

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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THE FOOD OF THE BODY

WE speak of “healthy mind in healthy body.” Our bodily health depends upon the nourishment we provide to the body and mind. What should we eat? How much should we eat? The answers to these questions would depend upon *who* is asking the questions. For instance, the quantity and quality of food for someone who wishes to build an athletic body would be quite different from that recommended for one who aspires to become a model. To acquire a body that enables us to live normal healthy life, free from diseases is one thing and to improve the health of the body such that it would enable us to live the spiritual life, is quite another. In the *Gita*, Shri Krishna says, “Beings are nourished by food, food is produced by rain, rain comes from sacrifice, and sacrifice is produced by action.” In *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, Mr. Judge explains that it is not as if food will not be produced if sacrifice is not performed according to Vedic ritual, but the right kind of food, leading to bodily conditions enabling man to live up to his highest possibilities, will not be produced. In the *Gita*, food is classified into three divisions: *Tamasic* or impure food, which is described as stale, tasteless and rotting. *Rajasic* food is bitter, sour, saline, pungent, dry, burning and excessively hot. *Sattvic* food is pure and savoury, and tends to enhance age, vitality, strength, health and cheerfulness.

We can see from the above classification of food that vegetarian diet is neither emphasized nor insisted upon. In the Yoga Aphorisms

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of Patanjali the disciple is not asked to refrain from eating meat. It is not because all people were vegetarians at that time. The warriors were allowed to eat meat and out of the warrior caste arose many that attained to the supreme heights of adeptship. It is an old and true saying that the kingdom of God cometh not from taking or refraining from meat, nor from the refraining from anything whatever, but that it is *within us*. In other words, we must not dogmatise that vegetarianism is the only right thing. One cannot claim to be spiritual, only because he is a strict vegetarian—cows and elephants are also vegetarians! Wicked and gross thoughts are more harmful than eating meat. H.P.B. puts it thus:

Remember once for all that in all such questions we take a rational, and never a fanatical view of things. If from illness or long habit a man cannot go without meat, why, by all means let him eat it. It is no crime; it will only retard his progress a little; for after all is said and done, the purely bodily actions and functions are of far less importance than what a man *thinks* and *feels*, what desires he encourages in his mind, and allows to take root and grow there. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 259)

Mr. Judge tried for nine years to leave meat eating but found it injurious. This is because the western person has no heredity of vegetarianism behind him. Many students of theosophy found it impossible to switch over to vegetarian diet, not because they experienced weakness resulting from lack of meat diet, but because of imperfect digestion causing disease. It is held by many physiologists that stomach is an organ for the digestion of animal food only. As a result, in a vegetarian person the pyloric valve between the stomach and the small intestine is almost paralyzed from want of use, so that the food passes almost directly from stomach to small intestine. On the other hand, in the case of a non-vegetarian, the animal food remains in the stomach for a long time. Hence, when a meat-eater turns vegetarian, the stomach cells that have got accustomed to keeping the food for longer time in the

stomach—because it takes longer to digest meat—keep also the vegetable matter for a long time. Though vegetarian food is digested quickly, the pyloric valve does not open, and the stomach retains it for long, causing it to ferment and turn toxic. As a result, yeast and other growths are thrown into circulation, which may cause tuberculosis, nervous diseases and other manifold derangement. Then again sometimes it is inevitable for people to eat meat, in the absence of any vegetation, as is true of places like Tibet, Alaska and North Pole.

Some of the arguments of vegetarians that show meat-eating to be dangerous, even on physical plane level, are sound. For instance, it is true that eating of meat may give us diseases of the animal, and that we have no right to take life, as we did not give them life. However, it is not true that we take life only when we eat *meat*, because vegetables too, have life. Life is everywhere, and expresses itself in myriad ways. The consciousness in plants and in the animals is at a different level. Mr. Judge settles the question of killing more or less-evolved organisms by stating that life sustains life—*Jivo jivasya jivanam*. Thus, in certain environments, at certain stages of evolution, a certain amount of injury to others is unavoidable. Both the vegetarians and meat-eaters are destroying life. Neither class is wholly right or wrong. It becomes actual wrong when we deliberately, without actual need, destroy lives of animals, insects or even plants. An epicure who relishes many dishes of meat just to satisfy his palate and not necessary for sustenance is as guilty as someone who kills animals for making fur caps or leather boots.

It is true that animal food imparts to the eater the qualities of the animal, and tends to make physical body grosser and denser. One of the great German scientists has shown that every kind of animal tissue, however you may cook it, still retains certain marked characteristics of the animal that it belonged to. H.P.B. observes that when the flesh of animals is assimilated by human beings as food, *it imparts to them*, physiologically, some of the characteristics of the animal it came from. The “coarsening” or “animalizing” effect

on a person is greatest from the flesh of the larger animals, less for birds, still less for fish and other cold-blooded animals, and least of all when he eats only vegetables. Spiritual life calls for etherealizing of the physical body. Thus, meat eating is deleterious in two ways: It retains the characteristics of the animal even when it is cooked very well, and it leads to coarsening of the body. However, the inner attitude and magnetism of the person who cooks and handles food makes it healthful or otherwise, because food preserves the magnetism of the person that cooks or serves.

There is also the other fact to be borne in mind and that is, suitability or fitness of the food for each person. Each body extracts from any kind of food only that which conforms to the nature of the possessor of the body and that nature is subject to change from within. Ultimately, food is necessary to keep the body fit for the soul to inhabit.

Moderation in eating is as important as the quality of food. Whatever be the food, it is better not to eat too much, or too little. Intemperance in eating is one of the things that paralyzes the will power in man and thereby paves the way to physical and moral degradation. Gluttony is considered to be one of the seven deadly sins. When severe strain is put on the vital energies by overtaxing the digestive machinery, the best and only remedy is to let it rest for some time and recoup itself as much as possible. The exhausted ground must be allowed to lie fallow before it can yield another crop. Fasts were instituted simply for the purpose of correcting the evils of overeating. The Buddhists do not have institution of fasting but they seem to fast daily, and all their life, by following the injunction of moderation in eating. Certain meats, like beef, as also certain vegetables have always been prohibited to students of occultism. It is because while perhaps highly nutritious and supporting to the body, their magnetism was deadening and obstructive to the “psychic man,” writes H.P.B. (*The Theosophist*, Vol. IV, January, 1883). However, it is also true that it is no use to fast *as long as one requires food*.

There are some people who succeed in getting control over all other sense organs, except the tongue. “Food” continues to be their weak point. In our civilization we find that far too much time and energy is being spent on preparing, discussing and eating of delicacies. There may be ten or twenty varieties of tea and coffee, and about as many varieties of bread and biscuits. Of course, we want to try out all of them! Saint Dhyaneswar points out that for a person wishing to walk the spiritual path, mastery over tongue is most essential. If one becomes slave to his tongue, it gradually leads to entanglement in all the other senses. But it is difficult to obtain mastery over tongue. Saint Dhyaneswar writes:

If one were to cut off the leaves, but put water in the roots, the tree will never be destroyed. On the contrary, by means of that water, the leaves will come forth again in greater strength. Without doubt, therefore, it is through one’s food that objects of senses get control over one’s mind. It is easy to shut off action of other senses, but it is not possible to carry on without food, on which sustenance of the physical body depends.

