



## The Astral Body

**I**N the Neoplatonic philosophy, the ineffable One produces the Universal Mind, which is the sum of the *Ideas* — the eternal archetypes of the forms of manifested existence. All the forms of matter are the result of pre-existing intelligences which shape matter to their various natures. The unity of all souls with the Universal Oversoul does not exclude spiritual individuality; in other words, the gross matter of earthly life is not the principle of individuation. Differentiation within the One proceeds on higher planes, prior to the objective differentiation of physical existence. Each plane of being produces another and inferior plane, until the lowest plane of matter is reached.

This process of emanation is exemplified in the descent of the individual soul to incarnation. Proclus succinctly describes how the soul takes on sheaths of increasing materiality in its passage from spiritual existence to a body of matter:

The vehicle of every particular soul descends by the addition of vestures increasingly material; and ascends in company with the soul through divestment of all that is material and recovery of its proper form, after the analogy of the soul which makes use of it: for the soul descends by the acquisition of the irrational principles of life; and ascends by putting off all those faculties tending to temporal process with which it was invested in its descent, and becoming clean and bare of all such faculties as serve the use of the process.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Elements of Theology*, translated by E. R. Dodds (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1933), Prop. 209. p. 183.

In the work from which this passage is quoted, the *Elements of Theology*, Proclus desired to present in a series of propositions the garnered wisdom of the ancient world. He was the last of the great Greek philosophers, and in a spirit almost prophetic of the coming dark period in human thought, he devoted himself to a synthesis of the work of his predecessors. How well he succeeded is shown by the extensive use H.P.B. makes of his writings in explaining the occult doctrines. Following is another passage from Proclus, with her interpolations:

After death the soul (the spirit) continueth to linger in the aërial body (astral form), till it is entirely purified from all angry and voluptuous passions ... then doth it put off by a *second dying* the aërial body as it did the earthly one. Whereupon, the ancients say that there is a celestial body always joined with *the soul*, which is *immortal, luminous and star-like*.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> *Isis Unveiled* I, 432.

In his Commentary on Plato's *Timaeus*, Proclus teaches the existence of "both an immortal vehicle and a perishable one which survives bodily death ... attaching the irrational soul to the latter while holding that certain roots of unreason are imperishable." This joining of the perishable vehicle with the irrational soul after bodily death appears to be a description of the union which takes place between the astral body and the *Kama-rupa*. The "imperishable roots of unreason" which also survive is doubtless a reference to the *Skandhas*, which await the ego at the door of its next rebirth. According to Proclus, the perishable vehicle "consists of successive layers of the four elements, which are successively attached to the immortal vehicle in the course of the soul's descent and discarded in the reverse order during the ascent."<sup>1</sup>

Plotinus, called by H.P.B. the "noblest, highest and grandest of all the Neo-Platonists after the founder of the school, Ammonius Saccas," gives an account of the sheaths intermediate between the higher part of the soul and the physical body. In the fourth *Ennead* he says: "The souls peering forth from the Intellectual Realm descend first to the heavens and there put on a body; this becomes at once the medium by which they reach more and more towards magnitude (physical extension) and proceed to bodies progressively more earthy." A little later he enters into a detailed discussion of that phase of the soul which is "required to produce life in the corporeal, and what there must be of soul present throughout such a completed organism."<sup>2</sup> This is the astral body, as the necessary model of the physical.

<sup>1</sup> Dodds, *op. cit.*, p. 307.

<sup>2</sup> *Fourth Ennead* III, 26, 30. From *Plotinus on the Nature of the Soul*, translated by Stephen Mackenna (London: Medici Society, 1924).

Elsewhere in the same *Ennead* he examines in detail the Aristotelian doctrine that the *entelechy*, or soul of the body, is dependent on the body for its existence. Plotinus shows that were soul and body but different aspects of the same thing, there could be sense perception but no intellection. For if, he says, the body and the soul are really one, "there is an end to the resistance offered by reason to the desires; the total (of body and Entelechy-Soul) must have one uniform experience throughout, and be aware of no internal contradiction." This is the classical criticism against all forms of materialistic and monistic psychology. If mind is but a function of body, exhibiting only responses to physical stimuli, there can be no such thing as thought, proper. A mind that is merely the reflex of bodily activity can have no thoughts *about* the body, because such thought is not independent, but entirely predetermined by the body itself. It is impossible for the Behaviorist to meet this argument except by asserting that *he* is independent of the laws of his own doctrine. Unless this is the case, he can tell us only things which are the result of his own unique bodily stimuli. As Plotinus says, "The very upholders of the entelechy are thus compelled to introduce another soul, the Intellect, to which they ascribe immortality." This is Aristotle's "Creative Reason."

Plotinus concludes the discussion with a clear distinction between the Aristotelian Entelechy-Soul and the Immortal Individuality:

The substantial existence of the soul, then, does not depend upon serving as Form to anything; it is an Essence which does not come into being by finding a seat in body; it exists before it becomes also the soul of some particular, for example, of a living being, whose body by this doctrine would be the author of its soul.

What, then, is the soul's Being? If it is neither body nor a state nor experience of body, but it is act and creation; if it holds much and gives much, and is an existence outside of body; of what order and character must it be?

Clearly it is what we describe as Veritable Essence. The other order, the entire corporeal Kind, is process; it appears and it perishes; in reality it never possesses Being, but is merely protected, in so far as it has the capacity, by participating in what authentically is.<sup>1</sup>

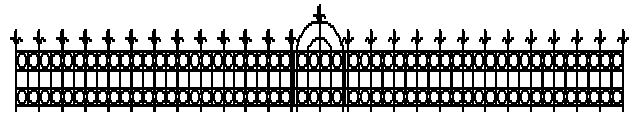
Thus the Immortal Individuality, or "Son of the Universal Mind" — Alaya-Akasa — is *more than the astral*. "The Personal Mind, is, as a temporary 'Principle,' of the Substance of the Astral Light.

As a pure ray of the "Son of the Universal Mind," it could perform no functions in the body, and would remain powerless over the turbulent organs of Matter. Thus, while its inner constitution is Manasic, its "body," or rather functioning essence, is heterogenous, and leavened with the Astral Light, the lowest element of Ether.

It is part of the mission of the Manasic Ray, to get gradually rid of the blind, deceptive element which, though it makes of it an active spiritual entity on this plane, still brings it into so close contact with matter as to entirely becloud its divine nature and stultify its intuitions. ("Psychic and Noëtic Action")

Man was not "created" the complete being he is now, however imperfect he still remains. There was a spiritual, a psychic, an intellectual, and an animal evolution, from the highest to the lowest, as well as a physical development — from the simple and homogeneous, up to the more complex and heterogeneous; though not quite on the lines traced for us by the modern evolutionists. This double evolution in two contrary directions, required various ages,

of divers natures and degrees of spirituality and intellectuality, to fabricate the being now known as man. Furthermore, the one absolute, ever acting and never erring law, which proceeds on the same lines from one eternity (or Manvantara) to the other -- ever furnishing an ascending scale for the manifested, or that which we call the great Illusion (*Maha-Maya*), but plunging Spirit deeper and deeper into materiality on the one hand, and then *redeeming it through flesh* and liberating it -- this law, we say, uses for these purposes the Beings from other and higher planes, men, or *Minds* (Manus), in accordance with their Karmic exigencies. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 87)



## American Claims Discovery of Atlantis

Tue Nov 16, 7:22 AM ET

By ALEX EFTY, Associated Press Writer

LIMASSOL, Cyprus — An American researcher claimed Sunday to have discovered the remains of the legendary lost city of Atlantis on the bottom of the east Mediterranean Sea, but Cyprus' chief government archaeologist was skeptical.

Robert Sarmast said sonar scanning 50 miles southeast of Cyprus revealed man-made walls, one as long as 2 miles, and trenches at a depth of 1,640 yards.

"It is a miracle we found these walls as their location and lengths match exactly the description of the acropolis of Atlantis provided by Plato in his writings," Sarmast said, referring to the ancient Greek philosopher.

The chief government archaeologist of Cyprus, Pavlos Flourentzos, reacted with skepticism, telling The Associated Press: "More proof is necessary."

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* Cf. *The Secret Doctrine* I, 174-5 fn.

