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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE ART OF GIVING

I do not give lectures or a little charity; when I give I give myself.

—WALT WHITMAN

IN present-day acquisitive culture where most of us are running around to gain too much too soon, we have very nearly forgotten the art of giving. We have the words of poet Wordsworth: “The world is too much with us; late and soon, getting and spending, we lay waste our powers.” And then those who have achieved desired objects too quick in life, at a very young age, experience existential vacuum. We say the world has shrunk with technological advancement, but then how do we explain the growing number of lonely and depressed people? Though messaging technologies facilitate communication, we share only superficially in the joys and sorrows of other human beings. It is easy to make or break relationships or apologize for a grievous error through SMS or e-mail, evading direct communication. What we really suffer from, says Dr. Fromm, is an inner deadness. We live in the midst of plenty and are joyless. Ever more people today have the means to live, but no meaning to live for, observes another psychiatrist, Dr. Viktor Frankl.

Though we may begin by giving material wealth, let us not be so absorbed in our own concerns as to be blind to the psychological

needs of those around us. Do we ever take the trouble to put aside our preferences and prejudices to look intelligently into the hearts of men? Instead of judging and condemning if only we could learn to be charitable to the weaknesses of others, the world would be a happier place to live in. We do not have to seek for the afflicted; they are everywhere—in the family, in the neighbourhood, at the workplace. Amazingly, people are often ready to unburden their bottled-up emotions, anxieties and frustrations to total strangers, at the slightest show of sympathy and concern. A few words of inspiration or encouragement, *or* being able to make the person see things in a different light can go a long way in instilling hope for a brighter future, or could even avert a suicide or save a relationship. Albert Schweitzer, the great humanitarian who served people as a doctor in equatorial Africa, says:

Open your eyes and seek another human being in need of a little time, a little friendliness, a little company, a little work. It may be a lonely, an embittered, a sick or an awkward person for whom you can do something, to whom you can mean something. Perhaps it will be an old person or a child. Or else a good cause that needs voluntary workers. Do not lose heart, even if you must wait a bit before finding the right thing, even if you must make several attempts.

“The poor ye have always with you.” It is not enough to pour vast amount of wealth but rather deal with the causes that produce poverty, misery, pain and degradation. The physical woes of humanity are only skin-deep, what needs greater help is the mental and moral suffering. We are called upon to become wider philanthropists by ministering to the needs of the inner man, the thinking man, who must be given right philosophy. It is life and its sorrows that destroy our peace, and every human heart wants to know the reason for it. Why am I here? Why do I suffer? Where may justice be found? The doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation hold answers to these questions, and these must be promulgated

and practised. Wrote a Master of Wisdom to a student-aspirant:

It is not enough that you should set the example of a pure, virtuous life and a tolerant spirit; this is but negative goodness.... You should, even as a simple member... learn that you may teach, acquire spiritual knowledge and strength that the weak may lean upon you, and the sorrowing victims of ignorance learn from you the cause and remedy of their pain. If you choose, you may make your home one of the most important centres of spiritualizing influence in all the world.

Jnana Dana or giving of knowledge is considered to be the highest form of giving. In another place the Master speaks about the “self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause to benefit by it as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can, which constitutes the true Theosophist.” What could this imply but application of the teachings so as to set an example which others may be inspired to emulate? Like the Masters, we have to become servants of humanity.

The *Gita* advises that in addition to performing one’s duty, one must never abandon acts of *Dana* (charity), *Tapas* (mortification) and *Yajna* (sacrifice). In learning the art of giving it is important to consider *what* we give, *how* we give, to *whom* we give and *why* we give. In fact, the *Gita* classifies charity into *sattvic*, *rajasic* and *tamasic*. Anything given away, out of place and season or scornfully, constitutes *tamasic* charity. Many a time we give away, as wedding or birthday present, things which are of no use to us, without bothering to find out if they would be of use to the recipient. We toss a coin to get rid of the pestering beggar. “A cup of cold water given in time to a thirsty wayfarer is a nobler duty and more worth, than a dozen of dinners given away, out of season, to men who can afford to pay for them,” says H.P.B. H.P.B. observes that it takes a very wise man to do good works without danger of doing incalculable harm. Often, kindness and gentle treatment bring out the worst qualities in a person who may be living a fairly presentable life

when surrounded by adversity and pain. Ultimately, the giver should succeed in kindling the spirit of “giving” in the receiver. When people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, works of charity, justice and generosity will be done spontaneously by all. But, what is it to be humane? If we are not prepared to share our last morsel with one weaker or poorer than ourselves; if we turn a deaf ear to the cry of human misery, or hear an innocent person slandered and do not take up his defence as we would our own, then we are born too soon in human shape, says a Master of Wisdom.

When we give with the expectation of return, be it material help or otherwise, *or*, with the intention of accumulating merit (*punya*), such giving flows from the *rajasic* quality, but when given without expectation of return and to the proper person and at a proper time it is *sattvic* giving. *Sattvic* giving calls for true discernment. Our indiscriminate giving can but turn the recipient into a parasite. True giving must aim towards creating self-dependent individuals. Is the money given put to proper use? We may think twice before giving money to a beggar, if we see him buying cigarette, tobacco or alcohol with that money. It has been observed time and again that lakhs of rupees are given in charity by sympathizing people toward cyclone or flood relief, but a lot of it is retained by the middle men—very little reaches the needy. H.P.B. asks, where is the gratitude that your millions of pounds should have called forth, or the good feeling provoked by them? When food or money is given through a third person it fails to evoke gratitude in the heart of the receiver. Hence the need for *personal* exertion for others; *personal* mercy and kindness; *personal* interest in the welfare of those who suffer; *personal* sympathy; forethought and assistance in their troubles or needs. We endow the gift with a thousandfold greater power and effectiveness by our personal contact and sympathy.

Though it is essential to ascertain that charity is given to the right person, we need not be *overmindful* of the worthiness of the receiver. Let us obey our heart and give spontaneously, instead of after too

much analysis and rationalizing. “Who are you that men should rend their bosom and unveil their pride, that you may see their worth naked and their pride unabashed? See first that you yourself deserve to be a giver, and an instrument of giving,” says Kahlil Gibran. When asked, give even a little, taught Buddha. We are trustees of our possessions. When we use wealth in an unselfish way and intelligently, for the elevation of the race-mind, that power in Nature produces an alchemical change in the giver of real gifts and the trustee attracts more wealth for his beneficent work. (*Thus Have I Heard*). Similar idea is echoed in *Light on the Path*:

...with the desire thus to help others comes the power. For it is pure desire, this, which comes upon him; he can gain no credit, no glory, no personal reward by fulfilling it. And therefore he obtains the power to fulfil it. (p. 68)

However, the best giving involves sacrifice. It is not sharing out of the surplus but willingness to give even when *we* are put to the pinch. “There are those who have little and give it all. These are the believers in life and the bounty of life, and their coffer is never empty,” says Kahlil Gibran. Sacrificial giving brings about an inner transformation in the giver; it is giving to others *more* than to oneself—*self-sacrifice*. We are all capable of making small sacrifices, such as, giving our seat to someone else who needs it more or giving away our lunch to the hungry and needy. But, “we have to discriminate. A man has no right to starve himself to death that another man may have food, unless the life of that man is obviously more useful to the many than is his own life.” H.P.B. praises the sacrifice of Father Damien, who offered his whole life for the benefit and alleviation of the sufferings of the lepers of Molokai, and finally caught the loathsome disease and died.

