoy the sensation. The art of reading leisurely so that the reader feels the joy and uplift of that experience is little known. Instead of craving for new books, it is better to read few books,

over and over again, and then reflect upon and assimilate them. Just as we "go through" books, we also go through different incidents of life, daily and hourly, without learning the lessons. We do not always extract the necessary lessons from the incidents in life, hence the soul has to assimilate these experiences in *Devachan* (*swarga* or paradise). Instead, if we endeavoured to learn from the incidents *during* life, we would progress more quickly. As one advances in one's spiritual life, one has to strive to so live the life that one can forego the bliss of *devachan*. It can be done if we cease to crave for something new for the senses and begin to see the freshness and 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. We can build new faculties and strengthen the old ones, when, with the help of the Philosophy of Theosophy, we shall learn to assimilate every experience.

Mr. Crosbie suggests that one of the meanings of Solomon's saying, "there is nothing new under the sun," is that whatever is done flows from what *has been* done. He mentions the case of a person who, as a result of brain injury, forgot his name, but was then able to play billiards, which he had never played before in his life. However, he must have played that game in some previous life, so that the brain injury closed one door but opened another, giving access to knowledge of the game. Each one of us has a vast store of capacities gained in past lives. Anybody's capacity is governed by the particular Karma of that life, permitting the expression of only a portion of his acquired knowledge and capacity. Even without the brain injury, we see tastes, desires and capacities change in a person, as a result of one set of karmic causes being expended, and another set beginning to precipitate. In every such case, the beginning expression of *new* taste, desire or capacity is from the storehouse of experience of the past, for no one can do anything that is not related to past experience, whether in this life or some other one. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 183)

LIBERTY AND FRATERNITY

A NEW political and social order which would result in peace and brotherhood and harmonious progress is a dream envisioned by many today. But it will remain a dream as long as the philosophical and moral principles on which such an order can be reared are not taken note of and striven after. We are told by politicians that the cause of war and tension is fundamentally the difference of ideologies dividing nations. Economists will say that the ideological cause is only secondary; the real one is economic and financial. While there is some truth in such positions, they are only apparent and superficial causes. We must go behind and beyond and inquire as to what brought these causes to the front. For those familiar with the spiritual philosophy of the ancient Sages, this view of both politicians and economists is not satisfactory; it is incomplete, because superficial. An impartial study of historical events in the light of moral philosophy reveals to us a truth which should not be overlooked. That truth is that unless we work for a change in the mind of the race an era of lasting peace cannot and will not open.

What would be the basic principle for the creation of the new social order in which commercial rivalries and nationalistic ambitions would give way to co-operation on every plane which alone would mean lasting peace? A new concept of patriotism must arise which will perceive that the good and the progress of one's own country at the expense of any other country, however small or however weak, is false patriotism, a vicious patriotism.

Humanity has gone on labouring for peace without the guidance of a noble moral philosophy, and has failed. That moral philosophy says that individual liberty without self-discipline is bound to degenerate into license, and the check by legislatures is but the natural outcome of the effort to enjoy liberty by the individual. Discipline rooted in right knowledge teaches everyone what liberty is, and to what use it can be put. The motor-car driver enjoys the liberty to drive, yes, but why? Only because he is a license-holder, that is, he

has passed the test of knowledge of motor driving and has proven himself fit to be given that freedom. Allow people to drive a car without a license and you will have the streets strewn with wrecks and damage. So liberty has to take into consideration the fact of discipline, rooted in knowledge and capacity, which enable a person not to interfere with the lives of others—his neighbours, his brothers.

Along the same line of reasoning we can say that any nation, great or small, whose foreign policy is not founded upon that self-discipline which takes cognizance of neighbouring and therefore of all nations does not deserve to enjoy its own liberty. Therefore the principle of fraternity should come first: one who does not take into account the good of his neighbours becomes a bad citizen; and a nation which ignores the good of other nations becomes a menace to peace. True democracy, therefore, begins with the concept of Fraternity. Humanity is one, and human solidarity is a fact in Nature. People who have broken the Law of the Brotherhood of Humanity have gone against Nature and Nature's God. Karma, the Law by which the broken harmony of human brotherhood is restored, produces opportunities at every turn, and even if we erred yesterday we can work with the law in the restoration of harmony today.

Without a proper knowledge of fraternity we shall not have liberty, and without liberty there cannot be peace. Real peace cannot be realized by the individual or the nation which ignores the Law of Brotherhood. Unless we are prepared to let go every kind of distinction, there will be no liberty, no peace, no progress. The world will be made safe only when the weapons of war and competition are put aside and the produce of the earth is shared by all the people living on it. Nature is bountiful, but we have to learn to make use of her bounty and must cease robbing her and robbing one another.

May the blessings of the great Sages be upon us all so that the spirit of Fraternity and of brotherhood may enter our hearts and envelop all mankind!

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA THE ROD OF PUNISHMENT—I

THE CHAPTER is called *Dandavaggo* or The Rod of Punishment. *Danda* means a rod which may be used to guide or stimulate. *Danda* also means punishment. Punishment for violation of the law is supposed to act as a deterrent for the law-breaker. However, our law ought to be restrictive rather than punitive. It must give a chance to the offender to reform. Moreover, the faultless law of Karma is sure to mete out in just measure, the punishment or reward for each and every action of ours. Exaction of punishment by any wronged individual is thus an additional and excessive punishment for which Karma has to compensate the wrong-doer. Hence, it is best not to take the law into our own hands but have firm reliance on the law of Karma. Our exaggerated sense of self-worth, intolerance of other people's ideas or way of life, our desire to reform other people or wanting to have justice done to the oppressed etc., are often the reasons why we speak harsh words, show anger, criticize, reprimand, and chastise another person. But these are most likely to evoke similar reaction from those thus treated. Such is the human nature. Even if our motive is good and our intention is to change the person for his own good, unless we have established that kind of relationship, and know how to communicate without offending, the reaction is bound to be retaliatory. It takes a modest and humble man to accept reproof in proper manner.