We may not be able to do without food, but it is possible to gradually come to a stage wherein all that is eaten goes towards physical growth and development. The article, “The Elixir of Life,” mentions that instead of fasting one must begin with the diet of milk and fruits. Then gradually, very gradually, one must decrease the *quantity* of food consumed. It is possible to survive on little quantity of food. The article points out that many of the simplest organisms have no excretion, such as common guinea-worms. They live in human tissue, and have no ejaculatory duct, and hence no excretion. All that is consumed is applied to its growth and propagation. The human neophyte, at a certain stage of his development, is in somewhat analogous condition. Unlike the guinea-worm, he does excrete, but it is through the pores of his skin. Through these pores also enter other etherealized particles of matter, which help in sustaining his body. Physically, he is almost like a foetus in the

womb. Later, a time may come when he is able to derive nourishment from the Ether (*Akasa*). In an incident reported in *The Times of India*, (August 27, 2001), a 64-year old person is said to have survived only on boiled water and sunlight for 411 days. American scientists were investigating the feat, in the hope that they could develop a technique to enable astronauts to go without food for long periods. The most amazing part of the feat was that the person was physically active and carried on all normal activities during his fast. Such feats of fasting are not uncommon among yogis and ascetics. The rationale of such phenomena is given to us in brief, in the statement in the *Supplement to The Theosophist* for December 1883 (p. 32): “*Akasa* is the mother of all phenomena and the source of nourishment of him who knows how to use it.”

What then is the true theosophic diet? It is that which best agrees with you. Vegetarianism must be practiced with right motive. If one refrains from meat in order to develop psychic powers and senses, and continues same sort of thoughts, neither cultivating nor practicing the highest altruism, then that vegetarianism is in vain. “We advise really earnest students to eat such food as will least clog their brains and bodies, and will have the smallest effect in hampering and retarding the development of their intuition, their inner faculties and powers,” writes H.P.B.

WE will do the best we can with anyone who desires to learn. For those who expect principles and methods to conform to their personal prejudices we can do nothing, however much we might desire to. Yet there is always hope that a little of Theosophy may work as a leaven which will wear away or displace existing prejudices, and for this, time must be allowed. Theosophy is for those who want it; it cannot be given to any others.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

W. Q. JUDGE—THE EDITOR

I

AS the writer of *Letters That Have Helped Me*, W. Q. Judge must be known to every student of Theosophy, for his correspondence with “Jasper Niemand” has proved a priceless addition to Theosophic literature. But as a writer of Editorials in the opening and closing issues of each volume of his magazine *The Path*, which he started in April 1886, *i.e.*, within two years of returning from his visit to India, and which H.P.B., who had a marked admiration for it, described as “pure Buddhi,” he is less well known. These Editorials bear the true stamp of W.Q.J.—are the proven gold, in smaller coinage, of his character. Let us examine these coins with care, knowing the heart-mind where they were minted, and see how even in this necessarily more practical form of writing “the greatest of the exiles” fulfils his mission and disseminates Theosophy’s basic truths.

What we note immediately is his unwavering loyalty to H.P.B. “We would have no one misunderstand,” he writes in the issue for March 1888, “how we look upon H. P. Blavatsky. She is the greatest woman in the world in our opinion, and greater than any man now moving among men. Disputes and slanders about what she has said and done move us not, for we know by personal experience her real virtues and powers. Since 1875 she has stood as the champion and helper of every theosophist; each member of the Society has to thank her for the store of knowledge and spiritual help that has lifted so many of us from doubt to certainty of where and how Truth might be found....The Society had died long ago, were it not for her. Next to the Brothers, then, we pin our faith on her: let none mistake our attitude.”

In the issue for March 1892 he wrote: “The last year now finished has had to chronicle the departure of our great leader, our friend, our champion, adept in all the noble arts of righteous war—H. P. Blavatsky”: and he rallied “the whole theosophic body” to

face this loss and yet stand firm, nay, rather, to go forward “with added energy, new zeal, and greater strength.”

Here occur some words and sentiments thoroughly characteristic of W.Q.J., chiming in accord with many we may have noted in the *Letters*. “To our feelings the death of the body called H. P. Blavatsky was a shock and loss, but for our true progress, for the health of our real nature it was a gain because it makes us stand alone. Man was born alone, must stand alone, die alone—so he must needs be strong. . . . We need no resolves for the future, for we never touch it; we need no regret for the past, for we have not lost anything, but have the gaining eternally of experience.”

Such loyalty to H. P. B. derived naturally from his firm belief in her Masters. “We adhere staunchly to the Society,” he writes in March 1888, “which we firmly believe was ordered to be founded in 1875 by those beings who have since been variously designated as Adepts, Mahatmas, Masters, and Brothers. In 1875 we knew them by the name ‘Brothers’; and now, as then, we pin our faith upon Their knowledge, wisdom, power, and justice. That much mud has been thrown at these ideals makes no difference to us; we have never allowed the insinuations and proofs of fraud or of delusion offered on all hands to alter our faith in Them and in the Supreme Law that carries us into existence, governing us there with mercy and giving peace when we submit completely to it.”

How typical that is of W.Q.J.! How strongly his voice comes through to us—“We wish not to hide or to fail to state our attitude”! No, never could he be accused of doing *that*. In his opening Editorial for *The Path*’s third year the “attitude” of all concerned with the magazine is as plain as words can make it: “We aspire to fulfil the wishes of the Masters who impelled the organization of the Society, that men may be led to study, believe in, and practice the immemorial doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion.” The Society he regarded as “the channel at present fixed by Master,” and he said further, writing in March 1889: “We would never have brought out this Magazine did we not have supreme faith in those Beings and forces controlling

the destiny of nations and individuals, well knowing that They will see that these efforts, made for the cause of humanity, shall not be devoid of fruit.”

Mr. Judge never doubted that the magazine was a definitely appointed instrument, and, as early as April 1887, writing at the beginning of the second volume, he “deems it proper to express his conviction that a mighty, if unseen, power has been behind it from the first, and will continue to aid it. In no other way can its phenomenal success be accounted for.” In March of the following year he says plainly: “The suggestion to start it came from minds greater than ours, and the derivation of its name is from the same source.” It is a name that must have appealed strongly to him, for the imagery of the Path recurs constantly throughout all his writings. Naturally so, since it derives from the literature he most venerated, “the ancient books of India, esteeming most highly that wonderful epic poem—the *Bhagavad-Gita*.” In the Editorial for March 1887, the issue which closed the first year of *The Path*’s Publication, he states the reason for his regard for those age-old writings from which so much of his own wisdom and knowledge of the truth was drawn: “All our devotion to Aryan literature and philosophy arises from a belief that the millions of minds who have trodden weary steps before ours, left a path which might be followed with profit, yet with discrimination.” In his very first Editorial he has observed that “what is wanted is true knowledge of the spiritual condition of man, his aim and destiny. This is offered to a reasonable certainty in the Aryan literature.” And in a later one, for March 1888, he tells his readers that, from the first inception of that magazine, “we intended to steadily draw all our articles and exposition toward the Light which comes from the East, not because we ourselves are of Eastern birth, but because the fathers of men living in the East ages ago went over the philosophical and scientific disputes that now engage the 19th century. . . . In the Vedas, in Patanjali’s Yoga System, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and hundreds of other works, can be found the highest morality and the deepest knowledge. What need, then, to

bother with crude beginnings of the same things put forth in Europe for admiration of scholiasts and the confusion of the multitude?”

