

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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ON BEING CHILDLIKE

SOMETIMES we find adults behaving like children. They are not childlike but childish. The words “childish” and “childlike” appear similar to one another, but these words have completely different meanings. The word “childish” has a negative connotation and is often used to refer to silly or immature behaviour. It is used to refer to some of the qualities that we do not admire in children. Thus, for instance, childish or immature behaviour includes display of irrational fears or excessive and irrational obstinacy by a child. Once, Emperor Akbar was very angry with Birbal, his Minister, as he arrived late to the court. On inquiring, Birbal explained that his child stopped him from coming. But Akbar was not satisfied with the answer and expressed that Birbal did not know how to manage a child. Birbal proposed that he would act as a child and Akbar should try his best to satisfy his demands. Akbar agreed to the proposal. According to one version, Birbal asked for a cow and immediately a cow was brought to the court. Birbal then demanded her milk, so the cow was milked. Birbal drank a little of the milk and then demanded that the rest of the milk should be put back into the cow. The Emperor had to say that it was impossible. But Birbal insisted and started crying loudly. Akbar was unable to meet the demand, and also could not pacify the child-Birbal. He had no option but to leave the place! According to another version of the story, Birbal asked for a sugarcane to be cut into small pieces, and then demanded that it

must be made whole by joining the pieces! Sometimes, we adults come perilously close to such childish behaviour.

The difference between childish and childlike may also be understood in terms of mature and immature behaviour. Some people are too mature for their age, and they act with wisdom and have self-control, while there are those who do not act their age. Immature behaviour is impulsive behaviour, without consideration for the consequences and responsibility. An immature person has little control over his emotions and is more likely to blame others for his problems. A mature person, on the other hand, is more likely to accept his responsibility, and be ready to accept criticism and learn from it. A childish person is self-assertive, self-centred and self-opinionated, not open to consider views of others. The most obvious of the childish qualities we disapprove of are impatience and selfishness.

It is true that one must retain a youthful outlook on life, even at the adult stage but that does not mean that adults should behave childishly. If youngsters play with pop-guns, in our civilization, often, adults play with machine-guns, and dangerously so. For that matter, should the adults, especially those who have contacted the right philosophy, continue to indulge in the sense-life and sensuous experiences? On modern men and women the import of the words of St. Paul, the initiate, are lost. He taught: "When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things."

The teachings of the Buddha make it amply clear that "Old Age" and the "Child State" are not dependent upon mere physical age, but are rather psychological and spiritual states. For instance, he says, "A man is not an elder simply because his hair is gray. ... He is called an elder in whom dwell truth, virtue, non-violence, restraint, and control, and who is free from impurity and is wise." Hindu scriptures mention four kinds of old people: *Vayo vriddha* or old in age; *Jnana vriddha*, old or advanced in knowledge; *Tapo vriddha* or advanced in *tapas* or austerity, and *Adhikar vriddha*, i.e., old

because occupying a certain position. There is the tradition in India to bow down to those who are older than oneself in age, and respect them because they possess greater experience of life. Conversely, one who is wiser and has attained to knowledge, even though he is young in age, must be revered. Sage Ashtavakra was a small boy, while his pupils were old, and yet he would address them as "O Children." Likewise, a young person holding certain position, and therefore sitting in the chair of a *Guru*, must be respected. Bahubali was young but a high *tapasvi* (ascetic). Thus, those not advanced in any of these categories may well be regarded as children.

Prof. C. S. Lewis points out that *prudence* is one of the four cardinal virtues and it means practical common sense, which implies taking the trouble to think and find out what exactly you are doing and what will be its consequences. People say that Christ asked us to be like children, so we have to be good, and in the process, it does not matter if we remain fools. But Christ never asked us to remain children in our intelligence. He said, "Be as harmless as doves," but he also said, "Be as wise as serpents." In the *Dhammapada* there is the chapter called *Balavaggo* or The Fool. The term *Bala* literally means "a child," but in this chapter, the term is applied to someone who is ignorant of the law, or has little understanding or limited insight as to the purpose of life. In that sense, we are all *children* to some extent. The term "*bala*" signifies spiritual immaturity. But just as the normal child has potential to grow up into a mature person, each human being has potential to become spiritually wise.

The term "childlike" may well refer to some of the qualities we admire, associated with the childlike state, such as innocence, humility and a trusting nature. Practically, from our day-to-day experience, we associate innocence and vulnerability with the child state. So often we observe a child struggling to convey something, being persistently ignored by grown-ups. It is not unusual for the child to be reprimanded over trifles. Amazingly, in few minutes the child comes back, hugging the adult or parent who might have

scolded him or even treated him harshly, forgetful of everything. As adults, we have to make a conscious effort to forgive an insult, hurt or injustice, but when that happens naturally and spontaneously, then we would have become childlike.

Children behave in an un-self-conscious manner. It appears that the extent to which we are able to overcome the ego, the sense of “I,” the closer we get to the childlike state. In some vernacular languages the word for “child state” is derived from the root which also means smallness. All saintly people urge us to become childlike. Saint Tukaram, a Marathi saint-poet, writes in one of his *abhangas*: “*Lahan pan Dega Deva, Mungi Sakharecha rawa*,” thereby meaning, “Endow me with the childlike state, O God, so that I can be as small as an ant, and enjoy eating particles of sugar.” It means extreme humility which desires no greatness, but rather seeks to be humble, even insignificant. We must strive to achieve greatness and excellence, but must not *feel* great. If other people regard us as “great” then that is fine, but we should never regard ourselves as great. “That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.” The *abhangas* goes on to say that we must seek to be “smaller than the small,”—ready to bend and be self-effacing, because “*Mahapure zade jati, tethe lavhale wachati*.” In other words, those who are unbending, proud and inflexible are like tall, stout trees, which are destroyed in a great storm, but the humble and unassuming are like the grass which is saved even during a great storm and wind, because it is ready to bend.

Lowliness and Humility is the grand concept put forward by Lao Tzu, which forms the basis of the paradoxical concept: “One must stoop to conquer.” A servant is able to become a leader because his motive is to “serve”—first, last and all the time. *Mahatmas*—Great Souls—describe themselves as “servants of humanity.” *Tao Te King* teaches that qualities of lowliness and humility are necessary for all great leaders and rulers. Thus:

He who is great must make humility his base. He who is high must make lowliness his foundation....Therefore the

Sage, wishing to be above the people, must by his words put himself below them; wishing to be before the people, he must put himself behind them. In this way, though he has his place above them, the people do not feel his weight....Therefore all mankind delight to exalt him, and weary of him not. (*Selections from the Upanishads and the Tao Te King*, pp. 112-14)

Therefore, being childlike is to be able to consider oneself as small and insignificant, as far as one’s personality is concerned. Humility is the mark of spiritual childlike state. The attitude of mind should be, as Mr. Judge says, “Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent. Your only true greatness lies in your inner true self.”

From the esoteric standpoint the seventy-year period of man’s life can be divided into ten periods of seven years each. The first five of these cover the cycle of growth: (1) The birth of the body. (2) The Ego assumes charge of the body at the age of seven. Probably that is why the child is not held responsible for any crime till he is *seven*. (3) At 14, there is adolescence, involving a change in the *kamic* (desire) principle. (4) At 21 there is a *Manasic* change when the youth attains manhood and should attain discrimination. (5) At 28, there is, or should be, a spiritual unfoldment through *Buddhic* illumination. In the five further seven-year cycles there is maturity and cyclic decline. From 35 to 42 spirituality should further unfold; from 42 to 49 there should be the maturing of the corresponding *manasic* period of 21 to 28, and so on; bringing second childhood from 63 to 70—a state of innocence but not of ignorance. (*Theosophy*, Vol. XIII)

Metaphysically and spiritually, we must strive to regain the child-state we have lost. The qualities that are exhibited by a child, unconsciously and naturally, we seek to unfold knowingly and consciously, till they have been woven into the very fabric of our being, and show forth spontaneously. We have to be like a child,

trusting, carefree, vulnerable, harmless, selfless and innocent. It is possible if we learn self-surrender. *Atma-nivedana* or complete surrender of the self is the highest form of devotion. There is no greater teacher of morals than love. True love leads to self-denial, self-abnegation, self-effacement and self-transcendence.