1. *All men tremble at the rod, all men fear death. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should neither slay nor cause to slay. (129)*

2. *All men tremble at the rod; to all men life is dear. Putting oneself in the place of another, one should neither slay nor cause to slay. (130)*

"Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" encourages us to become actively kind and virtuous. But, if this practice is too hard for an individual, he can make a beginning by following the

advice: "Do not do unto others as you would not have done unto you." What is painful for one is most likely to be painful for another also. It is evident that everyone seeks happiness and shuns pain. No one desires suffering. No one wants death. Therefore, even though we might be different from each other, physically, mentally and morally, our essential nature is the same. Hence, putting oneself in place of another, looking at oneself and seeing similarity, we should neither cause harm nor cause another to do harm. We are able to do this for those we love. But we have to learn to put ourselves in place of another and *feel* his pain. It would enable us to avoid becoming the cause of another's pain.

3. He who seeking his own happiness uses on others the rod of punishment because they seek their own happiness, will not find happiness after death. (131)

4. He who seeking his own happiness uses not the rod of punishment on others though they seek their own happiness, will find happiness after death. (132)

It is natural for a human being to seek happiness. But in most cases, happiness does not come to us without help from other people. It is by inter-dependence and mutual co-operation that human beings can live happily in a society. The constitution of many countries recognizes the right to equality and right to freedom for their citizens. But when it comes to practice, people tend to apply different standards to themselves from others. One may use every means within one's power to obtain happiness; but if others do the same and if that brings inconvenience to oneself, it is resented. There is also the problem of value judgment, wherein the self-appointed upholders of morals, judge, criticize and punish those whose action does not conform to the unwritten, hard and fast norms of the society. Others seek to impose their own ideas of right and wrong on others and punish those who refuse to obey them.

Non-judgment and non-interference are the fundamental rules of harmony. "Live and let live" is an age-old wise saying. When a

man peers about and finds others less privileged living happily and even enjoying life, he is jealous or even envious. "How can they be happy when here I am, suffering this pain?" Their evil eye acts as a rod of punishment for others, bringing harm to them. One who spoils the pleasure of others is called a killjoy. Such a person is self-centered and disliked. Instead of rejoicing in the happiness of other people, he plots and plans to ruin their happiness. How can such a man be happy here or hereafter? The classic example is that of Iago, in Shakespeare's play "Othello."

As against this, verses 3 and 4 emphasize the need for the disciple to regard all other efforts to attain happiness with sympathetic understanding. They assert the doctrine of non-violence, and Buddha is forever saying, as did Lao Tze, when he cautioned against "meddling" in the affairs of others, that it is impossible for us to force other human beings into righteousness. So, far from being moralist in the conventional sense, Buddha and Lao Tze regard even the personal seeking of happiness as a natural, and in this sense, legitimate stage in the acquisition of soul wisdom. The man who deliberately engages in destructive thoughts and actions, who is overcritical of his friends, neighbours and fellow disciples, becomes so involved in the details of the lives of other people that he is bound to lose perspective of his own. Thus, he builds irritation and confusion in his own emotional nature and "will not find happiness after death," when he must pass through the sphere of *Kamaloka*. After all, each striving after happiness, on whatever limited basis, is nevertheless a form of striving. While harmful things may be done to others, they are done in ignorance and without the intent to injure. Thus, one can be truly tolerant of any person who views life in affirmative terms, and it is characteristic of such persons that they are spontaneously friendly to others, regardless of differences of opinion as to proper conduct. The moralist, on the other hand, is never satisfied with life; it is as if, diverted from the proper tasks of disciplining himself through increased understanding, he seeks vicarious atonement by the futile attempt to regulate the actions of

others. He does not believe in Karma because he is not working upon himself according to the natural laws of psychic evolution. And the man who will not or cannot rely upon Karma will rely upon force, feeling justified in punishing or even slaying those who offend. (*Theosophy*, September 1956)

To those who have begun to discern the spiritual and sublime side of life and therefore feel impatient and intolerant towards other human beings who seek the simple pleasures of life, Mr. Judge's sage advice is:

Remember that life is the outcome of the Ever-Living. If you have come to comprehend a little of the mystery of life, and can value its attractions according to their worth; these are no reasons why you should walk forth with solemn countenance to blight the enjoyments of other men. Life to them is as real, as the mystery is to you. Their time will come as yours has, so hasten it for them, if you can, by making life brighter, more joyous, better. (U.L.T. *Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 4)

5. *Speak not harshly to any one; those thus spoken to will retaliate. Since angry talk is painful, the rod of retaliation may overtake you. (133)*

6. *If you make yourself still like a broken gong, you have already reached Nirvana, for anger is not in you. (134)*

Anger, greed and lust are called three gates to hell. Thoughts, words and deeds are the three avenues of action. Man can do much harm by thoughtless speech. This is particularly so when one is angry. Anger makes one lose discrimination, so that we are not aware of what we say, when we are angry. Sometimes, anger makes one utter words which one regrets. But, words are like the arrows shot from the bow; once shot they can never be recalled. Having said them, one must be prepared to face the consequences. Angry words can produce unutterable pain in another. Those who are thus spoken to are most likely to retaliate and pay you back in your own currency. The *Voice of the Silence* warns: "Learn that no efforts, not the

smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causesA harsh word uttered in past lives, is not destroyed but ever comes again." Mr. Judge points out in the article, "Culture of Concentration," that there is no such thing as "righteous anger." Whether your "rights" have been unjustly and flagrantly invaded or not does not matter. The anger is a force that will work itself out in its appointed way. It shatters the inner astral form into many pieces—undoing the work of many years. Therefore anger must be strictly avoided, and it cannot be avoided unless charity and love—absolute tolerance—are cultivated. Therefore we have to guard well against anger. The third of the noble eightfold path says:

The Third is *Right Discourse*. Govern the lips As they were palace-doors, the King within; Tranquil and fair and courteous be all words Which from that presence win. (*The Light of Asia*)

When a gong is struck by a mallet or a beater, it produces sound. The gong does not produce sound unless it is hit by something. A broken gong remains silent. We are like an active gong. We react to every stimulus from outside. We are asked to make ourselves silent like a broken gong. When one attains perfect calmness, one becomes like the broken gong. There is acceptance of whatever life brings. This perfect reliance upon Karma, surrendering of the personal will to the Divine will, makes the man free from anger. Such a man is said to have reached Nirvana.

(*To be concluded*)

THE WILL is that which has all power...there is no hell but where the will of the creature is turned from God, nor any heaven but where the will of the creature worketh with God.