Here, again, is the authentic voice of W.Q.J., though we may be less used to it coming to us across the editor’s desk than, more familiarly, from his oft-read books and articles. Familiarly indeed, though (if we use the word with due regard), comes this from, again, that first Editorial for April 1886: “Krishna says, the kingly science and the kingly mystery is devotion to and study of the light which comes from within. There are many undertones sounding here from the *Letters*, *Vernal Blooms*, and elsewhere, as also in his statement (in the same Editorial) on behalf of the founders of the new magazine. “From their present standpoint it appears to them that the true path lies in the way pointed out by our Aryan forefathers, philosophers and sages, whose light is still shining brightly, albeit that this is now Kali Yuga, or the age of darkness.” Verily, for W.Q.J., there could have been no other object for himself and his co-workers than “to point out to their fellows a Path in which they have found hope for man.” (*Ibid.*)

What other “hallmarks” do we find on this handful of *Path* Editorials, written perhaps not always with zest, though always faithfully as service to the Masters, for in April 1892, when magazine was entering on its seventh year of life, the Editor confesses that “he wearies of the eternal printing that goes on, for there is nothing new under the sun and we are like squirrels repeating the words spoken by bodies long since dead which were inhabited by ourselves whom now we fail to recognize. But since this is the age of black on white impressed by machinery, we are compelled to publish so that the opportunity of saying the same thing once more to a rebellious and stiff-necked generation shall not be neglected.”

(*To be concluded*)

INSTINCT—WHAT IS IT?

II

IN order to unfold the plan, the species is guided by inherent intelligence to learn from mistakes and retain in their memory, or shall we say their very genes, the useful knowledge gained through experiences. These experiences have taught them their “dos” and “don’ts,” in achieving their ultimate purpose of survival, proliferation and progress. *Encyclopaedia Britannica* explains how this may have been achieved. A good example is provided by the nest-building behaviour of many birds. Having chosen a nest site, the breeding female finds and deposits there, sticks or twigs or pieces of grass. The Jackdaws build their nest with twigs or branch. Holding the twig in its beak it performs downward and sideward sweeping movement that brings the twig into contact with the ledge or the branches on which the nest is built. The moment the twig meets resistance, the sideways movements become more vigorous and merge into a series of quick trembling thrusts. When the twig is in a position that offers even more resistance, the efforts become more intense until the twig wedges fast. This activity is repeated with many twigs until the nest is fully built.

But while the instinct for nest building itself is inherent in a young jackdaw, it does not have the instinct as yet for selection of right nest-building material. But, it learns this skill quickly. An inexperienced jackdaw, at first, will try any object small enough to be handled, even pieces of ice and the metal ends of small electric bulbs. But as none of these ever become lodged firmly enough by tremble shoving, such failure quickly extinguishes the bird’s tendency to fetch inadequate objects. And with “equally rapid positive conditioning,” the jackdaw learns to be a twig expert, coming to use only those that are just right in shape and flexibility. By contrast, many small songbirds do apparently have an inborn tendency to select the kinds of materials that are appropriate for different phases of nest construction. The songbirds exhibit an innate

knowledge of not only their nesting skills but also an innate knowledge of right material for nest building. But there must have been a time, when these were learnt through trial of other kinds of material which were then discarded as inappropriate by several generations of songbirds before the knowledge of their inappropriateness has become instinctual with them. Likewise, they must have gained instinctual knowledge as to the right material for nest-building. But what is it that guides them to discard the inappropriate, or use the right kind of material? It is the guiding intelligence or the Dhyān Chohanīc impulse.

Instinctive behaviour is assumed to be genetically based and therefore shaped by pressures of natural selection. As a result, instinctive activity contributes to the preservation of an individual or to the continuity of the species; that is, instinctive activity tends to be adaptive, contributing to the animal's ability to reach maturity and to breed. Instinct is involuntary response by an animal to an external stimulus. Instinctive behaviour is largely heritable, says *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Instinct is thus the result, the culmination of the slow process of acquirement, retention and transmission of useful learning. It is the memory of past experiences that are exhibited by animals. Thus:

Ideally, instinctive behaviour seems not to depend on learning or practice but to emerge in full complexity without rehearsal when appropriate stimuli or circumstances are encountered. Often, such stimuli do not guide or mould the instinctive behaviour but seem simply to trigger or release it. This characteristic gives instinct the appearance of driving the animal endogenously (from within); the quality of instinctive activity thus appears to depend only secondarily on exogenous (external) stimulation. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*)

While the fixed character of instinct is on the whole beneficial, once acquired, the animal follows it blindly. It does not reason about it. So, an animal will do all that his instinct permits it to do, like fly,

run or create a cloudy atmosphere (as in the case of *Sepia*) to escape predator, but beyond that it has to perish, if its skills are found to be insufficient due to change in environment. The trend may continue for some time before the guiding intelligence impels it to acquire new skills for its survival in the changed environment. H.P.B. mentions Lemmings, small rodents, which cross the Atlantic during the time of migration, and thousands of them perish while crossing the Atlantic. It seems that in former ages, land existed, where the North Atlantic Ocean now rolls. It was to this island that the Lemmings used to migrate which has long since sunk, leaving the exhausted Lemmings to drown into the ocean and die. H.P.B. remarks, "What we call instincts are but the blind and sometimes even prejudicial inheritance of previously acquired experiences." (*S.D.*, II, 782)

Instinct, therefore, consists of traits, behaviour, characteristics, automatic responses and reflexes, which are built into the very fabric of the organism. We can call it inheritance hard-wired into the genes and the very cells that make the organism. "This bringing back of knowledge also explains instinct, for that is no more than recollection divisible into physical and mental memory...it is all the effect of reincarnation acting either in the mind or physical cells, for under what was first laid down no atom is devoid of life, consciousness, and intelligence of its own," writes Mr. Judge.

Instinct is the memory of experience which is essential for preservation and propagation of species. Under the laws of Natural selection and other secondary causes, useful variation, *i.e.*, all the useful experiences and learning are passed on to the offspring. Thus it is the Dhyān Chohanīc intelligence which is behind the acquired experience or instinct exhibited by plants and animals. It is by useful variations that perfection in physical evolution is brought about. Each perfected species in the physical evolution affords more scope to the intelligence to act. Thus, evolution is a process of building and refining the psycho-physiological instrument for the spirit within.

Instinct, as a divine spark, lurks in the unconscious nerve-centre of the ascidian mollusk, and manifests itself at the first stage of action of its nervous system as what the physiologist terms the reflex action....It is the *divine instinct* in its ceaseless progress of development. This instinct of the animals, which act from the moment of their birth each in the confines prescribed to them by nature and which know how, save in accident proceeding from a higher instinct than their own, to take care of themselves unerringly—this instinct may, for the sake of exact definition, be termed automatic; but it must have either within the animal which possesses it or *without*, something's or some one's *intelligence* to guide it. (*Isis*, I, 425)

Theosophy teaches us that everything is sentient. There is life, consciousness and intelligence even in an atom. Life wave has passed through many transformations or re-embodiments, from simplest to most complex forms and has gathered experience in mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, evolving under “Natural Impulse.” The impulse which evinces a progressive march towards higher life may be termed as “Divine Impulse” because it is guided by intelligences. The experience gained in various forms is not lost but becomes part of the nature of the organism, which is termed as instinct. It is impressed on the very cells and atoms of various forms, as knowledge, and this knowledge or learning is passed on to the offspring, thereby producing better and fitter forms through which the consciousness can express itself fully.