Sarmast, 38, is an architect by training from Los Angeles. He has devoted the past 2 1/2 years to trying to locate the lost city described by Plato in his dialogues, the Timaeus and the Critias. He spoke to reporters on the "Flying Enterprise," his expeditionary ship, after six days of taking highly sophisticated "side scan" sonars of the seabed.

He said he had chosen the area from data provided by two earlier sonar scans of the east Mediterranean by Russian and French expeditions. His own expedition used more sophisticated equipment, he said.

"We found more than 60-70 points that are a perfect match with Plato's detailed description of the general layout of the acropolis hill of Atlantis. The match of the dimensions and the coordinates provided by our sonar with Plato's description are so accurate that, if this is not indeed the acropolis of Atlantis, then this is the world's greatest coincidence," he said.

Tests of that part of the seabed showed it had once been above sea level, he said.

"We cannot yet provide tangible proof in the form of bricks and mortar as the artifacts are still buried under several meters of sediment at a depth of 1,500 meters (1,640 yards), but the evidence is now irrefutable," he added.

Asked if the ruins could not be that of another city that sank beneath the waves, Sarmast said the remains match Plato's description of Atlantis so closely that they could not be anything else.

"If you compare it with Plato, you will be astonished," he said. "We hope that future expeditions will be able to uncover the sediment and bring back physical proof."

Plato wrote of Atlantis as an island in the western sea, which has been widely interpreted to mean the Atlantic Ocean. An earthquake undermined the island and it was submerged. But societies dedicated to finding Atlantis remain.

For its time, Atlantis was a highly civilized nation and in legend it has become associated with utopia. The English philosopher Francis Bacon called his 1627 book on the ideal state The New Atlantis.

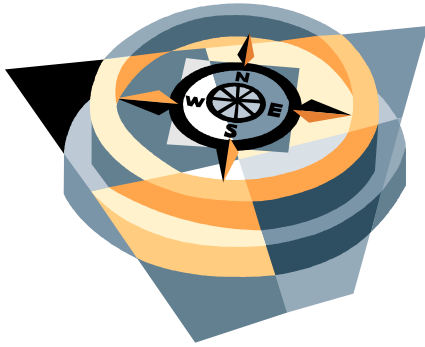
Chief government archaeologist Flourentzos said it was possible that Atlantis was near Cyprus.

"The myth of Atlantis has been around for ages and it is generally believed that, if it ever existed, it was somewhere in the Atlantic Ocean — hence its name. But ancient cities and civilizations in the Mediterranean region, such as the Minoan civilization of Crete, have disappeared as a result of major volcanic eruptions and earthquakes. For all we know, Atlantis may well have existed in our region."

Sarmast said his expedition had cost about a \$250,000. The funds came from public donations to his US-based company "First Source Enterprise," which is devoted to the project, sales of his book "The Discovery of Atlantis," and the Cypriot Tourist Organization, which donated \$60,000.

He said the book, published in September 2003, said Atlantis was in the east Mediterranean and his latest sonars confirmed it.





## POINT OUT THE WAY

### LVIII

#### Chapter XII

#### II. — The Motion of “Shells” and “Waking” Kama Loka

**QUESTION:** — What is the relation between the classification of “shells” and the four characteristics of Manas?

**ANSWER:** — Has anyone ever thought to speculate on that subject? With most of us, our ordinary mental action is the action of a shell — the mind flies off from anything we want to put it on. It flies *to* something that we like, that is, that we are attracted to, or it flies *away* from what we dislike, which is what a shell does; and it “squats,” remains passive, considering naught — which again is what a shell does.

Such a correlation ought to arouse us to the fact that our consciousness in Kali Yuga — the consciousness of the race — becomes more and more incarnated Kama Loka. (If you want to pursue that a step further, read the statement in *The Secret Doctrine* Vol. II, p. 350.)<sup>1</sup> Look at the number of people

<sup>1</sup> And on page 350 we find: “The secret teachings show that the “Deluge” overtook the Fourth, giant Race, not on account of their depravity, or because they had become “black with sin,” but simply because such is the fate of every continent, which — like everything else under our Sun — is born, lives, becomes decrepit, and dies. This was when the Fifth Race was in its infancy.

there are that are nothing but incarnated shells — just psychics, mediums. The Ego is there, but he is like an Ego in Kama Loka — he either exercises no control of his lower principles or he has lost the power of control.

**QUESTION:** — What is the difference in the kind of causation that leads to the after-death states and that which leads to rebirth?

**ANSWER:** — There is no difference; it is the same causation that leads to rebirth, to life, to death, to Kama Loka, to Devachan, to rebirth. That causation is *Tanha* the thirst for separate existence in matter. All these states go together. As long as there is the thirst, all the states are there. Why cannot all causes be worked out in the after-death states? Because the after-death states are purely a reaping of what has been sown; they are not a field of sowing, but a place of reaping.

Remember what H.P.B. says about the lower principles that make up the human being, except for the light of Higher Manas? She says that the lower principles are like wild beasts, and that, when death comes, they are made all the

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Thus the giants perished — the magicians and the sorcerers, adds the fancy of popular tradition, but “all holy saved,” and alone the “unholy were destroyed.” This was due, however, as much to the *prevision* of the “holy” ones, who had not lost the use of their “third eyes,” as to Karma and natural law. Speaking of the subsequent race (our Fifth Humanity), the commentary says: —

*“Alone the handful of those Elect, whose divine instructors had gone to inhabit that Sacred Island — ‘from whence the last Saviour will come’ — now kept mankind from becoming one-half the exterminator of the other [as mankind does now — H.P.B.]. It (mankind) became divided. Two-thirds of it were ruled by Dynasties of lower, material Spirits of the earth, who took possession of the easily accessible bodies; one-third remained faithful, and joined with the nascent Fifth Race — the divine Incarnates. When the Poles moved (for the fourth time) this did not affect those who were protected, and who had separated from the Fourth Race. Like the Lemurians — alone the ungodly Atlanteans perished, and were seen no more.”*

wilder by the great change — they fly to their elements. That is why the stay in Kama Loka is very short for the average man; the Ego can't assimilate the lower principles; they are with the Ego under duress during life. The moment they are free to fly, they fly.

In Devachan, the Ego is engaged in assimilating so much of addition to his will, to his knowledge, to his Buddhi, we may call it — that is, his sense of compassion, brotherhood and affinity for mankind — as the food furnished by the life last lived made possible. When that is over, he is drawn back to life by the sense of desire.

One of the Masters once used a very graphic phrase in regard to Devachan that may interest many of us. He said, "Of course, Devachan in sober truth is an intensely selfish state, a state of spiritual selfishness"— notice the word, *selfishness* — "in which the Ego reaps the reward of his unselfish acts and thoughts on earth." There is a pair of opposites with a vengeance, isn't it?

**QUESTION:** — If the real man is not affected by change or pain, why is there such a difference between the suffering of human beings and that of the animal kingdom, as seems to be implied in Theosophical teachings?

**ANSWER:** — There is a coupling up of two unrelated things. Suffering in the human kingdom is of two kinds: "animal" suffering — that is, suffering not accompanied by memory of former suffering, or by anticipation of worse suffering — and suffering upon which the imagination and the memory are put to work. H.P.B. says, "Woe to those who live without suffering. But we can suffer as the animal suffers without any mental suffering. *Mental* suffering comes from the imagination and memory. So man's suffering is mental and moral; the

animal's is purely astral — quite another thing.

**QUESTION:** — It has been stated that there are seven states between incarnations. Only three, however, seem to be spoken of: Life here and now, Kama Loka and Devachan. What are the other four states?

**ANSWER:** — Well, there is a kind of Devachan and Kama Loka on the way *down* to birth; that is quite another story. When we come here at birth, this is the same old earth as when we got old and got ready to die, but it looks mighty different. It is another earth to the old man than it is to the child. The two intervening states, the two psychic states on the way down and the Kama Loka and Devachanic states, constitute four, altogether; earth life is another, making five. The two spiritual states besides the state of Manas itself are the other two, and we have the seven states.

But we could put it more properly this way: There are three worlds or states which are causal; those are the three Spiritual worlds. There are three worlds or states which are the effect side of the causal or Spiritual states. Those are the three material worlds or elemental worlds. Then there is the mixture of the three Spiritual states and the three material states; that is, waking human consciousness. There are the seven worlds or seven states.

