

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE LIGHT AND DARK SIDE OF NATURE

“LIGHT and darkness, are the world’s eternal ways,” says the *Gita*. There have always been the pairs of opposites in the world. The rebels have co-existed with the god-fearing, and so, too, the law-abiders with the lawbreakers. For Rama there was Ravana and for Krishna there was Kansa. The visible world is a reflection of the invisible world. The duality of good and evil or light and darkness exists even in the invisible world. Good and Evil are the centripetal and centrifugal forces of the moral universe. *Centrifugal* force is centre leaving, while *centripetal* force is centre tending. The spiritual centre in man is his Higher Self or *Atman*. In human beings, the Centripetal force is *spiritual attraction*, and Centrifugal force is *terrestrial attraction*. As the centripetal force predominates, the individual reaches a higher plane of existence and ultimately becomes one with *Paramatma*. If, on the other hand, the centrifugal force becomes greater than the centripetal force, the individual comes to a lower level of existence and is ultimately annihilated.

If we arrest the centripetal motion of the earthly soul, *i.e.*, the movement of the mind towards the divine nature, then ultimately, we have a lost soul—an individual who deliberately chooses and delights in evil, life after life, turning a deaf ear to the promptings and guidance of the divine self, and at last, snaps the silver thread which connects him to the Divine within. Such are the *Dugpas*, Black Magicians, aptly described as “Brothers of the Shadow.” As

opposed to these there are “Brothers of Radiance,” or *Nirmanakayas* of Good, who form the Guardian Wall. “It is taught that the accumulated efforts of long generations of Yogis, Saints and Adepts, especially of the *Nirmanakayas*, have created, so to say, a wall of protection around mankind, which wall shields mankind invisibly from still worse evils.”

There are various degrees of the Beings of light, and so also there are degrees of the beings of darkness, some above and some below man, on the ladder of evolution. The Indo-Iranians of old believed that the world was created and sustained by many gods and goddesses and that these divinities must be propitiated by prayers, sacrifices and offerings. Says Shri Krishna, in the *Gita*, “nourish the Gods, that the Gods may nourish you....The Gods being nourished by worship with sacrifice, will grant you the enjoyment of your wishes.” Hence, Manu in his ordinances enjoins five sacrifices (*Yajnas*) which, he says, are incumbent on every man to perform every day in order to acquit himself of the debt he owes to his fellow-beings. They are sacrifice to the supreme (*Brahma yajna*), sacrifice to our progenitors (*Pitri yajna*), sacrifice to the gods (*Deva yajna*), sacrifice to the lower kingdoms of nature (*Bhuta yajna*) and sacrifice to mankind (*Nara yajna*). Besides, the beings on the Light side of nature feed on good thoughts, noble aspirations and noble deeds.

The beings on the dark side of nature thrive on evil. They are normally described as negative entities or energies. Yogi Ashwini explains that these beings of darkness survive and coexist with us. In *Satya Yuga* positive forces were at the peak, but as we moved towards *Kali Yuga* the influence of negative forces began to increase, till finally in *Kali Yuga*, negative forces completely control, as *dharma* has been forgotten. These negative energies look for vulnerable individuals for their food. They feed on negativity and negative energies. We might say that they get fresh and healthy food when they are able to convert a happy household into a chaotic and unhappy family by picking up the weakest link in the family to

enter. This weakness could be food, drink or sex, one of the basic senses. Negative energies feed on negative emotions. They control *tamasic* people who lack inner strength and can be manipulated easily, explains Yogi Ashwini.

We are in *Kali Yuga* the Dark Age, and interestingly, this age started with the death of Shri Krishna. It is said that with Lord Krishna gone, Kali started spreading evil in the minds of people, but still he could not enter King Parikshit’s kingdom. King Parikshit was the son of Abhimanyu and grand-son of Arjuna. The story goes that as soon as King Parikshit heard of the advent of Kali into his kingdom, he set out in search of him, so that he could prevent him from creating havoc in his peaceful kingdom. He came across an old bull with three broken legs, who barely managed to stand on one leg, being whipped by an evil-looking man to move faster. Righteousness stood on all four legs in Golden Age, but declines almost completely in Kali Yuga, standing on only one leg. The evil-looking man was Kali, the personification of evil, who wanted to have a place to live. As a king, Parikshit could not refuse, so he allowed Kali to dwell in five places—in gambling dens, in taverns, where there is drinking of alcohol, in brothels, where men and women indulge in carnal sexual relations, in slaughtering places, where violence is the norm, and wherever there is gold. The story goes that by allowing Kali a home in gold, King Parikshit was no longer immune to the effect of Kali, as Kali took up abode in the golden crown of the king himself, and brought about his downfall. The story goes that once the king was travelling through the jungle, and on being thirsty he entered the ashram of a sage and requested for water, but the sage did not reply as he was in meditation. The voice within prompted the king that he was being insulted and finally drove him to take a dead snake and put it around the neck of the sage, who on realizing what had happened cursed Parikshit that he would die in seven days. King Parikshit lived a short life, paying dearly for one mistake, of giving in to anger.

However, the black forces cannot affect a man unless he offers

an opening, unless he has a chink in his armour. It is through vices, however subtle, that evil forces can make an entry in man. This is symbolized in another story in *Mahabharata*, that of king Nala. Kali could not harm Nala so long as he was stuck to the path of virtue. Such was the purity of Nala that it took twelve years for Kali to find a small fault in him and bewitch his soul. However, one day, Nala went for his evening prayers without properly purifying himself, and this gave a chance to Kali to enter his body. Under the vile influence of this deity, Nala gambled and lost his kingdom and all his wealth to his fraternal cousin Pushkara. Both Nala and his wife Damayanti were banished to the forest, clad in a single piece of cloth. Both were subject to a series of calamities, before being reunited. So it does not take a spectacular mistake or slip on our part to let in a bad influence. Hence, “Eternal Vigilance is the price of safety.” *The Dhammapada* says: “Poison harms not one who has no wound. No evil is to him who does no evil.”

Mr. Judge suggests that when a spiritual aspirant advances sufficiently so as to make a difference in this world of moral darkness, the dark forces get busy to thwart his efforts and deviate him from the right path. *Letters That Have Helped Me* mentions that a person who has been doing hard and independent work at last comes to the notice of the White Lodge, and then the Black Lodge also takes notice of such a person. One of the things they would do is to arouse irritation, and increase it where it already exists. Mr. Judge’s advice to the aspirant is to learn to curb the trifling ebullitions of lower nature, *i.e.*, fretting and fuming over trifling matters. By doing this we will conserve energy and gain inner strength.

There is a profound thought on Black Magic and black magicians in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (p. 61). Mr. Judge suggests that it is easy to fall into Black Magic or dark side of nature. “The first exercise of Black Magic is to psychologize people.” In fact, we are likely to go on the downward path even when we act with partiality. The one walking the spiritual path in the earnest has to overcome every prejudice, every earthly liking and every feeling of preference.

These are not necessarily evil, but they lead to *sense of separateness*. “A deed of kindness done with partiality may become evil, *e.g.*, by stirring up animosity in the mind of the others,” writes Mr. Judge.

In a lighter vein we may read with profit Prof. C. S. Lewis’ book “The Screwtape Letters” which are letters written by a senior demon Screwtape to his nephew Wormwood who is inexperienced, giving advice and tips and showing methods in corrupting the human soul, in undermining faith and promoting sin in religious and pious people. A human being, newly converted to Christianity is referred to as “patient,” in these letters. The advice given is to arouse people to work for individual benefit and to increase greed, which is seen as the greatest good. It is interesting to note the variety of ways and means used by the “dark forces,” to take advantage of the infirmities of human nature, so as to deviate a person from the path of righteousness. For instance, in one of the letters Screwtape advises Wormwood not to engage his patient in reasoning, but to deaden his mind with jargon and distractions. If a man can be made to think high spiritual thoughts while ignoring the daily routines of life, he can be made to think himself very spiritual while at the same time becoming increasingly annoyed with his mother, and she with him.