The whole universe has come into existence because of sacrifice and is sustained by it. The descent of Spirit into matter is an act of sacrifice. It is through self-sacrifice of the divine beings called *Manasaputras* that humanity was endowed with *Manas* or

intelligence. But often, life places us in circumstances where we are either unable to give *personally* or do not find a worthy recipient. This is true especially of knowledge. Great is one's sorrow when one sees that there are only a few who can appreciate true philosophy, and yet is called upon to carry on the work of giving the waters of life, without losing hope or enthusiasm. Kahlil Gibran describes the giver's agony in these words:

Would that I were a well, dry and parched,
And men throwing stones into me;
For this were better and easier to be borne
Than to be a source of living water
When men pass by and will not drink.

One needs to master both arts—the art of giving and also the art of gracefully receiving. Often, a person who has been self-dependent all his life shuns receiving help and support in his old age. He would rather die than receive help—out of pride and a false sense of self-sufficiency. In Buddha's wise words: "Freely give and freely receive."

In its highest sense, Giving or *Dana* is the key of charity and love immortal. It is Compassion Absolute defined as an *all-embracing* love and desire for Universal Good. Without *Vairagya*, detachment and dispassion, and *Prajna* or highest perception and insight into human existence, no true giving can take place. Charity or love is sown as a seed, which flowers forth at the end of the spiritual discipline. The goal of spiritual evolution is not *moksha* or liberation, but renunciation of personal peace and bliss for the sake of suffering humanity, which is beautifully expressed in the Pledge of Kwan-Yin thus:

"Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone, but forever, and everywhere, will I live and strive for the redemption of every creature throughout the world."

DREAMS—PSYCHIC AND NOETIC

BRIHADARANYAKA Upanishad says: "The spirit of man has two dwelling places, both this world and the other world, and the borderland between them is the third, the land of dreams." So the land of dreams is placed in the middle position, between the outside world and the true inner world, and necessarily therefore can reflect that which belongs to the world of externalities and that which belongs to the world of eternal realities. Hence there are psychic and noetic dreams, just as there are psychic and noetic elements in man. The noetic element is the permanent spiritual individuality, the reincarnating Ego or the true manasic element. The reflection of that divine spiritual fire in this world of mortality is the *kama-manasic* consciousness, called the psychic element. Generally, all dreams are grouped together and put under one heading; ordinary dreams are clubbed together with prophetic visions and the dreams which bring inspiration and spiritual instructions.

While the body is asleep, we who live in the body are still susceptible of being impressed by physiological and physical occurrences. Within that body, within that world physical which is visible and tangible and which we contact *via* the senses, lies the world invisible which is known as the world of desires, that is the psychic world, a world which we share in common with the animal kingdom. Animals are essentially psychic beings, and therefore, animals also dream—psychic dreams. "Every animal, large or small, has, more or less, physical senses; and though these senses are dulled during sleep, memory will still, so to say, act mechanically, reproducing past sensations. That dogs and horses and cattle dream we all know, and so also do canaries" (*Transactions*, p. 70). *Svapna* state or dream state corresponds to that invisible, psychic world, where desires predominate. It is the borderland between the two worlds through which we must necessarily pass when we go from the waking state or objective world to the inner spirit. In the borderland we have psychic dreams. When we have passed beyond

the borderland, we are in the company of our divine parent or the spirit being, and there we have noetic—inner and spiritual—experience. It is called dreamless sleep or *Sushupti*.

We all dream, but some of us do not remember our dreams on waking up. Similarly, we all touch that true condition (*Sushupti State*), where we are one with the divine individuality. It is precisely because every night we go into that spiritual condition that we are able to bear the burden of life, and are able to replenish the oil of our spiritual lamp, and regain the necessary strength and courage to continue in the struggle for existence, and the struggle against our lower nature.

“Dreams are not, as Dryden says, ‘interludes which fancy makes,’ for such can only refer to physiological dreams provoked by indigestion, or some idea or event which has impressed itself upon the active brain during waking hours” (*Transactions*, p. 70). There are noetic dreams or the experiences of the Higher Ego, which are the real dreams, and which remain *terra incognita* for Science. H.P.B. says that there are at least seven kinds of dreams. Thus:

1. There are those dreams which are mere fancies. These dreams are disturbing, often caused by indigestion, or through bodily discomfort resulting from heat or a heavy blanket. Just as we take time in putting on fresh clothes, and combing our hair and cleaning our teeth, so we must spend time for inner reflection and self-examination, to prepare the inner self before falling asleep.

2. Confused dreams are essentially psychic, and spring from feelings and desires that are essentially personal and egotistic.

3. Allegorical dreams are half true and half fiction. H.P.B. describes them as hazy glimpses of realities caught by the brain and distorted by our fancy. These are generally only half true. An allegorical dream is merely the effort of our own higher self to impress upon our consciousness something of the real truth, but it gets distorted in the borderland or dream state, while it is being brought to the waking state. Each one has to interpret for himself such allegorical dreams which are symbolic. Thus, dreaming of a mountain, a snake or a boat may mean one thing to one person but

may indicate something different to another. Buddha’s mother dreamt that a shining six-rayed star from heaven entered her womb. She woke up with a happy feeling. The dream-reader said that the dream signified that she would give birth to a boy who would be a great holy man.

4. Warning dreams are from the divine parent. We have not one or two guardian angels looking from heaven, but something much more precious. We have as the true centre of our being, that Inner Ruler, the God within, that Eternal Spectator, who is also an admonisher, and it tries to protect and guide us, often through warning dreams. A warning dream may be for ourselves or, it may be a warning given for another. Abraham Lincoln had a premonition of his own death. There are examples of mothers dreaming about a plane crash and not allowing their son to board the plane and the plane really crashes. Why are warning dreams given to another? Because that other may not be susceptible to be impressed by his own Higher Self. What is known on that spiritual plane to one Higher Self is equally present with all, for there is no past, present and future but the Eternal Now on that plane.