**QUESTION:** — Do the executed criminals, victims of violence and so on, realize that they are dead and out of earth life?

**ANSWER:** — It would be difficult to answer that by Yes or No. According to the teachings, the violence of the shock is such that they are for the most part stunned; they are like a man in a nightmare, like a man dazed by a blow. But they can be roused to some

consciousness of earth life and to the fact that they are dead and out of earth life; they can be roused to that, and when they are, they may become a species of ghoul and vampire.

**QUESTION:** — If the after-death states are effect states, how can one get out of Kama Loka by self-induced and self-devised efforts?

**ANSWER:** — He must make the self-induced and self-devised efforts while he is alive in a body. The Kama Loka state is relative to the thought and action of the life last lived — it is still a part of the personal life, but it is the *effect* side of the personal life.

**QUESTION:** — What is a Theosophist to do when a person dies and those about the dead one are not Theosophists and even summon officers of the law?

**ANSWER:** — You can't prevent other people doing what they *can* do. But if the body were not left for ten minutes after death and we couldn't prevent it, we would only make a bad case worse by worrying about it or by getting desperate ourselves. Where we have the knowledge and the duty and the power, we are to do what we see is right; but if it is not in our power, then we ought to recognize that it is not our business. My business is what I *can* do, not what I can't do. Isn't that so in every case?

**QUESTION:** — What type of beings are those that have gone into Avitchi?

**ANSWER:** — First, let us understand that Avitchi itself, although ordinarily translated as "hell," is not our Christian theological hell. It is just the most convenient and graphic English word to use; but the term Avitchi bears no more relation to the theological hell than heaven itself does to Devachan. A being in Avitchi is one who loves evil for its own sake, does evil for its own sake; his

only happiness is in inflicting evil on others. Any such being is in Avitchi whether he is incarnate or disincarnate. There are such beings alive in human bodies. H.P.B. said that we elbow soulless beings at every corner. But if one has great knowledge and the kind of nature which loves evil for its own sake, he may be clever enough to keep out of incarnation himself and make use of the bodies of incarnated beings for his own purpose.

**QUESTION:** — How would that affect children? Sometimes we see children who act as if they were possessed of a devil.

**ANSWER:** — Maybe they are. Remember that children, good or bad, are not human beings or incarnated Egos in the sense that we are. Incarnation, even to the extent that it reaches in the ordinary adult man, is a very gradual process. It is said that the Ego doesn't get into connected contact with the body until the age of seven is reached. Up to that time the child may be called a human animal. There is an Ego to whom that body belongs, and in time the Ego will gain more or less control over it; but, up to the age of seven, both the Ego and the body have a somewhat independent existence as, you might say, a physical and a psychical Siamese twin.

But after seven years, the Ego begins to have consciousness as Ego, moral responsibility or sense as Ego, *while in the body*. Then, as we all know, at about 14 years of age, the second seven, a distinct change comes over the child; we call it adolescence. That change is not merely physiological, but psychical, mental and moral as well. In fact, the physiological side of it is a mere effect of the fact that the Ego is becoming more and more active as Ego while in the body.

By the time age of 21, the third seven, is reached, the Ego has attained maturity; that is, he has gone as far as he went before in the body; he has reached what for him is a balanced existence in the body. From then on, he makes new Karma, for better or worse; that is, he increases his Egoic power and control over, because of his understanding of the right use of, the body — or the reverse. By the time he is 28, or 35, the fourth or fifth seven, the Ego has undertaken consciously and intentionally the battle of life, which is the control of the body — meaning by that the four lower principles.

Most of us, however, struggle very little with ourselves after we reach young manhood and young womanhood; by the time we are 24, 25, 30 years old, we have become settlers, and we are inclined to take things as they are. Those bodily desires which are agreeable to us, we feed; those bodily desires which are disagreeable to us, we endeavour to suppress; but we seldom push the fight.

The value of Theosophy is that it makes one a student of nature. In grown men and women it arouses the knowledge that the battle is only begun. Look at this class — men and women who are studying, not because somebody drives them to school, but studying, of their own will, the great problem of how the Ego in the body is to be the master of the four lower principles and not their slave.

**QUESTION:** — What you have said accounts for the fact that there is no record of the ghost of a baby ever, having been seen?

**ANSWER:** — Yes; there are vivid dreams sometimes, and sometimes the imaginings of a mother in Devachan — imaginings of her baby so powerful that they might produce a picture of a baby that a medium or clairvoyant could see and would mistake for the ghost or soul of a baby.

But all they would be seeing would be a mental image.

**QUESTION:** — Would the mother get no *feeling* from the mental image?

**ANSWER:** — She couldn't produce it except out of concentration of feeling, which is Buddhi. Remember, the problem of the after-death states is not so difficult after all. Manas during waking human life is said to be dual and we speak of it as higher and lower Manas. When we reflect upon this, we see that it means that, in waking human life, Manas — which is one, not two — is aware of relativities. That is why it is called the dual Manas. Higher Manas is aware of a higher world than its own that it is now in; Lower Manas is aware of a lower world than itself. Manas thus perceives at least more or less successfully or unsuccessfully the contrast between the higher, invisible and the lower, visible world. After death, Manas is not dual, whether in Kama Loka or in Devachan; Manas is once more one.

Furthermore, we have to remember that in no case is Manas active in Kama Loka. Kama Loka is the state of objectified *memory*. If Manas were active in Kama Loka, Kama Loka would be a Spiritual state. Manas is active in Devachan but it is Manas active in the Buddhist mode of activity, and we know that only under such terms as Meditation and Concentration, while in a body.

Another thing to remember in regard to the after-death states and every similar state: since we are in waking human life, Manas is dual in us; that is, we are aware of a higher world and a lower world, and of ourselves struggling between the two. We need to study this subject by analogy. No after-death experience is possible for any living man that he hasn't already had while on earth without any Kama Loka or any Devachan.



There are times with us all when we are conscious only of evil; that is, of the dark side of life — our woes, pains, torments, and especially our sufferings or wrongs. We are so vividly conscious of the dark side of life that for the time being we have no memory whatever of life's bright side. Whenever that is our state, we are in Kama Loka; but we have a chance to *know* that we are in Kama Loka. After death, we are not conscious of that.

Everyone has times when he is completely happy. Assume a man dreaming of music, dreaming of a great painting, dreaming of writing a great book, dreaming of being his country's saviour and happy in his dream. "Dream" there is a conventional term — It means that his creative imagination is at work, no matter in what direction; at work so vividly and so actively that for the time being he is utterly unconscious of contrasts; in other words, he sees and is immersed in only the bright side of his nature. Such a man is in Devachan, but while alive he has a chance to see it for what It is. He says, "This is a Devachanic dream; I am in the Devachanic state." Then he would be "awake" in Devachan. Such a realization would not make him any the less competent an artist or a poet or a statesman or a writer of a great play, or a philanthropist; it would make him infinitely more competent, more capable, from our stand point. In fact, all the great works in the world have been produced in just that way, even as all the evil works are born in "living" Kama Lokas.

**QUESTION:** — It is taught that Kama Loka extends to a distance beyond the physical earth. Does that distance vary with the intensity of the mass action of human beings?

**ANSWER:** — To speak accurately, No; but to speak more truly, though not accurately, Yes. Whether in Kama Loka or in Devachan, the being is in what you

would call the "egg" state. Compare an egg with a chicken running around the yard, and you have the difference between meditation and thought. Thought or minds are represented by the chicken; the *consciousness* of the mind or thought of the matter in Devachan or Kama Loka is the egg.

Thus, the being in Devachan or Kama Loka has no consciousness that he is there; he has no conscious communication with any other being. If he had, his state would be one of relativities, and Manas would wake up. Manas is but the spectator of his own creations in Devachan, but the spectator of his own objectified *memories* in Kama Loka.

Since Kama Loka is a solitary state, in fact, how could the being be influenced by the mass? The teaching is that, in certain specified cases, we can be affected; the being in Devachan can be reached by one of the Adepts and affected by him to the extent that he can be brought out of that state — that is, Manas once more may be awakened to duality, to the perception of relativities. And as all fiction is founded on fact, the vast fiction of prayers for the dead, of purgatory, etc., has some basis of truth behind it. For a certain time after death — that is, so long as the Ego is, in fact, in Kama Loka — he can be affected both by the mass mind of humanity, its beliefs on that subject, and more particularly by the beliefs and thoughts directed towards him by those who knew him in life and who were associated closely with him.