Little offences can be made to produce significant results, if handled correctly. Every time a person fails to keep up the discipline, or follows the spiritual principles only superficially, the dark forces rejoice. Thus, for instance, Screwtape finds hope in the fact that the “patient” has repented, but he has not turned his repentance into action, and urges Wormwood to see that this never happens! Screwtape advises Wormwood to convince all his “patients” that all unbelievers are clearly different and inferior to believers, and after cultivating this idea turn it into spiritual pride, in which the subject sees himself as inherently superior to others. The work of corrupting individuals is done not only by introducing and encouraging unhealthy ideas in the minds of an aspirant, but also by keeping him away from true philosophical ideas.

We all are imperfect and have vices of our nature. But while we

have not managed to eradicate them, at least we should not make allowances, or find excuses, saying, for this one time, let it go; not to find excuse for one's anger, saying that there was provocation, or that one was tired, and so on. If we are not constantly vigilant our weakness may aggravate and become complex. But even in that case, it may give us an opportunity for growth. In the article, "Spiritual Progress" (*H.P.B. Series No. 26*), H.P.B. writes: "The trouble that comes upon us is always just the one we feel to be the hardest that could possibly happen—it is always the one thing we feel we cannot possibly bear. If we look at it from a wider point of view, we shall see that we are trying to burst through our shell at its one vulnerable point." Our trouble always seems to be the hardest because we have not mastered that weakness or learnt to deal with that particular circumstance of life. We may regard it as our "vulnerable point" our "Achilles' heel," through which nature gives us the opportunity to grow, if we could only learn to handle. So also, if we neglect to deal with our weakness, which could be money, sensuality, anger, or anxiety, then we would notice that more and more calamities come connected with that weakness, and as we learn to handle them and begin to learn the necessary lesson, we are able to burst through the shell, *i.e.*, overcome that one inhibiting factor in our character.

We are in *Kali Yuga* the Dark Age, characterized by great thirst for riches and material betterment, while the spiritual life is ignored. We cannot do much *against Kali Yuga*, but we can do much *in* it, as *Kali Yuga* is the shortest of the four *Yugas* with the rate of vibrations (cause and effect) four times faster than in other *yugas*. "A very slight cause produces gigantic effects. To aspire ever so little now will bring about greater and more lasting effects for good than at any other time," writes Mr. Judge. In this *Yuga* we have the opportunities for producing permanent good effects in ourselves and in the world as a whole. We must seize this opportunity to be good and do good by swimming against the stream.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT SELF-SURRENDER

A DEVOTEE said to Sri Ramana Maharshi, "I fear that Self-realization is no easy thing to attain." Sri Ramana Maharshi replied, "Why impede yourself by anticipating failure? Push on. Self-realization will come to an earnest seeker in a trice." To illustrate this, Sri Ramana Maharshi told the following story:

King Janaka was listening to a philosophical treatise read by the state pandit, wherein a passage occurred to the effect that a rider who had placed one foot in the stirrup, contemplating upon realization, could realize the Self before he lifted the other foot to place it in the other stirrup. That is, the passage taught, that when realization comes, it comes in an instant. The king stopped the pandit from proceeding further, and ordered him to prove the statement. The pandit admitted that he was only a book-worm and was unable to impart practical wisdom. Janaka suggested that the text was either false or exaggerated, but the pandit would not agree to this. Though he himself was unable to impart practical wisdom, he maintained that the text could not be false or exaggerated, since it contained the words of wise Sages of the past. Janaka was annoyed with the pandit and in a fit of rage condemned him to prison. He then inflicted the same punishment on every pandit who passed for a wise man but was unable to prove this scriptural text.

For fear of being imprisoned, some of the pandits fled the country in voluntary exile. While two or three of them were running through a thick forest, a Sage called Ashtavakra—*Ashta* means "eight" and *vakra* means "bends." Ashtavakra was so named because his body had eight deformities—who though young in age was wise in learning, happened to cross their path. Having learnt their plight, Ashtavakra offered to prove the text true to the king and thereby having the imprisoned pandits released. Impressed by his bold assurance, they took him in the palanquin to the king. At the sight of the Sage, the king stood up and saluted him with great reverence.

Ashtavakra then ordered the king to release all the Pandits. Janaka thought that such an order could come only from one who had the capacity to set his doubts at rest, and hence he released all the pandits and asked the Sage whether he could summon the horse. The Sage advised him not to be in a hurry and suggested that they should go to a solitary spot. Thereupon the king on his horse and the Sage in the palanquin went out of the city towards the forest. When they reached the forest the Sage asked the king to send back the retinue. The King did as he was asked, and then placing one of his feet in the stirrup, he requested the Sage to prove the scriptural text. But the Sage replied by asking whether the position in which they stood indicated a proper Master-disciple relationship. The King then understood that he should show due reverence towards Ashtavakra, and prayed to him for his Grace. The Sage then addressed him as “Janaka,” since he was no longer a king and told him that before being taught *Brahma-Jnana*, a true disciple should surrender himself and all his possessions to his Master. “So be it,” said the king. “So be it,” replied the Sage and disappeared into the forest. From that moment Janaka stood transfixed with one foot in the stirrup and the other dangling in the air, as if he were a statue.

Time passed by, and the citizens, finding no sign of their King returning, grew anxious and began to search for him. They came to the place where Janaka was standing transfixed and were dismayed to find him unaware of their presence and indifferent to their earnest inquiries. They therefore began searching for Ashtavakra who, they thought, must be a charlatan that had cast a spell upon their king, and vowed vengeance upon him. At the same time being concerned with the king’s condition and wanting to minister to him, they brought him back to the city on a palanquin. The king, however, continued to remain in the same condition.

At last, having found Ashtavakra, the ministers entreated him to remove the alleged spell and bring the king back to his normal condition. At the same time they charged him with the responsibility for having cast the spell. Ashtavakra treated their ignorant remarks

with contempt and called the name of Janaka, who immediately saluted him, and responded to his call. The Ministers were surprised. Ashtavakra told the king that he was being maliciously accused by the people of having brought him to some sad plight and asked him to tell the truth. On hearing this, the king angrily asked, “Who said so?” The Ministers were taken by surprise and pleaded for mercy. Thereupon the Sage advised the king to resume his normal functions, adding that *Brahma-Jnana* could be taught only to competent persons and that since the king had successfully passed the test, he would now impart it to him. Then the Sage remained alone with the king during the night and taught him the ultimate Truth, saying, “*Brahman* is not anything new or apart from oneself and no particular time or place is needed to realize It.” He finally concluded by saying, “That Thou Art (or *Tat Tvam Asi*). That is the Self, eternal and infinite.”

The next morning the ministers found that the king called the assembly and performed his functions as usual. In the assembled Court Ashtavakra asked the king whether his former doubt about whether *Brahma-Jnana* could be attained as suddenly and as quickly as mentioned in the scriptures was cleared, and if so to bring the horse and demonstrate the truth of it.

The king was all humility now and said: “Lord! Because of my immaturity, I doubted the correctness of the scriptural text. I now realize that every letter of it is true.” The Ministers thanked the Sage. [Taken from *Spiritual Stories as told by Ramana Maharshi*, Published by Sri Ramanasramam]

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TAT *tvam asi* or “That Thou Art” is one of the four *Mahavakyas* or “Great Sayings” from *Chhandogya Upanishad*. It shows that *Brahman* or One Reality, which is the substratum of everything in the universe, is identical with the divine essence in each one of us, which is *Atman*. It is important to bear in mind that when *Brahman* and *Atman* are identified, they both stand for *pure consciousness*.