The whole universe exists for the experience and emancipation of the soul. This is the purpose of evolution. Impulse to evolve comes from the very Spirit or *Atman*. Nature's forces are guided by higher intelligences. Blind forces could never have produced such wonderful harmonious world with its wonderful creatures, simply by chance.

(*Concluded*)

RISHIS—WHO ARE THEY?

II

THE THIRD Class of *Rishis* is *Devarshis*. They are generally described as *rishis* or saints of the celestial class, who dwell in the regions of the gods. These are considered to be sages who have attained perfection on earth and have been exalted as demigods to heaven. Narada is referred to as Deva-Rishi. Narada—a great *Rishi* and a Kumara—is one of the 10,000 sons of Brahma, brought forth for the purpose of peopling the world. Narada persuaded these sons to remain celibate and holy ascetics and twice frustrated Daksha's aim. For this, Daksha curses Narada to be reborn as a man. H.P.B. observes:

It is easy to see that Narada belongs to that class of Brahma's “first-born,” who have all proven rebellious to the law of animal procreation, for which they had to incarnate as men. Of all the Vedic Rishis, Narada...is the most incomprehensible, because the most closely connected with the occult doctrines—especially with the secret cycles and Kalpas. (*S.D.*, II, 82)

“Narada is the Deva-Rishi of Occultism par excellence.” To fathom certain anthropological, chronological and Cosmic Mysteries, an occultist must ponder, analyze and study Narada from seven esoteric facets. Narada plays a vital role in the drama of evolution of this Kalpa from the beginning to the end, and is said to appear in every Root-Race of the present Manvantara. (*S.D.*, II, 82-83)

In the Tenth chapter of the *Gita*, which describes the Universal Divine Perfections, Shri Krishna says, “Of the celestial Sages, [I am] Narada.” The Bhakti Sutras (Aphorisms on devotion) of Narada contain the reflections of a Deva Rishi whose only motive is to serve and guide humanity in its spiritual evolution. The Sutras deal mainly with the evolution of man to become immortal, to be one with the Deity.

The *Saptarshi*, the mind-born sons of Brahma, are referred to in the *Satapatha Brahmana* under one set of names; in the *Mahabharata* under another set. These *Rishis* are divided into many classes. The pre-cosmic or divine gods are the *Prajapatis* or the “Seven Builders” (*S.D.*, I, 436). “The Hindus place in the Great Bear their seven primitive *Rishis* and call this constellation the abode of the *Saptarishi*, *Riksha* and *Chitra-Sikhandinas*” (*S.D.*, II, 631). The *Saptarishis* are the seven Star *Rishis*, *i.e.*, the Regents of the seven stars that form the constellation of “The Great Bear,” or the constellation of Ursa Major. *Manus* and *Rishis* are manifested energies of one and the same Logos. If there are fourteen *Manus* in every Round, so also, there have been and there will be seven *Rishis* in every Root-Race, and are often described as *Manu-Rishis*. (*S.D.*, II, 614 fn. and 615)

These seven *Rishis* are assigned seven wives, namely, *Amba*, *Dula*, *Nitatui*, *Abrayanti*, *Maghayanti*, *Varshayanti* and *Chupunika*. There are other sets of names, which show *Arundhati* as wife of *rishi* *Vasishtha*. According to the *Bhagavata Purana*, *Arundhati* is the name of *Vasishtha*’s wife. The star *Mizar* of the stellar constellation *Ursa Major* is thought of as *Vasishtha* and the small one beside it, *Alcor*, as *Arundhati*. She is the only one to have merited her place in the *Saptarishi* by coming out triumphant when *Lord Shiva* tested her for her single-minded devotion to her husband (*i.e.*, for being *Pativrata*). She never stayed away from her husband, and extended her full co-operation in all his work. Among the *Hindus*, immediately after the wedding, the bride is shown this star *Arundhati*, and the bride worships the star. It is a symbolic acceptance of the ideal of virtue and devotion by the bride.

Except *Arundhati*, all other wives of *Saptarishis* are called the nurses of *Karttikeya* (or *Mars*), the God of War. They are *Pleiades* or *Krittika*. *Mars* is called the commander of celestial armies and is called *Siddha-sena*, the leader of *Yogis* in heaven and holy sages on the earth. *Karttikeya* is identical with *Michael*, and is a virgin or *Kumara*. *H.P.B.* points out that *Karttikeya*, the seven *rishis*, as well

as the *Krittikas*, are *Guhya* or mysterious, and when the adept is able to correctly interpret the nature of these, greatest mysteries of occult nature are revealed to him. These seven *Rishis* mark time and duration of events, as also periods of *Kali Yuga*, the *Dark Age*.

The *Saptarishis*, at times, are referred to as the inferior class of celestial beings, called *Devas* or elementals. *H.P.B.* writes, “Those who fall off from our living human *Mahatmas* to fall into the *Saptarishis*—the Star *Rishis*—are no *Theosophists*.” While explaining the meaning of this sentence, *Mr. Judge* observes that there are two classes of beings that can influence mankind: (1) The “living human *Mahatmas*,” and (2) the non-human beings. In the given context, the *Saptarishis* are a very advanced class of elementals that may be compared to the *Devas* of the *Hindus*. Sometimes they are able to communicate with man, and create an illusion to make him suppose that they are very high spiritual beings evolved from the human stage. By communicating with such elemental beings, one is deflected from the normal line of human development. (*The Vahan*, Vol. II, August 1892). In *An Epitome of Theosophy* *Mr. Judge* alludes to the possibility of an adept deciding to become a lesser god, thus:

There is also a fate that comes to even Adepts of the Good Law, which is somewhat similar to a loss of “Heaven” after its enjoyment for incalculable periods of time. When the adept has reached a certain very high point in his evolution he may, by a mere wish, become what the *Hindus* call a “*Deva*”—or lesser god. If he does this, then although he will enjoy the bliss and power of that state for a vast length of time, he will not at the next *Pralaya* partake of the conscious life “in the bosom of the Father”; but has to pass down into the matter at the next new “creation,” performing certain functions that could not now be made clear, and has to come up again through the elemental world.

(*To be concluded*)

STUDIES IN THE DHAMMAPADA

VIGILANCE—II

6. *Fools and witless persons give themselves to sloth. The wise value vigilance as their best treasure. (26)*

7. *Be not a sluggard. Have no dalliance with lust and sense delights. He who meditates with earnestness attains great joy. (27)*

SLOTH is inactivity and spiritual apathy. A sluggard is a habitually lazy person. Sloth is one of the seven deadly sins held to be fatal to spiritual progress. The other six sins are pride, covetousness, lust, anger, gluttony and envy. These are termed *tamasic* qualities in the *Gita*. Inaction, when action is needed, is a sin of omission. Effort is needed even for worldly progress. Spiritual progress demands *Virya*; the dauntless energy which signifies determination, fearlessness and confidence. Breaking of old habits is not easy. The whole of one's nature, as it were, rebels against change. Spiritual progress involves letting go of the lower step with a confidence that there is a higher step which is within one's power to reach. Steady practice finally achieves victory. But one has to first recognize its worth to make a beginning. One must prefer it over humdrum existence and conventional religion. Real pearls are found by divers and not by those who play at the shore.