-WILLIAM LAW

HEREDITY AND ATAVISM—SOME REFLECTIONS

WHY are human beings born with different characters? Some of us are born generous and others selfish. Some of us have great capacity of mind to cover many subjects, while some display special mind and capacity like the musician Mozart. The answer given by science would be that heredity explains it all. Heredity is the passing of traits to offspring, from its parent or ancestors. If that be so, then how does one explain the case of Blind Tom? He was born to Negro parents, who could not possibly have a knowledge of the piano, a modern instrument, so as to transmit the knowledge to the atoms of his body, and yet Blind Tom had great musical power and knew the present musical scale on the piano. Similarly, there are many other instances of great geniuses appearing in families that were devoid of these qualities. Nothing in the heredity of Napoleon the First can explain his character, as his family lacked the power and force displayed by him. On the other hand, we find exceptions to the hereditarily transmitted traits, when we see differences in character and capacity of the children of the same family. Also, there are instances in history to show that there is no constant transmission of learning, power and capacity. For instance, we do not find the great Egyptian character being transmitted to subsequent generation. So also, in the family line of the great musician Bach, his direct descendants showed a decrease in musical ability, so that finally, it disappeared from the family stream, altogether. So also, physical heredity is unable to explain birth of idiots or vicious children to parents who are good, pure or highly intellectual.

Moreover, if we believe that every human being is a new creation, a new soul passing through life's journey, then how could he be held responsible for his vices, weaknesses and sins, which are transmitted to him hereditarily? If there is a murderer, who comes from the race or family of murderers, then we cannot hold him responsible for murder, because he cannot help committing murder, under heredity. Thus, once we accept that our character is transmitted

to us hereditarily we cannot attach responsibility or punish people for murder, robbery, prostitution, etc. We may have to pass laws that make an exception in cases of people who are guilty of murder or theft because they come from the family of murderers or thieves, suggests Mr. Judge. But all the same, we do not deny the fact that likes and dislikes, as also, peculiarities are transmitted from one generation to the other, down the line of descent. We do find mental traits and physical peculiarities being passed on from the parents to children and sometimes bodily or mental trait of some remote ancestor is reproduced. The point to grasp is that heredity should not be looked upon as the *cause* of crime or virtue. It is not the cause but only an instrument or means for the production of the effect. The cause is hidden much deeper. Unless we study heredity in conjunction with the laws of Karma and Reincarnation, heredity must remain a puzzle. Thus, the reason for disappearance of musical ability from the family of musician Bach is that heredity is set to nought, because the subsequent Egos did not bring with them the great musical ability. The Ego is attracted to the family which can furnish it with the necessary instruments, the body and the brain, through which the knowledge and the skill can be manifested. Thus, Mozart brought with him the musical knowledge which could manifest through the musical brain furnished by his family, unimpeded. In India we have stories of sages born with complete knowledge of philosophy, such as sage Shukji.

Mr. Judge says that this bringing back of knowledge is recollection, divisible into physical and mental memory. This also explains instinct. Our body is made up of atoms, and atoms are made up of "lives." Every atom has a life and memory of its own. Memory in the "lives" when *innate* is called instinct. Instinct functions through readymade nerve connections, which ensure that such-and-such a response will occur in a certain situation. In the case of a person who might have burnt himself in a particular life, his physical and mental memory is so impressed by that experience that in the next life he will instinctively stay away from fire; and we

call this an instinctive fear of fire. In the same way the *Kama* principle can be given such strong impressions that in coming lives we have instinctive likes and dislikes.

At the time of physical death, all the impressions and memories of lifetime are revived and focused or centred in the astral body (the model or design body for the physical), which survives the death of the physical body for a while. Then a process of sifting of the memories takes place. Those memories, which are consubstantial to the Higher Mind or Ego, in terms of moral quality, are absorbed by it and built into permanent memory. Those experiences that are of lower, personal and selfish character remain in the astral body, and gradually disperse as the astral body disintegrates—leaving behind *skandhas* or congeries of "lives" with certain impressions. These *skandhas* are of five types—pertaining to physical form, mental and emotional nature, etc. The Buddhists speak about *skandhas* and the Hindus speak about *samskaras*. These are attributes. They remain as *Karmic effects*, as germs, hanging in the atmosphere of the terrestrial plane, and attach themselves to the new personality of the Ego when it reincarnates, explains H.P.B. The form in which we take birth is not determined by our ancestors, but by our *rupa skandhas* pertaining to form. They determine the stature, colour, shape of the body, with all the diseases inherent in it. Likewise, other *skandhas* or attributes determine a person's emotional and intellectual nature with all his likes and dislikes and so on. The Ego gets attracted to a particular family stream which can provide the Ego with the necessary tenement. Hence, Mr. Judge remarks that we are our own ancestors; we are building now the houses we are to live in during our future lives.

Mr. Judge explains why is it that even delicate European ladies will enjoy the recital of a bird or deer hunt. It is their Karma that they are the descendants of long generations of Europeans, who, with the aid of the church, decided that animals had no souls and therefore could be wantonly slaughtered. It is heredity based on Karma (*U.L.T Pamphlet No. 3*). He explains that heredity is the

mode used by nature to transmit physical and psychical traits through parents to provide a proper tenement to the Ego. But the traits are brought under karma by the Ego. A person who reviled and persecuted a deformed person persistently, imprints on his own immortal mind the deformed picture of his victim. When coming again to rebirth, this actor carries with him this picture, and if the family to which he is attracted for birth has similar physical tendencies in its stream, the mental picture causes the newly-forming astral body to assume deformed shape by electrical and magnetic osmosis through the mother.