Self, when separated from the limitations of name and form, is identical with the *Brahman* viewed apart from any attributes that differentiates IT from pure consciousness. A Guru reminds his disciple of his real nature, saying, THAT THOU ART. The disciple has to strive for self-realization, so that he can say, “I am That,” or *Aham Brahmosmi*.

We identify ourselves with the ever-changing perishable body, and with its conditions and relations, which are also ever-changing. We say, “I am happy, or I am sad,” “I am sick, or I am well.” These expressions are because of the self-identifying attachment to some form or conditions which are changing. We were likewise attached to other forms and conditions in the past, and in the future will be attached to another set of forms and conditions. But through all these conditions and forms, which are changing continually, there is that in us, the “we,” which has remained unchanged and unchanging, explains Mr. Crosbie.

The discipline of concentration, contemplation and meditation, gradually brings about the shift in the consciousness of the aspirant. There is a gradual realization that “I” am not the body, mind, feelings, and much less the possessions. When we are able to transcend the self-identifying attachment to not only family and loved ones, but also to physical form, ideas, desires, emotions, etc., we succeed in merging the personal “I” into the Individual “I.” But even when we cease to identify ourselves with the personality, so long as there remains even a subtle sense of separateness, union with the divine is not possible. When the universe grows “I,” and there is the realization that “I am verily that *Brahman*,” it is described as the *Samadhi* state.

The process of self-purification and hence of self-realization is a long process, requiring efforts of several lifetimes. Though it is possible for a person to go through the required discipline in seven years or in seven minutes, the strain involved would be enormous. The effort is of lifetimes, but the culmination is of the moment, and that is how a person can realize the Self in few seconds.

STUDIES IN THE BHAGAVAD-GITA ON INCARNATION—II

HOW CAN these beings who are not yet endowed with mind, or self-consciousness or the reasoning power, acquire for themselves this link between their higher spiritual and immortal principles and the lower principles of their beings? The answer is one which is very difficult to grasp unless we have conceived the metaphysical truth that there is a mighty chain of transmitters of the Light of Knowledge, a chain of beings who hand down to the beings that come after them the same immemorial secrets that they received from the perfected Beings in the past. The teaching is that the Sons of Wisdom, these Perfected Human Beings, themselves Living Mahatmas of previous evolutions, actually gave the light of *Manas*, the Fire of Intelligence to the human beings trying to evolve on this earth, so that we have in our innermost nature, the ancestors of the divine and human part of our being. How this process of lighting up of *Manas* actually took place, is said to be a great mystery, which we will fully understand, when we have become initiated disciples.

But the teaching is that the lighting up of *Manas* took place and continues to be revived and takes place today, through two different methods. Some of these Higher Beings simply gave a spark of their divine power to those beings who were human only in form. Other Sons of Wisdom actually incarnated in the human forms, thus endowing them with self-consciousness. Those Great Beings, those Sons of Wisdom of the Third Race, had as their first progeny a Being who is known in Theosophy as the Initiator, as the Great Sacrifice, as the Living Tree of Divine Wisdom, or the Seed of all knowledge, or the Supreme and the highest among all terrestrial Sons of Wisdom. This Great Teacher, this Maha-Guru, or Initiator, is He whose direct, though hidden guidance, helped all the teachers less divine in degree, to become the first instructors of Spiritual Humanity. And what we know of as the innate ideas, spiritual intuitions of our own nature, are the remains or the help and

assistance that we received eighteen million years ago from those Great Teachers, all directed by the Great Teacher, the MAHA-GURU.

Just as all our incarnations are today rooted in an egoic individual, so all the great teachers, all perfected human beings of yesterday or of today or of tomorrow, are rooted in this great Maha-Guru, and this Maha-Guru we know as the Planetary Spirits, some aspects of which are so high that we cannot conceive of them. But the fact that this Planetary Spirit at the beginning of this cycle gave us the key-note, sounded that note of truth for those of us who are trying to evolve and attain that complete Truth in this evolution, gives us the great fact that there is a Living Link which exists today between ourselves and the Source of all Supreme Knowledge, and this Living Link is the Great Lodge of Masters.

The Lodge of Masters has the Supreme mystery, which is revealed to all those chelas and disciples who prepare themselves for that final initiation. One of the Masters of Wisdom writes about the highest aspect of the Planetary Spirit, thus:

...the highest Planetary Spirits, those, who can no longer err...appear on Earth but at the origin of every *new* human kind; at the junction of, and close of the two ends of the great cycle. And, they remain with man no longer than the time required for the eternal truths they teach to impress themselves so forcibly upon the plastic mind of the new races as to warrant them from being lost or entirely forgotten in ages hereafter, by the forthcoming generations. The mission of the planetary Spirit is but to strike the KEY-NOTE OF TRUTH. Once he has directed the vibration of the latter to run its course uninterruptedly along the catenation of that race and to the end of the cycle—the denizen of the highest inhabited sphere disappears from the surface of our planet—till the following “resurrection of flesh.” The vibrations of the Primitive Truth are what your philosophers name “innate ideas.”

This Supreme Truth of Occultism has been misunderstood by the world of men, and from the stupendous fact of this Planetary

Spirit has arisen the ridiculous and dangerous concept of an anthropomorphic god. The idea of a personal deity is not only upsetting but absolutely contrary to the conception of this Origin and Source of all Perfected Beings. This higher Planetary Spirit is not an individual, is not a finite being, but is simply the collectivity, the aggregate of all Elder Brothers of the Human Race, of all Sons of Wisdom, of all Perfected Men, and so we are in our innermost consciousness if we succeed in reaching the goal of the Path of discipleship. The Planetary Being stands for the highest aspect of the Great Lodge. What the Planetary Spirit is, will only become clear at initiation, when we attain the divine vision that Arjuna attained in the Eleventh Discourse, but the very names and titles that Arjuna gives to Krishna in this Eleventh discourse are clues for us to try to follow, to meditate upon, that we may in time conceive more of the mystery of Initiation.

These names and titles mentioned in this discourse are very numerous, and some of them are very striking ones. We may choose some of them and group them so as to convey to us certain of the great aspects of the Lodge of Masters. The first group will give us the idea of that Great Lodge of Masters as a Unit. All those Perfected Men are of one heart and one mind, a collectivity. They form what we can symbolize under the idea of the Great Supreme Lord or Being, and keep in mind that it is simply the collectivity of all the Divine Souls which make up the Great Universal Soul. We find in verse 3 the title of *Purushottama*, or the Supreme Man, in verse 4 that of *Yogeshwara* or the Lord of Yoga, the Master of Devotion, and in verse 38 the titles of *Adhi Deva*, the First God, and *Purusha Purana*, the Most Ancient Man, being given to Shri Krishna. These four titles convey to us immediately the idea that our Ancestors, the Spiritual Fathers of the Human Race are those great Perfected Beings. For Krishna is the Supreme Man and the Most Ancient Man, the First Man on this earth, the Spiritual Initiator of our Race, and He is the Lord of Yoga. In the last discourse, Krishna was called by Arjuna a Yogi, because He had achieved the greatest yoga or

union of His own Spiritual and Divine Nature with the Manifested World, the union of the Divine Teacher who incarnates with the whole of Mankind. Krishna is also known as *Adhi Deva* the first God, because the Supreme and Most Ancient Man and God are one and the same thing, since we know in Theosophy that all beings can become Divine Human beings or Gods.

The second group will give us the idea not of the individual aspect, but of the Universal aspect. We find in verse 16 that Krishna is known as *Visvarupa* and *Vishveshwar*, or Cosmic Form and the Lord of that Universe. Krishna is not only the energizing and spiritual power of the whole of humanity, but also the actual visible manifestation of the Universe. Krishna from that point of view is the world everywhere present in every single body in today's world. Then several times throughout the discourse, Krishna is known as the dwelling, the mansion of the Universe. And the same idea is given to us very fully in verse 38: "Thou art all of the Universe, the Highest Receptacle the Supreme Mansion."