To be carefree like a child we must cultivate mental abnegation, and this involves giving up of interest in the results of our actions. Since the Law of Karma is just and merciful, there cannot be a misshapen day. So, instead of complaining or grumbling there must be acceptance or resignation, an attitude of supreme surrender, of unswerving faith in the Law of Karma. It is total acceptance that “my own comes back to me.”

To be childlike is to learn to be vulnerable. There is *courageous endurance of personal injustice*. All the great teachers like Jesus and H.P.B. never defended themselves. Although it might sound utopian, ultimately, every spiritual aspirant has to learn to practise complete nonviolence. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” *Light on the Path* says that the disciple must abandon the very thought of individual rights and give up all weapons of offence and defence. “A man must become as a little child before he can enter into the kingdom of heaven.”

Generally, there is a feeling that we must be allowed to keep some weapon for our security. We may carry a gun, but if we are not quick enough then the attacker may snatch it and fire at us. Hence, *a disciple* looks for no such protection, because he realizes the fact that no matter how much we may arrange for our protection, it is still superficial protection. The only sure protection is our karma, our purity, our Higher Self. If we are pure and if our Karma permits, then no harm can come to us. In a sense, it is exhibiting the highest faith in the Law of Karma, and a surrendering of the personal will to the Divine will.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THE ELEPHANT AND THE UNGRATEFUL FORESTER

THIS PARABLE was related by the Teacher [the Buddha] while he was in residence at Veluvana with reference to Devadatta. The monks, seated in the Hall of Truth, were saying: “Brethren, Devadatta the ungrateful knows not the virtues of the Tathagata.” The Teacher drew near and asked: “Monks, what is the subject that engages your attention now, as you sit here all gathered together?” “Such-and-such,” was the reply. “Monks,” said the Teacher, “not only in his present state of existence has Devadatta proved ungrateful; in a previous state of existence also he was ungrateful just the same. At no time has he known my virtues.” Then, in response to a request of the monks, he related the following Story of the Past:

In times past, when Brahmadata ruled at Benaras, the Future Buddha received a new conception in the region of Himvat in the womb of an elephant. When he came forth from his mother’s womb, he was pure white, like a mass of silver; moreover his eyes were like globules of jewels, and from them shone forth the Five Brightnesses; his mouth was like a crimson blanket; his trunk was like a rope of silver, ornamented with spots of ruddy gold; his four feet were as if rubbed with lac. Thus his person, adorned with the Ten Perfections, attained the pinnacle of beauty.

Now when he reached the age of reason, elephants from all over Himvat assembled and formed his retinue. Thus did he make his home in the region of Himvat, with a retinue of eighty thousand elephants. After a time, perceiving that there was contamination in the herd, he isolated himself from the herd and made his home quite alone in the forest. Moreover, by reason of his goodness, he became known as Good King Elephant.

Now a certain resident of Benares, a forester, entered the forest, seeking wares whereby to make his living. Unable to distinguish the directions, he lost his way, and terrified with the fear of death, went about with outstretched arms lamenting. The Future Buddha,

hearing those profound lamentations of his, thought: “I will free this man from his suffering.” And impelled by compassion, he went to him.

The instant that man saw the Future Buddha, he fled in fright. The Future Buddha, seeing him in flight, halted right where he was. The man, seeing that the Future Buddha had halted, himself halted. The Future Buddha came back. The man fled a second time, but halting when the Future Buddha halted, thought: “This elephant halts when I flee, and approaches when I halt. He has no desire to do me harm, but without a doubt desires only to free me from this suffering.” And summoning up his courage, he halted.

The Future Buddha approached him and asked: “Why, Master man, do you go about lamenting?” “Master, because I could not distinguish the directions, lost my way, and was afraid of death.” Then the Future Buddha conducted him to his own place of abode, and for a few days gladdened him with fruits and other edibles. Then said the Future Buddha: “Master man, do not be afraid; I will conduct you to the path of man.” And seating him on his back, he proceeded to the path of men.

But that man, that betrayer of friends, even as he sat on the back of the Future Buddha, thought: “If anybody asks me, I must be able to tell him where this elephant lives.” So he went along, he noted carefully the landmarks of tree and mountain. Now the Future Buddha, having conducted that man out of the forest, set him down on the highway leading to Benares, and said to him: “Master, man, go by this road; but as for my place of abode, whether you are asked or not, say nothing to anybody about it.” So saying, he took leave of him and went back to his own place of abode.

Now that man went to Benaras, and in the course of his walks came to the street of the ivory-carvers. And seeing the ivory-carvers making various kinds of products, he asked: “Sirs, how much would you make if you could get the tusk of a real live elephant?” “What are you saying, sir! The tusk of a live elephant is far more valuable than the tusk of a dead elephant.” “Very well! I will fetch you the

tusk of a live elephant.” Accordingly, obtaining provisions for the journey and taking a sharp saw, he went to the place of abode of the Future Buddha.

When the Future Buddha saw him, he asked: “For what purpose have you come?” “I, sir, am a poor man, a pauper, unable to make a living. I came with this thought in my mind: ‘I will ask you for a fragment of one of your tusks; if you will give it to me, I will take it and go and sell it and with the money it brings make a living.’” “Let it be, sir! I will give you tusks, if you have a sharp saw to cut them off with.” “I brought a saw with me, sir.” “Very well, sever the tusks with your saw and take them and go your way.” So saying, the Future Buddha bowed his knees together and sat down like a cow. The man actually cut off his two principal tusks!

The Future Buddha, taking those tusks in his trunk, said: “Master man, not with the thought, ‘These tusks are not dear to me, not pleasing to me,’ do I give you these tusks. But dearer to me than these a thousand times—a hundred thousand times—are the Tusks of Omniscience, which avail to the comprehension of all things. May this gift of tusks which I here bestow enable me to attain Omniscience!” So saying, as it were sowing the Seed of Omniscience, he gave him the pair of tusks.

The man took them and went and sold them. When the money they brought was gone, he went to the Future Buddha again and said: “Master, the money I got by selling your tusks turned out to be no more than enough to pay off my debts. Give me the rest of your tusks!” “Very well,” said the Future Buddha, consenting. And ordering all things precisely as before, he gave him the rest of his tusks.

Those also did that man sell, and then came back again. “Master,” said he, “I cannot make a living. Give me the stumps of your tusks!” “Very well,” said the Future Buddha, and sat down precisely as before. That wicked man trod on the Great Being’s trunk—that trunk which was like unto a rope of silver; climbed up on the Great Being’s temples—those temples which were like unto the snow-clad peaks of Kailasa, with his heel kicking the tips of tusks and loosening the

flesh; and having mounted the temples, with a sharp saw severed the stumps of the tusks, and went his way.

But even as that wicked man receded from the vision of the Future Buddha, the solid earth, which extends for a distance of two hundred thousand leagues and four Inconceivables more, which is able to endure such mighty burdens as Sineru and Yugandhara, such foul-smelling and repulsive objects as dung and urine—even the solid earth, as if unable to endure the wickedness he had piled upon it, burst asunder and yawned. Instantly, from the Great Waveless Hell flames of fire shot forth, enveloped that man, that betrayer of friends, wrapping him, as it were, in a blanket proper for death and laid hold of him.