We might say, both Heredity and Atavism are handmaidens of Karma and Reincarnation. The word *atavism* is derived from the Latin *atavus*. An *atavus* is a great-great-grandfather or, more generally, an ancestor. Atavism is the tendency to revert to ancestral type, wherein there is reappearance of traits which had disappeared generations before. The notion of atavism was used frequently by social Darwinists, who claimed that inferior races displayed atavistic traits, and represented more primitive traits than their own race. As a result of atavism, we have babies born with rudimentary organs such as a vestigial tail, and "caudal appendage." The presence of rudimentary organs was explained by some as the organs acquired by men from animals. However, that is not the truth, as suggested by an anthropologist, it could as well be that these organs existed in rudimentary form in man and then were passed on to the animals in whom they became useful appendages. *We are told that man (human astral) is the repertory [storehouse] of all the potential organic forms*, it is the central point from which these various forms in lower kingdoms radiate. In the course of his physical development man threw off (cast off) certain *basic types*. All the forms we see today came about through variations in these *basic types*. The potentiality of every organ useful to animal life is locked up in man. (S.D., II, 683)

Another example of atavism is cited in the *Secret Doctrine*. When we occasionally find men and women of height 7 feet or more, it

only proves the law of atavism, or the reappearance of ancestral features or character—as there was a time when 9 to 10 feet was the average height of humanity even in our latest Indo-European race. (S.D., II, 749)

How to account for birth of a black child to white parents? One answer could be on the basis of Atavism. The other explanation could be that during pregnancy, the women become particularly receptive to influences of the astral light, which assists them in the formation of the child and constantly presents to them the images of the forms with which it is filled. It is thus that sometimes very virtuous women have offspring bearing unmistakable resemblance to someone other than her own husband. Her creative faculty of imagination can fashion the coming child into whatever form she likes. The image of the object, making strong impression on the mother's mind, is instantly projected into the astral light. Her magnetic emanations then attract and unite themselves with the descending current which bears the image upon it. It rebounds, and re-percussing more or less violently, impresses itself upon the foetus. "The kabalistic use of the pentagram can therefore determine the countenance of unborn infants, and an initiated woman might give to her son the features of Nereus or Achilles, as well as those of Louis XV or Napoleon" (*Isis*, I, 395 and 398). This might explain the Germanic face of a child born to Asian parents settled in Germany or a black offspring born to white parents. The image of the person who impresses the would-be mother in some way is likely to impress the astral of the developing foetus and shape it accordingly.

It is futile to hope to solve the problems of heredity, such as what are the forces at work in the formation of the foetus and what is the cause of hereditary transmission, based on mechanical and material view. It is a mystery to plant breeders as to why they cannot improve plants in terms of size, beauty and speed of growth without sacrificing some valuable properties in some other direction. For instance, in the "improved varieties of garden musk and roses, the gain was at the loss of scent in these flowers. For a long time now, we have

succeeded in growing larger tomatoes, as also other fruits and vegetables, which however, are tasteless as compared to earlier varieties of the same.

The physical evolves from the spiritual, the mental and the psychic. Heredity is but a mode of the evolutionary process by which the conscious Force within matter strives for fuller self-expression and self-realization. Moreover, we need to take into account the astral prototype, an indispensable factor in heredity, which in the plants, animals and human beings, forms the substratum and the model for the development of the physical form. Heredity is determined by the arrangement of genes within the bodies of the germ cell that are called chromosomes, but that arrangement is not mechanical. It is instrumental rather than causal. Human heredity is enormously more complicated as compared to heredity in lower kingdoms, because human evolution is not by natural impulse but by self-conscious choices. The human germ plasm is dominated by the spiritual plasm, which is a spiritual potency in the Ego itself. In case of human beings, heredity is subservient to individual and racial Karma. Really speaking, inborn mental and moral characteristics are not inherited from parents and ancestors, but are brought over by the individual from his own past lives.

THEREFORE, both wealth and poverty are Divine gifts: wealth is corrupted by forgetfulness, poverty by covetousness. Both conceptions are excellent, but they differ in practice. Poverty is the separation of the heart from all but God, and wealth is the preoccupation of the heart with that which does not admit of being qualified. When the heart is cleared (of all except God), poverty is not better than wealth nor is wealth better than poverty. Wealth is abundance of worldly goods and poverty is lack of them: all goods belong to God: when the seeker bids farewell to property, the antithesis disappears and both terms are transcended.

-HUIWIRI

EVOLUTION—PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL, SPIRITUAL

I

THE TERM "evolution," is derived from the Latin word "*evolutio*" meaning "unrolling." Its dictionary meanings are: "an act of unrolling or unfolding" or "a process of continuous change from a lower, simpler, or worse to a higher, more complex, or better state of growth."

The question is, how can there be "unfolding" or "unrolling" unless the thing is already "folded" or "rolled up" in the first place? How can there be growth or development unless there is inherent potentiality for development from simple to complex or lower to higher states of growth? H.P.B. brings out this aspect beautifully, thus:

What is EVOLUTION? "the act of unfolding; the process of growth, development; as the evolution of a flower from a bud, or an animal from the egg." Yet the bud must be traced through its parent-plant to the seed, and the egg to the animal or bird that laid it; or at any rate to the speck of protoplasm from which it expanded and grew. And both the *seed* and the *speck* must have the latent potentialities in them for the reproduction and gradual development, the unfolding of the thousand and one forms or phases of evolution, through which they must pass before the flower or the animal are fully developed. Hence, the future plan, if not a DESIGN, *must be there*. (S.D., II, 653)

Does Science agree with the idea of existence of a plan? No. As of now, there are more than 2,000,000 of existing named species of plants and animals; and between 10,000,000 to 30,000,000 remain to be discovered (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). Science speaks of evolution proceeding as a result of the law of "Natural Selection" which ensures the "survival of the fittest." The "fittest" are produced as a result of modifications and adaptations called "useful variations" in the organism. According to science, these variations are produced

in the organism by the working of "blind forces of nature" without "design"! Development of furry coat in animals that live in extreme cold conditions; camel's ability to conserve water and tolerate dehydration; eyes with a special lid in amphibians that permit vision both on land and in water; marine birds with high salt excretory glands to get rid of excess of salt are just few examples of adaptations. But the cause of un-mistakable intelligence behind such "useful variations" or adaptations is not explained by Science. Theosophy says:

The underlying physiological variation in species—one to which all other laws are subordinate and secondary—is a sub-conscious intelligence pervading matter, ultimately traceable to a REFLECTION of the Divine and Dhyan-Chohanic wisdom. (S.D., II, 649)