That is this higher aspect of the Masters upon which the whole of the Universe and the whole of our own evolution, shall we say, rests. They are the Containers, and Sustainers of all our spiritual progress. Then one great idea in the titles of Krishna is found in verse 18: "Thou art the supreme inexhaustible Being, the end of effort, changeless, the Supreme Spirit of this universe, the never-failing guardian of eternal law: I esteem thee Purusha."

From the point of view of knowledge, the great Lodge of Masters is the Preserver, the Guardian, the Protector of the Complete body of knowledge, that has come down to us from previous efforts in previous evolutions. We all know Masters in Theosophy as the Preservers of the Great Spiritual Truths. They are preserved for us until the time when we make ourselves ready to receive from their hands. The truths are offered, presented to the minds and hearts of mankind at every great cycle. And the idea that the Great Lodge of Masters is in itself the Container and the Embodiment of all cycles is given to us in the title of Krishna as *Kala*, or Time, for at every

new cycle, the Wisdom Religion is again reiterated to the world, and the Masters know the ultimate division of time or *Kala*. These names are going to prepare us to receive the ultimate knowledge of the great Truth. Names are indeed things of power and just as by meditating on the *Vibhutis* we can come to the position of trying to understand the Eleventh Discourse, so too by meditating quietly on those titles therein given to Krishna we can attain the highest position of applying the knowledge we are receiving today.

This Planetary Spirit, *i.e.*, Krishna, or the Great Lodge in its highest aspect is the synthesis or the aggregate of all Divine Wisdom, but when this Planetary Spirit strikes the key-note of Truth for our cycle and generation, It simply starts the work. That very impress of Its own sounding of the note, immediately awakens in the Universe the lesser divine and spiritual forces and powers, and so we may regard the work of the Planetary Spirit as being that of the collectivity of beings. The companions of the Planetary Spirit may be found in verse 6, and they are divided into four classes, according to the names given to the ancestors of the humanity in the Vedic philosophy. We have all heard of the *Adityas*, *Vasus*, *Rudras*, and *Ashwins*, and Theosophy tells us that they are divided in a peculiar fashion. The *Adityas* are 12 in number, the *Vasus* are 8, the *Rudras* are 11 and the *Ashwins* are 2, and on adding them we arrive at the total of 33. We have all heard of the 33 crores of gods of the Hindu philosophy, and the number 33 also reminds us of the 33 Fravashis of Zoroastrian Cosmology.

(To be concluded)

HELP me, O God, to learn from Thee that the worth of life depends not upon the years of its duration, but on the spirit in which it is lived.

—PAUL MCELROY

WEALTH AND WISDOM

II

RESPONSIBLE use of wealth comes with the right perspective towards it, and by placing it in its appropriate place—“neither too high nor too low.” Here again, the iconography of *Lakshmi* comes to our aid. The four arms of the goddess may be taken to indicate the four goals of human life, of which wealth is only one. We all have desires (*i.e.*, *Kama*) to be fed, clothed and sheltered well, and to take care of our loved ones. In order to fulfil these desires, we need a means to generate wealth (*i.e.*, *Artha*). The grave mistake committed by the modern man is to consider these two— desires and means of fulfilling the desires—as the end and aim of life. This arises from a myopic vision of Man as merely a physical, biological entity.

These lower two goals of human life pertain to the perishable part of man, and not to the real, immortal Man within the body. Encouraging unbridled desires, and justifying all and every means of fulfilment of all desires—whether legitimate or otherwise—is what has steeped humanity into sorrow and suffering, irrespective of the material wealth and technological progress. This view comes from a fundamental misconception that man is just the physical body, and his life is just the journey from the cradle to the grave.

In the wise view of the ancients, the desires and the means to their fulfilment had to be bound within a framework of the law of Virtue (*Dharma*). Without this clear framework of Virtue—which decides, which are legitimate desires and which are not, and what are the moral means of earning one’s livelihood and what are not—there would be no end to desires, and every means of earning one’s bread would be justified, and man steps lower than animal in his pursuit of desires and wealth, thus deviating from the divine purpose for which he is on earth.

While the first two “goals” of human life pertained to his body and perishable part, this third goal—Virtue—pertained to his inner, real, vital nature. Misfortune and difficulties in physical life would

mean, at most, detriment to his perishable, impermanent nature—one which he anyway discards at the doors of Death. It is not such misfortune that he should be wary of. It is giving up the path of Virtue, of morality, of Justice, which he should be cautious about, since it pertains to the needs of his eternal nature, and since his moral choices would have a bearing on the destiny of all sentient beings due to the law of interdependence.

The fourth and the synthesizing Goal of human existence was Redemption (*Moksha*): liberation not just of one’s own self—such desire is but another form of selfishness, though exalted—but liberation of all sentient beings from the bonds of conditioned existence and delusion. Perhaps, the two upper hands of Lakshmi which hold the Lotus—itself an enigmatic symbol—indicate these two higher goals of human life: Virtue and Universal Redemption. It is the ignorance of the inner, real nature of Man—as being a divine spark sojourning in the world of matter to gain experience and attain emancipation—as also mistaking the non-eternal to be the eternal in man, the non-self to be the self, and evil to be the good, which makes us adopt desires and material wealth as the sole object of human endeavour.

When the real nature of man is thus dwelt upon and understood, Lakshmi and Sarasvati would transform, from being merely goddess of material wealth and goddess of earthly knowledge and literacy, respectively, into goddess of true spiritual wealth and goddess of knowledge of Self. It is this treasure which Jesus asks us to lay up for ourselves: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also” (*The Gospel According to St. Matthew*, 6:19). In the hands of such a wise man, wealth would not be a danger. “Riches destroy the foolish, not those who seek the Beyond. By his craving for possessions the foolish man destroys himself, fancying he is ruining

another.” (*The Dhammapada*, verse 355)

There are other lessons we can draw from the symbol of Lakshmi. In its application to human nature, she can be seen as representing the Mind principle—*Manas*. The etymology of Lakshmi from the word *Laksha* refers to it being “the goal, or the objective,” just as the goal and objective of spiritual life is perfection of *Manas*.

She is called *Chanchala*—“the fickle.” Material wealth, as well as human mind—both are fickle and unsteady. Every man has an auspicious and fortune-making aspect in his Mind—the higher, divine aspect always residing with Vishnu, who symbolizes Universal Spirit. Lakshmi plays a special role as the mediator or the intermediary between her husband Vishnu and his worldly devotees, just as *Manas* is the bridge between the world below—the perishable part of man—and the Divine Spirit within. “Sri is the speech [Logos], Vishnu is the meaning,” says *Vishnu Purana*. Then, there is also the lower, desire-tending aspect of our mind which is *Alakshmi*—who always brings us misfortune and disease. This dual nature of *Manas* can be seen symbolized in two sisters. The union of Soul (or Mind, *Manas*) with Spirit is *Srinivasa Kalyana*. “The soul cannot reach the abode of bliss, unless she has received the ‘holy kiss,’ or the reunion of the soul *with the substance from which she emanated*—spirit,” but “woe to the soul which prefers to her divine husband (spirit) the earthly wedlock with her terrestrial body.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 108)

This grand “objective” of nature—the holy Union or Yoga—is achieved through cycles of many births. At the end of every life, the true wealth we have garnered—*i.e.*, true moral development, elimination of defects in one’s character, development of virtues, spiritual insights gained, and altruistic pursuits—is not lost. Instead, this cream of life is stored and assimilated and made part of our being in the interlude between two lives. This “butter” which arises from churning of the ocean of personal life is our true wealth—our “treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt.” Krishna is said to be very fond of butter. Our higher, true Self is

“fond” of the spiritual wealth that we glean from each life. A life spent merely in sensual enjoyment and pursuit of material comforts is detestable to the divinity within, however enjoyable and pleasurable it may seem to the ephemeral brain consciousness. It becomes so much of a burden to be worked out in pain and sorrow in subsequent lives.