**QUESTION:** — On page 109 (2nd Indian ed.) (p. 103 Am. Ed.) Mr. Judge says: earth-life is also a *kama loka* since it is largely governed by the principle *kama* and will be so until at a far distant time in the course of evolution the races of men shall have developed the fifth and sixth principles, thus throwing *kama* into its



fruits (of actions). In order to gain this, the means employed are actions. Desire grows, awakens the mind and leads to activities. Therefore, Prakriti is the origin of three things: action, performance and the means of action.

Actions are differentiated according to the three Gunas: good, indifferent and evil. According to these arise happiness and misery. Evil deeds lead to misery, good actions lead to happiness and Self has to go through these.

Such is the peculiar partnership of nature and Soul that the woman *earns* and the husband *enjoys*, and though the male is not concerned, the woman gives birth.

He who is described as Purusha is neither feminine nor masculine nor neuter, and without body, possessions or companionship. He is ancient; older than the eldest, without eyes, ears, hands, or teeth, form or color. He has no name. No qualities can be affirmed of Him and yet such is the consort of Prakriti (the negative principle) and in that combination, he also goes through happiness and misery. Himself doing nothing, indifferent and untouched, the Maya (Prakriti) compels Him to go through experiences. It is the Maya, which is the source of form and color and the origin of attributes, causing a variety of illusory dramas.

This Prakriti actuates even inert matter, and is the source of fame, affection and the excitement of the senses. Though Purusha is impassive, it is Prakriti that entails, through illusion, constant movement upon the embodied mind [Lower Manas]. Prakriti is the great continent of error. It is the cause of linking up and the origin of unbridled passions. It is the great illusion enthroned in the palace of desire and located in the forest off allurements. It stimulates

language and gives form to that which is formless. It causes every description of activity.

Art and learning of every kind find root in it and desire as well as senses arise therefrom. It is the mint of all sounds. It is the central location of all strange things. In short, it is this which causes this universal drama. This great allurements finds its evening and morning in the creation of the world and its destruction. It is parallel to the principle of unity related to Brahman and is, therefore, allowed to play in the abode of non-existence. It has its sway over the world through its connection with the All-highest. In reality, Brahman is without attributes or activities. It is the principle of Prakriti, which causes the changes. What appears to be the origin of the self-existent creation and the location appears as it does through Prakriti.

In short, it is this Maya (illusionary principle), that secures attributes to Purusha. In this manner, it is that this principle of nature, which is also co-extensive with Brahman, gives appearance of change to Brahman, the changeless. ...

The Purusha is as different from Prakriti as the sky is from earth. He is like the pillar for the jasmine creeper. He is like the Meru mountain standing on the side of a river and reflected in the water, but never carried away by its flood. Prakriti comes and goes. Purusha is ever existent. Prakriti cannot create of itself. All that Prakriti appears to create is due to Purusha, who is the Overlord. All existence is absorbed in Purusha at the end of the age. This controller of Prakriti is the regulator of the universe, has enormous prowess and He alone can go beyond the illusory activities. The Soul contained in the body is the same as the Soul of the world. Hence, it is that

Purusha is said to be beyond Prakriti. Whoever knows this distinction correctly acquires special characteristics. Just as it is necessary to decide whether this is the original or the shadow, whether this is real water or the mirage, so he, who knows the distinction between Purusha and Prakriti, remains untouched, just as the sky is not affected by dust that arises in the sky. He does not get fond of the body or bodily enjoyment. He becomes free from birth and death.

I will tell you now of the means which will disclose this distinction to you at all times, just as the sun lights up things. ... All who seek liberation, choose their own path. With humility they keep faith in one thing. They listen to the words of the sages, who seek nothing but the welfare of the world. They think over what they have heard, and body and soul, and they are devoted to their preceptor. Such men who have faith, manage to cross the ocean of death, get beyond the differences of doctrine and keep firm and think only of the essentials.

I have now described to you the relation of the Soul to the body, which is nothing but the creation of small waves through the air on a large mass of water. If you examine carefully, even Prakriti and Purusha are one, just as threads are not different from cloth. One is produced from the other and though they may be different in existence, there is a substratum of unity. There may be a separate name, form and activity, but if you dwell on these differences, you will never be free. A single seed will produce fruits of different shapes. Though the branches of the Bor tree are crooked, the fruits are round. In all this variety that appears, the Soul is the same. In the different kinds of fire, the heat is the same. The individual self is not different from the universal Self.

...Brahman is attained in this body by those who have been able to destroy difference of outlook towards living beings. From many lamps, the light that emanates is the same. So is the Soul universal. Such equanimity secures the good fortune of permanent liberation. The man of wisdom realizes that even feelings and sensations are the doing of Prakriti (nature). He knows that the house is stationary though people may move inside and out. He knows that the sky is there, though the clouds keep moving. So through the borrowed light of the Soul, Prakriti is playing with different attributes, but the Soul is steady and unmoved and untouched by all these activities. When a man realizes this, he is free because he knows that the Soul does nothing. That man may be said to have attained Brahman who is able to think of all living beings not as separate, but as one. What waves are to the water, atoms are to the earth, rays are to the sun, limbs are to the body, emotions are to the mind, or sparks are to the fire the different living beings are to the great Soul, which is One. After this, whenever he turns round, he sees Brahman, and this gives him continuous happiness.

The sun does not get wet in the water in which it is reflected because it has its existence before and after the water. So it is not true to say that the Soul belongs to the body, because the Soul survives the body and existed before the body was formed. The reflection of the face in the mirror indicates the existence of the face. So is the Soul reflected in the body, but it is not there. You cannot stitch fire and cotton together. Nor can you patch up the sky with a stone. When people start in opposite directions, they cannot meet. Similarly, there is no more connection between the body and Soul than there is between light and darkness or the dead and the living. ... It is of the nature of

Brahman and has neither joy nor sorrow.

...

It is not created with the formation of the universe. Nor is it destroyed in the universal destruction. It is the quintessence of both existence and non-existence. It cannot be reckoned or measured. It is not fatigued. The forms of the body are numerous and changing, but the Soul remains the same. Space is everywhere but its nature is not altered by the different forms which it envelops. So the soul is not tainted by any false attributes of the body. The Kshetragna or Soul [*i.e.*, THE KNOWER] must be always regarded as separate from the body or Kshetra. Iron is influenced by the magnet, but the iron is not the magnet. That is the difference between the body and the Soul. The flame lights up things in the house, but it never becomes the house. Fire is in the body of the wood, but it is not the wood. Such is the light if the Soul.

[TO BE CONTINUED]



## CORRESPONDENCE

*Violence is not a Solution* — comments received

Greetings,

By the way, I have purchased and am just about finished with *At Hell's Gate*, which was alluded to in the last *AT*. This is a remarkable book. You may recall that, although I am no longer working with PTSD Vets, I did, for about 10 years. So, yesterday, I called the *Team Leader* (*i.e.*, Lead Counselor), at The Vet Center in Ventura and we spoke about this book. He was very interested, not only because he is personally open to Eastern concept, but the Vet Center method espouses an attitude of "what ever works" regarding getting through to their

vet/clients. Unlike the VA and its Hospital clinical approach to PTSD, which honestly rubs wrong those who need counseling, The Vet Center system (oddly enough, also under VA auspices) is more Jungian in its approach and far more open texture in general.

One of the Counselors I worked with is in fact a practicing Sufi.

What was especially poignant for me about this book, and the main reason I immediately purchased it, is that a client of ours at The Vet Center, whom I knew for years, recently committed suicide, and was a student of Buddhism.

But I guess he lacked the resolve to save himself from himself.

This is what I suspect we all suffer from, perhaps to a lesser degree than my friend. And, because the subject of "saving himself from himself" is key to the thrust of the book, it is of real value to students who have suffered through years of attempting to convert Theosophical theory into practice, and need to be "nudged" over the top, so to speak.

Steve



[My response to Steve was this:] I want to use this letter in a Correspondence column — but what does PTSD stand for and when you use the phrase "Vet Center" is that shorthand for PTSD?