The Masters of wisdom, who are the custodians of accumulated wisdom of the ages, know its secrets. Some of this knowledge has been given out to us under the name of Theosophy. It points out that the present world is only one such in an endless chain of universes that periodically emanate and dissolve back into One Reality called God or *Parabrahm*, which is the impersonal, infinite, eternal, unchanging, the rootless root and causeless cause of all that was, that is and that will be. Each Universe is a continuation of the previous one. At the dawn of manifestation, the duality of Spirit and Matter or *Purusha* and *Prakriti* begin to manifest. Spirit requires a vehicle of matter to manifest as "I am I" consciousness. And Matter by itself would remain an empty abstraction, unless it is vivified by Spirit or Consciousness. The plan for the Universe To-Be exists in the Divine Mind. This plan or the "Ideas" existing in the "Divine Thought" are then impressed on Cosmic substance as the "laws of Nature" through the intelligent medium of Divine Beings called Dhyan Chohans. Thus, the Cosmic Ideation or Mahat or the Universal Over-Soul is the basis of the intelligent operations in and of Nature. The Matter then differentiates to produce myriads of

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beings, guided and presided over by hierarchies of divine intelligences. Thus, it is not the Matter *per se* which is the cause of evolution, but the Matter, vivified, impelled by the cosmic ideation of Spirit which is the cause of evolution, and hence the right term to use is Emanation and not Evolution.

In Evolution...there is supposed to be in all matter an impulse to take on a higher form...The Emanationist believes that nothing can be evolved—or, as the word means, unwombed or born—except it has first been involved, thus indicating that life is from a spiritual potency above the whole. (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

Having understood the fact that evolution is the result of involution of spirit into matter which gives an impulse to matter to evolve; the question arises as to what is its purpose. Sage Patanjali points out that the Universe exists for the experience and emancipation of the soul. And what is soul? It is One Life, One Spirit, One Consciousness functioning through myriads of beings in the world—minerals, vegetables, animals to human beings—all have emanated from the One Universal Over-Soul—Spirit-Matter-Life. Everything is sentient. There is no such thing as dead or inorganic matter. Even in the so-called inorganic matter, there is life. From Spirit comes the power of perception, power to know and power to become. Soul is seeing and knowing. Spirit is the "power to become"; Soul is "the becoming." Soul is the accumulation of perceptions and experiences by means of which Spiritual Identity is realized, as it happened in the case of Buddha, Shankara, Jesus and Mahavira. This does not happen overnight.

The whole process from the dawn of manifestation takes billions of years to produce an enlightened being. While same Spirit shines in all, it does not shine forth equally. Why? It is because of the limitations of the body and soul, limitations of form and intelligence. While Science deals with only physical aspect of evolution; Theosophy teaches us the triple lines of evolution—the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical.

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As regards the physical evolution, the popular theories of religion and science differ from Theosophy. Science postulates that "the various types of animals and plants have their origin in other preexisting types and that the distinguishable differences are due to modifications in successive generations." (*Encyclopedia Britannica*)

Thus, the theory of science begins with "pre-existing types." It does not explain their origin. Moreover, a common misinterpretation of Darwin's work was that man is a direct descendant of existing species of apes. Whereas, what Darwin meant was that the man and the present anthropoids have come from common ancestors. As to the origin of life itself, even science has now discarded the theory of "spontaneous generation," or development of "living" organism from "non-living" matter. Darwin did not commit himself on the origin of life. Darwin's attitude was: "It is mere rubbish thinking at present of the origin of life; one might as well think of the origin of matter" (*Encyclopedia Britannica*). Theosophy maintains there is no such thing as dead or non-living matter. Life is there in everything, though not perceptible to us.

As against this, the Biblical story of creation is that the world was created by God. He first created the universe and earth. He created ocean and land. He went on to create plants, aquatic animals, birds and then land animals. He then created a man (Adam) in his own image. Woman was created from his rib. Adam and Eve thus formed the first pair and that other human beings were produced from this single pair. Theosophy disagrees. If Cane, the son of Adam went to the other lands and was received by other people who gave him a wife, then other races must have existed simultaneously with Adam and Eve.

Theosophy points out that the ultimate origin of man cannot be discovered. But, man did not spring from a single pair or from apes. Seven races of men appeared simultaneously on earth from the Moon. Having reached as much of progress that was possible on Moon, the beings or "mass of monads" arrived on earth as a "life-wave" on the newly formed earth, a portion at a time. These monads

or Egos are divided into seven classes. The term monad is applied to man's sixth and seventh principles, i.e., *Atma-Buddhi* as a unity or units of life in form.

However, monads that came from Moon did not appear on earth as full blown men as they are now, but gradually worked through the lowest to the highest kingdoms, evolving higher and better forms to facilitate expression of higher degree of consciousness. We see this clearly in increasing degree of refinement of form and intelligence in various kingdoms. Mineral kingdom exhibits the power of cohesion and adhesion. Minerals exhibit distinct physical and chemical properties which have been acquired over a long period of evolution lasting over billions of years—because of impelling life within. Mr. Crosbie writes:

All beings below man are evolutions each in its own degree. Even in the mineral kingdom there is form, whether that form be of a crystal or an atom; it is a spiritual something with a psychic nature, expressing itself according to its own acquired nature. Crystals have their own particular sympathies and antipathies, their own attractions and repulsions...They are inherent instinct—an unerring faculty which is but that spark of the divine lurking in every particle of inorganic matter. If the mineral kingdom did not have a psychic intelligence, man could never use it. (*Universal Theosophy*, p. 54)

The vegetable kingdom exhibits power of growth and sensation; there is a natural impulse in a seed to grow into a plant and then into a tree to bear flowers and fruits—of which we have vast variety. In this kingdom, we can say that the principle of *kama* or desire has perceptibly begun to express itself. With animals came greater freedom and more specialized modes of intelligence like struggle to get food, inherent instinct to protect itself and its young. "Life is defined as any system capable of performing a number of such functions such as eating, metabolizing, excreting, breathing, moving, growing, reproducing, and being responsive to external stimuli"

(*Encyclopedia Britannica*). These capabilities have been acquired gradually. Each cell has intelligence of its own. It combines with other cells to form complex tissues and various organs—each capable of performing specific functions; which combine to form complex biological systems with which we are familiar. They facilitate greater expression of consciousness.