Every night during deep sleep every one of us without exception—whether a holy man or a hardened criminal—touches this divine Wisdom that we have been garnering over innumerable past lives. This is a beneficial provision of Nature. Were it not for this, our society would have much more violence and crime than it has now. Though we touch divinity every night, we are unable to remember even a little of this experience in our waking life, except in rare cases, because of coarseness and corruption of our brain and mind.

At every birth, we bring back a portion of our merit and demerit, collected over past lives, to be expended in the new body and circumstances. In this light we can understand the “hundreds of Lakshmis,” some good and some evil, which are born at the birth of every mortal body. The good and evil in our life are the results of our past thoughts and actions.

The etymology of Sarasvati gives a hint as to what she symbolizes. Her name is a combination of two words—*Saara* (meaning “essence”) and *Sva* (*i.e.*, one’s own Self). She is “the one who leads to essence of Self knowledge”—esoteric science. It is this knowledge, symbolized by Sarasvati or Sharada, that Sri Shankaracharya is said to have worshipped. He summarizes the path to true wealth, which is wisdom of Self, in his *Vivekachudamani*: Neither through bathing (external purification), nor through charities (*i.e.*, rituals and ceremonies), nor through hundreds of *pranayamas* (breathing exercises), can one attain to true Wisdom. It is acquired only through diligent inquiry into the teachings of those desirous of the welfare of Humanity.

(Concluded)

THE PHILOSOPHICAL SIGNIFICANCE OF PI

WHAT is Pi? The number Pi is a mathematical constant defined as the ratio of the circumference of the circle to its diameter, and represented by the Greek letter “ π ” since the mid-eighteenth century. It does not matter how big or small the circle, the ratio yields the same constant, Pi. In fact, it may be termed universal constant, as it remains the same at all times and at all places. It applies to all types of circle, whether it is a small circle having 1 mm of diameter or of 10 meters or 10,000 meters. This attribute gives us assurance that our universe is an orderly universe, and not of chance and randomness.

Though fractions such as $22/7$ are commonly used to approximate Pi, it cannot be represented as ratio of whole numbers that yield an *exact value*. Hence Pi is an irrational number, which cannot be written as the ratio of two integers, and its exact value is inherently unknowable. Pi has an infinite number of digits in its decimal representation. When represented in its five decimal digits, the value of Pi is equal to 3.14159. Computer scientists have calculated billions of digits of Pi. In 2011, ten trillion digits of Pi were computed by using a dual processor Intel Xeon-based machine. No recognizable pattern seems to emerge in the succession of its digits, so that we may go on computing the digits infinitely, without knowing which digit might emerge next. This idea was very disturbing for the ancient mathematicians, who took irrationality of Pi to be an insult to the omniscient God. How could God know everything, if numbers exist that are inherently unknowable?

Our ordinary mind and consciousness defines what it does not understand as *irrational*. Interestingly, *Buddhi*, the principle of spiritual discrimination, in man, is called *irrational* spiritual soul, because it does not have individual reason of its own. In fact, it is above and beyond the reasoning mind, and borrows the light of Wisdom from *Atman*, and its rational qualities from *Manas*.

Pi may well be considered to be the Universal Number. Its ubiquity goes beyond mathematics. The number crops in the natural

world, too. It appears everywhere, where there is a circle, such as the pupil of the eye, the disk of the sun, the spiral of the DNA double helix, the concentric rings that travel outward from the splashes in ponds. In his book *The Joy of Pi*, David Blatner mentions that Egyptologists and followers of mysticism have been fascinated for centuries by the fact that the Great Pyramid of Giza seems to approximate Pi. The vertical height of the pyramid has the same relationship to the perimeter of its base as the diameter of a circle has to its circumference.

Many have felt that if Pi is expressed as an infinite sequence of numbers, and if these are converted into ASCII text, then probably in that infinite string of digits we may find name of every person, every date and time, and even answer to all the great questions of the universe. In that simple symbol, EVERYTHING exists. “Squaring the Circle” is a problem proposed by ancient geometers. The challenge involved is of constructing a square with the same or nearly same area as of a given circle, by using a finite number of steps with compass and straightedge. The number involved in this geometrical construction is Pi. Hence, Pi has often been understood in relation to “squaring the circle.” The expression “squaring the circle” is sometimes used as a metaphor for trying to do the impossible. It is interesting to note that the circle represents the infinite and immeasurable, the invisible, spiritual world, while the square represents the manifested and measurable world. In one of his poems John Donne has condemned the attempt to “square the circle,” or find the exact value of Pi, which he considers as an attempt to rationalize God.

Esoterically, Pi may be taken to represent the Deity itself. It has been compared to the “three strides” of Vishnu, symbolic of the whole process of manifestation in three stages. Stepping out of the Circle of Infinity, that no man comprehendeth, the Ain-Soph or *Parabrahm* or *Zeroana* Akerne, the Unknowable becomes “One”—the ECHOD, the *Eka*, the *Ahu*—then it is transformed by evolution into the One in many, the Dhyani-Buddhas or the Elohim; and his

third Step is taken into generation of the flesh, of “Man” (*S.D.*, I, 113). It has been explained by H.P.B. (*S.D.*, II, 38-39) by referring to the book *The Source of Measures* by R. Skinner, as the Deity (Elohim) being a circumference value of 3.1415 to a diameter of 1 (One). Then it manifests itself as Light (Sephiroth or Hierarchy of the Divine beings or Dhyān Chohans), which is once again the value of 3.1415 or *pi*, numerically expressed as the ratio of 20612:6561. And then when man comes on the scene, when Eve gives birth to Cain, we have the same value, the value of “Man even Jehovah,” numerically expressed as 113:355; wherein 113 is the value of Man, while 355 stands for the Hebrew word *Shanah* or Year (*Jehovah* as perfect year of 360). The ratio 113:355 yields 3.14159. Also, $113 \times 5 = 565$ can be represented as 56.5×10 , the male (*jod*=10) is said to be concealed in female (565), the value of Eve. Jehovah, the male-female is expressed as *Jod*, *He*, *Vah*, *He*, with the numerical values of Hebrew letters as, *Jod*=10, *He*=5, *Vau*=6 and *He*=5. (*S.D.*, I, 60)

In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 90) we are told that the number 3.1415, or “The Three, the One, the Four, the One, the Five,” is said to be the numerical hierarchy of the Dhyān-Chohans of various order and of the inner or circumscribed world. When placed on the boundary of the great circle of “Pass not,” it is called the *Dhyānipasa*, the “rope of the Angels,” the rope that hedges off the phenomenal from the noumenal Kosmos, not falling within the range of our present objective consciousness. The circumscribed world stands for limited or manifested world. Thus, the number 3.1415 is supposed to represent hierarchy of Dhyān Chohans of various orders, and it is also the number of the inner or manifested world which is circumscribed.

These beings who form the “Ring Pass Not” are called the *Lipikas*, which may be thought of as separating *Rupa* planes of planetary chains, from the three higher *Arupa* planes. In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 127), we are told that there are 3 chief groups of Builders, Planetary Spirits and *Lipikas*. The lowest group is

concerned with Karma of Humanity and they are the Recorders. The higher groups are the spirits of the Universe and they belong to the occult portion of the Cosmogony. And about them even the highest Adepts may not know. They separate the impersonal Self of man from the Personal self. They separate the manifested world from the Unmanifested worlds. Only on the “Day-Be-With-Us,” which refers to *mahapralaya*, we can cross the boundary or the Ring-Pass-Not, or when we have attained to *Moksha*, when we go to the state of *Paramapadha*.