Beginning is made by non-indulgence in lust and sense delights. The advice of Shri Krishna is that the acts of charity, sacrifice and mortification must never be abandoned by the individuals. Mortification does not mean torturing of the body, but gentle and firm control. Mortification of body, mind, speech and emotions is necessary. But it must be in balanced measures, a step at a time; replacing old bad habits by essential ones. It also includes practice of meditation. A quiet hour spent in reflection over spiritual truths and concentrating one's mind over the thread of thought on the subject under study. Soon, one begins to realize that one's

concentration is like the reflection of an image in a mirror, broken into dozen or more pieces. Bodily distractions and discomfort does not permit one to sit still for even five minutes. Mind wanders over hundred and one subjects which occupied its attention throughout the day. Pleasant or unpleasant memories pop their head just when one has begun to get steady. If we are observant, we begin to understand our own nature, little by little. We also realize that concentration cannot be attained like switching on a light. There is a need to cultivate the habit of concentration in everything we do throughout the day. It also requires us to practice virtues, which brings inner peace.

8. *When the prudent man overcomes sloth by vigilance he ascends to the terrace of wisdom. Sorrowless he surveys the sorrowful crowd. This wise man regards the foolish as the mountaineer from his high peak looks at those who are dwelling on the plains. (28)*

Not all beings aspire to reach the mountain-top. Not all beings who profess to walk the spiritual path are earnest enough. A Buddha is a rare efflorescence of an age.

Mountain-top signifies peace, calm and pure atmosphere. From the high ranges one gets larger view. The mountaineer breaths the pure air and is joyous to be with nature. He wonders why people on plains do not get attracted to work their way upward to mountain-top. Mountain-top signifies the pinnacle of Spiritual wisdom.

The Buddha, Mahavira, Jesus, Shankara are those few men who had courage to reach those great heights. They have taught that it is possible for *all* men to reach enlightenment. Each one of us is inherently perfect. People do not understand these Great Ones. They either worship them as gods or hunt them as devils. They demand miracles. They feel that if these Great Beings have all the knowledge and power, they must come out into the open and help them, as and when needed. They prefer to remain children, always dependent on others for everything. Periodically, They return to earth, to teach

humanity, bringing with them the pure spiritual atmosphere of mountains. Having reached the enlightenment, they have nothing to gain and yet their infinite compassion for suffering humanity brings them back into the world. This is the great ideal of the Path of Renunciation taught in Mahayana Buddhism. It is called the “Bodhisattva Ideal,” wherein the Great Being does not enter into peace and bliss of *Nirvana* but renounces it, to remain behind to help humanity.

Explaining the nature of a Great One, *Light on the Path* says that Their peace cannot be disturbed by our personal demands. “No sound which has discord in it can reach his ears. But for those who have power to separate themselves from this herd he is always at hand. And for those who are strong enough to conquer the vices of the personal human nature...he is consciously at hand.” In the darkness of night, even a small light in the valley below can be seen from the mountain-top. The desire to help humanity lights up an inner lamp, the *Tathagata light*, and even a feeblest glimmer of such light never fails to draw their attention. When the disciple is ready, the Master appears—to help and guide him—first on invisible planes and then face to face.

9. *Vigilant among the heedless, awake among the sleepy, the wise one forges ahead even as a charger outdistances a weak horse.* (29)

10. *By vigilance did Indra rise to the lordship of the gods. Vigilance is always praised, heedlessness ever deprecated.* (30)

Same potentialities exist in all human beings. We are born with certain qualities, which were developed in the past lives, and their use, disuse or misuse in the present, will determine whether we refine those qualities or make them dull. There are no gifts bestowed on any human beings except those, which he has acquired by his own merit, says the Third Fundamental Proposition of Theosophy. Indra is the god of the firmament or heavens. He is said to have

attained supremacy over other Gods by means of sacrifice. He is the king of the gods. In post-Vedic ages his reign is said to extend for a hundred divine years only; at the end of which time he may be superseded as king by some other of the gods, or even by man, if any be able to perform the severe penance necessary to obtain this exalted position. The Puranas teach that, in each age of the world, a different being has enjoyed this position. In the *Vishnu Purana* also there is the story of a man raising himself to the throne of Indra.

Hence in the Puranic stories we find that Indra is ever watchful to detect and disrupt the ascetic practices or sacrifice of anyone whose merit threatens to overthrow him. He even played the part of a thief so as to prevent the completion of *Asvamedha Yajna* or Horse-sacrifice by king Sagara.

Indra is a finite being who attained special position by severe penances and vigilance. He is married to Indrani (senses). He rules over the kingdom of enjoyments and by enjoyments his merits fall. He was cursed by *Rishi Gautama* for committing an act of grossest immorality with his wife Ahilya. All these instances signify the power of senses over the mind. Constant vigilance is needed to retain what has been gained. It indicates the need of most stringent discipline and relentless toils to ascend the spiritual heights.

11. *A Bhikkhu who delights in vigilance, who sees the danger of heedlessness, advances like a fire consuming fetters, small or large.* (31)

12. *A Bhikkhu who delights in vigilance, who sees the danger of heedlessness, will not fall; he is close upon Nirvana.* (32)

Ignorance is the cause of delusion in man. Knowledge as to the real nature of man can break all chains which bind him to the cycle of life and death. Fire of knowledge separates out dross from pure gold. Man is a free-willed being making choices at each moment, for which he is held responsible and has to face the results, good or bad. It is not easy to swim against the current, give up the ways of

the world to take the “road less-travelled.” It is easy to live virtuous life when things are going well, but not so when we are tested in adverse circumstances. Greater the height, greater the fall. Puranas tell us many stories of fall of great sages from their exalted state when they give in to their anger or temptation, thereby losing merit of many years of spiritual discipline (*tapasya*). Then they have to begin anew. From stage to stage, we rise until at last a state called “*Samadana*” is reached. It is a state in which the Yogi becomes constitutionally incapable of deviating from the right path. He is close to *Nirvana*. Until then, his only protector is constant vigilance. Thus:

The knowledge which is now yours is only yours because your soul has become one with all pure souls and with the inmost. It is a trust vested in you by the most high. Betray it, misuse your knowledge, or neglect it, and it is possible even now for you to fall from the high estate you have attained. Great ones fall back, even from the threshold, unable to sustain the weight of their responsibility, unable to pass on. Therefore, look forward always with awe and trembling to this moment, and be prepared for the battle. (*Light on the Path*, p. 14)

For, on Path fourth, the lightest breeze of passion or desire will stir the steady light upon the pure white walls of Soul. The smallest wave of longing or regret for Maya’s gifts illusive, along *Antaskarana*—the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arousers of Ahankara—a thought as fleeting as the lightning flash will make thee thy three prizes forfeit—the prizes thou hast won. (*The Voice of the silence*, p. 56)

But we must never lose courage and hope. Help comes from our own inner nature and the GREAT GURU called the “Great Sacrifice,” the Mahadeva.