Thus, monads passed through lower kingdoms and finally emerged into human form. It is said that the first class of monads reached the human stage of development in the first round itself, much before other monads which arrived subsequently. Those arriving later reached the human stage in the second, third, and first half of the fourth round. After which the door to human kingdom was closed. No more monads or Egos would now emerge into human kingdom with one exception. The first class of Monads having assimilated the nature of earth chain finally evolved their shadows at the beginning of the fourth round as a model for the less developed monads which came behind them, subsequently. It was the gift of our Lunar ancestors called Lunar Pitris to humanity. This shadow is the astral model on which our physical body builds itself. From the time of conception, this model exists in mother's womb and becomes the basis for physical form of the baby. The development of the baby from the fertilized ovum repeats the entire process of development through which the Lunar Pitris went through to produce the model or the shadow. The embryo grows from its stone-like composition to resemble a plant with three or four leaflets, a tadpole with branchiae and then a mammal with a tail, before human form is developed; thereby repeating the journey through mineral, vegetable, to animal kingdom in a short span of nine months. "History of the embryo is an epitome of that of race." This fact has been accepted by Science.

(*To be concluded*)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

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

Question: If the Adepts are in seclusion then how do they help humanity?

Answer: Our philosophy points out that the Adepts remain in secluded spots which are inaccessible to the unprepared disciples or merely curious people. The concept of "help" varies from person to person. Some of us want these Adepts to intervene and help save one's sinking business or help to get one's son or daughter married. We must realize that they do not, must not and will not interfere with Karma. No matter how apparently deserving of help the individual may be, they will not extend help in the manner in which he desired, if his Karma does not permit it.

Many expect these Adepts to help them by exercising their wonderful powers. Why can they not help to overcome poverty by manufacturing gold, or help people to renew their vigour and youth by the "elixir of life"? Why do not the Adepts multiply the food? The answer is, there is no need for them to multiply the food, as there is enough food to feed the hungry, and that the scarcity is caused by the greedy people hoarding it. Also, if the food were multiplied, then the multiplier would be imprisoned and classed as criminal. This is because it would be concluded that either he has stolen the food or in some way interfered with the trade. Yet, it is claimed that the Adepts have multiplied food in famine times in the Eastern lands, where there is no likelihood of condemnation and persecution.

Others feel that why do they not destroy evil if they have great powers? The Adepts point out that even if they have power to destroy

evil, mankind must be left free to make efforts to set in motion good causes and compensate the evil. The Adept may help mankind by preserving and by spreading the right philosophy, which can bring about the change in mind and heart of people, with the help of their disciples and companions. By preserving and spreading the knowledge of doctrines such as Karma and Reincarnation, they help humanity to set into motion fresh good causes, and enable them to accept the consequences of their actions, by responding in right manner.

They will not and cannot alter human nature by their power. Each one has to change through self-exertion, by best means he can. Yet, they help by putting right ideas in the mind of the person who is far enough advanced. An ordinary person does not need help from the Adepts. A spiritually inclined person needs it and he is given the same. Thus, though physically they are unreachable, mentally they are reachable, but only to those who are sufficiently pure. They are assisting all good movements, by mentally influencing or inspiring the persons involved in such movements. Here and there, they are preparing men and women to become active workers for the good of humanity.

An individual who wishes that an Adept must use occult force and save his business does not know what he is asking for. The exercise of occult force must have far reaching effect. When an Adept exercises some power, invariably, it involves the aid or disturbance of elemental spirits. These disturbed elementals enter the sphere of the individuals and become agents in concentrating the Karma of these people, leading to quicker precipitation of Karma. It could throw the one who is not inwardly prepared, off-balance.

Some people have also complained that if they possess the knowledge of scientific principles and medicinal preparations, why do they not reveal the same to learned men to benefit humanity? The answer is that they possess all the truths but they guard them from the seeking minds who are not ready, and are not likely to use this knowledge properly. But, on the other hand, when the time is

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ripe, often, these Adepts touch the cogitating mind of a scientist or philosopher with the right idea, which the scientist or philosopher may describe as a flash of intuition. As a result, he succeeds in making this or that discovery, or writing a beautiful piece of poetry or philosophy. The scientist or a philosopher becomes famous, while the Adept remains and works from behind the scenes. This is especially true of the help given to nations.

They are constantly engaged in the far greater task of the betterment of the soul of man and the elevation of the race, which they accomplish through human agents. These wonderful beings have swayed and are shaping even today the destiny of nations through their human agents, such as, pillars of peace and makers of war such as Bismarck, or saviours of nations such as Washington, Lincoln and Grant. It is said that Lincoln always felt that in some way he was to be an instrument for some great work, and the stray utterances of Bismarck suggest that some unknown and unseen impulse was pushing him to whatever good he may have done. It is due to efforts of these Adepts that Indian Mutiny of 1857 against the British failed, though the patriots of India desired victory. The far-sighted Adepts had at their hearts, the highest good of India and of humanity. They could see that if the British were driven out at that time, India would have come under the rule of some other western nation, who unlike the British, would have destroyed the valuable books and palm-leaf records of India, as they had done with the Alexandrian Library, as also, with the historical and ethnological treasures of Central and South America.

A very prominent role is played by the Adepts in the struggle for American Independence. They over-saw the framing of the Constitution, as also, the Declaration of Independence of America. These Adepts influenced the mind of Thomas Paine through Freemasons like George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, etc., so that he wrote the book, *Common Sense*, which inspired people to overthrow the British rule. Thomas Paine wrote of the thoughts which entered his mind as a bolt from the outside. He describes

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them as "voluntary visitors," which he received with respect, and "it is from them I have acquired all the knowledge I have." Mr. Judge writes that these ideas and thoughts which Paine described as "voluntary visitors," were injected into his brain by the Adepts. **Question:** "Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven, and all other things will be added unto you," says the Bible. What is meant by "all other things," and how they can be added?

Answer: The statement occurs at two places in the *New Testament*—*Matthew*, 6:23 and *Luke*, 12:31. It is said in the context of people worrying about what they would eat or what they would drink or wear. It points out that there is more to life than just food and clothes. The Lilies of the field grow without toiling and the fowls of the air worry not as to wherefrom will come their food, yet the heavenly father feeds them. Your heavenly father knows what you need. Hence, seek ye first the kingdom of God and all these things shall be added unto you. *Luke*, 12:31, further adds that worldly treasures get spoiled by moth or may get stolen by the thief; not so a heavenly treasure.