5. Retrospective dreams are dreams of events belonging to past incarnations. These come from the permanent individuality. In the noetic aspect or the permanent individuality—that aspect which has gone from life to life—is the storehouse of the memories of all our past incarnations.

6. Prophetic dreams are dreams of coming events. “These are impressed on our memory by the Higher Self, and are generally plain and clear: either a voice heard or a coming event foreseen.”

7. There are dreams sent by adepts and white magicians. When we have transcended the personal and the selfish and are attuned to the highest in us, we can be guided and protected by the Great Immortal Ones, the Elder Brothers of humanity. Hence, *The Voice of the Silence* tells us:

The WISE ONES tarry not in pleasure grounds of senses.

The WISE ONES heed not the sweet-tongued voices of illusion....Seek for him who is to give thee birth, in the Hall of Wisdom [dreamless sleep] the Hall which lies beyond, wherein all shadows are unknown, and where the light of truth shines with unfading glory.

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OBSTACLES IN SPIRITUAL LIFE

While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light.

—*St. John*, XII, 36

MAN makes his own impediments by building up habits which, though at one time he considered desirable, have now on mature experience become obnoxious. Vice is a habit recklessly welcomed with a sense of pleasure and a degree of satisfaction, even though it is known to militate against all canons of morality. Because of the fascination that is exercised by vice over certain natures, the craving that it arouses makes the person work towards its satisfaction. The urge for this may at times become so acute that it will compel him to stoop to anything to consummate its gratification. What are the mechanics of the process that enables vice to hold him captive against his will and his better judgment? What force is it that seemingly compels him to drink the cup of lasciviousness to its bitter dregs? Neither religion nor science has either the answer or the panacea. They have to be sought for in the laws of the Occult.

All men are interlinked, not only among themselves but also with the innumerable lives and intelligences that throng the seen and unseen realms of space. This space which embraces the stars and the planets and the vast interstellar expanses is full of lives which are, some friendly and others inimical to the person. These continually impinge upon and affect him intimately, though he knows it not. They are within him, in each of the sheaths of his Soul, as they are around him, having their continuous ebb and flow in and through him. They change with every change of his moods and feelings. They people his current in space and reflect his clean and unclean fancies. It is these lives that make up every secret part of his nature. Given the proper conditions—the psychic atmosphere that exudes from men, places, ideas and images—they are aroused to feverish activity and begin to clamour for expression. The mind gets involved

through dwelling on the anticipated enjoyment and thus permits itself to be used as a playground of the senses.

These lives are subservient to the laws of Causation and to the dominant will of man. Their actions on him are guided by the attraction and repulsion produced by himself and their activities are under the law of cycles and the other law which makes the man subject to atavistic tendencies and the hereditary bias provided by family, nation and race.

If man can in his blindness open himself to the undesirable, he can, when his eyes are opened, become receptive to the desirable. Why, then, does he hold back? Why is it that seemingly against his own will he goes and does exactly that which he wishes to avoid and even to shun? It can only be so because he is cowed and subjugated by a force superior to his enfeebled will—a force that compels him to do evil where the moment before he had intended to do good. As his cycles of aspirations are followed by cycles of darkness, he lives through his ups and downs and becomes a Dr. Jekyll or a Mr. Hyde by turns, with no clear prospect of virtue finally triumphing over the hordes of evil. Long years spent in unholy acts and in sense indulgence have already fashioned his physical and ethereal bodies with lives that are congenial to vice and evil. They cannot be evicted overnight. The beginner does not have at his command those reservoirs of energy that can work the transformation. He has deliberately to build within himself that force which is superior to the one in the possession of the lives he had welcomed as honoured guests, but whose presence is now a source of worry and torture.

The law that can help the student in his plight is the same law that science has come to recognize at least in part. It is the law under which the physical body undergoes a complete alteration and renovation at intervals of about seven years. What science has yet to discover is that this change can be controlled by the human will, which can accelerate its action. Occult psychology affirms that this same will can select the type and quality of lives that will be attracted

to replace those that are being shed. Man is potentially a God. The voice of that God is within him. But it is crowded out by the hubbub raised by his desires and his thirst for sensation. If by some means available to him he can starve and remove from his make-up lives which have the quality of grossness, then will he be able to give opportunity to the ethereal particles of his inner vestures to manifest themselves.

The first step, then, would be to take the benefit of the seven-year cycle and to concentrate the will-force on such acts, words, feelings and thoughts as would deny entrance to the grosser elements and at the same time help in purging such deleterious ones as have already made their lodging in him. By so doing, he will initiate the process of attracting ethereal and more refined particles to come in and fill the vacated places.

It is now recognized that the flesh of animals is made up of lives and organisms that are the carriers of the qualities inherent in the animals. Lust, anger, greed, deceit and craftiness are in all flesh in greater or lesser degree. There are also strength, tenacity, determination, love and loyalty, though these are of lives not suited for the ethereal aspects of the person. When one eats flesh, he takes in these lives with the essence of the animal's qualities. His body will of course reject those that are not congenial to it. But, if he has qualities that shut him off from the higher regions, then, by taking flesh food he but augments the gross particles within him, and these will successfully thwart all efforts at reform.

Alcohol—in whatever form—has the potency to inject the grossest forms of life, so that even if it is taken in miniscule doses it will incline the person towards the irresponsible and murky sides of life. It has the tendency to paralyse the nerve centres and to shut out from the consciousness the light that is inherent in all life.

Sexual desires are the great drainers of energy. Indulgence in them leads to debility and a lowering of the nerve vitality. On the inner planes, the after-effects produce a great disturbance in the mental balance and moral stamina. Sexual acts produce pleasurable

physical sensations which are only enjoyable at such stages of density as require the use of a certain gross quality of the original matter of the Universe. It therefore becomes a great setback for the student because in his urge to satisfy a physical craving he is tainting matter which it is his duty to leave unsullied. His misuse of this matter and his draining away of energy make him so much the poorer in will and soul-force.

The avoiding of certain foods, the total abstinence from alcohol and its products, the curbing of indulgence in sex—these are but negative, though none-the-less curative, steps. Unless these preliminaries are taken care of, the beginner will find that he is not only marking time but slipping backwards. Yet, it must be evident to the merest tyro that no abstention from alcohol, no care in the selection of foods, no outward adoption of sex restraint will take him even a little step forward if the craving is still in his heart or if his inner food—sights, sounds, thoughts, ideations and feelings—is amoral and insipid. It is here that study and familiarity with the scriptures helps. The silent repetition of sacred texts as a form of worship is recommended in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The student has to discover through his own experience that when the mind is made to dwell exclusively upon morals and metaphysics, the grip that the grosser particles exert upon him is for a time loosened. As the adoration of the God within increases, the ethereal particles that clothe the pure and the diviner parts of the man (he is a sevenfold being) find a chance to shine through.