A very good letter, many comments received on that article ["Violence is not a Solution"], thanks!

jerome



[And Steve's reply:]

The Vet Center is a Veteran Affairs organization within the Federal

Healthcare system for Veterans. It is also called Readjustment Counseling Service (RCS).

PTSD stands for Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. It used to be called "Battle Fatigue" in previous wars, but at that time it was simply a label for what were thought to be cowards.

Since the Vietnam War, and since many adults have come out and admitted they have suffered abuse at the hands of parents, priests etc., the PTSD label has come to mean depression, as provoked by a complete confusion and lack of trust of those support systems we generally have taken for granted from birth. By that I mean: — Government, clergy, parents, etc.

The reason adults have been those to complain, rather than say children, is because most have been so raised as to refuse to believe that what happened to them could have actually happened, given the previous trust in such institutions by previous generations. Therefore, the trauma becomes post-traumatic because it is not faced until years after the actual trauma.

You can see how this applies to veterans of combat (per the book, *At Hell's Gate*) who have to kill, which is against human nature, veterans of abusive homes and abusive clergy. You can also see how it could be the psychological "disease" of our time since so much of what we thought was "civilization" has turned out to be a little below expectation (per Gandhi — "It would be nice").

Sorry to go on, but it seems nearly impossible to answer any other way.

Steve



## The Fitness of Things

STUDENTS of Theosophy are in no way different from the rest of humanity with respect to intellectual capacity, moral stamina, and the tendency to fault and error of the race as a whole. They are not a "chosen few," singled out for their peculiar abilities and personal merit, but a representative "cross-section" of the whole human family, who, under karma, have the opportunity of becoming fortune's favored soldiers.

The human failures of the Theosophical Movement regarded their opportunity as a special privilege; they thought their personal defects unimportant in the light of so select a "Karma." The successful ones took their opportunity as a deep responsibility, the fruit, perhaps, of a score or more of incarnations spent in humble work and aspiration, and they bore their individual limitations with an abiding humility. To know Theosophy in this or any era is to enter the Path trod by the Teachers of Mankind, to begin to teach oneself.

It is not achievement, but the position assumed, the direction taken, which counts.

One cause of misunderstanding between H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott was due to the difference in the objective before their minds. Colonel Olcott thought of the Society as an organisation for developing Brotherhood and religious tolerance. H.P.B. thought of it not in that light alone, but also as a recruiting camp for Chelas who, after occult training, would carry on the work from generation to generation. The T.S. was to her first and last an agent and instrument for all possible plans of the Masters. Colonel Olcott, however, saw no particular use in bringing occult ideas to the front, and especially the idea of Discipleship, for he

scented danger to the Society in the private relations which H.P.B. might have with members as teacher to pupil. On the other hand, H.P.B. clearly saw that without a definite nucleus of Chelas pledged to carry out the orders of the Masters, the Society would become merely one more philanthropic organisation. This divergence in objective became most marked after the Coulomb attack in 1884. Colonel Olcott almost went out of his way to ignore the occult basis of the Society; so far did he go that, about 1888, the Master K.H. told H.P.B. that “the Society has liberated itself from out grasp and influence and we have let it go—we make no unwilling slaves. He says he has saved it? He saved its body, but he allowed through fear its soul to escape; it is now a soulless corpse, a machine run so far well enough, but which will fall to pieces when he is gone. Out of the three objects the second alone is attended to, but it is no longer either a brotherhood, nor a body over the face of which broods the spirit from beyond the Great Range. His kindness and love of peace are great and truly Gautamic in their spirit; but he has misapplied that kindness.”

It was to prevent the Society falling to pieces later, that H.P.B. finally revived the original idea of a secret nucleus to the Society, and established the “Esoteric Section of the Theosophical Society”. Colonel Olcott’s suspicions of an *imperium in imperio*, which H.P.B. might thus create in the Society, was only put to rest by his receipt of instructions on August 22, 1888, from Master K.H, while on his way to London on S.S.*Shannon*.

This was the last letter Col. Olcott received from the Masters. The one

directly before this one was point-blank in its stern warning<sup>1</sup>:

THESE are *foolish, insane* ideas of yours about Upasika, Henry, wretched thoughts — the *mirage* thrown upon your brain by some of those who surround you.  
...

Do not take as an excuse your honesty. *Honesty* without *Justice* is like a drunken watchman’s *bull’s eye* — made but to throw light on his own distorted features leaving all around him in greater darkness still. . . You wrong her from beginning to end. You have *never* understood Upasika, nor the laws thro’ which her *apparent* life has been made to work since you knew her. You are ungrateful and unjust and even cruel. You take *maya* for reality and reality for illusion.

I have said and shall say no more, and now if you don’t listen and believe what I now tell you I shall have to turn *Karma* into a new direction.

M.:



## AN INTERVIEW WITH GOPI KRISHNA

Excerpts from an interview conducted by  
Tom Kay ©

<http://www.ecomall.com/greeshopping/gopinterview.htm>

<sup>1</sup> Received in 1884. One further letter was received by H.S.O. on Aug. 22, 1888 while onboard the *Shannon* in transit to London.

**TK:** — Mr Krishna, you have had a Kundalini experience. I wish you could explain what a Kundalini experience is and what its ramifications are.

**GK:** — Before I start to describe my own experience, perhaps it would be better to give a little detail about what Kundalini means. We are not using the totality of the human brain. According to various estimates, most of us use only ten percent of the brain and according to some only eight percent. That means 90 percent of the brain is unutilized, that there is still a large margin in the brain which could be used for other purposes, and nature has provided it for certain purposes which are not yet known to science. According to Indian tradition, there is a region in the brain below the crown and about the pallette which is called Brahmarendra<sup>1</sup> or the cavity of Brahman. This region can be activated by certain disciplines and when activated it can give to the individual the same vision of the universe which all great mystics of the Earth have described. When it is awakened the normal energy of the body or the blood is not able to fuel the center. It needs a more powerful and constrained psychic fuel. This fuel comes from the reproductive system, which is transformed into a kind of radiation and that radiation awakens and makes the center function.

In my case, the awakening occurred at the age of 34, in 1937. I had been meditating for 17<sup>2</sup> years and then all of a sudden

<sup>1</sup> In Theosophical literature this word usually appears as "Brahmarandra."

<sup>2</sup> Meditating for 17 years at the age of 34, means Gopi had been directly engaged in spiritual endeavour for half his life. This should say something about the "instant high" so many western neophytes thirst for. *The Sermon on the Mount* is referred to again and again. We have to live-the-life if we would know [firsthand] the doctrine. Then there are the grave crises passed thru between 34 and 49. Unless we succeed in saturating ourself with *Alaya*, and becoming a co-worker with Nature, the Dog's that guard the

during Christmas, while I was sitting cross-legged in a state of meditation, a strange thing happened. Something exploded in my brain and a current of silvery light rising from my spine radiated throughout my whole brain, and I felt myself expanding in all directions. This expansion was so incredible, so amazing that I thought that something unusual had happened in my inner ear. After this I had two other experiences of the same kind, at short intervals apart, and it then succeeded.

But something was changing in me and I could perceive this change for many, many years, day and night. In fact, I passed through grave crises during that period. Finally, I became stabilized in that condition of consciousness in my 49th year. Since that time I have been living in that condition. That is to say, before my 34th year I was living in this world thinking, seeing, perceiving in the same way as other people do, but since my 49th year I have been living in two different worlds. One is the normal world of senses and reason, and the other is the world which is much higher, much more happy and which is totally apart from anything that we can know of the earth. It is the world of consciousness.