When that wicked man thus entered the earth, the tree-spirit resident in that forest-grove thought: “An ungrateful man, a man who will betray his friends, cannot be satisfied, even if he be given the kingdom of a Universal Monarch.” And making the forest ring, proclaiming the Truth, the tree-spirit uttered the following stanza:

To an ungrateful man
Ever looking for an opening
You may give the whole earth
And yet not satisfy him.

Thus did that tree-spirit, making the forest ring, proclaim the Truth. The Future Buddha, having remained on earth during term of life allotted to him, passed away according to his deeds.

Having completed the parable he [the Teacher] identified the personages in the Birth-story [Jataka tale] as follows: “At that time the man who betrayed his friend was Devadatta, the tree-spirit was Sariputta, but Good King Elephant was I myself.”

[Taken from *Buddhist Parables*, translated from the original Pali by Eugene Watson Burlingame.]

* * * * *

The sacred day of Buddha Purnima falls on the full moon day of the lunar month of Vaisakh, when the Buddhists all over the world pay homage to “Gautama the Buddha,” as the day marks the triple

Anniversary of (a) Buddha’s birth as prince Siddhartha, (b) his Enlightenment, *i.e.*, the day on which he attained to Supreme Wisdom under the Bodhi tree at Gaya, and also (c) the day of his death.

Jataka Tales are the birth stories of the Buddha. Some of these stories show how the Buddha developed the power to sacrifice, gradually, over many lives, that enabled him in his hour of triumph to forego Liberation, and choose the Path of Renunciation, in order to remain in touch with the earth and to give help to mankind—becoming a Buddha of Compassion. The Buddha says that if one has only compassion for the sufferings of other living beings, then in due course all other virtues, all other spiritual qualities and attainments, and even Enlightenment itself, will follow. Compassion is that which seeks to overcome suffering.

Self-sacrifice has been defined as giving to others more than to oneself. But self-sacrifice has to be performed with discrimination. However, there are cases when people make *apparently* foolish sacrifices guided by the heart-impulse. In another *Jataka tale* we are told that the Buddha, in one of his former lives, gave away his body to be eaten by a starving tigress so that she could feed her cubs. Our logical mind questions such sacrifices, and considers them futile. Why give away life in order to save an animal? But these are actions prompted by feeling of boundless love and compassion for the lower forms of life.

H.P.B. writes: “For gratitude does more good to the man who feels it, than to him for whom it is felt.” Just as there is right attitude of mind and heart needed in *giving*, there is also the right attitude of mind and heart required in *receiving*. When a receiver feels the gratitude, it kindles in him a sort of reverence for the very process of giving and receiving. It appears that gratitude is a heart quality. To the extent we feel gratitude, we have allowed the spiritual consciousness to make itself felt and impress on our everyday consciousness.

STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA

THE WAY OF CONTENTMENT—III

THE TWELFTH Discourse repeats on a higher spiral the teachings in the Sixth Discourse. In verse 32 of the Sixth Discourse, Krishna has already spoken of this divine unity of all things, and said:

He, O Arjuna, who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee.

And at that point Arjuna interrupted Krishna, his Teacher, immediately and said to him, “How is it possible to attain complete unity? It cannot be possible for us because of the restlessness of mind—because constantly our thoughts disobey our own orders, and wander in various directions.” In the Twelfth Discourse, Krishna anticipates the question of Arjuna and does not allow Arjuna to interrupt, but immediately says, “If thou canst not succeed in doing this immediately, then do so and so.” But it is interesting to note that he goes as far back as the Sixth Discourse for the remedy to the wandering mind. He had mentioned two qualities or faculties which would enable Arjuna to subdue his own mind, namely, *Abhyasa*—constant practice, and *Vairagya*—indifference or spiritual detachment or dispassion. Arjuna has become much wiser as he knows today who the Teacher is, and what he stands for, and he has learned the great quality of listening, so that he does not interrupt so readily. Thereby Arjuna has gained the privilege of hearing more about this particular method which is going to enable him to conquer the wandering mind and it is the explanation of that method, as given in the Sixth Discourse, that we find in the following verses, which have confused and puzzled many students, and which cannot be understood unless we recollect the answer of Krishna in the Sixth Discourse. In verses 9 to 12 of the Twelfth Discourse, we have:

If thou shouldst be unable at once steadfastly to fix thy heart and mind on me strive then, O Dhananjaya, to find me by constant practice in devotion [*Abhyasa Yoga*]. If after

constant practice, thou art still unable, follow me by actions performed for me; for by doing works for me thou shalt attain perfection.

But if thou art unequal even to this, then, being self-restrained, place all thy works, failures and successes alike, on me, abandoning in me the fruit of every action. For knowledge is better than constant practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation; final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation.

Thus, if we cannot attain the instruction and succeed in placing the Thinker (mind) and *Buddhi* in us on the Living Ideal of the Masters, we have several steps or stages which will, in the course of time, enable us to achieve the supreme goal. These stages are in terms of the two qualities: constant practice or repetition, and dispassion. In practicing *Abhyasa Yoga*, union through practice, we can distinguish two definite steps. We must acquire *Jnana* or Knowledge, and this cannot be acquired unless first, we study and second, we meditate. *Dhyana* enables us to absorb or assimilate the essence of that which we study, and unless we study and then meditate on the result of that study, we cannot acquire knowledge. These two steps take us to the next great quality, the quality of *vairagya* or dispassion. *Vairagya* or union through indifference deals with how to apply the result of both study and meditation in everyday life. It consists of two definite stages: First, the performance of certain duties for the sake of the Masters. The second is the renouncing of the fruits of all actions.

What are the specific actions that we must perform for the Masters, if we are trying to tread the spiritual path whatever our own condition in life may be, and whatever our other duties may be? They have been mentioned already in the previous discourse, and they will be again emphasized in the Eighteenth Discourse. They are the three types of actions, *Dana*-Charity, *Tapas*-Mortification and *Yajna*-Sacrifice. All students, would-be chelas, as

well as all chelas and disciples have the duty to offer these three kinds of action. They must all exercise and manifest Charity for the Cause they are serving, charity for the Theosophical Movement in terms of service which they can render the cause, the time they can give to the study and promulgation of the Philosophy, and the money they can give to support the great Movement in the world. *Dana*, or Charity is one of the absolute duties that we must all fulfill.

Then there is *Tapas*-Mortification. All of us must also mortify our lower nature, to a certain degree when we are aspiring to find the Masters. It is not that these mortifications will interfere at all with the duty of our own karma, with family duties, but each one of us must naturally give up some of the personal habits of his own personal life, and adopt few definite ascetic rules. These two types of action, *Dana* and *Tapas* must be offered as *sacraments*, as explained in the previous discourse. But all our duties are not in terms of charity, mortification and sacrifice, specifically for the great Cause of the Masters, the Spiritual Service of the Human Race. Hence, we are told what to do with the other duties so as to make them spiritual actions. The answer is, to renounce the fruit of these actions, to offer these actions to the Ideal of the Masters. But we are asked to subdue the personal self whilst we are renouncing the fruits of all actions. When this renunciation of the fruit of *Kamic* action has been achieved, the final goal is reached, that of obtaining *Kshanti* or peace and contentment.

In the last of the series of verses in which it is said that some of these qualities were superior to the others, Krishna simply mentions them in their successive order as they have appeared in the different steps, the following one is always superior to the preceding one, and as they thus stand in that order, they are—Practice, Knowledge, Meditation, Renunciation and *Kshanti*. *Kshanti* is even superior to *Tapas*, because if we have peace within us it implies that we have renounced the fruits of all actions, that we have meditated correctly, that we have acquired knowledge and understanding, and that we have practiced the control of the wandering mind.