(*Concluded*)

JULIUS CAESAR

A STUDY IN VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED

II

CASSIUS, straining to see the movement of the battle, said of his physical sight that it “was ever thick.” But had not his moral and political sight also been thick when he ensnared himself and Brutus in the conspiracy? In those final moments these blindnesses led him to his self-inflicted death. Brutus too, moved by error, that shows “to the apt thoughts of men things that are not,” became the victim of fear and of over-confidence. At the end both men killed themselves through ignorant pride. To them suicide was less terrible than to be taken as prisoners through Rome amid the jeers of their former friends and inferiors.

Romans thought that suicide through loyalty to a friend or a cause, or to escape disgrace, was honourable. They prided themselves on this kind of honour. Three persons took that means in this case of escaping what they regarded as worse than death; a fourth did the same through desperation—a pitiful psychic exaggeration and weakness. There was no thought in any of them of a definite result afterward. Death seemed like a bare wall. They went up to it—jumped over—and all was ended; without accountability, without good or evil effects—mere blankness.

The laws of nature as stated by Theosophy—and physical science as well—declare that energies centred in a living form cannot meet destruction. They are only changed in their appearance. Having animated the form, they leave it again, thus breaking down that form; but the energies are themselves still busy at shaping other forms. Theosophy applies this also to the many and varied energies constituting a living man. Hence for a man there can be no blank wall of death with nothing on the farther side.

In the case of one who kills himself, as of one murdered, those energies—that is, those thoughts and feelings—which compose his

mind and soul are as alive and as connected after expulsion from the physical body as before. They necessarily undergo a continued acting and reacting between themselves. Into thoughts such as murder and suicide men have put tremendous will-energy. Those thoughts have fused with and coloured all the other lines of thinking of the life-period. Together they all have formed a mental unit, joined by Nature's law of Cohesion. As the Cohesion making an individual man ceases, the opposite law of Dispersion breaks up the unit and sends the energies elsewhere. That time, for a being who has remained in his body, becomes his natural moment of death. But for an entity who has been thrust out of his body, the power of Cohesion between the mind-energies is not destroyed. The thinking goes on; and since it has now no new objective experiences, it is compelled to busy itself with those it has had; especially with those later and very powerful thoughts that brought on the suicide. Therefore one who kills himself inevitably rehearses the lines of his thinking that led to his last Earth-act—his despairs, his wrongs, his fruitless desires, wicked deeds, and the sudden lawless taking-off. He does this till the time, whether months or years, when the Cohesion between his energies reaches its natural lawful end.

That is what the suicides in the bit of history seen in this drama were obliged to face—Brutus and Cassius ever forming their conspiracy, conducting their winning or losing battles, and their final pushing themselves out of life; Portia, “true and honourable wife” of Brutus, forced to undergo over and again her impatience of his absence, her grief at his enemies' success, and in distraction her torture of swallowing fire. And as also murderers, those suicides who were conspirators were compelled to be always repeating their stabbing of Caesar. This is the special and otherwise unexperienced torment they brought on themselves by their suicide. They could not say, as Brutus thought he could, “Caesar, now be still,” merely by going out of their physical bodies. Their gaining of quiet could not be so easy as that—for they had too greatly disturbed the equilibrium of the forces of Nature.

The pity is that Brutus knew better. On the morning of the last day, he and Cassius conferred (Act. V, Scene 1):

- Cas.* If we do lose this battle...
What are you, then, determined to do?
- Bru.* Even by the rule of that philosophy
By which I did blame Cato for the death
Which he did give himself—I know not how,
But I do find it cowardly and vile,
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent
The time of life:—arming myself with patience
To stay the providence of some high powers
That govern us below.
- Cas.* Then, if we lose this battle,
You are contented to be led in triumph
Through the streets of Rome?
- Bru.* No, Cassius, no: think not, thou noble Roman,
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome;
He bears too great a mind.

Thus Brutus lacked the strength to obey the philosophy he knew, which would have led him to face his own results and actually to “stay the providence of the high governing powers.” He thereby proved himself to be as theoretical in his philosophy as he was in his statecraft.

THE PSYCHISM OF THE PLAY

This play gives emphasis to some unusual psychic phenomena, mostly examples of prophecy. However little Romans in general knew or practiced the ancient Eastern philosophy, they did retain some of the old beliefs that concerned forecasting of the future. In these were mixed much superstition and falsity. The fictitious exaggeration was perhaps exemplified in the accounts of the terrifying storm and the mysterious happenings of the night before Caesar's death. A few of those incidents, however, may be recognized by theosophists as possible psychic occurrences.

The prophetic phenomena concerned not only individuals but bore directly on the most important political events—the death of Caesar and the failure and death of Brutus. Theosophists know that Adepts, though neither mixing in particular temporary politics nor attempting to interfere with “the general drift of the world’s cosmic relations,” do watch and work for both individual and national benefit. Said one of Them: “There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and ‘making history.’” Genuine psychic phenomena are among the means used by Adepts for “moulding events” through the individuals who experience the phenomena. It may be that the disturbances of the “strange disposed time” just before Caesar’s death were used or even in part produced as advisory monitions by invisible Adepts acting at that time for the welfare of Rome. If then the people as a whole had recognized that the fearful events were indeed “portentous things unto the climate that they point upon,” and if they had really taken to heart these warnings, they could have found a way even then to improve their political-ethical condition. If Adepts were at the time giving special attention to Rome, Caesar as head of the Government would naturally be a chief focus for their observation. Foreseeing through their spiritual perception the coming dangers to him and knowing that his death would avail nothing, they could impress their guidance publicly by soothsayers’ prophecy and more occultly by dreams. These means indeed may have been so used.

(To be concluded)

IF a man holds aloof from the desires of this world, the misfortunes of this world hold aloof from him.

—HERMES

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: How do we decide whether to entertain or not, the claims other people make on us?

Answer: There are fair claims and there are unfair claims. As we attend to claims made by others, several questions arise. What makes a claim, an unfair claim? Does it conflict with one’s duty? Is it asking for more than one is capable of giving? Is there a tendency to shift one’s responsibility onto another’s shoulders? We must learn to sort out various claims and also set the priorities. Whatever may be the claims made on us we must not resent them or feel irritated. A trustee has to use the funds and property of the trust only for the objects of the trust, for which the trust has been set up. Likewise, we are trustees of our time, energy and mental faculties, which need to be used judiciously for proper purpose and in the right direction. The whole society and the world have a claim on us. When we do our job, we must put in our best efforts. If we earn our livelihood in a constructive way, then we can make our contribution to the society and the world. By doing his duty, in proper place and proper time, a man makes the world his debtor.

As we fulfil our duty towards family, friends, society and humanity at large, we must not forget that we are all pilgrim souls and hence evolution of the soul is an *unspoken and implicit claim* on every human being which we should not neglect. We must so apportion our time and energy that always there is enough left to ourselves for reading and reflection on good books, for relaxation and recreation, for pursuing hobbies and interests, for self-examination and meditation. Family members and loved-ones do

not have absolute claim on us. A person once asked Mr. Judge, what should he do as his wife complained that he was neglecting her in order to attend Theosophical meetings and lectures in the evenings? Mr. Judge's reply was that justice to ourselves and those dependent on us would show that no wife has the right to demand the whole of man's time. If she cannot attend a lecture or meeting once a week, she should be willing to let her husband attend them. A wife that seeks entire attention of her husband seems to consider herself "legal owner" of her husband.