The danger which must still dog the steps of the aspirant lies in the cyclic return of impressions and the precipitation of the bad Karma which he has gathered. Step upon cautious step must remain the order of the day, till in time the Soul will become unfettered and the desires free. It has to be kept in mind that the gross elements that have been unceremoniously bundled out resent their expulsion. They will combine together, devise strategies, gather their cohorts and mount a determined attack particularly on that front where the individual's defences are weak. The Mahabharata War *has* to be

joined. It cannot be escaped. But, by this time, the disciple—like Arjuna—will have secured his celestial weapons and opted to take Krishna as his charioteer. All the energies of the aspirant have to be made to converge on this point in time, when the forces of good are challenged by the forces of combined evil. To support the aspirant in this hour of danger, *Light on the Path* offers valuable advice and instruction. It says:

1. Stand aside in the coming battle, and though thou fightest be not thou the warrior.
2. Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee.
3. Take his orders for battle and obey them.

4. Obey him not as though he were a general, but as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires; for he is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself. Look for him, else in the fever and hurry of the fight thou mayest pass him; and he will not know thee unless thou knowest him. If thy cry reach his listening ear then will he fight in thee and fill the dull void within....But if thou look not for him, if thou pass him by, then there is no safeguard for thee....

He is thyself, yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth. When once he has entered thee and become thy warrior, he will never utterly desert thee, and at the day of the great peace he will become one with thee.

5. Listen to the song of life.

THE magnetic needle always points towards the north, and hence it is that the sailing vessel does not lose her course. So long as the heart of man is directed towards God, he cannot be lost in the ocean of worldliness.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

MEMORY—THE SPHINX OF SCIENCE

II

THE most common objection to belief in rebirth is that if we have lived before why do we not remember our past lives? This lapse of memory is an experience of everyday life. Of so many experiences from our childhood to youth we are able to recall only a few and that too not in full detail. Memory is the record pertaining to a particular existence. At every new birth there is a *new* body, a *new* brain and *new* memory. In a new birth a *new* record pertaining to that existence is developed. However, our Higher Ego is omniscient and has the memory of all our past lives. Reminiscence is the memory of the soul or the Higher Ego.

In physical memory we have separate details, and an orderly sequence of relations. Physical memory is the record of passing events, but is not the preserver of *experience*. Physical memory is but the outer husk of experience. Experience relates to feeling and consciousness; memory, to time and sense. Hence, *memory* belongs to the personality, while *reminiscence* belongs to the permanent individual (*The Path*, Vol. IV). We may say that reminiscence is the aroma or nectar of the spiritual qualities of past personalities. For soul-memory to become available in our waking consciousness, the brain must be made porous and receptive so that it could be impressed with this memory of the past. For this, it is essential to think and act along right lines during waking life. Spiritually advanced beings such as Buddha and the Initiates remember all their past incarnations.

At the solemn moment of death, even when the death is sudden, every man sees the whole of his life marshalled up before him, in its minutest detail. For one short instant the personal ego becomes one with the Individual and *all-knowing* Ego. A Master of Wisdom describes the mental state of the dying man, thus:

At the last moment, the whole life is reflected in our memory and emerges from all the forgotten nooks and

corners, picture after picture, one event after the other. The dying brain dislodges memory with a strong, supreme impulse; and memory restores faithfully every impression that has been entrusted to it during the period of the brain's activity....No man dies insane or unconscious, as some physiologists assert. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 25*, p. 1)

H.P.B. recounts many instances of people recalling long-forgotten events at their dying moment. When a consumptive who was declared dead, was recalled to life by two successive injections of a gram of ether, he uttered something in Flemish, and when offered pencil and paper he wrote in Flemish a few lines and then died. When translated, it was found that he had suddenly recollected having borrowed a sum of fifteen francs, some twenty years ago, from a certain person and he desired it to be paid. At the dying moment, he could not only recollect the trifling event of his borrowing fifteen francs but also Flemish—the language he had heard only in his childhood but never spoken or learnt. Such memory cannot be the result of physical brain, but must be part of spiritual memory, that of the Higher Ego (Reincarnating individuality), says H.P.B. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 25*, p. 2)

At the time of physical death, all the impressions and memories of the lifetime are revived and focused in the astral body (the model or design body for the physical), which survives the death of the physical body for a while. Those experiences, which are consubstantial with 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—*Rupa* (form or body), material qualities; *Vedana*, sensation; *Sanna*, abstract ideas; *Samkhara*, tendencies of mind; *Vinnana*, mental powers—and they combine to form a new personality. However, the *personal* memories of the previous incarnation are “lost” during the vast period of 1000

to 1500 years that the Ego spends in *Devachan* or *Swarga* before a new birth. New combination of *skandhas* form his new personality.

But then how to account for instances of individuals who remember certain incidents from their past lives, which are proved to be correct? Theosophy teaches that if a child dies very young, before the Egoic consciousness has had the opportunity to acquire any food for assimilation in *Devachan*, then that Ego is born very early and often with the same *astral body*, on which the memories of the previous short life, just lived, are impressed. These memories may be transmitted to the waking brain consciousness of the new body while the person is still young. Such quick rebirth is also possible when the person dies an accidental death, or is killed in war. In such cases, if the astral body of the previous life is still disintegrating—which carries clear impressions from that past life—the new brain consciousness may attract fragments of these impressions to itself. Hence, we have stray instances of some children being able to recall fragments of their last life.

There are instances, when people claim to remember what they think is *their* past life. These are *sensitives*, with the ability to see in the Astral Light of the earth, wherein are impressed the records of all actions, thoughts and feelings of all. As these sensitives are not fully trained to look into the astral light, their glimpses are partial and indefinite, and at times what they *claim* to remember from the past life has no relation to *their own* past life. It is like reading out of the book of another author.

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

stories, etc., form the whole of our mental life. We may say that phantasy is the power to re-arrange elements already existing in the lower mind. Whatever we see, read, hear, from newspaper, books or through gossip, these impressions accumulate and tend to have self-reproductive power. We must minimize the collection of useless impressions. Phantasy is automatic and operates without the control of the Ego. Day-dreaming is a mild form of phantasy wherein the Ego has weak and intermittent control. It functions much more vividly and coherently—as in the case of mediumship or when one is under the influence of drugs—when the Ego has no control over the impressions and sensations of the lower mind. Phantasy is different from the reasoning mind and also the faculty of imagination in which there is conscious arrangement of impressions and images in the mind. Phantasy implies supremacy of lower mind and is the chief obstacle to meditation and to concentrated thought. Mr. Judge puts it thus:

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

There are five impediments to concentration described by Patanjali. One of them is memory or *smriti*—the other four being sleep, correct cognition, fancy and misconception. Does overcoming phantasy mean that past memories and impressions are destroyed?