Then the last part of the discourse gives the description of the devotee of the Master. We have Krishna himself, the Great Master for us. It is good to remember that constant meditation on these qualities of a true devotee, as they appear in this discourse, will help us in the practice of the spiritual rules. For, all these qualifications are the requirements to tread the Path of Chelaship, and we can apply most of them in our own life. They bring the ideal of the Master as not something that is a cold abstraction, far beyond and above us, but the idea that the Master becomes the friend and companion and the guide and instructor of him who is trying to follow the path of the Masters. The summation of the discourse is contained in the last verse, where Krishna says:

Those who seek this sacred ambrosia—the religion of immortality—even as I have explained it, full of faith, intent on me above all others, and united to devotion, are my most beloved.

There are then specific things which must be expressed daily by us if we are following the “religion of immortality,” the Wisdom Religion, the Path of Discipleship. They are more than simply the virtues, as they are understood in the world, as belonging to the life of the good and pure person. In the words of the Master Himself:

It is not enough that you should set the example of a pure and virtuous life and a tolerant spirit; this is but negative goodness—and for chelaship will never do.

The positive aspect of goodness has been mentioned in the Thirteenth Discourse, and from then onwards, the whole last series gives us the application of the Teachings in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and emphasizes the practical bearing of these teachings in the life of the disciple.

(Concluded)

SAKTI—SOME REFLECTIONS

II

IN MANIFESTATION, the female passive principle or *Prakriti*, which manifests the energy of Spirit or *Purusha* is designated as Sakti. The same holds true at the pre-cosmic level. In his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* T. Subba Row explains that *Parabrahmam* is the one essence of almost everything in the cosmos, but that does not mean that It is the *upadana karanam* or material cause of the cosmos, like clay and water are the material cause of a pillar. *Parabrahmam* is the one essence from which starts into existence a centre of energy, which is variously described as the Logos, *Eswara*, *Sabda Brahman*, *Verbum* or the Word of the Christians. Just as our physical sun is only a focus or a window through which light and heat of the invisible, Central Spiritual Sun radiate, so also, *Parabrahmam* radiates from the Logos and manifests itself as the light and energy of the Logos. This light and energy from the Logos is called *Daiviprakriti* in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and which is the foundation of all the forces in the cosmos. It is this intelligent energy of the Logos which commences the process of evolution.

Though *Mulaprakriti* has all the potentialities locked up in her, it is as a result of the action of the energy radiating from the Logos upon *Mulaprakriti*, that matter acquires all its attributes and powers, and the universe comes into existence, in the course of evolution. In the *Secret Doctrine*, (I, 10) H.P.B. describes *Adi-Sakti* as the direct emanation of *Mulaprakriti*, in her Akasic form of the Universal Soul, and being the female aspect of Brahma. *Akasa*, the radiation of *Mulaprakriti* is connected with all natural phenomena. *Akasa* is the divine Astral light.

Anna is the name of the mother of Virgin Mary, and it is said that Anna gave birth to her daughter, Mary, in an immaculate way. The name Anna is derived from the Chaldean Ana. In one of the footnotes to the article, “Commentary on the Pistis Sophia,” that appeared in *Lucifer* magazine, H.P.B. writes that esoterically, Ana signifies

Akasa, the mother of the Astral light. She is also called *Durga*, *Kali*, *Annapurna*, *Kanya* or Virgin. Her mystery name is *Uma-Kanya* or “Virgin of light.”

The earliest mention of the title “Uma-Kanya” is found in *Kena Upanishad*, portrayed as a being of light and goodness. She is Saraswati and *Vach*. In the Third Chapter of *Kena Upanishad* we are given the allegory of ignorance of the gods or *devas* regarding *Brahman*. *Brahman* obtained the victory for the *Devas*. The *Devas* became elated by the victory of *Brahman*, and they thought, “This victory is ours only, this greatness is ours only.” *Brahman* perceived this and appeared to them. But they did not know It. Finally Indra approached the spirit, but It disappeared from before him, and in the same space Indra came towards a woman, highly adorned: it was Uma. He said to her: “Who is that spirit?” She replied: “It is *Brahman*. It is through the victory of *Brahman* that you have thus become great.” After that he knew that it was *Brahman*.

The Kabalists and Hermetic philosophers call the Astral Light the “heavenly or celestial Virgin.” In the article “The Twelve Signs of the Zodiac,” in *Five Years of Theosophy*, T. Subba Rao tells us that the sixth sign of the Zodiac, *Kanya* (or Virgo) means virgin and represents *Sakti* or *Mahamaya*. As the sixth *Rasi* or division, it indicates that there are six primary forces in Nature which are called *Parasakti*, *Jnanasakti*, *Itchasakti*, *Kriyasakti*, *Kundalinisakti* and *Mantrikasakti*. The six forces are in their unity represented by the Astral Light, the seventh. H.P.B. comments that the six forces in their unity are represented by “*Daiviprakriti*” or *Fohat*.

Fohat is called the *Sakti* of the Divine Mind. In the article “Fohat—The Great Transformer” published in Vol. 34 of the *Theosophical Movement* we are told that *Fohat* is the Tibetan term for energetic or the motion aspect of the Supreme Spirit. *Fohat* is called the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation and also the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation. The dynamic energy brings about transformations which are guided by *Fohat* according to the divine thought. *Fohat* is compared with the steed (horse) drawing a chariot

and thoughts (Cosmic Ideation) are termed as the rider. *Fohat* as a horse serves a dual purpose. Like the horse, it becomes the means for transportation from one place to another, from one plane to another; but it also transforms that which was subjective into the objective, that which was *noumenal* into the phenomenal.

Thus the ideal image in the mind of man may be reproduced as a concrete form. Take the potter having the image or images of various types of pots in his mind. He has clay, water and other necessary ingredients in front of him, but unless and until he *wills* to use his own energy and his hands to mould and shape the clay according to the image of the pot in his mind, there will be no objective, physical pot. The *will* of man is an aspect of *Fohat* on the plane of the mind; the potter's use of the energy to create the pot with his own hands and make it an objective reality is another aspect of the vital force. *Fohat* thus transforms the idea in the mind of the potter into an objective physical pot by guiding the clay to shape itself according to the subjective idea. The same is true at cosmic level.

In Nature, the *Fohatic* principle is working all the time and bringing about continuous transformation of forms from one state into another. Heat and cold are forms of energy of One Life. They are rooted in *Fohat*. They transform ice into water and water into steam. Heat of the Sun transforms water into vapour to form clouds which burst into rain, which fructifies seed under the ground to bring about growth of the plants and trees, flowers and fruits in which process there is constant change of form going on. This is brought about by the motion aspect of the Divine Life or *Fohat*. It is the dynamic energy of life which turns a germ into a foetus in the mother's womb and later into a baby which becomes a man or a woman. As the destructive aspect of the same energy, *Fohat* brings about old age, decay and death.

The other six saktis, of which *Fohat* is the synthesis, have been briefly explained by T. Subba Row, and which has been quoted by H.P.B. in the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 293-94). Thus, *Parasakti* has been defined as the great or Supreme Force or power.