It is said that elementals are carriers of Karma and these elementals or “lives” seem to function under higher agents called *Chitra-gupta* or *Lipikas*, who are agents in karmic dispensation. One of the agencies employed in bringing about good or bad effects is said to be the winds, so that winds from the East are considered auspicious and good and those from the North are said to bring calamities. The word *Lipi-ka* is derived from the word *lipi*, meaning “writing.” They are the Divine Beings, connected with Karma, for they are the Recorders or Scribes. They impress on the “invisible tablets of the Astral Light, ‘the great picture-gallery of eternity’ a faithful record of every act, and even thought, of man, of all that was, is, or ever will be, in the phenomenal Universe.”

The number 31415 represents circle and the mystical swastika. One reason being that these figures, whether taken from left to right, or from right to left, add to fourteen. The *Swastika* symbolizes the whole work of *creation* or *evolution* from the unknown *Parabrahmam* to the *moneron* of materialistic science. In the *Chaldean Book of Numbers*, it is called “Worker’s Hammer,” which strikes sparks from the flint (space), those sparks become worlds. (*S.D.*, II, 98-100)

Commenting on the *Vishwarupa Darshana* given by Shri Krishna to Arjuna, Mr. Crosbie in the *Notes on the Bhagavad Gita* writes that all forms evolve from within outwards. From the “point” a radiation equal in all directions begins and establishes a circumference. The point spreading out horizontally becomes a

diameter which is then intersected by the vertical line—the stage when spirit has fallen into matter that commences motion, when the ends of the vertical and horizontal lines extend towards each other, forming an ansated cross, it appears as the square within the circle, or the four pointed star, the sign of the animal kingdom, which then becomes the five-pointed and then six pointed star and so on. Thus, it appears to be the vision of the archetypal world itself.

Mr. Judge remarks that Swastika represents the disc or *chakra* of Vishnu, and Prophet Ezekiel of the Jews saw this wheel in his vision. In fact, he saw “wheel within a wheel,” which represent, among other things, hierarchies of spiritual beings. Each of these hierarchies furnishes the essence, and is the “builder” of one of the seven kingdoms of Nature.

In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 91) H.P.B. writes, “The 1:314,159, and then again 1:3:1,415,927 are worked out in the secret calculations to express the various cycles and ages of the ‘first born,’ or 311,040,000,000,000 with fractions, and yield the same 13,415.” In the *Secret Doctrine* (I, 434), we have, “The great mother lay with triangle, and the line, and the square, and the second line, and the five-pointed star, [which reads 31415 or “π” It is the synthesis or the host unified in the Logos, explains the footnote] ready to bring them forth, the valiant sons of square, triangle, and two lines. In the bracket we are told that it represents the Cycle of 4,320,000 years. H.P.B. explains that at the beginning of every cycle of 4,320,000, the seven great gods descend to establish the new order of things and to give impetus to the new cycle. The Mighty Ones perform their great work and leave behind them everlasting monuments to commemorate their visit to our plane. She points out that the great Pyramids were built under their direct supervision.

The figure 4,320,000 represents one *Mahayuga*, arrived at by adding the length of the four *yugas*. Once again the figure for 1000 *Mahayugas* or one Day of Brahma is 4,320,000,000. And his nights have an equal duration. Then again if we consider 360 days and nights, or 1 year of the age of Brahma, it comes to 3,110,400,000,000

years and 100 such years constitute *Maha-Kalpa* or Brahma’s Age, which works out to 311,040,000,000,000, *i.e.*, 311 trillion years. It appears to suggest that some of the numbers in the value of *Pi*, namely, 3,4,1,1, or 3,4,2 are repeated in various cycles and ages of the “first-born” or Brahma, which is the Manifested Logos or first manifestation or expression of the Deity.

The number 31415 adds to twice seven or fourteen. These are variously termed Dhyanis, Dhyan Chohans, Devas, Pitris and in the Hebrew the *Elohim*. In the *Source of Measures*, we are given the value of the word *Elohim* or *Alhim* as *A* is 1; *l* is 3 (for 30); *h* is 5; *I* is 1 (for 10) and *m* is 4 (for 40), *i.e.*, 13514, which is 31,415 anagrammatically, after suppressing the cipher or zero.

ALL WHATEVER is spoken, written or taught of God, without the knowledge of the signature is dumb and void of understanding; for it proceeds only from an historical conjecture, from the mouth of another, wherein the spirit without knowledge is dumb; but if the spirit opens to him the *signature*, then he understands the speech of another....For though I see one to speak, teach, preach, and write of God, and though I hear and read the same, yet this is not sufficient for me to understand him; but if his sound and spirit out of his signature and similitude enter into my own similitude, and imprint his similitude into mine, then I may understand him really and fundamentally, be it either spoken or written, if he has the hammer that can strike my bell.

By this we know, that all human properties proceed from one; that they all have but one only root and mother; otherwise one man could not understand another....

Man has indeed all the forms of all the three worlds lying in him; for he is a complete image of God, or the Being of all beings.

—JACOB BOEHME

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: In the article, “Universal Applications of the Doctrine,” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*, p. 6), speaking of a thought, Mr. Judge says, “How can it be possible that a few hours a week devoted to Theosophic thought and action can counteract—even in the gross material cells—the effect of nearly a whole week spent in indifference, frivolity, or selfishness? This mass of poor or bad thought will form a resistless tide that shall sweep away all your good resolves at the first opportunity.” Does this apply to the businessman whose duties leave him no time for study and meditation?

Answer: No one is too busy to study and meditate. We may fool ourselves into thinking so, but if we are honest to ourselves we know it is not so. What else does the great business magnate do but study his business problems day and night? What else than meditate, even in his sleep, on greater business, greater wealth, greater power? We all meditate, we all study—the question is not one of time, but rather one of the subject of our meditation, the object of our study. We find time to sleep, to eat, to care for our body. Why? Because Nature compels us. If we refuse, we must suffer and we do not like pain. We need a change of values. We must learn to cease identifying ourselves with the body, which is but an instrument or a vehicle of the Divine within. We would call that man mad who identifies himself with his motor-vehicle. The madness of him who identifies himself with his body-vehicle differs only in degree, not in kind.

However, the fault does not lie with the body, but in the force which moves the body. That force is *Tanha*—“the will to live,” that which in ordinary men and women produces the love of life and the

fear of death. This force or energy causes rebirth, and is responsible for human joys and sorrows. There are two kinds of meditations: meditation at a fixed time, and a line of life’s meditation or that on which one’s heart is set. Business magnates and other ambitious people make study and meditation slaves to this force—enhancing the “love of life.” When study and meditation are used to transcend *Tanha*, “which rageth like fire and is never to be appeased,” and give it a new direction, the human soul has turned its face Homewards.

