

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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WHERE SHALL WE LOOK FOR HELP?

Forsake every other religion and take refuge alone with me;
grieve not, for I shall deliver thee from all transgressions.

—Gita, XVIII

Men driven by fear seek refuge on mountains, in forests,
under sacred trees or at shrines. Such refuge is not secure, such
refuge is not the best. Such refuge frees not a man from pain.

—The Dhammapada

WHAT do we witness around us today? Though technological and scientific advancement has, to a great extent, weaned away the intelligentsia from the orthodox church or religion, the majority of mankind is still in the clutches of rituals and ceremonies—with the exception of the materialists, the rationalists, the agnostics and atheists. Even in India, we find that scientific men or highly qualified academicians have a completely closed mind, when it comes to religion; they are reluctant to apply reasoning. Often, one is afraid to question one's religion. It is much safer to follow blindly the tradition followed by one's elders.

As long as life is smooth and comfortable we do not ask: Why am I here? What is the purpose of life? Why do we suffer? The moment some tragedy strikes—loss of a loved one, financial loss, serious illness, etc.—we turn to God and spirituality. Often, we

are not aware that we are reaping the effects of the causes we had sown earlier. Students, parents, young boys and girls, visit temples to barter with God. “Let my son or daughter pass the examination,” a mother will pray. It is not Ganesa, the God of Wisdom, who is, going to correct the answer papers. Instead, if only they could study well, then, being a God of Wisdom, Ganesa can help in understanding and assimilation. At the Balaji temple at Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh, the collection goes up to twenty five crores or more—in terms of currency and coins—not to mention the jewellery offered to the Lord. Some offer a silver leg as a barter to get their own leg cured or set right. There may be reports of successes, but unfortunately, the statistics do not include the failures. Everything must happen within the ambit of the law—the great Law of Karma. Can anything or anyone escape the Law of Karma? H.P.B. writes:

The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but ONE Truth, man requires but one church—the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter but penetrable by any one who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God.* (*Isis*, II, 635)

H.P.B. was asked: “Do you believe in prayer”? Her answer was: “We do not pray, as you do,” *i.e.*, pray to a personal, anthropomorphic god. The prayer we believe in is the silent, unuttered prayer to our “Father in secret.” Most people engage in petitionary prayers. If a murderer or worst kind of criminal, at deathbed, receives communion, then his ticket to heaven is assured. He is forgiven. This kind of vicarious atonement has morally ruined us. Then, where do students of Theosophy look for help? The answer given is, to their *Karma* and to their Higher Self—the divine spirit or the God within. H.P.B. explains that Higher Self and Karma are one and the same.

Neither Atma nor Buddhi are ever reached by Karma, because the former is the highest aspect of Karma, *its working*

agent of ITSELF in one aspect, and the other is unconscious *on this plane.* (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 133)

There is no difference between Atma and Karma, because the working agent of Karma is Atma. The Ninth Discourse of the *Gita* begins with the words, “Unto thee who findeth no fault, I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge.” A spiritual aspirant must have faith in the Guru. He should have faith that the knowledge exists and the Law operates universally. It is the Royal Knowledge, the Kingly Mystery, the most excellent purifier—the remover of dross from our lower nature—and clearly comprehensible, not opposed to sacred law, easy to perform and inexhaustible. Those who are unbelievers in this truth are born again in this world. Krishna says that “The deluded despise me in human form, being unacquainted with my real nature as Lord of all things.” “I am the ego seated in the hearts of all beings.” Whenever we decry or abuse another person or mortify our body, we decry and torture the Krishna within. Krishna also points out in this chapter that those who worship him with some motive, have certain reward—they go to *Indraloka* or Devachan and spend time there in proportion to their merits, and then are born again on earth, once the stock of merit is exhausted. But for those who have grasped the all-pervading nature of Krishna, when they worship, considering Him as identical with all, Krishna promises: “I bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness.”

Man is a sevenfold being. The four lower principles—physical body, astral body, Prana and the desire principle—constitute man’s personality or *Kshetra* that is changing and is perishable. *Atma-Buddhi-Manas* constitute Individuality or *Kshetrajna*. We are undergoing the obligatory pilgrimage of life to transform ourselves from *Kamatmic* beings to *Mahatmic* beings. *Kama* or desire principle is the middle principle. The incarnated consciousness becomes dual, and is designated as the higher and the lower *manas*. The lower *manas* is caught in the webs of *Kama* which drag the man to animality. H.P.B. points out that the fate of the consciousness

standing on the *Antahkarana*—the bridge between the higher and lower mind—depends upon whether it will levitate towards the divine parent—making the person a Mahatma—or, is pulled down by lower passions and desires, making the person worse than an animal. Thus, man is dual in character. He can be like a dove or a tiger. The moment we identify with our body and personality, we separate ourselves from other beings. When we think in this manner, the fight between the lower and the higher starts—the fight between the living and the dead. The living is the higher and the dead is the ever-changing personality. This is the theme of the *Gita*. In the very first verse, Dhritarashtra, the blind king representing matter, says, “Tell me, O Sanjaya, what the people of my own party and those of Pandu... have been doing”? When one has the concept of mine and thine, confusion sets in. Because of lack of knowledge, and lack of time to go through the scriptures ourselves, we turn to *pandits* and priests to interpret them for us. This other-dependence is the folly of modern society. Theosophy emphasizes self-dependence—dependence upon the true Self. *Brihad Aranyaka Upanishad* says:

For only where there is separation [duality] may one see another, may one taste another, may one speak to another, may one hear another, may one think of another, may one touch another, may one know another. But the one Seer is undivided, like pure water. This, O king, is the world of the Eternal. This is the highest path. This is the highest treasure. This is the highest world. This is the highest bliss. All beings live on the fragments of this bliss. (*Selections from the Upanishads*, pp. 18-19)

But so long as we have this separative tendency in our mind we cannot understand the nature of self, much less carry out its behest. The moment we are able to surrender totally to the Lord within, what the Vaishnavites call *Prapatti*, then we will be able to carry out the behests of the lord, the charioteer within. In the *Gita*, it is only in the Eighteenth Chapter that Arjuna tells Krishna that his

delusion was destroyed and he had regained his memory and would act according to his bidding. It is the delusion of being separate from Krishna and from all the other beings.

Generally, we are engrossed in our own world, going far, far away from the true goal—through our selfishness and competitiveness. What kind of education are we giving to our children? Children are our salvation. We should make them stand on their own feet, inculcate love and kindness towards all, and realize that the entire humanity is one brotherhood. *Ishavashya Upanishad* says, in the very first verse, that the moment we surrender everything, we can realize God. Through true renunciation, we may enjoy—by giving up the non-essentials. And he who sees all things in the Self and the Self in all beings, feels no hatred by virtue of that realization. Therefore, what is the duty of a Theosophist?