Jnanasakti is the power of intellect, or real Wisdom or Knowledge, and has two different aspects:

(1) When the power of intellect functions under the influence or control of material conditions, it manifests in following different ways: (a) Senses are responsible for the data or sensations, but it is the power of mind which interprets the data, giving rise to perception. (b) It is the power of the mind which recalls past ideas (memory) and thereby gives rise to future expectation or regrets over the past. (c) The power of the mind is also exhibited in generating the notion or idea of an external object by using the "laws of association," which enables it to form *persisting* connections between various groups of sensations. (d) The power of the mind connects our ideas together by the mysterious link of memory and thus generates the notion of self or individuality. H.P.B. explains in the *Key to Theosophy* (p. 34) that the complex feeling that "I am Mr. Smith," means a long series of daily experiences strung together by the thread of memory, and forming what Mr. Smith calls himself.

(2) When the power of intellect is liberated from the bonds of matter, it manifests as Clairvoyance and Psychometry, among other things.

Clairvoyance is "clear seeing." *The Theosophical Glossary* defines it as "the faculty of seeing with the inner eye or spiritual sight....Real clairvoyance means the faculty of seeing through the densest matter, and irrespective of time (past, present and future) or distance." True Clairvoyance involves the ability to see as well as to *interpret* correctly what is seen on the astral and Akasic planes. True clairvoyance is also called seership and a true clairvoyant is called a "seer," who can "see things visible and invisible...at any distance and time with his spiritual or inner sight or perceptions." (*The Theosophical Glossary*)

Spiritual visions become possible by one of the two methods. An adept may receive direct impressions from his spirit by paralyzing at will, the memory, fancy, instinctual or independent action of cells and organs in the body, and automatic activities of the brain. In *Isis Unveiled* (II, 591), we are told that unless these are paralyzed, they

pose an obstacle to spiritual vision, which gets further distorted by vibrations of astral waves, even in a high state of *dharana*.

Nabia means seership or soothsaying. In Islam, a *Nabi* is a seer, one who brings out the scripture from *Akasa*, while a *Prophet* only interprets the scripture. According to post-Vedic tradition the *Rishi* is a “seer” (*mantra-drashta*) to whom the Vedas were “originally revealed” through states of higher consciousness.

In his article, “Psychometry” Mr. Judge defines the power to psychometrize as, “the power to bring up before the mental or spiritual eye, a panoramic view of all that has occurred to the object examined.” Science admits that a lasting and reproducible impression can be made upon a piece of smooth steel by simply placing on it another object, such as a penny. Also, washed-out images on certain plates can be brought to light again by electricity or chemicals. But science will not admit that a man can, simply by holding the same plates in his hand or to his forehead, take off and bring up clearly before his mind’s eye the same old and obliterated impressions. Occult philosophy holds that every object receives and keeps all impressions, not only of all objects that stand before it, but also of all that happens before it and these impressions are indelible, and can at any time be taken off by man’s nervous system and from that reported to the mind.

H.P.B. explains in *Isis Unveiled* (I, 182) that psychometry is the faculty which enables a certain class of sensitive persons to receive from any object held in the hand or against the forehead, impressions of the characters or appearance of the individual. A manuscript, painting, article of clothing, or jewelry—no matter how ancient—conveys to the sensitive, a vivid picture of the writer, painter, or wearer. If the sensitive person is given a fragment of the ancient building, he can tell its history, and even about the scenes that transpired within or about that building, by simply holding that piece in his hand or against his forehead.

We might say that the psychometer sees with the inner eye. H.P.B. gives an example of psychometry in her article, “Transmigration of the Life Atoms,” thus: Let any man give vent to intense feelings of

anger, grief or disappointment, under a tree or near a tree, or in direct contact with a stone. Many thousands of years later any tolerable Psychometer will see the man and sense his feelings, from one single fragment of that tree or stone that he had touched.

Interestingly, one of the “discoverers” of psychometry, Professor Buchanan, had predicted that it would enable us “to detect vice and crime. No criminal act... can escape the detection of psychometry when its powers are properly brought forth” (*Isis*, I, 332). True to his prediction, a curious case of a man with a “Sixth Sense,” was reported in a magazine, in the year 1933, who possessed psychometrical power, and was consulted by the police of several countries for help in the unraveling of mysteries. This person, who called himself a “graphologist,” could “see” the individual concerned in his every physical feature through his writing. He claimed that an individual writing reflects, not only a person’s character, but his thoughts, worries, and wishes, as well. He claimed to have discovered in one man’s signature his intention to commit murder.

H.P.B. gives the rationale of psychometry, thus: Through the astral emanations of the object he holds, “the psychometer is brought in contact with the current of the astral light, connected with that specimen, and which retains pictures of the events associated with its history.” (*Isis*, I, 182 fn.)

“To see and appreciate the difference—the immense gulf that separates terrestrial matter from the finer grades of supersensuous matter—every astronomer, every chemist and *physicist* ought to be a *psychometer*,” writes H.P.B. When an envelope containing a particle of meteorite was placed on the forehead of a materialistic and skeptical woman, not being aware of what it contained, she said, “What a difference between that which we recognise as matter here and that which seems like matter there! In the one, the *elements are so coarse and so angular*... in the other, all the elements are so refined...” (*S.D.*, I, 201fn.)

(To be concluded)

H.P.B. AND THE MASTERS OF WISDOM

H. P. BLAVATSKY, the founder of the present Theosophical Movement, passed away on May 8th, 1891. White Lotus Day is always May 8th, which commemorates the great event of the passing out of our physical world of a noble Soul, whose devotion and sacrifice have enabled us to become what we now are.

In her will, no monument was asked for; instead, she asked her friends and students, if they wished to remember her, to gather together on her anniversary day and simply read from her two favourite books, the *Bhagavad-Gita* and *The Light of Asia*, the one embodying the wisdom of Shri Krishna, and the other that of the Great Enlightened One. Her students, out of devotion and gratitude to her, have added to these two readings a third one, from *The Voice of the Silence*, embodying the Golden Precepts learned by her at the feet of the Great Gurus.

Why is the day called White Lotus Day? The Lotus is a symbol and conveys certain great ideas. It enshrines mighty truths which mortal men aspiring to immortality should learn. Great in purity, it springs from the mud and mire of the earth, passes through the water, and resting on its surface bares its heart to the sun. In its centre lies the seed. These, perfect replicas of the whole lotus plants of the future, make possible the re-embodiment of a plant after it withers and dies. White lotuses were used as a decoration at H.P.B.'s first anniversary meeting, and since then the white lotus has become the symbol of that great being whom the world knew as Helena Petrovna Blavatsky; her students, as H.P.B.; and who was known "otherwise" to the Great Mahatmas, as one of them wrote.

Did she teach anything "new"? No one ever teaches anything new. Krishna spoke of how mankind gradually lost the "mighty art," "in the course of time." He taught the same eternal doctrine to Arjuna (*Nara*—man)—"because thou art my devotee and my friend." We, H.P.B.'s students, also, must become her devotees and her friends in order to benefit by the great ideas she put forward. These ideas

belong to the ageless divine Wisdom, the *Bodhi-Dharma* or the Wisdom Religion, the *Brahma-Vidya* or the Esoteric Science. They were not invented by the ancient Sages any more than by H.P.B. They are as old as thinking man.

What teachings were specially emphasized by her for our modern era? First, the existence today, even in our present Kali Yuga, of a great body of Teachers: Mahatmas, Sages, Rishis, Munis, Dhyanis. They are living, divine Men. In India and elsewhere there prevail today false ideas of gurus and chelas. The great idea has been perverted. Gracious Ones have been forgotten and many false claimants are followed to the detriment of the followers. The idea of the Great Chain of Gurus (*Guruparampara*) has been distorted if not forgotten. It now needs serious reconsideration. True Gurus cannot be found in the world of *moha* and the *mayavic* fascinations of worldly life. They are to be found only in the realm of Sat, of Truth, where They live unseen by the world. The true Guru will not cure illnesses, solve difficulties and perform miracles. If that were possible, then Shri Krishna would have said to Arjuna, "I shall do the fighting for you!" But he did not. He began instead by teaching the ancient philosophy, and he closed his discourse with the injunction: "Act as seemeth best unto thee." That is the mark of a true Guru—he does not interfere with the free will of the disciple.