When we do attend to claims of others, let us be careful so that we do not make the other person dependent on us. Some people frequently feel the need to give vent to their feelings. In trying to help another we must not allow that person to drain us physically, mentally or even emotionally. H.P.B. puts it thus:

The duty—let alone happiness—of every Theosophist... is certainly to help others to carry their burden; but no Theosophist or other has the right to sacrifice himself unless *he knows for a certainty* that by so doing he helps some one and does not sacrifice himself in vain for the empty glory of the abstract virtue.... 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. (*She Being Dead yet Speaketh*, p.10)

However, we must not reject the claim of another simply on the basis of our likes and dislikes. For instance, if a person who is known to us to be a bore wants to see us on a Sunday, and if we have planned to read some good book then we are most likely to refuse to see him. This is because we do not like to change our fixed plan and we do not like to be bored—both are purely personal considerations. Unless another's claim conflicts with our duty, we must be able to drop the work in hand, at once, and attend to the person.

Question: In *The Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge mentions the

cycle of Sun, thus: "The cycle of the Sun is a period of twenty-eight years, which having elapsed the Dominical and Sunday letters return to their former place and proceed in the former order according to Julian calendar." What does it refer to?

Answer: Dominical letters are letters A, B, C, D, E, F and G assigned to days in a cycle of seven with the letter A always set against 1st January. Dominical letters were a method adopted from the Romans by chronologers to aid them in finding the day of the week corresponding to any given date. The Christian Church, due to its complicated system of movable and immovable feasts, has long been concerned with the regulation and measurement of time. Easter is the most important Christian feast. The custom has been to fix the Easter festival always on Sunday.

The Romans were accustomed to dividing the year into *nundinae*, periods of eight days. They used the first eight letters of the alphabet (A to H) to mark the days. When the Oriental seven-day period (week) was introduced in the time of Caesar Augustus, the first seven letters of the alphabet were employed in the same way to indicate the days of the new division of time. The days of the year from 1 January to 31 December are marked with a continuous recurring cycle of seven letters: A, B, C, D, E, F, G. A is always set against 1 January, B against 2 January, C against 3 January, and so on. Thus F falls to 6 January, G to 7 January; A again recurs on 8 January, and so on. Clearly, if 1 January is a Sunday, all the days marked by A will also be Sundays; If 1 January is a Saturday, Sunday will fall on 2 January which is a B, and all the other days marked B will be Sundays. The dominical letter of a year is defined as the letter of the cycle corresponding to the day upon which the first Sunday (and thus every subsequent Sundays) falls. Those years which are not Leap years are assigned dominical letter of its first Sunday. Since January 7 was a Sunday, in the year 2001, that year is assigned dominical letter "G." Leap years have two Dominical Letters. Thus, for instance, year 2001 has dominical letter "G," 2002 will have "F," 2003 will have "E," and 2004 (the leap year) will

have DC, where the second letter describes the portion of the year after the *leap day*. The Dominical Letters from the year 2001 to 2028 are as follows:

2001-G, 2002-F, 2003-E, 2004-DC, 2005-B, 2006-A, 2007-G, 2008-FE, 2009-D, 2010-C, 2011-B, 2012-AG, 2013-F, 2014-E, 2015-D, 2016-CB, 2017-A, 2018-G, 2019-F, 2020-ED, 2021-C, 2022-B, 2023-A, 2024-GF, 2025-E, 2026-D, 2027-C, 2028-BA

If we assign Dominical Letters to subsequent years, we find 2029-G, 2030-F, 2031-E, 2032-DC, 2033-B, and so on. Thus, we can see that the same sequence of letters from G to BA would be repeated for next 28 years, *i.e.*, from 2029 to 2056. This holds true for the Julian Calendar. Since our earth revolves around the sun in approximately $365 \frac{1}{4}$ days, and not in 365 days, to take care of that fractional day, the Roman calendar considered the year to be of 355 days, while every alternate year was supposed to include an extra month of 22 or 23 days. But this arrangement did not work and by the time Julian calendar was introduced, the Roman calendar was too much out of sync with the seasons. The last year of Roman calendar before the introduction of Julian calendar comprised of 445 days and was termed “the last year of confusion.” The Julian Calendar was introduced only in the year 45 B.C. by Julius Caesar to take care of the fractional day. In this calendar, each year is assigned 365 days, while the fractional or quarter day is taken care of by having one extra day in every fourth year, making it a year of 366 days, called *leap year*. In leap years the extra day gets added to the month of February. However, this calendar was found to be out of sync with solar calendar by the 16th century, by 10 days. This was taken care of by introducing Gregorian calendar, which is similar to Julian calendar in all respects, except that it was provided that years divisible by 100 would be *leap years* only if they were divisible by 400 as well.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The Japanese believe that you are what your blood type is, so that one’s blood type plays a vital role in matters of match-making or getting a job. The four of the top ten best-sellers in the year 2008, in Japan, were about how blood type determines personality. These four books, one each for types, A, B, O and AB, has combined sales of well over 5 million copies. These books describe people with blood group “A,” *i.e.*, Type As, as sensitive perfectionists, but also overanxious. Type Bs are cheerful but eccentric and selfish; Type Os are curious, generous but stubborn, and Type ABs are arty but mysterious and unpredictable. Many firms ask blood types at job interviews and some firms have decided to give assignments based on employees’ blood types. The blood-type craze is not harmless and some Japanese have termed it, “bura-hara,” meaning blood-type harassment. (*The Times of India*, February 3, 2009)

There are many physical indicators of the personality of a person. The handwriting and the physiognomy of a person could reveal a lot about the personality type, to one who is an expert at interpreting these things. Blood could well be an important indicator because blood is closely allied to *Kama* or Desire principle. The very essence of blood is *Kama*. It serves as physical *upadhi* or basis for *Kama* and *Prana* (life energy). Thus, blood seems to be closely allied with *Kamic* or personal nature of a person. In the article, “The Sheaths of the Soul,” Mr. Judge points out that science admits only actions of nerves along the skin, mucous membrane and in flesh, as the receivers and transmitters of sensation. Whereas, occult philosophy teaches that blood cells and the fluid they float in also receive and transmit sensation.

Moreover, a person’s personal magnetism impresses everything that he uses, with the stamp of his character, emotions and ideas. This includes one’s blood also. Blood carries and retains the psychic characteristics as well as the magnetism of the person. Thus, blood transfusion involves the transfer to the recipient of some magnetism

and qualities, including defects of character of the donor; not only in the shape of physical matter but on the psychological plane as well.