**TK:** — How do you see the world?

**GK:** — We know what all people perceive of this world. I can understand what you perceive of it, you can understand what I perceive of it. That is, this perception is uniform. Everyone has the same perception. But this other perception is different. In this other perception you do not see the world as a solid, real, objective creation. The real

Golden Fleece are sure to devour us and our pretensions. Sincere effort to attune our life to the Great SPACE of Amitabha's realm will reap its harvest at the appointed hour, but woe to him who would reap before he has sown! [See *V.O.S.* p. 62 and 72, fn2] — Ed., A.T.



objective creation is consciousness. You see consciousness everywhere. You see the ocean as if it is consciousness everywhere. You see the ocean as if it is living; you see a mountain as if it is living; you see the sky as if it is living; you see the Earth as if it is living; you see life or consciousness everywhere. And this life or consciousness is not something which is really dead or which is something you can understand. It is unfathomable. It is wonder and everytime you see it, you perceive it. The wonder grows deeper. I am never tired of sitting in quiet and reflecting on myself. I am never tired of looking at the sky. The sky, to me, does not appear as it appeared before my 34th year; it is so fascinating. It is such a beautiful vision that I would like to look at it for days and months on end. In other words, in the air a fountain of happiness, a new kingdom, I should say, is opened. This is probably what Christ meant when he said, "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." This is the Nirvana of Buddha; and this is the state of Vada mentioned by the Suffi mystics. In fact, in this inactive state what we perceive is consciousness in its most magic form, in its glorious form, and not consciousness as a point looking through the eyes or hearing through the ears, but a consciousness which has its own channels and which knows that it is the master and not the slave of the material forces which knows it is the creator. It is infinite: it is deathless. In this state one feels himself to be a king, he feels himself to be the master of what he sees. It is not the ego.<sup>1</sup> I should say it

<sup>1</sup> No, certainly not. According to HPB the Higher Ego cannot be understood by the brain mind of the lower personality. It is like the sky, lending wings to the aspiring lower mind. Or, as Mr. Crosbie says in Quoting Judge: "The system postulates that Ishwara, the spirit in man, when a firm position is assumed with the end in view of reaching union with spirit through concentration, comes to the aid of the lower self and raises it gradually to higher planes. In this process the Will by degrees is given a stronger and stronger tendency to act upon a different line from that

is not the ego; it is the very condition of this consciousness. That is the reason why it is said that no mystic would change his state even for a kingdom. It is something so unique, so glorious, so elevating that I have no words to describe this state.

**TK:** — What type of life must a person live to awaken their Kundalini?

**GK:** — In order to make this clear, I would like to say that it is not Kundalini per se, Kundalini is the power, the mechanism. But actually, what we do is awaken to activity a certain region in the brain. This means that nature has already

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indicated by passion and desire. Thus it is freed from the domination of desire and at last subdues the mind itself. ... In practical occultism, through this word [AUM, the name of Ishwara] reference is made to Sound, or Vibration, in all its properties and effects, this being one of the greatest powers of nature. In the use of this word as a practice, by means of the lungs and throat, a distinct effect is produced upon the human body. ... "Now, therefore, it would seem to follow that both he who knows the true meaning of O M , and he who does not, perform the same sacrifice. But this is not so, for knowledge and ignorance are different. The sacrifice which a man performs with knowledge, faith and the Upanishad is more powerful."

Outwardly the same sacrifice is performed by both, but that performed by him who has knowledge, and has meditated on the secret meaning of O M partakes of the qualities inhering in O M , which need just that knowledge and faith as the medium through which they may become visible and active. If a jeweler and a mere ploughman sell a precious stone, the knowledge of the former bears better fruit than the ignorance of the latter.

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provided a potential in the brain which has to be awakened. This means that the brain can still organically evolve to a higher performance. This is my experience, that the human brain is still organically evolving in the direction of the great mystics, in the same direction as the great geniuses. For this evolution a certain type of life is necessary.

For instance, throughout our life this evolution is relentlessly going on and we have to cooperate with it. When we do not cooperate with the inner evolution we create problems for ourselves. For that purpose, for the last 5,000 years at least great prophets have been born. Beginning with the Vedas, then Buddha, then Christ, then Mohammed, then Guru Nanak, and all the ancient prophets of the Bible, they have been born time after time, and they have given some teaching to mankind, which was a direction for how to live while the brain is still evolving. Their Sermon on the Mount, the Ten Commandments, the Discourses of Buddha, The Bhagavad-Gita, and all those directions contained in the religious scriptures of the Earth — they are all meant to regulate our life so that we may live in harmony with the law of evolution which governs our life.

The revolutionaries have come to regulate the lives of human beings so that they may work in harmony with the law of evolution that is at work day and night within their brains. When they depart from this law of evolution, they always bring calamities or problems upon themselves. The present time is one such occasion when we have digressed from the laws of evolution and the result is that we are threatened from many directions.

The life to be lived is just as you see in the sermon on the Mountain - a life of humility, a life of love, a life of purity, a life in which you wish for others what you wish for yourself, a life in which you

are pure, you are not sophisticated, you are not overly clever, you are not smart, you do not use your cleverness or smartness to take what belongs to others, a life of extreme purity and a life of simplicity, that you do not waste the resources of the Earth.

As you know, every animal satisfies his basic needs from the recycled resources of the Earth. Man is the only creature who is wasting the basic resources — the minerals — for his own luxury and pleasure. That is what the Sermon on the Mount is meant to teach, that humanity should live simply, beautiful, pure, compassionate lives. That is the type of life necessary for the awakening of Kundalini.

**TK:** — And this is what all religions of the world say?

**GK:** — Every prophet, every great mystic, even every philosopher, for instance, Socrates or Plato. We will find that this life is okay: purity, compassion, love, service is the ideal life which human beings have to live.

**TK:** — Is there no change in consciousness in birth or in death? Would you explain that?

**GK:** — Here we come to metaphysics. We see the sun rising in the morning and setting in the evening. Actually, is there any change in the sun? The same is true of consciousness.

Consciousness is eternal: our souls. They are eternal, immutable, omissive, omnipresent, omnipotent, and our spark partakes of the same nature as the divine, so there can be no death for this, no change for this. The change occurs in our shells, mind, intellect, the senses. But not in the essence, the principle which is consciousness.

**TK:** — The more we use our mind, the greater our development of our evolution takes place.

**GK:** — The human brain is evolving rapidly because from morning until evening we are applying our brain to some task, we are reading, we are looking through the newspapers, we are watching the television or we are working in the office.

Most of the people are applying their brain throughout the day, this was not the case before when people hunted or when they were tilling the soil; they had no need to apply their brain in such a constrained way.

We are now applying our brain in a very constrained way, from morning until night. In other words we are meditating, though on material objects. The result is a rapid state of evolution.

Our way of life must change, but we have not changed, on the other hand. We have made our living and our life more and more complex and intricate, so that all day we are working and working and working to feed our belly, to live. We are giving no time to the mind, no time to the spirit. We are not giving any thought to it. The result is that there is a disproportionate evolution. We have developed a very powerful intellect as seen by the scientific discoveries that have been made and the changes that have occurred in our life, but on the other hand our spiritual and moral growth has been negligible.

So what we have in modern times is a disproportionate human being, a giant of the intellect, on the one hand, and a pygmy of moral or spiritual growth. This disproportion is at the base of the present threatening situation of the world.

**TK:** — What can we do to remedy that?

**GK:** — What we can do is to make a thorough research of all the religious scriptures of mankind, of all the occult traditions of the past, and to make experiments on the brain. In fact, yoga was devised in India to make experiments on the brain. The very word "yoga" means to yoke, to join the individual soul with the over-soul, with moderation, with temperance. It is this type of life that has to be led, not a luxury life of wasting the Earth's resources, of pollutants polluting the planet, so that nature's forces are now creating a situation in which either calamity occurs which will change the direction of human life, or by their own sensible reaction they will change themselves. Change has to occur in any case.

**TK:** — The research of this force is the most urgent task of our time.

**GK:** — It is the most urgent. I have been saying it, after observing my own state for at least 30 years. For 30 years I said nothing because I wanted to confirm that my experience was real experience, and not a delusion and that it is corroborated by ancient tradition. I made a study of those traditions, and I found that my experience is in conformity to the ancient traditions. After that I wrote my first book, and now in my 80th year I solemnly say this and this alone is the answer to modern crises.

The answer is this: The brain is evolving and present science doesn't know how. There is complete darkness about it because you cannot see this evolution of the brain. By external observation you can see only neurons and their connections. It has to be seen from internal observation by awakening this power. When this power is awakened, then you are able to observe the internal working of the brain and that shows you that you are still evolving.

**TK:** — What do you propose? How do we investigate this?

**GK:** — I think any sane government, any good government, should first make research on the brain, on the nervous system. The ancient religious traditions, the ancient occult traditions. After all, we have to understand that religion has always been a companion of man. We have evidence that man was religious even two hundred thousand years ago. The first relics found show that those people were performing religious rituals, so it means religion has always been a part of human life.