H.P.B. did not stop with the giving out of this teaching about the Great Gurus. She showed us that the living Masters not only existed today but that *there is a way to reach them*. They are to be known by the study of their Wisdom. "Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility," says Shri Krishna; and "the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee." We have to serve, search, enquire and be humble. Only when these prerequisites are built into our character may we hope to gain recognition from the Masters. Masters need companions. Their teachings and the practice of these teachings will lead us across the ocean of *Samsara*. Spiritual Knowledge will then spring up spontaneously in us.

The *Sangha* of these Great Teachers is not far, but is near at hand. It can be reached through self-study. “Man, know thyself!” ever said the ancients. It is much more than the physical body, much more than the personal man, that we have to know in order to seek the Way. Shall we follow the eightfold Way of the Buddha, the steps that Shankara taught, the 18 chapters of the *Gita*, the beatitudes of Jesus, and the Golden Precepts of *The Voice of the Silence*, which says, “Look inward; thou art Buddha”? Or, shall we take the way of wealth, money, friends, family—and then death and rebirth, to begin the weary round again? This is the great challenge always facing us.

The nature of the true Gurus has to be understood. No true Guru ever claimed that position. Anyone who makes such a claim, or accepts it, is a false guru. The true Gurus are hidden, “difficult to meet.”

All of H.P.B.’s teachings revolve round the central idea about how to gain intimacy with the Great Ones, and through Them, with the Great Self. “Of teachers there are many; the MASTER-SOUL is one, Alaya, the Universal Soul. Live in that MASTER as ITS ray in thee. Live in thy fellows as they live in IT.” A ray of the Great Self is in us; that ray can lead us to the Source, and help us to gain conscious union with the Self. Distinctions of race, creed, caste, etc., prevent us from living in our fellows “as they live in IT.” Does not Shri Krishna say in the Tenth Chapter of the *Gita*: “I am the Ego which is seated in the hearts of all beings”; and in the Thirteenth Chapter: “The spirit in the body is called *Maheshwara*, the Great Lord, the spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also *Paramatma*, the highest soul”? This brings us out of our narrow circle into the sphere of true Brotherhood, where castes, races, sexes and religions exist not, where man is Man, the Thinker. This is the first step if intimacy with the true Gurus is desired; otherwise, let us be honest enough to admit that we are ready neither to know them nor to tread the way of the spiritual life. In spite of our present limitations we can all reach that stage. This is the encouraging message H.P.B. brought. If Upali, the barber, could become a disciple of the Great Buddha, and walk the Noble Eightfold Path, then why not we?

We must go forward, step by humble step. If we see a fault or weakness in our character, then it has to be crushed out beyond reanimation, and then only can we go forward. Procrastination can spell ruin. What will give us the enthusiasm and courage to press forward? The memory of the fact that the Great Sages, the Rishis, the Masters exist. If there are gods in human form, it is these Great Ones. As the poet saint Kabir, has put it, the Guru is greater than *Ishwara*, because he shows the way to *Ishwara*, the divine spirit in us. It is necessary to have knowledge which will bring some glimpse of the *Guru-parampara*, not one link of which can be disregarded or treated with disrespect. All men are our teachers. The whole of Nature teaches us. The vegetable, mineral and elemental kingdoms of Nature, too, can teach us great mysteries—if we have humility.

Students of Theosophy owe what they know and what they are to the Buddha-like and Christ-like heart of H.P.B. Her teachings provide the nourishment which all of us need, and without which “neither sacrifice nor wisdom comes our way,” as the Buddha taught. The Great Teachers are Lords of *Yajna*. They embody sacrifice in their personalities. “Awake, arise, seek the Great Ones, and learn,” sing the Upanishads. And having learnt, we have to pass on the great truths.

“One of the most valuable effects of Upasika’s mission is that it drives men to self-study and destroys in them blind servility for persons,” wrote a Master of Wisdom. These remarks of the Master bring out a great spiritual fact. Each human soul must take to self-study, destroy within himself blind servility to persons—priests, teachers, leaders included. It is right that each student, once he believes in the existence of Masters, should try to understand what Their nature and powers are, to reverence Them, to strive to draw near to Them, and to do their bidding, *i.e.*, to study Their philosophy and to serve Their humanity. This can only be done by rising to the spiritual plane where the Masters are, and not by attempting to draw Them down to ours.

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: Can we speed up or slow down our karma?

Answer: Karma is the law of action and reaction; cause and effect. The law of Karma adjusts every effect to its cause and restores the disturbed equilibrium in the physical world, and broken harmony in the moral world. This process of bringing the result or consequences for every cause generated is what we call precipitation of Karma, which depends upon the appropriate environment. When there is not the appropriate environment or condition, karmic precipitation or the process of adjustment is delayed and then those karmic causes remain “stored-up” as mental deposits. Sometimes the plant grows from the seed, overnight, and sometimes the seed-cause waits for years and years for flowering. Thus, for instance, eating stale food would cause a stomach-ache within few hours. But a person indulging in chain-smoking or eating of tobacco might experience cancer of mouth or lungs in old age. We feel the effect of mental deposits created by our thoughts, actions and feelings in this or in previous lives, when we have obtained just the right kind of bodily or mental frame, constitution and environment, necessary to bring them to play. For instance, so long as one is in a male body, he cannot have the experience of motherhood. Thus, depending upon the speed of adjustment, karma is divided into two types: Quick Karma and Slow Karma.

Hence, “speeding up” or accelerating of the Karma can be understood, either in terms of quickening its *precipitation* or quickening the *exhaustion* of karma. The same applies to the slowing down of the karma. We can speed up or slow down the precipitation of Karma by altering the instrument, as explained in Aphorism 19:

“Changes may occur in the instrument during one life so as to make it appropriate for a new class of Karma, and this may take place in two ways: (a) through intensity of thought and the power of a vow, and (b) through natural alterations due to complete exhaustion of old causes.” When a person is determined to live the spiritual life, his aspiration works as heat, and leads to quicker precipitation of Karma. In ordinary people, karma spreads across many lifetimes, but once a vow is taken to live the higher life, karma precipitates in terms of boulders, instead of pebbles. “It is well to have recognized that for a long time the hidden activity of the spiritual aspiration manifests most in the increased activity of the lower nature, and this may also mean in the circumstance of life. It is the hastening of Karma,” writes Mr. Crosbie. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 142)

The distinction between ordinary humanity and student-aspirants is brought out in *Light on the Path*. It describes the situation by saying that masses of men go through life waveringly, not having a definite goal, and hence, their Karma operates in a confused manner. But those who wish to walk the path of occultism have to make choices. Knowingly they take steps on the right or wrong path, and every step produces great karmic results. Hence, the portion of humanity that has not decided to walk the path of occultism and therefore do not make a definite choice between good and evil is the lay majority, which Eliphas Levi describes as the “useless portion of humanity.” He says, “To be *immortal* in good, one must identify oneself with God; to be immortal in evil, with Satan. These are the two poles of the world of souls; between these two poles vegetate and die without remembrance the useless portion of mankind.” (*H.P.B. Series No. 11*, p. 40)

Humanity as a whole will have to consciously make the choice between good and evil, in the Fifth Round, when mind of man is fully developed. As a result there will be segregation of humanity into three groups. Those who choose neither good nor evil will remain unconscious till the next Planetary *Manvantara*. H.P.B. points out that it is not surprising that majority of mankind would meet this

fate. Just as out of millions of acorns from the Oak tree, only one in a thousand grows into a tree, so it is with humanity. Those who take the left-hand path become co-workers with nature in her work of destruction. The same idea has been echoed in St. John's *Revelation*: "So then because thou art *lukewarm*, and neither cold nor hot, I will spew thee out of my mouth." (*H.P.B. Series No. 11*, p. 41)

We speed up the *exhaustion* of our karma by learning to accept people and situations that we are unable to change, without grumbling or complaining, and try to learn the lesson. We speed up exhaustion of karma when we learn to act selflessly, renouncing attachment to the results of actions. "It must be through non-attachment that the soul will burst through the walls of pain, it will be only through change of mind that the Karmic burden will be lifted," writes Mr. Judge. (*W.Q.J. Series No. 7*, p. 7)

Question: "Do not try to open up conscious communication with beings on other planes," warns Mr. Crosbie (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 14). Why?