To control and conquer, *through the Higher, the lower self*. To purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of his own conscience. Never to do a thing by halves; *i.e.*, if he thinks it the right thing to do, let him do it openly and boldly, and if wrong, never touch it at all. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 238)

People say that it is difficult to realize the abstract principles, but what about the Masters? They are the embodiments of the Law of karma and the law of sacrifice for the sake of humanity. They have preserved the knowledge for Orphan Humanity—for those who are open-eyed and eager enough to seek it. Knock and it will be opened unto you. Ask and it shall be given unto you. But we ask with our lips only. Have we become fit enough to be entrusted with the sacred knowledge? Speech comes only with knowledge, says *Light on the Path*. Have we acquired spiritual knowledge? If we have acquired it then have we really assimilated it? If we find it too difficult to contemplate on One Reality—being too abstract—“seek then the bridge, the Masters.” We are asked to think about

their compassionate nature and their incessant work for humanity. Thus:

As we admit the reality of the Higher Self, we should embrace the idea, dwell on it *day in and day out* until the will and desire naturally incline to it and have it as the subtone or aim of thought. This process will make the line of influence brighter and better *with every thought*. When the influence grows strong it pervades the entire nature and strengthens as well as improves. It will give *knowledge and also energy*. This is the real and only road to the Masters, the Adepts, the Mahatmas. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 140-41)

We are told that realization comes from dwelling on the thing to be realized. These are not just words. We must weave them into the fabric of our own nature. It should become our first nature. Then we will always keep in mind that whatever we do, whatever we think, whatever we feel must be consistent with the Higher Self. Once we have that realization, we need no outside protection. We will know that even in our sleep, the Light of the One Master radiates on us.

The light from the ONE MASTER, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the Disciple from the very first...But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*; its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 19)

I do not know what I may appear to the world, but to myself I seem to have been only like a boy, playing on the seashore, and diverting myself, in now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me.

—SIR ISSAC NEWTON

DASAVATARA—TEN AVATARS OF VISHNU

The whole world has been pervaded by the energy of the deity, he is entitled Vishnu, from the root *Vis* “to enter” or “pervade,” for all the gods, the Manus, the Seven Rishis, the Sons of Manu, the Indras, all are but the impersonated potencies (*Vibhutayah*) of Vishnu.

—S.D., II, 611 fn.

WHAT is an Avatara? “An Avatara is Divine Incarnation. The descent of a god or some exalted Being, who has progressed beyond the necessity of rebirths, into the body of a simple mortal. Krishna was an avatar of Vishnu. The Dalai Lama is regarded as an avatar of Avalokiteshwara” (*The Theosophical Glossary*). Vishnu is the second person of the Hindu *Trimurti* (trinity) composed of Brahma the creator, Vishnu the preserver and Siva the destroyer and regenerator. Narayana or “mover over waters of space,” is one of the titles of Vishnu. “Appearing with every Manvantara as Narayana or Swayambhuva (the Self-Existent), and penetrating into the Mundane Egg, it emerges at the end of the divine incubation as Brahma or Prajapati, a progenitor of the future Universe into which he expands” (*S.D.*, I, 80-81). Hence the Puranas show the lotus flower growing out of Vishnu’s navel and Brahma issuing out of that flower. Thus, Vishnu [or Narayana] represents the first or Unmanifested Logos, and Brahma, the second or manifested logos (*S.D.*, I, 381 fn.). Avatars are aspects of the Logos—the Word made flesh. The Logos contains within itself seven other procreative rays or powers. Hence it is said:

Men will *know* then, that there never yet was a great World-reformer, whose name has passed into our generation, who (*a*) was not a direct emanation of the Logos...*i.e.*, an essential incarnation of one of “the seven,” of the “divine Spirit who is sevenfold” (*b*) who had not appeared before, during the past Cycles.

Krishna is said to be “Purna Avatara,” as the potency of all the seven procreative rays manifested through him. The Avatars or Saviours come on earth, periodically from age to age, for the preservation of the just and establishment of righteousness, as also for the destruction of the wicked. Mr. Judge explains the meaning of the appearance of Avatars thus:

Krishna comes when wickedness has reached a maximum development. The real meaning of this is that the bad Karma of the world goes on increasing with the lapse of the ages, producing at last a creature who is, so to say, the very flower of all the wickedness of the past, counting from the last preceding Avatar. He is not only wicked, but also wise, with magic power of awful scope....His [Avatar’s] power is as great as the evil one, but he has on his side what the others have not—spirit, preservative, conservative forces [the general will of nature]. The result is a victory for the good and destruction for the wicked. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 107-08)

Against Krishna, there was a black magician, Kansa. Against Rama, described as the first king of the *divine* dynasty of the early Aryans, there was Ravana, symbolical personation of the Atlantean Race.

The ten mythical Avatars of Vishnu are as follows:

1. Matsya-Avatar: as a fish. It will also be his tenth and last Avatar, at the end of the Kali Yuga.
2. Kurma-Avatar: as a tortoise.
3. Varaha: as a boar.
4. Nara-sing: as a man-lion; last animal stage.
5. Vamana: as a dwarf; first step towards the human form.
6. Parasu-Rama: as a hero, but yet an imperfect man.
7. Rama-Chandra: as the hero of Ramayana. Physically a perfect man.
8. Christna-Avatar: the Son of the Virgin Devaki, one formed by God, or rather by the manifested Deity Vishnu, who is identical with Adam Kadmon. Christna is called Kaneya, the son of the Virgin.
9. Gautama-Buddha: (The Buddhists reject this doctrine of their Buddha being an incarnation of Vishnu).
10. Kalki-Avatar: According to the opinion of some Brahmins

he will appear himself under the form of the horse Kalki. Others maintain that he will be mounting it. This horse is the envelope of the spirit of evil, and Vishnu will mount it, invisible to all, till he has conquered it for the last time. (*Isis*, II, 274)

The above shows that, in a sense, various avatars depict the gradual evolution and transformation of all species, beginning with Azoic times, corresponding to *ilus* in which Brahma implants the creative germ. Then we pass through Palaeozoic and Mesozoic times, covered by the first and second incarnations as the fish and tortoise. Next is the Cenozoic period, covered by the third and fourth incarnations in the animal and semi-human forms of boar and man-lion. The geological period is covered by the fifth, designated as “the age of man,” symbolized in the Hindu mythology by dwarf.

Matsya-Avatar symbolizes the period when the earth was covered with water. According to the story in the “Mahabharata,” while Vaivaswata Manu was engaged in devotion on the riverbank, a fish appears and pleads to be saved from a bigger fish. He saves and places it in a jar, where growing larger and larger, he tells him of the forthcoming deluge. H.P.B. points out that it is the well-known “Matsya Avatar,” the first Avatar of Vishnu and many other things besides. Vishnu orders a ship to be built, in which Manu is said to be saved along with the seven Rishis. H.P.B. explains that the seven Rishis stand for *seven Races*, the seven principles and various other things. In one sense it refers to the Atlantean flood and Vaivaswata, the great sage on Earth, who saved our Fifth Root-race from being destroyed along with the remnants of the Fourth or Atlantean Race (*S.D.*, I, 139-40). But Vaivaswata Manu is also shown as saving mankind or the portion of it (that would constitute the Fourth Race), when the Third Continent, Lemuria, perished 700,000 years before the commencement of Tertiary (Eocene) age, by Deluge (*S.D.*, II, 313). Explaining the symbology of Fish, H.P.B. writes:

The “fish” and the sea, or *water*, are the most archaic emblems of the Messiah, or incarnations of divine wisdom, among all the ancient people. Fishes play prominently a figure on old Christian medals; and in the catacombs of Rome the “Mystic Cross” or “Anchor” stands between two fishes as supporters. “Daghdae,” the name of Zarathushtra’s mother, means the “Divine Fish” or Holy Wisdom. (*H.P.B. Series No. 2*, p. 13)

Daitya king Hiranyakasipu is said to have been slain by Vishnu in his Narasimha Avatar. The legend goes that Hiranyakasipu, the Daitya, who was supposed to have conquered the three worlds, was inflated with pride and self-esteem. He had a very pious son, Prahlad, who was a great devotee of Vishnu. When it was found that Prahlad refused to recognize the supremacy of his father, but revered Vishnu as the sovereign of the three worlds, Hiranyakasipu tried his best to kill his son, but every time the son remained unscathed. Upon being told by Prahlad that he was protected by Vishnu who was everywhere and that he was present even in the pillar, Hiranyakasipu struck at the pillar, in order to kill Vishnu. Immediately, Vishnu in the form of half-man and half-lion, came forth from the pillar, laid hold of the Daitya king by the thighs with his teeth and tore him up the middle. Brahma’s boon to the Daitya king was that he would not be destroyed by a common animal or man; he would die neither in the day nor night, and so on. This promise was kept. Daityas and Rakshasas refer to the Atlanteans, “who offered fanatical worship to dark Cosmic, anthropomorphic Powers, with whom they made alliance.” They had become materialistic, sensuous and proud, as expressed in Stanza X, Sloka 40: “The Third and the Fourth (races) became tall with pride. We are the Kings, We are the Gods” (*S.D.*, II, 271). Further:

We are shown one hero...first born as the “unrighteous but valiant monarch” (Purusha) of the Daityas, Hiranyakasipu, slain by the Avatar Nara-Sinha (Man-lion). Then he was born as

Ravana, the giant king of Lanka, and killed by Rama; after which he is reborn as Sisupala, the son of Rajarishi (King Rishi) Damaghosha, when he is again killed by Krishna, the last incarnation of Vishnu. This parallel evolution of Vishnu (spirit) with a Daitya, as man, may seem meaningless, yet it gives us a key not only to the respective dates of Rama and Krishna but even to a certain psychological mystery. (*S.D.*, II, 225 fn.)

In the Hindu Puranas, two great creations are mentioned, the Padma and the Varaha. During the latter creation the Earth was lifted out of the water by Brahma, in the shape of a boar, or “Varaha Avatara,” writes H.P.B. We are also told that the last Kalpa was the Padma, the present one is Varaha. This has allusion to the period when our globe was covered with water, when physical nature, unaided by the divine intelligences, failed to create man. After this, the “Creators” are displeased and dry the earth, and hence began the period of incrustation. (*S.D.*, II, 52-53)

The legend associated with the *Vamana* or Dwarf avatar of Vishnu says that there was a mighty demon king called Bali who took care of the well-being and prosperity of his people. It is said that he was trying to trap Laxmi and get her to his kingdom from Vaikuntha, in order to bring prosperity to *his kingdom only*. Vishnu then decided to teach him a lesson and took the form of a dwarf and went to Bali, who was conducting a great sacrifice. Bali welcomed this dwarf wholeheartedly and requested him to have anything as a sacrificial gift. Vishnu asked him to give him land that he could cover in three strides. When Bali consented, Vishnu assumed a huge form and with his first step he covered the earth, with the second he covered the heavens, and for the third step Bali had to allow Vishnu to put his foot on his head. Thereupon, Vishnu, who is also called *Trivikrama*—the Lord of three strides—became extremely pleased with Bali and he put his foot on Bali’s head and pushed him beneath to *Patala*, the nether region, where Vishnu gave Bali a kingdom exclusively for himself, which Vishnu himself protected. The Divine element in man—call it “Atma” or “Spirit,”

is described as the dwarf sitting in the heart. There are various interpretations of the “three strides of Vishnu,” says H.P.B. In the astronomical sense, it depicts various positions of the sun—rising, noon and setting. We may also understand the “three strides” in terms of various stages of manifestation—arising from the One. “Stepping out of the circle of Infinity, that no man comprehendeth, Ain-Soph (the Kabalistic synonym for Parabrahm), becomes the ‘one,’ then he (or it) is transformed by evolution into...the Dhyani-Buddhas or the Elohim, his third Step being taken into generation of the flesh, or ‘Man’” (*S.D.*, I, 112-113) Thus:

The three strides relate metaphysically to the descent of Spirit into matter, of the Logos falling as a ray into the Spirit, then into the Soul, and finally into the human physical form of man, in which it becomes LIFE. (*S.D.*, I, 113 fn.)

As for Buddha being considered as Avatar, we may refer to H.P.B.’s explanation on “Thirty-five Buddhas of Confession.” She points out that these personages, though called “Buddhas” in Northern Buddhist religion, may just as well be called Rishis or Avatars and are universal. They are *historical* sages. “They are chosen from among some ninety-seven Buddhas in one group, and fifty-three in another, mostly imaginary personages, who are really the personifications of the powers of the first-named.” Gautama Buddha is the twenty-seventh of the last group (of fifty-three Buddhas). H.P.B. explains further that these thirty-five Buddhas represent once living men, great Adepts and Saints in whom the “Sons of Wisdom” have incarnated, and who, therefore, can be called minor Avatars of the Celestial Beings. But of these, only eleven belong to the Fourth or Atlantean Race, while twenty four belong to the Fifth Race, from its beginning. They are identical with the *Tirthankaras* of the Jains. (*S.D.*, 423 and fn.)

PLATO AND HIS IDEAS

II

THERE is a great deal of technical and philosophical explanation in Plato’s philosophy as to what the visible world or the world of matter is like. What makes it even approximately knowable is that it follows or obeys a consistent pattern. The world itself is shapeless and constantly changing, but it obeys a set of laws. Where do they come from? How can something which is itself shifting like sand provide them? Plato says that on another and the higher level of reality there are ideas or forms which are real, because they do not change. They govern the flux, the constant change in the universe. Indeed, they give recognizable shapes or qualities or characteristics to the things in the world we know. Otherwise, those things would be mere shapeless chaos. In fact, in the technical language of Greek religion and philosophy, Plato pointed out that whatever the ultimate reality might be, it was by the impression of the Divine Mind upon Chaos that we have a world which is a cosmos. He says that metaphorically, Chaos or infinite substance is like the Mother (undifferentiated matter) from whom the Son, the actual universe, is born. The Father, so to speak, is ideas in the Divine Mind. The term “Idea” is really a copy of the Greek word *Idein*, which has shades of meanings, such as a sharp image and the other is *eidolon*—a sort of fleeting impression of a thing. Ideas govern things, and hence it is said, “Ideas rule the world.”

In modern physics, matter has become exactly what Plato described it to be, philosophically, *i.e.*, something which has no solidity, which has no permanent shape, which cannot be located or described very accurately. Heisenberg’s Uncertainty Principle says that if you describe the *velocity* of a particle, you cannot describe its *location* accurately. On the other hand, if you describe its location then you cannot describe its velocity accurately. Academic teachers of philosophy and those physicists, who take

interest in philosophy, agree with Plato that the only thing that they can be accurate about is a mathematical description of reality. All other descriptions are very approximate and inaccurate. When Plato speaks of approaching reality, he speaks of several stages, and in those stages, the highest are *not physical*.