What research have we made on it? We have made research on psychic coma. But no research on religious tradition and religious experience.<sup>1</sup> If we were to devote as much time and resources as we devote to other scientific experiments, the results would be a hundred-fold more precious.

**TK:** — The results would prove...

**GK:** — The results will show that the human brain is still organically evolving, that certain lifestyles, certain ways of behavior are necessary to live in conformity to the inner changes, and that religion came in time to guide mankind on this path.<sup>2</sup>

**TK:** — And it is the path that will lead us to the stars, if it is our purpose to.

<sup>1</sup> Thanks to the efforts and cooperation of the Dalai Lama such research is gradually beginning. In Sept. 2003, there was a major cooperation at M.I.T., but the most exciting collaboration occurred recently at the Dalai Lama's home in Dharamsala. [See December issue, page 28, "Scans of Monks' Brains Show Meditation Alters Structure, Functioning."] — Ed., A.T.

<sup>2</sup> The Wisdom-Religion is age-old and is always available to those devoted to Humanity's Welfare. The great Initiates and Saints, Siddhas and Workers the world over are a standing proof, both today and historically. Self-induced, Self-devised effort guides him who has a spark of clean intent. — Ed., A.T.

**GK:** — It will lead humanity to this new dimension of consciousness.<sup>3</sup> It will lead to the goal which nature has assigned for her. It will lead humanity to a peaceful co-existence, to happiness, to long life, to much greater achievement than she has done, even now. It will lead her to the exploration of the universe.

**TK:** — How will this affect the political structure?

**GK:** — I need not say, for the experiments will show what kind of life and what kind of environment a human being must have to evolve completely in harmony with the law of evolution, there will be more freedom.

**TK:** — I believe that things happen not by chance but by purpose to our life, that there is a purpose to our existence.

**GK:** — Now, please tell me, can such a vast creation be purposeless? Can such a

<sup>3</sup> The drive to *Compassion* does not end when the meditator achieves "clear consciousness." It is so fulfilling that its easy to be "stuck" there, or in the words of Tenzin Gyatso: "It is very difficult for us to glimpse the actual nature of consciousness, which is the sheer state of knowing or the luminosity of mind. One technique that we can use in order to do this is sitting meditation, through which we free our mind from thoughts of past experiences and from any form of anticipation of the future. Instead, we abide in the nowness of the present, although we cannot talk of a "present" consciousness.

When you are able to clear away thoughts of the past and the future, slowly you begin to get a sense of the space between the two. You learn to abide in that present moment. In that space, you begin to glimpse what we call emptiness, and if you can remain in that emptiness for longer and longer periods of time then gradually the nature of consciousness itself, which is the sheer luminosity and natural awareness of mind, will slowly dawn in you. Through repeated practice this period can be lengthened more and more, so that your awareness of the nature of consciousness becomes clearer and clearer.

However, it is **important** to realize that this experience of luminosity of mind, of the nature of mind, is not a profound realization in itself. Rebirth in many of the Formless Realms of samsara is considered to result from abiding in such states of clarity. [*A Simple Path*, pp. 78,81]

vast creation come out of nothing? Can such a vast creation ruled by laws be all composed of dead, insensitive matter? The very idea of being — existence — comes from the mind. A rock or a mountain or an ocean has no idea of existence, this existence comes from intelligence, and the author of the universe must be intelligent. If we didn't have an intelligent creator, there would be no purpose to this existence. There must be a purpose. If there was no purpose, how have we then come to have a purpose in ourselves? We do everything with a purpose. How has this purpose come if there is no purpose in creation? How do we act on purpose? So it means that purpose and plan is a part of consciousness.

**TK:** — The very fact that we build nuclear weapons is spiting nature's wrath. You said that nature is very merciful, and that nature will use the least amount of force to put us back on the proper path.

**GK:** — Unless nature were merciful, how would we be here?<sup>1</sup> You see this Earth,

<sup>1</sup> While Gopi Krishna is presenting a particular viewpoint of nature, there are other ways to express it such as this: "And though for the Pantheists and Occultists, as much as for the Pessimists, Nature is no better than "a comely mother, but stone cold"—this is true only so far as regards *external* physical nature. They both agree that, to the superficial observer, she is no better than an immense slaughter-house wherein butchers become victims, and victims executioners in their turn. It is quite natural that the pessimistically inclined profane, once convinced of Nature's numerous shortcomings and failures, and especially of her autophagous propensities, should imagine this to be the best evidence that there is no deity *in abscondito* within Nature, nor anything divine in her. Nor is it less natural that the materialist and the physicist should imagine that everything is due to blind force and chance, and to the survival of the *strongest* even more often than of the *fittest*. But the Occultists, who regard physical nature as a bundle of most varied illusions on the plane of deceptive perceptions; who recognise in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility, which is visible in the silent influence of never-erring Karma, or *abstract* nature—the Occultists, we say, view the great Mother otherwise. Woe to

inside the Earth, fire, it is a volcano, inside inferno and outside the Earth fire. You have cosmic rays coming, for which you have an umbrella. Known as the "hemisphere layer" this umbrella is 50 miles from the earth. If you didn't have this layer there would be total destruction of all life in a short time. We are so protected that even one single slip or error can destroy all of life on Earth. If nature were not merciful, how could we live? The very fact that we are alive and that all these hazards around us are controlled by other powers means that nature is merciful and kind.

[Being "saved" by the control of "other powers" throws a haze of religious emotionalism on the subject. Wouldn't it be more to the point to say that *Karma has not yet ripened*. Justice and Mercy are two sides to the same coin. — ED., A.T.]



## New Thinking on the Collapse of the Mayan Civilization

November 15, 2004:

Where the rain forests of Guatemala now stand, a great civilization once flourished. The people of Mayan society built vast cities, ornate temples, and towering pyramids. At its peak around 900 A.D., the population numbered 500 people per square mile in rural areas, and more than 2,000 people per square mile in the cities — comparable to modern Los Angeles County.

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

This vibrant "Classic Period" of Mayan civilization thrived for six centuries. Then, for some reason, it collapsed.

The fall of the Maya has long been one of the great mysteries of the ancient world. But it's more than a historical curiosity. Within sight of the Mayan ruins, in the Petén region of Guatemala near the border with Mexico, the population is growing again, and rain forest is being cut to make farmland.

"By learning what the Maya did right and what they did wrong, maybe we can help local people find sustainable ways to farm the land while stopping short of the excesses that doomed the Maya," says Tom Sever at the Marshall Space Flight Center (MSFC).

Sever, NASA's only archeologist, has been using satellites to examine Mayan ruins. Combining those data with conventional down-in-the-dirt archeological findings, Sever and others have managed to piece together much of what happened:

From pollen trapped in ancient layers of lake sediment, scientists have learned that around 1,200 years ago, just before the civilization's collapse, tree pollen disappeared almost completely and was replaced by the pollen of weeds. In other words, the region became almost completely deforested.



Mayan ruins in Guatemala. Photo copyright Tom Sever.

Without trees, erosion would have worsened, carrying away fertile topsoil. The changing groundcover would have boosted the temperature of the region by as much as 6 degrees, according to computer simulations by NASA climate scientist Bob Oglesby, a colleague of Sever at the MSFC. Those warmer temperatures would have dried out the land, making it even less suitable for raising crops.

Rising temperatures would have also disrupted rainfall patterns, says Oglesby. During the dry season in the Petén, water is scarce, and the groundwater is too deep (500+ feet) to tap with wells. Dying of thirst is a real threat. The Maya must have relied on rainwater saved in reservoirs to survive, so a disruption in rainfall could have had terrible consequences.

(Changes in cloud formation and rainfall are occurring over deforested parts of Central America today, studies show. Is history repeating itself?)

Using classic archeology techniques, researchers find that human bones from the last decades before the civilization's collapse show signs of severe malnutrition.

"Archeologists used to argue about whether the downfall of the Maya was due to drought or warfare or disease, or a number of other possibilities such as political instability," Sever says. "Now we think that all these things played a role, but that they were only symptoms. The root cause was a chronic food and water shortage, due to some combination of natural drought and deforestation by humans."