Contrary to general belief, study and meditation necessitate no appreciable sacrifice in either time or energy. Study is the acquirement of ideas which through meditation and action we make our own. What has brought the world to its present chaos is action apart from right meditation. A few minutes spent in quiet reading of some devotional book every morning, followed by a short reflection on what has been read sounds the *key-note* for the entire day. Then, every feeling, every thought and every action which follows can be in harmony with that *key-note*. We must revert to the teachings in our spare moments; we must resound that key-note from time to time lest its sweetness fade away. That morning meditation must be re-energized as often as possible. This means no loss of time. On the contrary, since Yoga is skill in action, our business efficiency is enhanced. Meditation is not sitting in some peculiar posture, staring and breathing in some unnatural ways. With such dangerous practices Raja-Yoga has nothing to do. True meditation makes the *Self* the object of our meditation *while we engage in the performance of our duties*. The business of the day is more quickly attended to, activated by a motive which energizes, rather than exhausts us. Thought processes which involved conscious effort, become smooth. As children learning to walk we wilfully moved each muscle to obtain harmonious co-ordination. Today, however, the muscles so trained in infancy carry out our will without any effort. Will-action through meditation has become mechanical. Thought is self-reproductive. Thoughts planted in the morning sprout at noon,

blossom and bear fruit in the evening and at night produce seeds for the next day's planting. Therefore it is said, "Wait in the morning for inspiration, in the noon for guidance and in the night for Wisdom." A wise gardener does not dig up his seeds from day to day to watch their growth. He plants them, waters them, weeds them, and gives Nature time to do her work. So we on waking up, plant our seed-thought, water it by remembering it, weed it by uprooting inharmonious thoughts and leave the Self like the sun to fructify the plant.

To the Self all this life is for the most part but an empty show. To It our mundane interests are of little importance. It and It alone, through Its ideation becomes a living power and can resist that tide of poor or bad thought against which Mr. Judge warns us.

Question: *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 18) asks us to "Merge into one sense thy senses." How can one do it and how can that save us or secure us against the foe?

Answer: Normally, senses move towards their appropriate sense-objects, they move outwards towards, pleasant sight, sound, smell, taste, etc. The fourth step in Patanjali's eight-fold yoga, is *pratyahara*, which means restraint of the senses, wherein the senses and mind are directed inwards, towards the realization of the soul. The relationship between the mind and the senses is compared to that of bees following the queen bee. If the queen bee moves, the others follow. When she rests, the others rest. Similarly when the mind stops, the senses too stop functioning. This is *Pratyahara*, explains Shri B.K.S. Iyengar. Besides the sense of smell, touch, sight, hearing and tasting, the Upanishads mention the sixth and seventh senses, which pertain to mind and understanding (or *Buddhi*). Merging all senses into one sense seems to refer to the activation of *Buddhi*—the intuitive faculty. But before we reach that stage, we have to begin the work with the control of the senses. In the Third Chapter of the *Gita*, Shri Krishna shows Arjuna the method of overcoming desire. "In the first place, restrain thy sense." It is by means of outward senses and their inner counterparts that a great turmoil is set up first in the heart. We are asked to *begin* with

the senses, but not stop there. What happens when we are addicted to eating pizzas? In spite of our great determination, in the beginning, the sight of pizza or the smell of pizza being cooked, is enough to shake our determination. So, a person who has weakness for pizzas may avoid going near the place where it is cooked, sold, stored, etc. We restrain the senses by not allowing the eyes to rest too long on tempting sights, or ears to rest on tempting sounds, and so on. Like a tortoise withdraws its feet and head within the shell at the approaching danger, the advice is to draw in all the senses and restrain them from running in their accustomed directions.

There is attachment created also by the data brought through the astral senses. But simultaneously with the control of the senses, one must control the mind and heart. It is important to recognize that *ultimately*, it is the *mind*, and not the senses that lead us astray. Senses and organs produce sensation, when they contact external objects. For instance, when we put ice-cream on the tip of our tongue, the tongue reports that it is cold and sweet, but it is the mind that intervenes and says, "I like it, I want more of it." We are cautioned in *The Voice of the Silence*, "Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind." Thus, as stated briefly in *Katha Upanishad*, the senses are the horses; the mind or *kama-manas* is the reins; the body is a chariot and the will is the charioteer. *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* (p. xiii) points out that the Will is not wholly dependent on the mind, but is separable from it, and the Will and mind are servants for the soul's use. Thus, using Will, the higher can control the lower mind, and through the reins of the mind, the horses of the senses can be restrained and then all must be turned inward.

Restraint of the senses has been explained a little differently in the Fourth Chapter of the *Gita*. Every activity can become a sacrifice (*yajna*), an oblation or offering into the fire of Brahman or Supreme Reality. *Yajna* comprises of two essential factors: the *ahuti* (offering) and the kindling of the fire. The fire consumes *ahuti* and the flame shoots up. In verse 26 we are told that sense-perception is a *yajna*, in which the stimuli entering the sense organs—sound entering the

ears, colour and form for the eyes, smell for the nose, etc.—constitute the offering, and the resulting sense-perception is like the flames kindled. Thus, sound and other sense-objects sacrifice themselves into the fire of sense-perception. Likewise, self-restraint is a *yajna*, in which the hearing, seeing, and other sense-perceptions are offered, which kindle the flame of self-restraint. The senses bring in the data which is perceived by the mind, but also, the mind lingers over the perception, forming attachment to pleasant sense-perceptions and aversion for unpleasant sense-perceptions. If each perception dies away after its completion, and no mental indulgence is allowed, then self-restraint for each perception is cultivated. Thus, sense-perceptions must be offered into the fire of self-restraint. In sacrificing the sense-perceptions, the mind is controlled and not allowed to become a playground of the senses.

There is another way of understanding the merging of the senses into one sense. Scientists now accept the phenomenon that one type of sensory input (such as hearing music) evokes an additional one (such as seeing colours). The phenomenon is termed *synesthesia*. We are able to appreciate that all our senses are, to a certain extent, interchangeable. Occultism explains these phenomena by saying that the physical sense organs are not the real organs of perception. The perceptive faculty proper belongs to the astral plane, and real centres of perception are in the astral body. All the senses are but differentiation of the One Sense Consciousness. Every sense pervades every other, there being only one sense acting through different organs of sensation. We are told that fish living in dark subterranean waters are blind. However, although they do not have any organs of physical sight, they do have a sense of sight, otherwise how could they find their prey in darkness and move around avoiding obstacles? If they are taken out and put into a pond, after a few generations they will develop eyes.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

How did our universe come into existence? Some religions put forward a simple and naïve model that creation is created by a creator. According to this model, the universe was created all at one go, with no possibility of an evolving universe. The creator is different from his creation. An eternally existing, and “beginningless” being is admitted as the efficient cause, whereas his creation has a beginning and an end, as per his will. On the other hand, philosophers like Plato and Aquinas based their argument on a series of “cause and effect.” Since nothing comes from nothing, an effect must have a cause, and if we rewind sufficiently back in the timescale, we would reach the primal cause of all that exists. Thus, the universe must have a beginning and must have evolved from a primal cause. But the question remains, wherefrom the primal cause originated.

To avoid infinite regress philosophers maintained that such primal cause was created by an eternal creator out of his will and volition. They distinguished between material cause and efficient cause and argued that the primal cause from which everything emanated was the material cause with a beginning and an end, and it must have been caused by an efficient cause. But if the first cause was created by an eternal creator, wherefrom did the creator come into being?

On the other hand, the ancient Indian philosophers of various schools developed the theory of First Cause through a model of *upadana karana* (material cause), and *nimitta karana* (efficient cause). In this model the efficient cause creates as well as pervades creation, and it is immanent throughout the material cause.