As suggested in the article, “Phantasy and Psychism,” in the mind of an adept there is no place for phantasy. He can, at will, select and use impressions from without and within and even shut them off altogether. Hence, it is not the question of destroying the impressions but being able to control at will the appearance of impressions and images in the mind. Ammonius Saccas asserts that the only power which is directly opposed to soothsaying and looking into futurity is memory. While explaining the nature of *true seership*, H.P.B. observes that in case of a psychic clairvoyant, pictures of the past, present, and future will be tintured with the terrestrial perceptions of the objective world; the physical *memory* and *fancy* will be in the way of clear vision. But the seer-adept knows how to suspend the mechanical action of the brain. His visions will be as clear as truth itself, uncoloured and undistorted. Thus:

The seer can never take the flickering shadows for realities, for his memory being as completely subjected to his will as the rest of the body, he receives impressions directly from his spirit. Between his subjective and objective selves there are no obstructive mediums. This is the real spiritual seership. (*Isis*, II, 591)

We seem to live life carrying with us a heavy load of past baggage. We seldom appreciate situations and people as they present themselves from moment to moment. Our reactions are predominantly based on a storehouse of memory, impressions and preconceived notions. For instance, when a person greets us, our reaction—consciously or unconsciously—is based on the image of him stored in our memory. Should memory, based as it is on experience, have such an overriding influence on our response as to render ineffective our capacity to meet life afresh, moment to moment? asks Satyendra Kaushik. We seldom live in the present. We live life, oscillating between past and future. Hopes, fears and memories keep the human consciousness in a non-integrated state. *The Voice of the Silence* advises: “Kill in thyself all memory of past

experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.” The suggestion is to forget the emotional experiences attached to the past events that tend to take control of our mind and colour the present and the future. Once we have extracted the lesson from an event we must let it pass without brooding over it. Our capacity to do good in the present is adversely affected, when we dwell too much over the past, which drags us down from our present level of consciousness.

Paradoxically, a person desiring to cultivate concentration has to be aware of his mental processes, so that not even a fleeting impression or a passing thought might be missed. A mere passing sight of a picture or a single word instantly lost in the rush of the world, may become the basis for a dream that will poison the night and react upon the brain the next day. A person desiring to succeed in the practice of concentration must be able to trace back the dream to the impression or thought during the waking hours that caused it. Mr. Judge says that if you are unable to find that impression easily, you have to go back in memory over every word and circumstance of the preceding day, seeking, like the astronomer through space, for the lost one. Even otherwise, we must learn to be able to go backward into our days and go over carefully and in detail all that happened and all that we permitted to pass through the brain. We shall succeed in recollecting all thoughts and impressions only if we have been vigilant and aware all through the waking hours.

(Concluded)

God is nearer to me than I am to my own self; my life depends upon God's being near me, present in me. So is he also in a stone, a log of wood, only they do not know it. If the wood knew of God and realized his nearness like the highest angel does, then the log would be as blessed as the chief of all the angels.

—ECKHART

REVOLVING IN REBIRTH

MISERY of the mind, agony of the heart, diseases of the body, are so universal that the cause and cure of sorrow has been a major problem of philosophical inquiry for many long centuries. Pain is related to evil in the common mind, and evil to wickedness. There is a basis of truth in this belief, but great confusion results when we see a virtuous man struck down with disease, or when an innocent woman is molested and ravaged. There are many such occurrences in our world, which create a mighty puzzle—the suffering of the good and the virtuous. Still another striking phenomenon is connected with new-born babies. Why are so many children born, let us say, blind, or deaf and dumb, and worse, born idiots?

People have no answer and many say it is a mystery. They say that God created such children—a God that is good and just and wise! Others with so-called scientific knowledge prate about heredity. How does one explain a profligate son of virtuous parents? In both these answers—God and Heredity—there is an underlying truth. God is the Great Law that is present everywhere in Nature and works incessantly. What about Heredity? Heredity is not a primary but a secondary factor. It is the means or method that the impersonal Law of Justice adopts. Whatever we are in body, in character, did not come by chance and accident, but from within the soul in which the Law of Divine Justice operates. We read in the Bible:

And as Jesus passed by, he saw a man, which was blind from his birth. And his disciples asked him, saying, Master, who did sin, this man, or his parents, that he was born blind? Jesus answered, Neither hath this man sinned, nor his parents: but that the works of God should be made manifest in him. (*John*, 9:1-3)

Now this is a strange answer. Remember that this man, *born* blind, could not have sinned in this life. But that does not preclude

that in a previous life, in a past incarnation, he could have sown the cause of his present blindness. Jesus says, “the works of god should be made manifest in him.” It is by the power of the god within us that we can overcome any defect or weakness. The Law, which is Divine Justice, produced that man’s blindness, and by the operation of the same Divine Law working within him he can lessen its impact. There are two important facts to be noted. (1) We ourselves and none else made us as we are in body, in morals, in mind; (2) our diseases of the body, weaknesses in moral character, etc., are results of ignorance, of our acting without knowledge in the past.

The Law of Divine Justice works all the time and is truly merciful. How? By overcoming the ignorance we remove our evils and destroy our limitations. This lesson also comes out of another story of the Bible, that of the blind man. He was cured by Jesus of his blindness and when the enemies of Jesus, the Pharisees, questioned him, the man said that he was born blind but that Jesus gave him sight. What does that mean? Remember what Jesus said, “the works of god should be made manifest in him.” Theosophically, it means that the Divine Law of Justice working within us produces circumstances, which remove the blindness of sight, or mind or heart, when we sincerely and earnestly desire change by seeking and acquiring knowledge. But we might say that the blind man was *cured by Jesus* and not by his own god within. It has twofold significance. Jesus represents knowledge; suppose that the man himself had the knowledge that Jesus had, then he could have cured himself. Secondly, just as parents are the instruments of the Law of Divine Justice, so also every human being we come in contact with is an instrument of that Law. Jesus was the instrument through whom the great Law fulfilled itself. This is an important point. All of us are closely knit together; we are not only connected with our blood relations, but with all—with friends and enemies, acquaintances and strangers. The Law of Interdependence or the Law of Brotherhood is an important aspect of Reincarnation.

Like the blind man of the story, each one of us has some blindness

in him. Not only is the power of our sight different, so that some can see more objects or read more minute types, but in each one of us the light of the mind and the sight of the heart is also different. The capacity to love purely and unselfishly is the sight of the heart; each one of us has that capacity, but it is a limited capacity. By right knowledge about its correct use we can increase that capacity to love.