We may pause and reflect that by asking us not to worry about our future needs, and leaving it to God, we are not being asked to be passive. We might replace the word "God" by "Law." Mr. Judge points out that there is never any need to worry, as the good law looks out for all things. His advice is to acquire a lot of what is called "carelessness" by the world, but it is in reality a calm reliance on the law. We must do our duty and what lies in our power, and have confidence and faith that the results, no matter what they are, must be in accordance with the Law.

However, it is possible for those who have realized the true nature of the divine to find that all their needs are satisfied. Krishna tells Arjuna that "my devotees who think of me as identical with all and worship me, I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness." There are several stories in the lives of saints where help seems to come, in the most unimaginable manner, because of intense faith and trust of the devotee. There is the story of a Gujarati

saint-poet Narsi Mehta, who was extremely poor. When his daughter had to be married and he had no means to meet the expenses, his relatives humiliated him. At the last moment Shri Krishna saved his honour by providing timely help in the form of presents and gold. The legend goes that Krishna Himself came in disguise as a wealthy merchant and honoured a *hundi* (similar to a present-day cheque/ draft) issued by Narsi Mehta.

We may connect "seeking the Kingdom of Heaven, which is within" with what is said in *Light on the Path*: "Desire only that which is within you. Desire only that which is beyond you. Desire only that which is unattainable." Once you have made friends with the Inner Ruler, you will have everything—Power, name, fame, possessions, knowledge, peace, happiness and so on. Also, in the *Gita*, we are told that wherever Krishna and Arjuna are together, there with certainty, are fortune, wealth, victory and wise action. But unlike pursuit of divinity, in any worldly pursuit, having attained one goal we work towards attaining another goal. For instance, when we pursue pleasure, no sooner have we obtained our pleasure, we lose it again, so that we have to again go in search of it. The "Kingdom of heaven" refers to the divinity within. "Kingdom of Heaven" is the state of spiritual bliss and perfection. It is that peace and bliss which leaves no desire for any worldly thing. It is that knowledge, knowing which, nothing else remains to be known.

Mr. Crosbie explains that "seeking first the kingdom of heaven," means that right thought must precede right action and right speech. Our real Self finds channel of expression through our thoughts. Hence, it is at the *thought level* that we must first seek the Divine. It is firm position taken with ideal end in view. There must be first determination at the thought level to leave behind the mundane life and search for the truth. When we undertake self-discipline, we must first make an ideal plan or *Sankalpa*, and then execute it. *Sankalpa* means to so thoroughly think and imagine that the thing thought about gets translated into action.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Is attraction a spiritual contract? All the people that we have in life, good, bad and ugly, have been attracted by *us*. If we really have a choice, how is it that we do not attract only the attractive, beautiful, kind and supportive people? Why can't we do away with all those people we do not like? The truth is that every relationship is a spiritual contract. Not only are marriages made in heaven, but every relationship that we have with anyone, including ourselves, is made in heaven. People do not come into our lives by chance. There are three kinds of people in our lives—people we love, people we dislike or hate, and people we are neutral about. We play our emotional dramas with first two categories of people because these are the people with whom we have our major spiritual contracts, life after life, until we fulfill these contracts. There is some truth in what people call, "*saat janmon ka saath*," (companionship for seven lives). Our contracts with people we love make us happy. They mirror our unrecognized strengths and show us the qualities we fail to acknowledge as being present in us, and make us focus on those qualities so that they become part of our conscious energy. This energy helps us attract those experiences in life, which help us achieve our untapped potential. The acknowledgement of our qualities improves our self-worth.

The people we dislike, for instance, the nagging wife, irritating mother-in-law, angry boss and selfish colleague, are also our teachers. In our spiritual contracts with them, they mirror the qualities and aspects latent in us which we deny in ourselves because we find them too ugly to face openly. If we refuse to look into the mirror shown by them then the reflections get uglier and we delay our own growth by blaming them or showing resentment towards them. Unlike the people we love, these teachers teach us tough lessons. We must thank these teachers for helping us release all the muck which had remained unnoticed for years, within us. If we can honestly look at all the people we meet in our lives as mirrors,

reflecting our good and bad qualities, and co-operate with them in learning our lessons, then we shall grow exponentially, writes Kanupriya. (*Life Positive*, October 2010)

We increasingly suffer, these days, from strained relationships. Yet, good human relationship is central to our well being and has the power to change the world. We meet a lot of people in our life, and find that with some there is instantaneous attraction, while with few others we may experience a feeling of repulsion or dislike. What is it that determines our affinities? It is under Karma that the Ego is drawn to particular parents, family, race and nation. Our parents, brothers, sisters, all come to us under karma. Not only when we love someone but also when we hate someone, we could be thrown into a closer relation with that person in the next life, say, as a wife, husband, brother, son, etc. Often, past affinities may draw us into friendship with a drunkard or gambler, who could be the cause of our downfall. On the other hand, through past affinities, one person can help to hasten the spiritual progress of another.

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

Phoenix has been regarded as a supernatural creature, which dies, to be reborn again from its ashes. The Phoenix has always been regarded as a symbol of resurrection. "Phoenix" is the Greek word for "red," which links this magical bird to fire and Sun. Greek and

Roman myths consider Phoenix a symbol of resurrection and immortality and associate it with the Sun god Phoebus (Apollo). The Phoenix is a solitary bird that does not reproduce, as only its death produces another of its race. The legend goes that when it feels its end approaching, after the period of between 500 to 1461 years, it will build the nest with finest aromatic woods, sets it on fire and is consumed by his own flames. A new Phoenix arises from the ashes, embalms the ashes of his predecessor in an egg of myrrh and deposits the egg on the altar of the Sun god at Heliopolis. A painting of a Phoenix, discovered from a tomb near Changsha, is said to belong to a Chinese Emperor, and considered to be a mysterious and sacred symbol that led the Emperor to victory. It is said that before embarking on the Kalinga war, Emperor Asoka, the Great had obtained from the Chinese King of Jin Dynasty the replica of this powerful and sacred Phoenix, and won the Kalinga war. Feng Shui belief is that placing a red Phoenix in the Fame and Recognition sector brings glory to people, writes Mohan Deep, a Feng Shui master. (*Jam-E-Jamshed Weekly*, August 21, 2010)