In the *Symposium*—one of the dialogues—Socrates himself is being instructed by Diotima, a mystic. They agree that man advances from, let us say, admiring the beauty of a handsome youth or a beautiful girl, to admiring the idea of a shape in the abstract, to admiring the beauty of conduct, to admiring the beauty of principles, until we approach the ultimate principle of all principles—BEAUTY. Thus the Greek tradition had already thought what an English poet wrote many centuries later: “Euclid alone saw beauty bare,” *i.e.*, that the highest experience of beauty is mathematical. It is not the particular colour or the particular texture. His philosophy is an actual analysis of human experience. In this, Plato’s method of going from the universals to particulars in the science of knowledge or epistemology becomes his important contribution. Plato, the philosopher, in fact has given a solid reality back to the universe in the sense that matter is only a constant flux which you cannot rely upon, but behind it, there is a universe which does not change. The same thing happens with regard to the study of aesthetics. Some people say that Bach is a great musician and others think that Jazz is great music. How is one to determine? But Plato firmly expressed that there is an idea of beauty that exists on its own plane, quite apart from what anybody thinks. This supports the view of those who are quite sure from their aesthetic experience, that there is such a thing as high quality in music or painting or sculpture. It is but natural that centuries later, we should respect the paintings of Raphael or Michelangelo or the poetry of Dante or Shakespeare.

H.P.B. mentions that Plato embraced the ideas of Pythagoras, and Pythagoras in turn had brought them from India. For instance, the concept in astrology, of a planet or a star exerting some strange

influence. Plato thought—like Pythagoras and the ancient Hindus—that behind every planet or star is a great conscious cosmic intelligence. There is a Rector or Regent of each planet or star. Much of the ancient talk about the influence of the stars or planets is not concerning the physical stars or planets, but is about the nature and the activities of the Regent—a kind of intelligence that later ages describe as Angelic or Archangelic. Plato speaks of Agathon (Supreme Deity) and Chaos (Mulaprakriti or undifferentiated matter). Within Chaos is the Logos. Logos is simply Greek for *word* and from this Logos emanate or radiate, like rays, conscious, cosmic or angelic intelligences. Therefore, these forms or ideas are not simply abstractions. They are alive, they are animate, with a life which is angelic or divine. In Plato’s time, the word divine did not necessarily refer to God. In fact, Plato himself defined the word *Theos* as derived from a Greek root, which means to move—that which animates from within and moves and is divine. The word “Logos” became the focal point of Christianity when it tried to explain its beliefs in philosophical terms. Plato describes Logos, as that divine energy which is the first thing in the *manifested universe*—as the Agathon is totally unreachable, like the *Parabrahm*. Chaos by its nature is an infinite potentiality, a substance, like *Mulaprakriti*. It is through it that an actual universe has to manifest. But the control of the actual universe—the manifestation, belongs to the Logos. The concept of the Logos came to western civilization from Plato. It comes close to the First Fundamental Proposition of the Secret Doctrine. Plato speaks of the eternal idea as the equivalent of the Logos.

Divine Mind is reflected in the Eternal Idea and has many aspects. For instance, Truth, Goodness and Beauty; the Pythagorean trinity, is an aspect of a divine structure of the universe. It controls and governs the changing processes, the incomplete capacities of matter. What happens when we recognize beauty or when we recognize goodness? Plato says that soul or psyche too has come from the Logos, but when the psyche was still with God, still not

differentiated or crystallized away from the Agathon, it participated in Divine Eternal Idea. In manifestation, since the soul has to work through matter, it forgets its divine origin. Only *sometimes* something that is beautiful or good or self-evidently true awakes in the soul or *psyche* a memory of what it knew when it was an undifferentiated part of the Divine Reality. Hence, when we call something *truly* beautiful, we are not merely expressing our like or dislike, we are not merely expressing our personal emotion, it is a memory of a Reality. And that thing deserves our thanks because it reminds us of a divine life to which we belonged in our origin as souls.

There are several injunctions on leading a good life. Plato's political contribution which comes in the famous dialogue called "The Republic," is essentially that if human beings are to live worthily they must live in such a way that soul has many opportunities of seeing and remembering what it knew on the higher level of its original life. It has opportunities of moving from beautiful forms to beautiful conduct and from beautiful conduct to beautiful principles. It has opportunities of making the return journey—returning back to divinity. Therefore, the State has to be guided by those who have already accomplished it—by the philosopher kings. The philosopher king would not want to rule. Because "power," in our worldly sense, is something he does not value and does not want. So that people will have to go and beg him to take charge and guide them. He refers to a wonderful Greek myth, which points out that when Saturn, the deity of time, himself ruled, he saw that no man was fit to rule another, as it might lead to injustice and trouble. Hence, he provided the earliest human beings in the golden age with rulers who were divine or semi-divine or heroes. This is of course exactly like the Indian notion of the *Rajarishis*.

(Concluded)

OUR THREE OBJECTS

DIVINE wisdom has always existed. Wisdom-Religion forms the repository of the wisdom of the ages. It is known to perfected beings like Buddha, Jesus, Shankara and spiritually advanced beings who are not even known to the world. They are called Mahatmas, Masters or Elder Brothers of humanity. They work ceaselessly to keep alive in men's hearts and minds the spiritual ideas. They make definite effort to help the spiritual progress of mankind. One such effort was in the form of the Theosophical Movement, launched in the year 1875. It was the time when right philosophy was desperately needed. The western world was fast dividing into two classes. One was wedded to dogmatism, superstition and blind belief and the other had embraced Darwinian ideas of evolution, which had shaken the very roots of their belief in God and his creation. For them, science was their new goddess. They had enthroned skepticism as her ambassador and believed only those things that had the stamp of acceptance by science. Humanity was in dire need of truths. It was then that Theosophy entered the arena with three important objects. The first object is stated thus:

To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour—the separate distinctions most universally made in the world.

This is the only object which every student of Theosophy must necessarily subscribe to, if he really wants to derive benefit from the teachings of Theosophy. Theosophy only proposes to make a sincere and serious attempt to form a *nucleus* of Universal Brotherhood—a coming together of men and women to work for humanity. When united unselfishly and on the universal basis of brotherhood of all men, a powerful centre is formed like a nucleus that requires tremendous energy to break it apart. A nucleus of universal brotherhood would be such a centre to which all may join and to which Masters can direct their spiritual energies and

powerful influences for the benefit of humanity. It is *Universal Brotherhood* that must form the basis of unity and not some partial brotherhood. It is partial brotherhoods that have led to atrocities, war, strife, horrors and terrible miseries for the rest of the humanity. The true Brotherhood has to be universal, to which everyone belongs and from which no one can be excluded.

Theosophy teaches us that the whole of humanity is an emanation from one source, which is divine. And having come from the same source, we are children of one family. Each one of us is essentially a divine being, though we have forgotten who we really are. We are like the king dreaming a dream that he is a beggar. We are not born in sin. All of us are of the same essence—physically as well as spiritually. Perfectibility is inherent in man.