Answer: We are warned against trying to open up communication with entities from the invisible world. The warning comes because some religious people intensely desire to communicate with a god or goddess, or to "see" them. Some student-aspirants wish to meet or communicate with the *Mahatmas*. The reason for the advice to abstain from such attempts to communicate with beings of the invisible plane has been given in the subsequent lines: "It is not the time and danger lies that way, because of the power of creating one's own images, and because of the power and disposition of the dark forces to simulate beings of light, and render futile your efforts to reach the goal." It is very clear that we should not desire to visualize the form of a god or a goddess, or try to communicate with them, before we have developed inwardly, before we have learnt to distinguish between the real and the counterfeit.

In many cases, what appears to be the vision of a god or a great being, is simply an objectivization of the image impressed on the brain. In the *Ocean of Theosophy* (p. 153), Mr. Judge explains that

apparitions are of two general classes. The first, the images from the astral world, either actually visible to the eye or the result of vibration within, thrown out to the eye, and thus making the person think that he sees an object form without. Thus, when one sees the objectivized image of, say, Jesus or Krishna, from one's mind, one may believe that one has actually seen Jesus or Krishna, whereas it is only an image.

The other possibility is that these images may even be simulated by the dark forces to delude us. In *Vahan*, August 1, 1892, Mr. Judge writes that there are two classes of beings able to influence mankind at large, one being the "living human Mahatmas," who help us in our evolution, and the other, non-human beings. He points out that very advance class of elementals, such as *Devas* of the Hindus, can communicate with man and make him suppose that they are high spiritual beings, and deflect him from the normal line of human development. In *Isis Unveiled* (I, 495) H.P.B. mentions a class of elementals called *Shudala-madan*, which can assume any shape he chose, transform one thing into another and make people see what is not there. There is a danger of our getting into by-lanes.

In the article, "Spiritualism Old and New," Mr. Judge mentions that during the time of Moses, there were "consulters with the familiar spirits," who opened up communication with powerful nature spirits of air or fire element. They could use the inner senses of man, and help a person to obtain information about matters which were not normally available to him. These "familiar spirits" are dangerous because they are devoid of conscience, and act automatically. They make use of the inner senses and intelligence of the person. Their influence is mainly on our lower nature and in the course of time such a person who is a consulter of familiar spirits finds that his moral qualities are paralyzed. In the same article, Mr. Judge mentions that Moses, an initiate, prohibited his people from certain occult practices, saying, "There shall not be found among you anyone a consulter with familiar spirits, or a wizard, or a necromancer."

These days a new cult of angel therapists is on the rise and they

hold workshops in angel therapy, and in giving insights and interpretations of the messages from angels. It is believed that everyone has a guardian angel. It is generally believed that one can call out to various angels for protection, healing, wisdom, etc.

H.P.B. writes that there has always been a belief in the guardian angel, or tutelary spirit. This doctrine has not originated with the Christians but with Pagan world. It was represented in the tutelary *daimon* of Socrates (*The Theosophist*, September 1881). The word *Daimon* was given by the ancients to all kinds of spirits, *whether good or bad*, human or otherwise, but the appellation was often synonymous with that of Gods or angels. Some of these *daimons* are elemental spirits. Socrates had his own *daimon*. He was frequently warned by a *daimon*. He maintained that a god (*daimon*) gave him secret warnings; and he warned his disciples to do or not to do certain things, according to the dictates of his genius, writes Xenophon, a disciple of Socrates. While the angels or *daimon* may guide us, consulting of these elementary spirits may easily lead one to mediumship and consequently, in time, one may completely come under their sway, and that is something undesirable for one who wants to walk the spiritual path. Regarding Socrates, H.P.B. writes: “The old Grecian philosopher was a ‘medium’; hence, he had never been initiated into the Mysteries; for such was the rigorous law. . . . The old sage, in unguarded moments of ‘spiritual inspiration,’ revealed that which he had never learned; and was therefore put to death as an atheist” (*Isis*, II, 117-18). The occultists believe most firmly in the personal, *divine* spirit in man, the source of his inspiration, and which is both his “angel” and “guardian.”

JUDGEMENT can be acquired only by acute observation, by actual experience in the school of life, by ceaseless alertness to learn from others, by the study of the activities of men who have made notable marks, by striving to analyze the everyday play of causes and effects, by constant study of human nature.

—B. C. FORBES

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Sometimes what we thought was our limit turns out not our limit after all. It is possible to go beyond. It is good to ponder over and find out what limits are we capable of crossing—the good and the bad. What is the worst that you are capable of doing if pushed to the edge? Also, what is the best we can do—and under what conditions? We observe sportspeople, adventure-seekers, bungee-jumpers, mountain-climbers, cyclists, swimmers and marathoners pushing themselves beyond perceived physical limits. We are all aware that in crisis our limits stretch beyond imagination, as we exhibit much greater strength and prowess in order to save our own life or that of a loved one.

On the other hand, negatively speaking, have we ever wondered if we are capable of murder or violence? We are not likely to know unless we are pushed to the limits of anger and helplessness. “Sometimes, it requires as much strength to push back from those limits as it does to push beyond them. When you see red, you know that to give in is to explode. And so you make a conscious decision to step back. Reason and fear help you to do that. . . . Knowing your limits is important in order to understand how far beyond these boundaries you can push. But, also to know the point beyond which you must not push, because pushing beyond that could prove counterproductive,” writes Vinita Nangia. She points out that sometimes we reach a point after which we should start stepping back, not out of the fear of being unethical or illegal, but in order to conserve the limited time and energy we may have, for doing meaningful things.

Again, each one of us should be aware of the fields in which we may endeavour to push our limits and those others in which it would be a waste of time and effort, to strive. We should neither overestimate nor underestimate our capabilities. The balance helps us to make the most of time, energy, capabilities and potential.

“Not being able to say no to demands on our time leads to a

frustrated day and dissatisfaction all round. Similarly, in a limited lifespan, frittering away time in useless activity, or trying to do things that are beyond our capacity would be a sad waste of life... Intelligent people get a good grasp of their unique qualities, and also of their limitations," writes Vinita Dawra Nangia. (*Times Life, Sunday Times of India*, March 5, 2017)

A complacent person achieves nothing. One has to learn to be moderately ambitious to achieve worldly things, and must *aspire* to reach spiritual heights. "Ah, but a man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" wrote Robert Browning. Each one of us is born with limited powers and abilities. But these limitations are brought on us by *Karma*, *i.e.*, by the way we have lived our lives in the past incarnations. Each one of us is invited to cross over the self-created boundaries. Have we ever thought it possible that we can transcend our present limitations and become a Buddha, and experience unconditional happiness?