Researchers in Sweden, led by Kenth Svartberg of the University of Stockholm, have carried out the study and shown that pedigree dogs, which are bred for their looks and not for their intelligence, have become increasingly stupid. According to them, the mental and physical agility of many pedigree breeds is being eroded as owners look for docile and pretty pets. After conducting 10 tests on 13,000 dogs as regards their characteristics, the researchers concluded that those dogs bred for appearance displayed reduced levels of sociability and curiosity, such as was seen in the case of collies (herding dog) and Rhodesian ridgebacks, which were used for hunting even dangerous games. The attractive appearance was often linked with introversion and boring personality. Svartberg said that the changes in intelligence had happened over just a few generations. (*The Times of India*, January 20, 2009)

Man has always kept pets for various reasons. Dogs were domesticated and trained to be watchdogs and also for hunting. Animals must be treated with love and compassion, but we need not make them our constant companions and much worse, attempt to humanize them. The most important thing for the animal is to have experience in the species to which it belongs. They are unable to have that experience when they are cut off from their natural surroundings. An animal has to learn self-defence, to find food for himself, etc. Hence, when some people say that their dog is able to appreciate music, they fail to see that appreciation of music is not the next step in dog's development. In fact, in close proximity with humans, they pick up lower tendencies. For instance, a pet dog that is showered with love and attention all the time is often found, out of jealousy, to harm a newborn baby, towards whom the family's

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

Were Mars and Mercury formed from the leftover material after the formation of Earth and Venus? Scientists generally believe that Earth and other planets were formed from a disk of gas and dust that surrounded the sun some 4.5 billion years ago. If the rocky planets formed from a homogeneous debris disk, they should be roughly of the same size and revolve around the sun in similar circular orbits. However, Venus and Earth are much more massive than Mercury and Mars. Brad Hansen, from the University of California, proposes that the disk of dust and gas, surrounding the sun, fragmented into bands of debris at various distances. Further, Earth and Venus formed within one thick band or annulus, in the inner solar system. As these two planets rotate around the sun, they had to pass through a sea of pebble and mountain-size debris, some of which was absorbed by them, while other chunks were hurled out of the annulus. Hansen suggests that Mars and Mercury could have formed from such separated debris. It is believed that the new theory of planet formation could explain some of the characteristics of Mars and Mercury that have puzzled scientists for a long time. (*The Times India*, January 24, 2009)

Regarding the formation of the seven planets and the sun, H.P.B. explains: Allegorically, from the body of Aditi (*Mulaprakriti*), the homogeneous matter, eight sons are said to have been born. Cosmically and astronomically, (the seven Adityas) these are the seven planets, the eighth son being our sun (*S.D.*, I, 99). The occult doctrine rejects the hypothesis that the seven great planets have

evolved from the Sun's central mass, "the Sun and the planets are only co-uterine brothers, having had the same nebular origin, only in a different mode from that postulated by modern astronomy." (*S.D.*, I, 589)

Mr. Judge points out that Mars, Mercury and Venus have a special and direct relation to earth. Those three visible spheres have to do with certain cosmic principles and lines of influence in and on the earth, while the remaining visible planets of the Solar System do not have the same relation (*W.Q.J. Series No. 8*, p. 31). He remarks that their occult relation with earth is not explained because these explanations belong to higher grade of initiation. "Mars is in a state of obscurity at the present time, as stated by the Masters. This is because, in that chain of development, the Egos have finished their fourth round, or because the fourth round has not yet commenced, except in respect to the planet itself as a place of habitation, the Egos having passed on to the next globe of that chain... The same may be said of Mercury... it is beginning to get out of the obscurity caused by the absence of Egos" (*W.Q.J. Series No. 8*, p. 27). Venus is in her last or Seventh Round, hence men there are as gods to us, so that some of her great light must emanate from those beings and not all be from the sun. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 15*, pp. 14-15)

Thus, if Venus is in her last round, while Mars and Mercury are in their fourth Round, just like earth, humanity on Venus must be older than that of Mars and Mercury. Earth is child of Moon and she is not considered to be one of the seven sacred planets, in occult philosophy. H.P.B. points out that Earth is a planet of lower order.

What is Wisdom? Where does one find it? The quest for wisdom is as old as Socrates. However, when things are going well, we do not need to go in search of wisdom. The modern scientific study of wisdom is traced to the work of the American psychologist Vivian Clayton in the 1970s, at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin, who

dropped her research in 1982. Clayton devised first empirical tests, which she defined as the ability to acquire knowledge and analyze it both logically and emotionally—picking up on the work began by Socrates. There is \$2.7 million programme, funded by Templeton Foundation, called Defining Wisdom, which implies that the researchers will know what they were looking for, once they find it. Several researchers in the fields of neuroscience, music, art and law have been given wisdom-seeking grants. According to Robert J. Sternberg of Tufts University, wisdom research is needed in our days, where brilliant people without wisdom get into power and make a mess of things. The 38 proposals for finding wisdom, include those aimed at finding wisdom in computer algorithms or "Data Compression as a Mathematical Measure of Wisdom," and in classical literature. Some feel that wisdom-related knowledge is usually conveyed by the medium of language, while few others propose to explore music as a form of wisdom. It is felt that if ants can teach us something about wisdom, it would be worthwhile studying the life of a person like Sylvia Miles, who frittered away her career with nonstop partying. The programme's directors, psychologists, John Cacioppo and Howard Nusbaum, see "wisdom" in part as a corrective to the "rational choice" paradigm of decision making, which is the foundation of free-market economics. Rational choice holds that everyone experiences happiness when people maximize their short-term individual gains, even when it is at the expense of long term future or broad interest of the society. Such approach is exactly opposite to the wisdom of the ants who do not worry about their individual fates. It has been observed that through good and bad years, ant colonies remain cautious and do not over-expand, as we humans do, out of reckless greed, and then collapse in economic crisis, writes Jerry Adler (*Newsweek*, January 26, 2009)

Animals seem to display wisdom and intelligence, which is divine instinct at work. Instinct is defined as direct perception of what is right, within its own realm. On the other hand, intuition is direct perception of truth in all things. Reason is balance between instinct

and intuition. Whenever we allow our divine nature to manifest on this plane, we are in possession of wisdom, and guided as to right course of action. However, could we acquire wisdom through research or by collecting data of various cases where wisdom was displayed? Wisdom results from the blending of the mind and soul. It calls for proper blending of mind and heart. Wisdom is not the knowledge of all the facts of a case but also intuitive understanding of them. *The Voice of the Silence* points out that the seeds of wisdom are inherent in us, but for those seeds to sprout, we must acquire breadth and depth of mind. Mr. Judge suggests that in order to acquire wisdom we must pay heed to the promptings of the inner nature. If something within urged us to visit a sick person, we must obey the suggestion without delay. Likewise, let us give the necessary help, money or otherwise, when we are moved to tears by the story of another, without trying to rationalize. “More light, more wisdom, more spirituality, must necessarily come to one thus prepared, thus expectant.”

SUCH a (disciple of philosophy) may be compared to a man who has fallen among wild beasts—he will not join in the wickedness of his fellows, but neither is he able singly to resist all their fierce natures, and therefore seeing that he would be of no use to the State or to his friends, and reflecting that he would have to throw away his life without doing any good either to himself or others; he holds his peace, and goes his own way. He is like one who, in the storm of dust and sleet which the driving wind hurries along, retires under the shelter of a wall; and seeing the rest of mankind full of wickedness, he is content, if only he can live his own life and be pure from evil and unrighteousness, and depart in peace and good-will, with bright hopes.

—PLATO

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