Events of the world clearly demonstrate the principle of interdependence and close relationship among human beings. When Iraq attacked Kuwait, when combined forces of America and its allies attacked Iraq, its repercussions have been experienced by all the countries, whether they actively took part in the war or remained neutral. If petroleum prices rise, it affects even the common man because the commodities and services that he buys are linked by a complex chain of dependencies to those who buy and use petroleum products. If there is large-scale deforestation, killing of certain species of animals, it leads to serious ecological disturbances with far-reaching consequences. This is the reason why Theosophy affirms that when a man overcomes his own individual vice, he lifts the entire humanity to a higher level. Similarly, if he falls, if he sins or gives way to temptation, he causes the whole of humanity to be dragged down to a lower level, be it ever so little. It is this grand ideal of oneness of humanity, which provides a firm and logical basis for the practice of ethics.

When there is a calamity, when there is a natural disaster like tsunami, cyclone, earthquake, flood, destroying thousands of homes, killing millions of people, bringing on large-scale destruction and death and consequent poverty and misery, we are

touched and shaken. We at once empathize, we are able to feel the pain and loss of those who are caught up in the turmoil, and we respond to their cry for help spontaneously. Sadly, it takes such catastrophes to reawaken and arouse our innate brotherly feeling. Unfortunately, we have hardened ourselves so much that we are pretty comfortable or at least not overly disturbed like Buddha, when we see misery and suffering around us. It has become part of our lives. Sometimes, people harden themselves to such an extent that even calamities are merely news and statistics to be used as small talk. That is the reason why Theosophy urges us to respond at once while our cheeks are still wet with tears. That is the only palliative to the terrible miseries of humanity, which is the direct outcome of the sense of separateness, and man's inhumanity to man. The other two objects are:

The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study—in order to detect the vital principles common to all of them and thus do away with sectarianism and exclusiveness.

The investigation of the unexplained laws of nature and the psychological powers latent in man—to destroy the ideas of “special creation” and by the recognition of the reign of Law in everything and in every circumstance, and the recovery of the Spiritual and Psychological knowledge and powers of the immortal Ego.

The second and third objects are an extension of the first object and are for its support and realization. The second object attempts to show us that if there is one source, one root of everything and everyone in the universe, then there must be a common body of truth which must govern us and find its expression in various religions, philosophies and sciences. All of them must express various aspects, facets of the same truth. It is only by studying the teachings enshrined in various scriptures; by making an honest attempt to inquire and understand various points of view, that we are likely to come closer to understanding truth. It is our ignorance

or false understanding of ideas of God, Man and Nature, regarding life and evolution, that is at the root of wrong thinking and erroneous actions. What we need is truth, no matter from where it comes.

We said that there exists a body of divine knowledge. All down the ages, prophet-reformers gave out only an aspect of this wisdom that humanity needed most at that time. Later their followers called it a religion and gave it a label. It is by the comparative study of religions that we realize that all religions have common ethics. All religions teach man to be kind, brotherly, charitable, honest, loving and so on. All religions are true at the bottom and false on surface—due to lack of proper understanding on the part of the followers or sometimes due to deliberate misrepresentations and interpolations by priests, *pandits* and *purohits*. It requires careful sifting to salvage the truth from a mass of general teachings, rituals, ceremonies and external observances. Such a study enables us to know our own religion better and to respect truth, which is likewise present in other religions. This is a challenging, difficult and time-consuming object. We may or may not really possess the necessary skills and resources to undertake such a study. We are fortunate that H.P.B. has already provided such a comparison in her books, such as *The Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*.

If we turn to the third object, we realize that each phrase has significance. What is proposed is to “investigate” the unexplained laws of nature and psychic powers latent in man. It does not ask us to try to acquire these powers or obtain mastery over the laws of nature, but to *investigate* them in order to understand the rational basis of various phenomena and miraculous happenings in the world. The other significant phrase is “unexplained laws of nature.” Theosophy affirms that this is an orderly universe of law. Everything that happens in the world is the result of the operation of laws. We may not know them now, but there are those who know them and use them to produce various phenomena. There are laws pertaining to the physical world which science is investigating, but there are also laws of the inner, invisible world. It is possible for man, being

part of nature, to know them. If physical laws can be investigated, so can the psychic.

The important thing to realize is that not all that is invisible is necessarily spiritual. One must not make the mistake of equating acquirement of powers—most of which are only lower, psychic powers—with spiritual progress. The spiritual as well as evil man may possess these powers equally. So also, there are mediumistic people through whom various phenomena take place without their conscious control or knowledge. The invisible psychic zone is a dangerous zone. Spiritual progress must be from within without. Altruism, kindness, charity, love, selflessness, forgetfulness of oneself in the service of others, and above all, pure motive to always help others will at last bring man to a stage when these powers come to him spontaneously, ready to serve him to help others. Until then, the third object will keep us vigilant against false prophets; help us to steer clear of the allurements of cultivation of such powers in ourselves until we have reached that purity wherein we can be entrusted with them to use them for the benefit of mankind. Otherwise, psychic powers like mind-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, knowing past or future events, are like powerful dynamite in the hands of a child or a madman. Unless we have learnt to live in a brotherly manner, we are sure to become black magicians and enemies of mankind. It is such inquiry that helps to keep alive in man his spiritual intuition.

In *Isis Unveiled*, H.P.B. gives rational explanation of the laws that operate in so-called miracles. In conclusion, we may point out that for a serious student of Theosophy, it is the *first* object that should always aspire and guide him in his daily and hourly life and interaction with other human beings.

A GOOD book is the purest essence of the human soul.

—THOMAS CARLYLE

INTUITION

INTELLECT. Intelligence. Inspiration. Ideation. Idealism. Intuition. Strange, or perhaps *not* strange, that so many of the words associated with inner being should begin with the significant letter “I.” Most of them appear frequently in the writings of Mr. Judge, but the one we are concerned with at the moment is Intuition. Aided by his deep knowledge and understanding of the component parts of our mysterious psyche, let us try to learn more about this faculty, which some are notably endowed with, while others wholly lack it, though there are probably few who have not found it active in them at some time or another, however slightly.

As always with Mr. Judge, the more we ponder what he writes, the more its meaning seems to grow. One’s first reading of his books and articles may be rapid through sheer eagerness to know what he says, but ever after one returns to them for slow re-readings and careful study, these “permitting,” as he says himself, “the brilliant lamp of spiritual knowledge to illuminate our inner nature,” thanks to one who was himself a lifelong “holder of the flame.” (*The Heart Doctrine*, p. 82; *Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 108)

What *is* Intuition? “An instinctive inner knowing” seems a fair enough answer. A knowing which sometimes operates very simply in the realm of everyday matters, telling us, say, that the friend who has called unexpectedly has come because of something weighing on his or her mind, or that the unlooked-for letter just delivered to us contains a piece of good or, as the case may be, bad news. Sometimes we know what someone is about to say before he utters it. These are only very simple examples of Intuition operating; everyone will remember others of his own. So obviously, Intuition is not necessarily confined to the loftier spiritual levels, but can at times be little more than an instinct or an involuntary leap to a conclusion which is later proved right. If one person is peculiarly understanding of another without much exchange of words, that other will probably think of him as intuitive.