Since all of us have at our disposal limited amount of time and energy—physical, mental and psychic—these must be used judiciously. "Psychic and vital energy are limited in every man. It is like a capital. If you have a dollar a day and spend two, at the end of the month you will have a deficit of \$30," writes H.P.B. It is not always wise to be struggling to push beyond our limits, as Socrates advises: "There is no failure in unavoidable surrender...to know when to give up struggle...there also is a kind of triumph."

While we push our limits in the direction of spiritual growth, we likewise, must learn to step back from vices and entanglements that tend to drag us down. Each one of us has to fix for himself a boundary, a *Lakshaman rekha*, which was a line drawn by Rama's brother Lakshaman for Sita, which she was not supposed to cross. When Sita crossed that line, she was abducted by Ravana and found herself thoroughly miserable, in spite of living in Lanka of gold! Ravana represents, among other things, material world with all its temptations. We must draw a limit for ourselves and not covet or try to acquire unlimited wealth and property. We can draw a line in the

case of earning and spending the money. In spiritual pursuit, it is the disciple who has to "put the bit into his own mouth" *i.e.*, put upon himself painful restrictions.

Where did evil come from? Many believe that evil has existed for eternity and that Devil is the personification of all evil. Where did the Devil come from? The Devil is also called Satan, Shaitan or Demon. In Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the Devil is described as an archangel, a chief angel, who was thrown out of heaven because he rebelled against God and challenged His authority. Many theologians believe that the Devil was created by God. Many have argued that the Devil was born when he was banished from heaven by God. Then there are those who believe that the Devil was created by God so that humans would appreciate good and God by contrast, and also to enable them to exercise their free will.

To understand the Devil we must understand what is good and evil. We term something as good when it resonates with our innermost feelings of peace, truth, love and joy. Likewise, we term something as bad when it is not in harmony with our innate self. We like feelings of joy, love, truth, etc., because our true nature is made up of these values. When people act in an evil manner, their reasoning, will power and feelings are completely overpowered by a vicious emotion. Vicious feelings are not a part of our original nature. Evil is simply an illusion. Just as absence of light is termed as darkness, and absence of health is termed as disease, similarly, absence of our innate goodness manifests as evil. We can remove darkness by switching on the light, so also, we can remove evil by realising our innate goodness.

The Devil is not an evil person, but only represents vices like lust, ego and anger. God did not create the Devil. The Devil was born due to human weaknesses. God gives us wisdom and power to free ourselves from the clutches of the Devil. (*Purity*, March 2017)

What is the origin of evil? Christian theology states that evil came

into the world because the first man and woman (Adam and Eve) ate the “forbidden fruit” in the Garden of Eden, and because of Adam’s sin every other human being is and has been a sinner. Interestingly, this first man was made in the image of God—he was *perfect*—and yet, he was unable to restrain himself from doing forbidden things! Eating the forbidden fruit is equated with evil, perhaps because, as H.P.B. points out, “Too much knowledge about things of matter is thus rightly shown as evil.”

In Ancient Philosophy the birth of the Kosmos is attributed to ONE becoming the many, or homogeneity becoming heterogeneity, creating the contrasts. The creation of contrasts or “pairs of opposites” has given rise to evil, *i.e.*, free will through choice created evil. Moreover, one-third of evil is inherent in manifestation. Evil is not immanent in matter which is eternal but in the illusions created by it. “The real evil proceeds from human intelligence, and its origin rests entirely with reasoning man who dissociates himself from Nature. Humanity then alone is the true source of evil,” writes a Master of Wisdom.

Pagans regarded good and evil as twin brothers born from the same mother—Nature. However, when people started believing in a just, merciful and perfect anthropomorphic god, there was a need to create his opposite, the *Devil* or *Satan* to explain injustice, cruelty and evil in the world. H.P.B. points out the absurdity by arguing that if God is Omnipresent, Omniscient and Infinite, that God must also include evil. Either God must include evil, or he must be the direct cause of it or he must cease to be Absolute, Supreme and all-embracing. The Ancient philosophers defined evil as the lining of God or Good. If good is represented by Light, then evil could be represented as its shadow, and hence inseparable. If evil disappeared then good would disappear along with it from Earth, as depicted in the story of *Kaliyadaman*, in which Krishna does not *destroy* serpent Kaliya, but asks him to retire into the fathomless depths of the sea. It implies that even if we may get rid of evil from our *individual* natures, evil will always remain in the Kosmos as the opposing power

to active goodness which maintains the equilibrium in Nature, writes H.P.B. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 26*, p. 15)

“To the best of my knowledge” is a lovely phrase. “It denotes the fact that the statement to which it pertains is made after due consideration and a thorough, conscientious mental review—and yet, implicit in it is certain modesty, humility and open-mindedness implying that perhaps someone else’s knowledge could be even better. Or, ‘my’ knowledge could become even ‘better’ in the future,” writes Deepak Hiranandani. Similarly, it is far more polite to add, “I think,” before making a strong sweeping statement about the merits or demerits of something. Though the terms “knowledge” and “truth” are used interchangeably, knowledge expands when more facts are gathered, while Truth is fixed. Knowledge of an individual, society or culture is, to a great extent, the result of commonly agreed beliefs, actual data and observations. What passes for truth or knowledge varies greatly.

In various branches of knowledge, which includes science, dogma can prevent the acceptance and realisation of self-evident facts. For instance, decades were taken for the acceptance of the idea that smoking cigarettes could have any possible negative effect. Hence, it is not surprising that when it comes to matters which are other-worldly, implied and inferred but not directly visible, the strength of the dogma could be even stronger. “Would it not be a great thing if religious people, religious texts, discourses, preaching, frequently added, ‘This is to the best of my (or ‘our’) knowledge’?” When the implication of this phrase is understood, it would be clear that what is accepted as knowledge, and what is accepted as truth, is relative, writes Deepak Hiranandani. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India*, March 12, 2017)

The human mind is capable of acquiring two kinds of knowledge, depending on which of its two modes of consciousness is more active—one is rational and the other, intuitive. Rational knowledge is a relative knowledge and belongs to the realm of intellect. As

against this there is Absolute Knowledge or Wisdom. Purely rational knowledge has its own limitations. Our knowledge of things is limited by our perceptive faculties. We know an object in terms of our sense perceptions. For instance, a blind person may know a flower only by its smell and touch. A scientist may know even its chemical composition. But the flower as we see it is not identical with the flower as it is in itself. So Kant said that there is knowledge of the “thing-in-itself.” That is Absolute Knowledge or Wisdom, which reveals the very essence of things and is all-inclusive.

Anekantvada is one of the fundamental doctrines of Jainism. It refers to the principles of pluralism and multiplicity of viewpoints, the notion that truth and reality are perceived differently from diverse points of view, and that no single point of view is the complete truth. The Jaina theory of Judgement says that every object has innumerable aspects or characters. A person who is omniscient can have direct knowledge of various aspects of an object at one go, but it is not so for an ordinary being, and hence the understanding of an ordinary human being is partial, and therefore valid only from a particular point of view. This is called *nayavada*, which points out that in daily life our judgements regarding objects are conditional because they are true only from a certain standpoint and as regards certain aspects considered. From this arises the theory of *Syadvada*. We must realize that an individual can never present complete knowledge of an object because of limited understanding, imperfection of speech, etc. Therefore, the Jaina logic insists that every judgement (*naya*) should be qualified by the word (*syat*), i.e., “somehow” or “in a way,” to emphasize its conditional or relative character.

We must try to give up our own mental bias, and enter into the bias of another’s mind to see his viewpoint. “Each one is enamoured of his own mental habits, and disinclined to admit that any other one can be better. When we have become acquainted with this mental path of ours, we are then in position to see whether in any particular case our view is false,” writes Mr. Judge.