We revolve in rebirth for this specific task—to remove our weaknesses and our blemishes by the aid of knowledge we already possess, and by obtaining more knowledge. But if we do not acquire knowledge about enhancing our virtues and capacities, we will act in ignorance and then we will go wrong. For instance, if we do not know how to handle and direct our love into pure and noble channels, and allow it to be exploited by others, then we will err and bring upon ourselves great misery and anguish. So all the time, if we want to get away from the triangle of “pain, evil and vice,” we must use what we have already acquired, intelligently, and gather more knowledge to obtain further experience in a beneficent way.

Theosophy teaches that the purpose of Reincarnation is the conquest of Nature by understanding the Laws of Nature, whereby the human soul unfolds to its fullest extent. All of us, here and now, must take account of that soul, which we truly *are*. In this life, in this body and mind, the soul that we are picks up the old thread of activity by which progress goes on. All of us, without exception, possess knowledge, for all are divine souls, but divine in *essence* and in the *process of growth*, and therefore that knowledge is not complete but only *partial*. Let us illustrate. Everyone knows how to switch on an electric light; this is like the common fund of knowledge that virtue should be followed. But some people know more than merely switching on light. When a fusing occurs most people seem helpless; only a few know what to do and they, in a few minutes, restore light where darkness was! But even they become helpless when some major complication arises and then they send for an electrician. But suppose that something has gone

wrong at the Central Power House, then even the cleverest electrician becomes helpless. What does it mean? In this world there is a progressive system of knowledge and experience, and those who know less are dependent upon those who know more, and those who know more are willing to aid those who know less.

The practical lesson to be noted is this: we have to find out our own place in the scheme of human evolution; how much do we know, how much do we practise what we know; of what are we ignorant, and what steps are we taking to remove that ignorance? When we recognize that each event brings experience and enriches our knowledge, that every human being we come in contact with can aid us and enable us to aid others, life becomes most interesting. We are not here only to learn; we are not here only to teach; but we are here to grow and to progress through a dual process of learning and teaching.

So long as we are not perfect, so long there is blindness in us. The central message of reincarnation is hope. It offers certitude of our future. We are a mixture of good and evil because of the knowledge already acquired and because of ignorance which remains to be dispelled. Most people suffer badly not only through the bad karma of past lives but through false beliefs and lack of available knowledge in this life. Many forget the very purpose of life, which is soul-evolution.

What is the end of evolution? When all the lessons one can learn as man are learnt, he emerges in his full Perfection. What does Perfection imply? Wisdom which solves every mystery in Nature; Love ever-expanding, which recognizes no distinctions and differences of any kind but which pours itself out on all men, and more, on all kingdoms of Nature. Such Men of Perfection are the Elder Brothers (*Mahatmas*) of our Race, who teach what they themselves learnt in their own past lives. And what they have done, we also can do.

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: It is said that we may suffer or enjoy the consequences of Karmic causes sown in some prior lives. In such cases how and where is the unexpended Karma stored and how does it return back to the sower/creator?

Answer: Karma is the law of action and reaction. At the base of every action there is thought. Hence, we say, “thoughts are the seeds of Karma.” We may or may not act on our thoughts. But ugly, unkind or selfish thought-seeds will bring their own consequences, and likewise kind, gentle and unselfish thoughts will bring their result. Some seeds take longer to grow into trees and bear fruits, while others grow quickly. So also, some actions bring quick results—if we put our finger into the fire it gets burnt. However, certain consequences we reap after several years or lifetimes. In the absence of the memory of having planted the seed, we feel that we suffer unjustly, and hence ask: What did I do to deserve this? Karma cannot act unless there is an appropriate environment or instrument—in terms of appropriate body, mind, intellectual and psychic nature—required for its action. However, our own comes back to us even after several lives. Unexpended Karma is simply held in reserve for future operation and the lapse of time does not reduce the intensity or force of that Karma.

But where are the Karmic causes preserved? It is said that we are surrounded by “lives” or elementals or centres of force, which are without moral character or tendencies, but capable of being coloured by our thoughts. Every thought combines with the

elementals and forms an entity. We impress the elementals with good or bad, and make them messengers or carriers of Karma—quick or slow. It is like staining a cloth; until we wash it with soap, water and brush, the stain remains. So also every unkind or selfish thought stains these elementals and we need to give them reverse impression and purify them. They are drawn back to the one who made them impure. Moreover, Mr. Judge writes:

The elemental world has become a strong factor in the Karma of the human race. Being unconscious, automatic, and photographic, it assumes the complexion of the human family itself. In the earlier ages, when...man had not yet begun to make bad Karma, the elemental world was more friendly to man because it had not received unfriendly impressions....So long as mankind does not cultivate brotherly feeling and charity towards the whole of creation, just so long will the elementals be without the impulse to act for our benefit.

Mr. Judge explains how elementals become carriers of Karma, by giving the example of an idiot boy who tortured insects and crushed out flowers in his idiocy and thus hindered their evolution. The elementals forming the bodies of the tortured beings carried the picture of their torturer and also desire for revenge. When the boy died and incarnated again as an intelligent person, these elementals precipitated down his glance and thus took their revenge by bringing about disaster in whatever matter this person engaged himself. When the person directed his glance on any thing or person, the astral light went out in that glance and through it those elementals saw that which he looked upon. “But one by one they [elementals] are caught up again out of the orbit of necessity into the orbit of probation in this world, and at last all are gone, whereupon he finds success in all he does.” Elementals take on the colour or impressions we give them. When we give them wrong impression, their future progress is hindered. When this happens we have pushed them into the “orbit of necessity.” As contrasted with this, the “orbit of probation” is the

series of experiences, as per their own evolutionary upward march, which takes these elemental beings to higher levels of consciousness.

In a similar manner, we are continually impressing elementals or “lives,” with good or bad thoughts and creating what are called *skandhas* or *samskaras* or attributes from day to day. They are a collection or congeries of “lives” impressed with various thoughts. These *skandhas* keep a magnetic link with the person who generated them. Through our thoughts and actions, personal and impersonal, we generate material as well as spiritual *skandhas* or attributes. After death, the higher and nobler aspirations of the last personality (spiritual *skandhas* or attributes) become part of the Ego or Individuality, which goes to *Devachan* (*Swarga*). After a period of rest and absolute bliss in *Devachan*, the Ego is ready to take the next birth. The essence of the lower or material *skandhas* wait at the threshold of *Devachan* as *Karmic effects*, and when the Ego emerges from *Devachan* these *skandhas* are irresistibly attracted to the Ego like the iron filings to the magnet. These *skandhas* are of five types—pertaining to physical form, mental and emotional nature, etc.—and they combine to form a new personality with healthy or diseased body; with kind or cruel nature; with sharp or dull intellect, etc. However, the *skandhas* or attributes which pertain to desire nature or *Kama* control the rebirth and also determine various affinities and therefore the circumstances and relations of the next life.