Mr. Judge, naturally, is far better able to explain this thing in us which so often seems to behave so erratically. “There is scarcely anyone,” he says, “who has not got an internal voice—a silent monitor—who, so to say, strikes within us the bell that corresponds to truth, just as a piano’s wires each report the vibrations peculiar to it, but not due to striking the wire itself. It is just as if we had within us a series of wires whose vibrations are all true, but which will not be vibrated except by those words and propositions which are in themselves true.... Many persons are inclined to doubt the existence in themselves of this intuition, who in fact possess it. It is a common heritage of man, and only needs unselfish effort to develop it.” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 45)

You see how he instantly lifts Intuition from the level of the trivial examples given above, showing it to be *in esse* a spiritual faculty. “One of the inner powers,” he calls it (*Ibid.*, p. 89), pertaining to the soul, in fact bearing witness to the soul, for, speaking of “the natural man, the lower principles and mind, presided over by the false consciousness,” he says, in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (p. 29), “Of the soul we have but brief and partial glimpses—in conscience or intuition—in our ordinary state.”

At first we may only be aware of our Intuition in embryo. But we must not permit ourselves to leave it at that. In those “Conversations on Occultism” between a Student and a Sage, included in *Vernal Blooms*, clear instructions are given as to what to do with the tiny spark of Intuition that is our heritage. (p. 172)

“Tell me,” says the Student, “some ways by which Intuition is to be developed.”

Here is the Sage’s reply:

First of all by giving it exercise, and second by not using it for purely personal ends. Exercise means that it must be followed through mistakes and bruises until from sincere attempts at use it comes to its own strength. This does not mean that we can do wrong and leave the results, but that after establishing conscience on a right basis by following the golden

rule, we give play to the intuition and add to its strength. Inevitably in this at first we will make errors, but soon if we are sincere it will grow brighter and make no mistake. We should add the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not.... We must not only be unselfish, but must do all the duties that Karma has given us, and thus Intuition will point out the road of duty and the true path of life.

Mr. Judge warns against using Intuition “for purely personal ends” just as he has told us previously that it “needs unselfish effort to develop it.” All our gains in the inner life are to be devoted to the good of all. “For when one lives thus to help others,” he writes in his first letter to Jasper Niemand, “he is thereby putting in practice the rule to try and ‘kill out all the sense of separateness,’ and thus gets little by little in possession of the true light.”

Can we have faith in what our Intuition tells us? Can we let it guide us in spiritual matters? For, if Mr. Judge asserts that “No one was ever converted into Theosophy; each one who *really* comes into it does so because it is only ‘an extension of previous beliefs’” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 23), surely Intuition, co-operating with these, must have played a considerable part in leading many to Theosophy.

Mr. Judge would have us rely on it. “What is Faith?” he asks. “It is the intuitional feeling—‘*that is true*’” (*Ibid.*, p. 9). And again writing to Jasper Niemand, he says, “As far as your private conclusions are concerned, use your discrimination always. Do not adopt any conclusions merely because they are uttered by one in whom you have confidence, but adopt them when they coincide with your Intuition” (*Ibid.*, p. 23). He goes so far, in fact, as to cite “the Great Workers who are behind us” as upholding Intuition as a safe guide to the student-neophyte: “I know that their desire is that each should listen to the voice of his inner self and not depend too much on outside people, whether they be Masters, Eastern disciples or what not” (*Ibid.*, p. 121). And as for the fear of Intuition deceiving

us, he dismisses it. “All doubts come from the lower nature, and *never* in any case from the higher nature. Therefore as [one] becomes more and more devoted he is able to know more and more clearly the knowledge residing in his *Satwa* part,” *Satwa* being the first or highest of the three qualities sprung from Nature which “exist potentially in *Purush* (Spirit)” as mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. (*Ibid.*, pp. 30 and 32)

Here a line of conduct is indicated: we must strengthen and clarify our Intuition through devotion. “In history and in our own experience there is abundant evidence that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is right in saying ‘spiritual knowledge includes every action without exception,’ and that it is to be attained by means of devotion,” writes Mr. Judge in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 75), and he instances “unlearned men,” such as Jacob Boehme, who “have attained to devotion, and thereby cleared away from before the eye of the soul the clouds of sense whose shadows obscure our view of truth.” “I do not decry or despise learning,” he adds. “It is a great possession; but if the learned men were also a devoted one in the sense of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, how much wider would be the sweep of his intellection no one could calculate.” Even Adeptship can only be obtained through “profound knowledge joined to devotion,” and, concludes Mr. Judge, “this again proves that devotion is the first and best, for these extraordinary Masters would not appear unless devotion had been the aim of their existence.” (*Ibid.*, p. 76)

So here is the essential corollary of Intuition—Devotion. “Without it,” says Mr. Judge, “a vast confusion arises within us” (*Ibid.*), and then our Intuition will inevitably function less and less. He repeatedly urges devotion—to Theosophy, to the Masters, to Krishna. He says, “Devotion must be attained by that student who desires to reach enlightenment” (*Ibid.*, p. 69). Intuition, alone and unaided, is not enough. Also, as he reminds us, “We sometimes fail to live up to our own Intuitions.” (*Letters*, pp. 4-5)

Then, what *is* Intuition?

Mr. Judge never quite defines it in so many words. In

“Conversations on Occultism,” “where,” asks the Student, “should I look for the help I need in the right life, the right study?” The Sage replies, “Within yourself is the light that lighteth every man who cometh here” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 171). And to each of us in our grade of studentship comes this bidding from the same wise Teacher: “Meditate on things you want to know....Seek all knowledge within yourself, do not go without. You understand what is meant by this; not that books should be neglected but that information obtained from them should be *drawn within*, sifted, tested there. Study all things in this light and the most physical will at the same time lead to the most spiritual knowledge.”

Now, why such emphasis on the “within” if there is not indeed a “silent monitor” there, our Intuition? Mr. Judge may have thought definition needless since we are all aware of it and its very presence is its proof. Moreover, he never encourages curiosity. Interest, yes, but curiosity, no. So much is wrought silently in that sphere of the “within.” Here are some pointed words of his anent this, again from one of his letters to Jasper Niemand. He has already referred to the outwardness which can cause a ferment in the nature and which “impedes the entrance of the clear rays of Truth,” and his conclusion is, “Even now, while we cannot master these high themes, we can have a patient trust in the processes of evolution and the Law...living up to our highest intuitions ourselves.” (p. 30)

For all your days prepare,
and meet them all alike:
When you are the anvil, bear—
When you are the hammer, strike.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

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: What has Theosophy to say regarding keeping pets?

Answer: Man has always kept pets for various reasons. Dogs were domesticated and trained to be watchdogs and also used for hunting. Similarly, horses, cats and certain birds like parrots, have been domesticated all down the ages. Alarmingly, more and more people are keeping pets to get over depression and loneliness. Pets seem to be taking the place of human companions. It is easier to love pets and find one’s love reciprocated, almost without fail. People form a close bond with their pets and grieve deeply at the death of these pets. Is keeping pets the right solution for loneliness? Animals must be treated with love and compassion, but we need not make them our constant companions, and much worse, attempt to humanize them. It was once reported that a lady could not believe that it was not good for her parrot to lie on its back, and so she used to take it to bed with her and compel it with slaps to lie on its back. The most important thing for the animal is to have experience in the species to which he belongs. They are unable to have that experience when they are cut off from their natural surroundings. An animal has to learn self-defence, finding food for himself, etc. Hence, when some people say that their dog is able to appreciate music, they fail to see that appreciation of music is not the next step in dog’s development. In fact, in close proximity with humans, they pick up lower tendencies. For instance, a pet dog that is showered with love and attention all the time is often found, out of jealousy, to harm a newborn baby, towards whom the family’s

attention may be shifted.