The physicists of modern times put forward the *Big Bang* theory and maintain that the world is created from a super-compact substance that exploded, governed by the laws of physics, at the beginning of the universe. This modern view of science agrees well with the ancient model of the universe, called *Ajativada* or theory of no-origination, presented by Gaudapadacharya, the grand-preceptor of Shankaracharya. According to this model, creation

should be looked upon as a being, an eternal existence, with the beginning and end as transitory stages in a long chain of eternal changes exhibited by this being. There is only one eternal being whose very nature is to exhibit constant change on one facet and remain changeless substratum on the other dimension. The changeless and the changing, as also, the material and efficient cause, are but two aspects of one and the same being. This model shows that the universe is controlled by the immanent creative force, and that it is invalid to search for the primal source of all. This very universe is its source. Being itself is becoming, writes Vijaysrinath Kanchi. (*The Speaking Tree, Sunday Times of India*, October 30, 2016)

In Theosophy, there are two aspects of God or One Reality. In its Transcendental and Unmanifested aspect it is called *Parabrahman* or *Nirguna Brahman*, which can neither emanate nor be divided, because it is Absolute, eternal and immutable. Its Immanent and manifested aspect is called *Saguna Brahman*, which can emanate and be divided. Both these aspects are hinted at in Shri Krishna's words, "I established this whole universe with a single portion of myself, and remain separate." (*Gita*, X)

Universe, teaches Theosophy, is not created. "Creation" implies a creator and material for creation, and that the two are separate. It is like a potter creating a pot where the efficient cause, *i.e.*, idea or design for the pot comes from the potter, while the material for the pot, *i.e.*, clay is outside of him. Even the creation, *i.e.*, the pot is separate from the potter. The Upanishads give the analogy of a spider weaving the web, in which the material for the web comes from the mouth of the spider and so also the idea or design for the web. Likewise, both the material (*upadana karana*) and plan (*nimitta karana*) for the universe are within the Absolute, as also, the universe itself is within the Absolute and not separate from It. Theosophy speaks about manifestation, implying that, that which was hidden or potentially present is now manifest or expressed, just as the spoken word is an outward expression of concealed thought. In fact, Theosophy differentiates between evolution and emanation. While

Science speaks of evolution from the simple to complex forms, taking place as a result of working of blind forces of Nature, the "Doctrine of Emanation" speaks of divine intelligences guiding this process. Nothing can be evolved except it has first been involved.

The transcendental Reality is symbolized by the "Great Breath." With the out-breathing, the one Unknowable Deity, breathes out a thought, as it were, which becomes the Kosmos and with the in-breathing, the Universe disappears into the bosom of "the Great Mother." Our "Universe" is only one of an infinite number of Universes, all of them "Sons of Necessity," because links in the great Cosmic chain of Universes, each one standing in relation of an effect as regards its predecessor, and being the cause as regards its successor. The sum total of causation of the previous universe must of necessity become the seed for the succeeding one.

Connection with other humans seems to be the fulcrum of human existence, and the sole antidote to loneliness, writes Divya Thampi, an Emotional Intelligence Practitioner, Coach and Counsellor. When infected with the dengue virus and confined to bed for over two months, she learnt some of the most valuable lessons of life—one of them being the need for and impact of human connection. Human connection and loneliness lie at the opposite ends of the spectrum of human experiences. According to Sebastian Junger, an American journalist, it has been observed that war veterans returning home from war, suffered from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and that their number has gone up considerably over the last few years. Soldiers and Officers are used to being part of close-knit units with their workmates. However, when they get back to the regular civilian society they find "a fractious society splintered into various competing fragments, many of them hostile to one another," observed Junger.

At a workshop, when asked to think of two emotions that each participant wished to experience less often or experience in lesser

intensity, all agreed almost unanimously that one of the two emotions that each of them had experienced and wanted to manage better, was indeed “loneliness.”

“Loneliness is different from being alone....A short period of loneliness is almost good for us because it helps us appreciate the connection we experience with other beings, whenever we do. However, it becomes dangerous when you start wading in the waters of loneliness, for long durations. It is an emptiness that is overwhelming...sucks you dry of any joy, serenity, interest, gratitude or hope. You float in it listlessly, unable to experience life the way it is meant to be. The longer you drift in the waters of loneliness, the farther you get from the shores of connection. There is probably nothing worse than this feeling of disconnection because when you are lonely, you are not just disconnected with others, you are disconnected with yourself,” writes Thampi.

Though we know that connection with other human beings is at the heart of happiness, how come loneliness is turning out to be an epidemic of alarming proportions? The author mentions that she has observed from her own life and the life of others that when we experience loneliness, more often than not, we assume that reaching out for help is a sign of weakness. What we need is connection with a compassionate and understanding human being. As Thelma Davis, an American civic leader and a well known artist said, “When someone is going through a storm, your silent presence is more powerful than a million empty words.” Let us give to the lonely, the gift of connection, writes Divya Thampi. (*Life Positive*, November 2016)

Social connectedness is directly related to health and happiness. In each one of us there is a deep-seated need for sharing. Jacqueline Olds and Richard S. Schwartz, professors of psychiatry at Harvard Medical School, provide an insight into cause and cure of loneliness experienced by many people today. We are caught in a tug-of-war between conflicting desires—we want to stay connected, and we want to be free. Frenetic busyness of our lives has adversely impacted our neighbourhoods. “Being neighbourly used to mean

visiting people. Now being nice to your neighbours means not bothering them.” Socializing is essential to our well-being. When we experience a feeling of being “left out,” we must examine, and then chances are that we would work a little harder to reconnect, instead of sinking into apathy and seclusion.

With too much use of technology we have virtually forgotten how to handle our emotions. We share only superficially in the joys and sorrows of other human beings. We do not have to seek for the afflicted; they are everywhere, often ready to unburden their bottled-up emotions, anxieties and frustrations to total strangers. A few words of inspiration or encouragement, *or* being able to make the person see things in a different light can go a long way in instilling hope for a brighter future. Albert Schweitzer, the great humanitarian, says: “Open your eyes and seek another human being in need of a little time, a little friendliness, a little company, a little work. It may be a lonely, an embittered, a sick or an awkward person for whom you can do something, to whom you can mean something.”

An overflow of advice and wisdom leads to a deafening of our own inner voice. There are too many people ready to give advice, lecture on the right way of doing things, and try to push you in the right direction. You sigh, and people tell you to shed the past and live in the present. Frown, and you get homilies on how anger ruins your health; grieve and they lecture you on how the very nature of life is impermanence. An annoyingly large number of people have transformed themselves into self-anointed gurus advising one and all, with the intention of setting right the world and all its living beings.

Where does so much wisdom come from? We are actually surrounded by it, so much so that if you tried, you could not dodge it. There are gurus on television channels, and bookshops overflow with books on how to live well. We are so saturated with the advice given to us that we cannot resist dolling it out to the next person.

“Indeed we live in a world that is humming with the right advice

and good thoughts. It would be sad if the humming stays limited to repeating the good word to each other, rather than acting on it. We advise each other to 'look within for all the answers.' But how many of us really carve out time to actually do so ourselves? Nothing wrong in handing out advice at the right time, in the right place, with the right attitude. The trick, however, is in understanding how to measure and balance it so that people seek you for it rather than run away from you because of it," writes Vinita Dawra Nangia. (*Times Life, Sunday Times of India*, November 20, 2016)

We should certainly not give unasked advice. We should have sufficient knowledge and even experience to be able to give effective advice. Often we give advice to exaggerate our importance, and when frequently given, it tends to make the other person dependent. When will they learn to solve their own problems? It is much better to teach a man how to fish than give him a fish, which is what we do when we offer ready solutions for a person's problems.

It is very easy to advise others without practising it ourselves. We are advising all the time, as superiors in the office, as parents and elders at home or as well-meaning friends. But if we were careful, we would notice that the impact on the listener is almost magical when we speak from our own first-hand experience. Like Gandhiji, perhaps, each one of us should make it a practice to check out if we have been practising ourselves what we advise others to do. Once a mother brought her seven year old son to Gandhiji and requested him to advise her son not to eat too many sweets. Gandhiji told the woman to bring her son back after two weeks. That was because he needed two weeks to give up sweets himself, before he could advise that boy. When we *apply* what we believe in, we would also be able to show ways and means of overcoming the weakness.

Ultimately we have to learn to find answers to our own problems by listening to the *voice of conscience* within. We may make mistakes, but on learning from mistakes we can develop intuitive faculty, which would ultimately guide us unerringly.