Question: How do we become aware of the dormant desires?

Answer: It is our desire nature (*Kama* principle) that influences our thoughts, value-judgment and character. There are hidden layers of our mind where “dormant,” unexpressed or latent desires as well as unpleasant memories, aversions and fears lie waiting to come to the surface, given an opportunity. These “dormant” impulses indirectly influence our behaviour and attitudes. These are called “repressed” as against “suppressed” impulses, emotions, desires and so on. Psychology defines repression as the *unconscious* impulse to

exclude from one’s consciousness certain desires, wishes, socially unacceptable ideas, traumatic memories, etc., while “suppressed,” desires and emotions are those which we *know* to be improper tendencies in our moral nature and hence we *consciously* dismiss them. Freud maintained that the contents of the subconscious are not available for introspection but manifest during dreams, “slip of the tongue,” or psychoanalysis. The process of hypnotism also tends to bring to the surface the contents of the subconscious, and hence latent or dormant thoughts, feelings and desires. Strong desires always find some way of expressing themselves, such as, through dreams. A lady once narrated her dream to Mr. Judge in which she was standing in front of a mirror and trying out her new bonnet. She was thinking how lucky she was to be the first one to get the bonnet of the new style! Just then she saw another lady walk into the room and growing green with envy, seeing her new bonnet. Mr. Judge remarked that the dream was avenue for the gratification of her love of personal decoration and also brought to the surface the hidden desire to stand ahead of others.

Often we put down certain desires—because we do not like to face them—by a strong effort of will instead of struggling to slay or transmute them. It is like allowing the fire to smoulder under a thin layer of ashes. A whiff of wind can cause big flames to leap out. We are then behaving like that Spartan boy who hid the baby fox under his coat, when he was caught stealing it, and while he valiantly kept answering the questions put to him, the baby fox was eating away his entrails. H.P.B. points out that similarly our dormant desires tend to corrupt the better part of our nature, when we refuse to kill out or transform them. Some of these desires are unconsciously pushed into the subconscious. For instance, the child who dislikes the father and wishes to kill him, does not admit that he has this desire and thus slowly that desire gets repressed.

Sometimes we feel that we have successfully transmuted or killed out a certain desire, but vestiges of it may still be lying dormant, so that as soon as the mind becomes free it unexpectedly turns to that

desire. Then we become aware that we have not completely eradicated the desire. Often, analysis of our actions makes us aware of the traces of certain desires in us. For instance, we may not openly steal, but we may be perfectly willing to make extra money by unfair means so long as we are not found out. This is latent greed or desire for money. If we continually compare ourselves with those who are wealthy or prominent in the society, it reflects latent ambition or envy.

However, when one earnestly determines to live the spiritual life and offers oneself for discipleship or chelaship, it is said that by that very solemn vow he arouses the sleeping passions or dormant desires. This is an occult law. In fact, his whole moral nature with its strength and weaknesses, *i.e.*, with good and evil propensities is brought to the surface. It is similar to the process of purifying the metals, which brings the scum to the surface and leaves the pure gold behind. Hence, chelaship has been defined as a “psychic resolvent,” which eats away all dross and leaves only the pure gold behind. If there is *latent* lust for money or vain display, or false speaking or sensual gratification of any kind, the germ is almost sure to sprout. The *real man* comes out. Then the person must fight many times harder to kill out or transmute those desires or weaknesses because, having aroused these passions there is no alternative but to vanquish or be vanquished by them.

However, along with the lower “dross,” the “gold” of our soul-nature, in terms of good moral character, also comes to the surface. Thus, hitherto hidden traits of goodness and higher virtues may come to our aid in confronting the base desires and tendencies, and in subduing them.

WE have to cultivate calmness under all circumstances. Calmness is like a rock; waves of irritation may dash at it, but cannot affect it.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In his new book *Social Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman, presents a new perspective on human connection. Why do we cry when we see another person cry, or feel buoyed-up by a stranger’s smile? The answer is, our brains are designed to be social and they catch emotions the same way we catch a cold. The closer the relationship, the more potent such “contagion” will be. Negative emotions and interactions cause the body to secrete a harmful chemical called cortisol, while positive interactions prompt secretion of oxytocin, which boosts the immune system. When the elderly live in the company of children they bloom and seem to be getting younger. Likewise, anger-prone people can “infect” themselves with calmness by spending time with mellower individuals. Goleman explains it in terms of “mirror neurons” which function towards stimulating like reaction. It also explains the Michelangelo phenomenon, in which long-term partners come to resemble each other through “empathic resonance.” So too, our ideals and prejudices can be contagious. Our “constant digital connectivity” can deaden us. There is a need for richer human connection that could be brought about through empathy. It is an aberration to be cruel and our brains are wired for kindness. Perhaps the most inspiring piece of the social-intelligence puzzle is neuroplasticity: the discovery that our brains never stop evolving, writes Mark Matousek (*Health and Nutrition*, July 2007). “Social interaction helps neurogenesis. The brain rises to the occasion the more you challenge it,” observes Goleman.

Brain is only an instrument of the mind with centres for intelligence and emotions. When two minds vibrate or change into the same state, they will think alike. A Master of Wisdom points out that the law of sympathy works at all levels. “Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man.” There exists a mysterious sympathy between the plant, animal, and human kingdom. Sympathy is a holy and natural power of magnetism

while fascination is evil and unnatural. Spiritual love, that of the mother for her child, or love as pure friendship, are purely magnetic manifestations of sympathy in congenial natures. (*Isis*, I, 209-10)

The whole concept of brotherhood rests on the subtle threads of sympathy which connect us. We are interconnected on the inner plane. One person's unhappiness pollutes not only his own inner being and of those around him but also the collective human psyche of which he is an inseparable part. Further, any negative inner state is contagious: Through the law of resonance, it triggers and feeds latent negativity in others. Mr. Crosbie writes:

It is better to assume a cheerful attitude, to cultivate in one's self a feeling of confidence, and endeavour to impart it to our nearest. Our anxiety and inner fears, as well as our outward expression of them, may go a great way in depressing those who love us and whom we love.