It would be comparatively better to keep a dog and use him as a watchdog. In olden days, in England, people kept and trained horses, but for a period of about three to four months, the horses would be allowed to graze into open lands—thus allowing them to remain in their natural environment. At the end of that period, they had to train the horses again.

There is a greater danger than germ infection in keeping pets. Occultism teaches that there is a continuous exchange of atoms or “lives” going on between man and the lower kingdoms. When we keep pets, there is abnormal interchange of life particles. The animal is at a lower stage of evolution, while man is on a higher rung of evolution. The animal evolution is unnaturally forced and the task of developing instinct is interfered with. On the other hand, what kind of life particles are we attracting to ourselves by our so-called “loving” attachment to pets? When we link ourselves so intimately with animal nature, we hold back our own human evolution, “animalizing” our own character. The need for abstaining from keeping pets is still greater as one advances on the spiritual path, as one is required to keep one’s own magnetism pure. Hence, at a certain stage in discipleship, there is a strict rule that “no pet animals are permitted and it is forbidden even to touch certain trees and plants. A disciple has to live, so to say, in his own atmosphere in order to individualize it for occult purposes.”

The lower kingdoms look up to us for their salvation and evolutionary progress, as we do towards the Great Ones for ours. Keeping pets for our own pleasure, in an environment which is artificial for the animal species, due to our ignorance of their special needs, is selfishness and a form of cruelty.

We sometimes see modern craze for exotic pets, such as, cobras, frogs, lizards, rabbits, tortoises, fish, etc. Human nature sometimes humours itself with unconventional amusements, as we often watch in circuses and on televisions. It is utterly thoughtless and degrading to derive fun from animal behaviour, in artificially created

conditions, especially, by enforcing unnatural behaviour from them.

One point we must note, while we are on the subject of our relationship with animals. For ages, it is admitted that men have treated, both wild and tame animals, with indignity and much cruelty, because we think they are inferior and incapable of articulating their own defense. We have been exploiting them, since the time of the Fourth Race, Atlanteans. As H.P.B. points out, we have yet to meet the heavy karma for the cruelty (organ transplants, etc.) to the dumb brutes.

Perhaps, one way by which we can expiate or compensate for these transgressions is by looking after their welfare with kindness, or arrange for the protection of their species, as some institutions and individuals do. Some of them, selflessly, take animals in their sincere care, *with knowledge*, as we do for our children. Animals do respond with trust and gratitude, and their service to us has made us debtors.

Question: What is the importance of self-examination in spiritual living? How does one carry it out?

Answer: We do not grow or progress if we do not have a place in our lives for self-examination. Nature forces us at the time of death to take review of the life just ended. Similarly, we must set apart a fixed time at the end of the day to examine all our activities in terms of our motives, thoughts, feelings and actions during the day. As Seneca puts it:

We should every night call ourselves to account: What infirmity have I mastered today? What passion opposed? What temptation resisted? What virtue acquired? Our vices will abate of themselves if they be brought every day to the shrift.

We may begin with the morning and analyze ourself hour by hour. We are asked to note our good points as well as our weak ones, taking the position of a witness or observer, and not make excuses or allowances for our slips and blunders. It is precisely because we have a tendency to *explain away* our mistakes, that it

takes us time to detect our faults, even though we pursue self-examination. Only when there is sincerity of heart and intellectual honesty are we able to evaluate our weaknesses. Mr. Crosbie writes:

No one who sees his mistakes can be a hopeless case. The moment we see that we are deluded, that moment we are no longer deluded, although we may be surrounded by consequences of delusion and have to work through them. Any trouble and hindrance comes from self-identification with delusion and mistakes; this is the delusion of delusions.

There is no need to despair if we notice glaring faults in our character or if we have committed blunders. “Regret nothing,” says Mr. Judge. The thing to do is not to brood over our failings or fall into self-reproach, but repent and resolve to offer penance in the right way on the next day. On the other hand, we need not feel elated about our good deeds but must feel thankful that at least in some matters we did the right thing—thought nobly, spoke the truth or felt kindly.

Self-introspection must be done with the view to controlling our lower nature. In this, it is essential to study other human hearts, so as to become aware of the evil and good in the human heart in its wider range. Then, there is less chance of slipping into despair when we encounter evil in our own nature. As *Light on the Path* says, it is something of a staff to lean on, to know that others have gone along this path. The same mystical book points out that the vices of ordinary men undergo subtle transformation and reappear with changed aspect in the heart of the disciple. Hence, our anger, envy, greed may take on subtle form so that only through intense self-introspection we may become aware of them. For instance, we may not directly hate a person, but if we find ourselves disliking his speech, his clothes, his mannerism, etc., then that would be a subtle sense of hatred. Heart is a centre of spiritual consciousness and its full mysteries can be known only when, as Mr. Judge points out, we are able to dissolve the “knot of the heart.” That “knot” is

the astringent power of self or egoism with many strongholds. If we conquer it in its outermost manifestations, it recedes till we reach the kernel of the heart. To fathom the mysteries of the human heart, in general, we are asked to look intelligently and impersonally into the hearts of men. Generally, we think in grooves and the natural groove of one mind refuses to run into the groove of another mind. When we accommodate our mind to other minds, we would know the working of their heart and mind and in one life have the advantage of having lived several lives.

There are times when we are not sure of what is right and wrong. What is the yardstick for judging? Buddha taught his disciples to examine their conduct by the light of the Divine Paramitas, the Transcendental Virtues. Often there is a terrible sense of guilt for wrong action. In such a case, we can take the position of an observer and allow our Higher Self to be the judge, jury, witness and executioner. There are bound to be difficulties in turning the corner, as St. Paul describes:

...to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.

No self-examination should end with the noting of the foibles and frailties of the lower self. One last act in the ritual of introspection should always be performed: the higher nature must be gentle to the lower, like a mother who, after chiding the child who has done wrong, speaks soothing words and encourages him to do better, for *he can do better*. Our *Kama-Manas* is a pupil and a learner. To “raise the self by the Self” is the real business of life.

STONE walls do not a Prison make,
Nor Iron bars a Cage;
Minds innocent and quiet take
That for a hermitage

—RICHARD LOVELACE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

There is a hidden side to happiness. “There is a reason we love to hear of heroes transformed by tragedy....A rich, rewarding life often requires a messy battle with adversity,” writes Kathleen McGowan (*Psychology Today*, March-April 2006). We love to hear the stories of people who have been transformed by their disasters, saying “I wish it had not happened, but I am a better person for it,” because it supports a psychological truth that there is a built-in human capacity to flourish under the most difficult circumstances. W. Keith Campbell, a professor of social psychology at the University of Georgia in Athens, points out that the way to react to “ego shock,” a serious blow to self-esteem, or a sudden ego threat—a public rejection, a professional failure—is often to go numb: the mind goes blank and the world suddenly seems unfamiliar. But such ego shocks had positive long-term effects, shaking up the status quo in the person’s life, opening the door for change. Thus:

Those who weather adversity well are living proof of one of the paradoxes of happiness: We need more than pleasure to live the best possible life. Our contemporary quest for happiness has shrivelled to a hunt for bliss—a life protected from bad feelings, free from pain and confusion....