The ancients have tried to convey the doctrine of Rincarnation through the language of symbols and myths. For ages, the symbol of symbols for rebirth has been the Phoenix. It is a mythical bird of great beauty which is fabled to live for 500 to 600 years, then to burn itself on a funeral pile and rise from the ashes to live through another cycle of years. It is said that when it burns itself to ashes, one glowing spark, signifying the immortal spirit, remains, and from it new life is evolved. The immortal spark or Ego undergoes pilgrimage in the drama of evolution. Often from the ashes of evil, good may spring up. "And sometimes the man who has sinned so deeply that his whole nature is scarred and blackened by the fierce fire of selfish gratification, is at last so utterly burned out and charred that from the very vigour of the passion light leaps forth." (*Through the Gates of Gold*, p. 35)

The Egyptians speak of Benoo-bird, where Benoo is the word applied to two symbols, *Shen-shen* (the heron), and other to a non-

descript bird, called *Rech* (the red one), and both are sacred to Osiris. Both Heron and Rech are symbols of cycles, the former of the cycle of 365 days; the latter of the tropical year or a period covering almost 26,000 years. Both these cycles represent the return of light from darkness or return of the Sun-god to his birth place—his Resurrection. The bird Phoenix is associated with the *Tree of Initiation* or of knowledge. The Phoenix is *Onech* in Hebrew, named after Enoch. Enoch means literally the *Initiator* and *instructor*, hence the Hierophant who reveals the *last mystery*. In the Persian mythology, there is Simorgh Anke, representing the infanite cycle, and is the steed of Tahmurath, just as Garuda is the vehicle of Vishnu. Simorgh is half-phoenix, half-lion, endowed in the Iranian legends with oracular powers. It was the guardian of the Persian mysteries. Esoterically, it stands for a Manvantaric cycle. Its Arabic name is *Rakshi*. (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

Garuda, the vehicle of Vishnu, is the Indian Phoenix, an emblem of cyclic and periodical time. Garuda is the emblem of the great cycle or *Maha-Kalpa* and is co-eternal with Vishnu. The death and revival of the Phoenix symbolize successive destruction and reproduction of the world, which many believe to be effected by the agency of fiery deluge and watery one in turn. (S.D., II, 564 and 617)

Death came only after man had acquired the physical body, till then there had been no regular death, but only a transformation, for *men had no personality* as yet. "They had bodies, or rather shadows of bodies, which were sinless, hence *Karmaless*. Therefore, as there was no *Kamaloka*—least of all *Nirvana* or even *Devachan*—for the 'souls' of men who had no personal *Egos*, there could be no intermediate periods between the incarnations. Like the Phoenix, primordial man resurrected out of his old into a new body. Each time, and with each new generation, he became more solid, more physically perfect, agreeably with the evolutionary law." (S.D., II, 610)

More often than not we seem to use words without knowing their meaning, and that is called parroting. The word is *shabda* while the meaning of the word is *shabda brahman*. *Shabda* is the vessel that carries the *shabda brahman*. Through *shabda*, the *shabda Brahman* is transmitted from one person to another. We tend to rely on learning by rote, in which we memorize right words and regurgitate the same in examinations and interviews without actually understanding the meaning. We exchange words but without completely grasping the meaning. There is the story in the *Upanishads* about the fight between sage Yagnavalkya and his teacher Vaisampayana, who was a student of Sage Vyasa, the classifier of the Vedas and the author of the *Mahabharata*. It is said that Vaisampayana memorized the teachings of sage Vyasa and passed on the information to his students, and hence he was unable to give the meaning and the essence of teachings, symbols and rituals, which Yagnavalkya wished to know.

When Vaisampayana wanted to perform a ritual to cleanse him of a sin, Yagnavalkya pointed out that it was not the ritual that brought about cleansing, but the self-introspection and reflection inspired by the ritual. Mere mechanical performance of a ritual is mimicry. When the teacher told him to give back the words he had taught, it is said that Yagnavalkya "vomited" them out—a symbolic rejection of the words. The other students of Vaisampayana took the form of birds and ate the vomit. What they remembered and passed on is known as *Krishna Yajur Veda*, or the *Taittiriya Samhita*, the *Book of Birds*. Parrots, Partridges and Parakeets are the birds that symbolize learning by rote without grasping the meaning. Here, "Krishna" means dark and full of ignorance.

Yagnavalkya is said to have approached the Sun and begged it to throw light on the meaning of the words, rituals and symbols. The Sun took the form of a horse and shared the wisdom with him, which is known as *Shukla Yajur Veda* or *Vajasaneyi Samhita* or the *Book of Horse*. "Shukla" refers to brightness brought about by the meaning. Hayagriva or horse-headed form of God is worshipped

as source of knowledge in India, writes Devdutta Pattanaik, a mythologist. (*The Times of India* [*The Speaking Tree*], September 5, 2010)

Only human beings are endowed with articulate speech; animals communicate through sounds. Even when our speech is precise we are able to get only what the words convey, having lost the insight and intuitive understanding of one another. Very frequently, if not always, we use words like "thank you," "sorry," "all the best," etc., only as a matter of convention. These words should be spoken meaningfully, backed by intense and pure emotions. Mr. Judge observes:

Words are things....Upon the lower plane of social intercourse they are things, but soulless and dead because that convention in which they have their birth has made abortions of them. But when we step away from that conventionality they become alive in proportion to the reality of the thought—and its purity—that is behind them. So in communication between two students they are things, and those students must be careful that the ground of intercourse is fully understood. Let us use with care those living messengers called words.

Says Shri Krishna in the *Gita*, "I am he who is the author of the Vedanta, and I alone am the interpreter of the *Vedas*." Keeping in mind Krishna's words, Mr. Judge advises us to read the *Gita* [also applicable to other scriptures] by the light of the spiritual lamp, i.e., by the light of the divine nature within. This spiritual lamp will shed brighter light if we live the life according to the dictates of our divine nature and diligently inquire after the meaning. The Vedas say that what we see of them is only "the disclosed Veda," that we should strive to go beyond the *disclosed words* and search between the lines and within words for the "undisclosed Vedas," or their inner significance and essence.