When the elderly live in the company of children, they seem to be getting younger, not only because the vivacity and cheerfulness of the children is contagious but, there seems to be absorption of life-energy or vitality of the young by the old, when kept in close proximity. H.P.B. points out that intelligent physicians forbid parents to have young children occupy their own beds. When David was old and feeble, his vital forces were rejuvenated by having a young person brought in close contact with him so that he could absorb her strength. (*Isis*, I, 463)

In a Bedouin town at Al-Sayyid in Israel, of the 3,500 residents, 150 are deaf. Deafness has been passed down from one generation to the next for the last 70 years. As a result, an indigenous sign language has sprung up as a means of communication and is used alike by the deaf and hearing villagers. Thus, there are three sign languages: American Sign Language (ASL), Israeli Sign Language

(ISL) and now, Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language (ABSL). Linguists who have visited the town observe that since Al-Sayyid Bedouin Sign Language has arisen entirely on its own, it is a proof of "language instinct," *i.e.*, man's inborn capacity to create language. If the linguists can isolate the formal elements that make ABSL a language, they might be able to possess ingredients essential to all language. By the end of the twentieth century, linguists believed that their sought-after virgin language existed in the sign language of the deaf. "Sign languages spring from the same mental machinery that spoken languages do, but they are linguistic saplings." The linguists do not claim that the ABSL reflects evolutionary development of language in *Homo sapiens*, but observe that given a fully developed human brain, we are able to see how it makes a language out of nothing, writes Margalit Fox. (*Discover*, July 2007)

Language is a collection of sounds and languages have their "cyclic evolution, their childhood, purity, growth, fall into matter, admixture with other languages, maturity, decay and finally death" (*S.D.*, II, 199). In a footnote on the same page H.P.B. states that "Language is certainly coeval with reason." The whole of human race was at one time of one language, taught to it by Divine Instructors.

H.P.B. tells us that "it is almost certain that the great linguistic families pass through three stages" (*S.D.*, II, 662). In the first stage, all words are roots and merely placed in juxtaposition, creating what are called radical languages. In the next stage, one root defines another and becomes what is called a "determinative element." This is the stage of agglutinative languages. Finally, this determinative element unites into a whole with the formative element, and we have inflected speech. This agrees with the scientific explanation of the origin of language, but science has no idea where the original roots come from. The early mankind (first three races) did not possess articulate speech. Some scientists assert that "human speech was developed from a few simple sounds," but that is not true. Professor Max Muller contended that no plausible explanation has been given

as to how the “roots” of language came into existence. Theosophy asserts that a “*human* brain is necessary for *human* speech.” When we compare the brain of an ape with that of man we find that a great gulf separates the two. It has been observed that the brain of the largest ape, the gorilla, measures only about 30.51 cubic inches; the average brain even of the Australian natives—one of the least developed races, measures about 99.35 cubic inches. Thus, the brain-size of the ape is not even half the size of the brain of the new-born child. (*S.D.*, II, 661)

To understand the development of language we must take into consideration the development of speech in various races of man. The First Race was speechless. The Second Root Race communicated by chant-like sounds composed of vowels only. During the second half of the Third Root Race, after the sexes had separated and mind was awakened, speech developed. This speech was, at first, monosyllabic, *i.e.*, consisted of vowels mixed with consonants. The Fourth Root Race developed what is known as agglutinative language, *i.e.*, consisting of loosely connected words. In the Fifth Root Race our modern languages were developed.

In 1950, in a letter to bishops, Pope Pius XII took up the issue of evolution. He wrote that so long as evolution relates to the study of physical traits, the Roman Catholic Church does not object to its study, but “Catholic faith obliges us to hold that souls are immediately created by God.” In 1996, Pope John Paul II made much the same point and remarked that considering the mind as emerging merely from physical phenomena was “incompatible with the truth about man.” On the other hand, the theological standpoint that a God imbues humans with souls is challenged by science, as evolutionary biologists and cognitive neuroscientists discover more and more brain structures and physical correlates to feelings like empathy, joy, disgust, as also physical basis for moral thought, writes Cornella

Dean (*The Times of India*, June 28, 2007, courtesy *New York Times*). How are we to regard Descartes’s dictum: “I think, therefore I am,” as biologists bring forward evidence that animals too exhibit emotions and patterns of cognition, once considered as strictly human? V. S. Ramachandran, a brain scientist at the University of California, San Diego, remarked that there may be soul in the sense of “the universal spirit of the cosmos,” but soul as “an immaterial spirit that occupies individual brains and that only evolved in humans—all that is complete nonsense.”

“Between degrading superstition and still more degrading brutal materialism, the White Dove of Truth has hardly room whereon to rest her weary unwelcome feet. It is time that Theosophy should enter the arena,” wrote a Master of Wisdom, in early years of the Theosophical Movement, making plain the need for Theosophical philosophy. The situation is much the same today. Theosophy mentions three aspects of the Soul—*animal*, *human* and *divine*—pertaining to passions and desires, reasoning and spiritual aspects in man. H.P.B. points out that just as the moist element in jelly-fish is derived from the Ocean that surrounds it, so also our soul is derived from the Universal Over-soul or *Anima Mundi*. It is the divine essence that permeates, animates and informs all, from the smallest atom of matter to man and god. She explains that when it is stated Soul was breathed into man by God, this “Soul” spoken of in Chapter 2 of *Genesis* (v. 7), is *Nephesh* or *vital*, animal soul and not the *thinking Soul* or *mind*.

H.P.B. further shows how untenable is the belief that man was bestowed with Soul by a *personal* God. She argues: Why would a just and merciful God create some souls to be born in adverse surroundings and others to be born in favourable surroundings? Worse still, are we to understand that millions of children born in crime and adultery are God’s work—that God, who forbids adultery and punishes breaking of the Law?

Though science has succeeded in identifying certain areas in the brain and certain chemicals corresponding to various emotional and

moral traits, brain is only an instrument of the Soul (Mind) and not their seat. Out-of-body experiences (OBEs) have proven the existence of Soul independent of the body. When the body and brain are asleep, we still experience joy, fear, aversion, etc., in dreams, wherein we are in a different state of consciousness.

Animals have souls and yet man differs from animals in that he has self-consciousness and the power to think and choose. In the article, "Have Animals Souls?" H.P.B. writes:

Man and animal are both endowed with soul and faculties, if not equal in development and perfection, at least the same in name and essence....Instinct and intelligence are two faculties completely opposed in their nature....and if they [churchmen and modern metaphysicians] will not admit of two souls or principles, they have to recognize...the presence of two potencies in the soul, each having a different seat in the brain.

Human *brain*, leave alone soul or mind, is of much better and deeper capacity than that of even the most intelligent animal.

It is told how Jesus, son of Mary, met an old man on a mountain, who lived in the open air without shelter against heat and cold. "Why dost thou not build a house?" he asked him.

"O Spirit of God," replied the old man, "prophets before thee predicted that I would only live for 700 years: therefore it is not worth my trouble to settle down."

—SAFURI

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