Compassion, wisdom, altruism, insight, creativity—sometimes only the trials of adversity can foster these qualities, because sometimes only drastic situations can force us to take on the painful process of change. To live a full human life, a tranquil, carefree existence is not enough. We also need to grow—and sometimes growing hurts....

Crises challenge our deepest beliefs: that bad things don’t happen to good people, that life makes sense, that we have control over what happens. Tedeschi describes them as seismic, because they overturn basic assumptions upon which life is built. Afterward, a new framework must be constructed...

It is possible to live an extraordinarily rewarding life even

within the constraints and struggles we face. In some form or other...we all must go through this realization.

We primarily desire pleasure. But in our search for pleasure we find that pain is a co-ruler, says *Through the Gates of Gold*. It is a package deal, so to speak. In this continuous war between pain and pleasure, we hope that some day pleasure will win and then we will be happy forever.

“Pain arouses, softens, breaks and destroys....It is an implement, a thing, which is used, evidently.” Pain arouses. It is only when pain comes that we sit up and ask questions of life. We come to a realization that we need to learn to surrender *our* will to *divine* will. *Light on the Path* says, Pain alone makes us grow. H.P.B. writes:

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death? (*S.D.*, II, 475)

Bad things happen to good people, showing that good people have to become spiritual. The most terrible of suffering comes to us under karma; the causes may have been sown in this or in some previous life. Hence the Buddha says: “Ho! Ye who suffer! Know ye suffer from yourselves. None else compels, none else holds you that ye live and die, and whirl upon the wheel, and hug and kiss its spokes of agony, its tire of tears, its nave of nothingness.”

Scientists have detected a rare form of synaesthesia—crossing of the senses—in which hearing a word triggers the complex sensation of taste in the mouth. Synaesthesia runs in families, with

about one in 23 people having some form of crossed sensory experience. Generally, people experience colours when they hear a letter or number. Julia Simner of the University of Edinburgh in Scotland found that on reading, saying or hearing words, the taste was triggered by the meaning of the word and not the sound. “It is triggered by the part of the brain that encodes the meaning of words, not the part of the memory that encodes the way the word sounds...Synaesthesia is caused by parts of the brain that don’t normally actively communicate with each other. The same connections exist in the brains of most people but they are inhibited so the information is not allowed to pass,” says Simner. Simner has yet to spot a pattern. For instance, the word “mince” arouses in a person the taste of mincemeat, but so also a rhyming word like “prince.” For others, only proper names gave rise to sensation of taste. For instance, John aroused sensation of cornbread taste, while William that of potatoes. (*The Times of India*, November 24, 2006)

The phenomenon that one type of sensory input (such as hearing music) evokes an additional one (such as seeing colours) is termed *synaesthesia*, from the Greek roots *syn* (together) and *aesthesis* (perception). H.P.B. describes this phenomenon in the article “Occult or Exact Science?” (*The Theosophist*, April 1886). She gives the instance of a person who associated sound with colour. The vowels appeared to him variously coloured, whereas the consonants appeared dark grey. Thus, human speech appeared to him “in the shape of many-coloured, or variegated ribbons coming out of persons’ mouths, the colours of which are determined by those of the vowels in the sentences, separated one from the other by the greyish stripes of the consonants....The sounds of the instruments have also their distinct and special colours: the piano and flute suggest tints of blue; the violin—black; and the guitar—silver grey, etc.” There are sensitives in whom a triple phenomenon is produced by one special sense generating two other senses. For instance, a certain sensitive saw dark golden clouds and experienced a taste “like copper in the mouth” whenever he heard a brass band.

H.P.B. explains the phenomenon as “*a cyclic return of human organisms to their primitive form* during the Third and even the Fourth Root Races of what is known as the *Antediluvian periods*...That which is now considered as an abnormal phenomenon, was in every probability the normal state of the antediluvian Humanity.” We are told that in the absence of the sense of hearing—which was developed only in the third sub-race of the Atlantean Race—human speech was more like a mental articulation of sounds, “something like the systems we now see worked out for the deaf and dumb.” In those days, “speech” was associated with sight, and “people could understand each other and *talk* with the help of only *sight* and *touch*. ‘Sound is seen before it is heard’ ...”

Researchers at Howard Hughes Medical Institute and the University of Chicago, in a study published in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, claim it is *probable* that the so-called Neanderthals and the modern *Homo sapiens* interbred at some point when they lived side by side in Europe. Neanderthals, who died out about 35,000 years ago, are considered more primitive, with robust bones but smaller intellects than humans. It is believed that the Neanderthals may have given the modern humans a gene that helped them develop superior brains. The team found a brain gene that appears to have entered the human lineage about 1.1 million years ago, and then had a modern form, or allele, that appeared about 37,000 years ago—right before Neanderthals became extinct. “The gene microcephalin (MCPH1) regulates brain size during development and has experienced positive selection in the lineage leading to *Homo sapiens*,” say the researchers (*The Times of India*, November 9, 2006, courtesy *Reuters*).

Regarding Geological Ages, science tells us that Paleolithic Age is the prehistoric period when people made stone tools exclusively

by chipping or flaking. John Lubbock proposed and defined the term Paleolithic, or Old Stone Age, in 1865, and also defined a subsequent Neolithic, or New Stone Age, during which some stone tools were formed by polishing or grinding. The Early Stone Age/*Lower* Paleolithic was followed by the Middle Paleolithic Age. In Europe, Middle Paleolithic people were the Neanderthals. They are a group of late archaic humans from Europe, the Near East, and central Asia that immediately preceded the first modern humans in those regions. H.P.B. contends that all Paleolithic men were not savages. There have been savages at all times, and hence we may infer that in those days also there might have been cultured nations and civilized people, contemporary with those rude savages (*S.D.*, II, 716-17). H.P.B. writes:

The earliest Paleolithic men in Europe—about whose origin Ethnology is silent, and whose very characteristics are but imperfectly known...were of *pure* Atlantean and “Africo-Atlantean stocks....The pure Atlantean stocks—of which the tall quaternary cavemen were, in part, the direct descendants—immigrated into Europe long prior to the Glacial Period; in fact as far back as the Pliocene and Miocene times in the Tertiary....These colonists were portions of the once glorious race, whose cycle from the Eocene downwards had been running down the scale. (*S.D.*, II, 740 and fn).

Theosophy assigns approximately 1,500,000 years to the Quaternary period—comprising Paleolithic Man, Neolithic Man and Historical period. Man has not descended from savage or ape, says Theosophy. It was 18 million years ago that man’s mind was lighted up and it was done only when man’s brain was of much better and deeper capacity than that of any other animal. We are in the Fifth or Aryan Race. The earlier Races were far superior to the present race, intellectually and spiritually. The depth and variety of brain convolutions are caused by the presence of the *Manas*, and are not the cause of mind, says Mr. Judge.