Today, the rain forest is again falling under the axe. About half of the original forest has been destroyed in the last 40 years, cut down by farmers

practicing "slash and burn" agriculture: a section of forest is cut down and burned to expose soil for planting crops. It's the ash that gives the soil its fertility, so within 3-5 years the soil becomes exhausted, forcing the farmer to move on and cut down a new section. This cycle repeats endlessly ... or until the forest is gone. By 2020, only 2% to 16% of the original rain forest will remain if current rates of destruction continue.

It seems that modern people are repeating some of the Maya's mistakes. But Sever thinks disaster can be averted if researchers can figure out what the Mayans did right. How did they thrive for so many centuries? An important clue comes from space:

Sever and co-worker Dan Irwin have been looking at satellite photos and, in them, Sever spotted signs of ancient drainage and irrigation canals in swamp-like areas near the Mayan ruins. Today's residents make little use of these low-lying swamps (which they call "*bajos*," the Spanish word for "lowlands"), and archeologists had long assumed that the Maya hadn't used them either. During the rainy season from June to December, the *bajos* are too muddy, and in the dry season they're parched. Neither condition is good for farming.

Sever suspects that these ancient canals were part of a system devised by the Maya to manage water in the *bajos* so that they could farm this land. The *bajos* make up 40% of the landscape; tapping into this vast land area for agriculture would have given the Maya a much larger and more stable food supply. They could have farmed the highlands during the wet season and the low-lying *bajos* during the dry season. And they could have farmed the *bajos* year after year, instead of slashing and burning new sections of rain forest.

Could today's Petén farmers take a lesson from the Maya and sow their seeds in the *bajos*?

It's an intriguing idea. Sever and his colleagues are exploring that possibility with the Guatemalan Ministry of Agriculture. They're working with Pat Culbert of the University of Arizona and Vilma Fialko of Guatemala's Instituto de Antropología e Historia to identify areas in the *bajos* with suitable soil. And they're considering planting test crops of corn in those areas, with irrigation and drainage canals inspired by the Maya.

A message from 900 A.D.: it's never too late to learn from your ancestors.

[http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/15nov\\_maya.htm?list738761](http://science.nasa.gov/headlines/y2004/15nov_maya.htm?list738761)

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## The Search for Honesty

SCIENTIFIC REPORTING IS NOT NECESSARILY UNBIASED OR EVEN TRUTHFUL IN THE "SPIN" IT PUTS UPON ITS FINDINGS. YOU HAVE THE DRUG-ORIENTED STATUS QUO ON ONE SIDE AND THE HEALTHFOOD STATUS QUO ON THE OTHER SIDE. Both sides are risky purveyors of truth because they are rooted in profits first and service second. We print below two articles, the first is from main-stream media published all over the country. The second article comes from the internet, and is a rebuttal. (There are many more available on the Internet.)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This Finnish URL gives a multitude of links to **actual studies** that have been done. The literature on the

## Study: High dose of Vitamin E increases death risk

By Steve Sternberg, USA TODAY

NEW ORLEANS — High-dose vitamin E supplements taken daily can increase a person's risk of premature death, researchers said Wednesday.

People who take daily doses of 400 international units or higher are about 10% more likely to die of a variety of causes than people who take smaller doses or no vitamin E, according to an analysis of 14 studies conducted between 1993 and 2004.

Many of the studies did not specify causes of death, but researchers believe patients died of all the usual causes, including heart disease and cancer.

As many as 40% of people in the USA take vitamin supplements. Twenty-five percent take vitamin E; of those people, about two-thirds take doses that may be dangerous, says the study's lead researcher, Edgar Miller of Johns Hopkins University.

"People take it based on wishful thinking as much as anything else. But we should see if they're beneficial or not," he says.

His study appears in Thursday's *Annals of Internal Medicine* and was reported simultaneously at a meeting of the American Heart Association here.

Previous research on vitamin E has been mixed, with some studies suggesting that vitamin E may be beneficial for people with specific illnesses. One study suggested the vitamin may help prevent a second heart attack while another indicated that vitamin E offered some benefit to patients with end-stage kidney disease.

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benefits of Vitamin E (even large doses) is enormous: <http://www.hankintatukku.com/V-E.html>

Later studies began to suggest that vitamin E may raise death rates. As those trials began rolling in, doctors began changing their prescribing habits, Miller says. ...



## The Truth About Vitamin E

by Lynn Laboranti, MS, RD

Heard a lot about Vitamin E in the news lately? Not everything you hear is 100% accurate, and we wanted to take some time to explain the truth about Vitamin E.

Researchers from Johns Hopkins University recently published a report in the online edition *Annals of Internal Medicine* (Nov. 10) alleging that high-dose vitamin E may increase the risk for mortality. While the case may seem straight forward at first, upon closer examination the conclusions of the study are on shaky ground.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Will taking Vitamin E cause heart attacks? Will it increase or cause heart problems? What if I already have a heart condition?

No. Vitamin E may actually help prevent heart attacks in healthy people. Research shows that vitamin E helps maintain heart health and may help prevent heart disease by limiting LDL, or "bad" cholesterol. Vitamin E may also help prevent formation of blood clots, which can lead to heart attacks.

A number of studies have associated lower rates of heart disease with higher vitamin E intake. **For example, a study of approximately 90,000 nurses suggested that the incidence of heart disease was 30 to 40 percent lower among nurses with the highest intake of vitamin E from diet and supplements.**

If you currently have a heart condition or you are at risk for heart disease, talk to your physician or health care provider before taking a vitamin E supplement. It has been recognized that vitamin E does not substantially decrease mortality from heart disease in patients with known heart disease, or for those individuals who are at high risk for the disease.



The researchers' conclusions about vitamin E are severely flawed. The researchers drew conclusions about vitamin E use and mortality by combining results from 19 different studies of people that were already at grave risk with existing diseases, including cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's and kidney failure. 18 of those studies showed no statistically significant difference in mortality between people who consumed high doses of Vitamin E and those who didn't. Only one report found a negative correlation and the researchers chose to focus on that instead of the 18 reports that didn't.

In fact, a number of studies in the analysis showed positive results. The researchers even acknowledge this in their analysis: "High-dosage....trials were often small and were performed in patients with chronic diseases. The

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#### Does vitamin E cause health problems?

Unlike other fat-soluble vitamins, vitamin E is relatively non-toxic and side effects are rare, even at doses of 1,500 IU. Vitamin E is safe and has benefits for healthy people. Because vitamin E supplements may decrease blood clotting ability, caution is advised in those individuals taking anticoagulant medications.

Do high doses of Vitamin E cause cancer? No. Vitamin E taken at any dosage does not cause cancer. Antioxidants such as vitamin E are believed to help protect cell membranes against the damaging effects of free radicals. Free radicals may contribute to the development of chronic diseases such as cancer. Vitamin E may also protect against the development of cancers by enhancing immune function. Some evidence associates higher intake of vitamin E with a decreased incidence of prostate cancer and breast cancer. In addition, the American Cancer Society recently released the results of a long-term study that evaluated the effect of regular use of vitamins C and E supplements on bladder cancer mortality in almost 1,000,000 adults in the U.S. The study, conducted between the years 1982 to 1998, found that subjects who regularly consumed a vitamin E supplement for longer than 10 years had a reduced risk of death from bladder cancer. [1] References  
1. Jacobs EJ, Henion AK, Briggs PJ, Connell CJ, McCullough ML, Jonas CR, Rodriguez C, Calle EE, Thun MJ. Vitamin C and vitamin E supplement use and bladder cancer mortality in a large cohort of US men and women. *American Journal of Epidemiology* 2002;156: 1002-10.

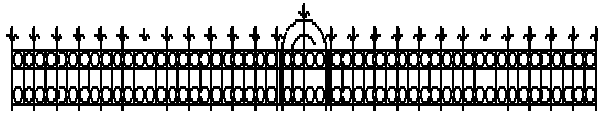
generalizability of the findings to healthy adults is uncertain. Precise estimation of the threshold at which risk increases is difficult."

It has been recognized in scientific literature that vitamin E does not substantially decrease mortality from heart disease in patients with known coronary artery disease, or for those who are at high risk for the disease. There is, however, a significant body of evidence showing the protective effect of vitamin E among lower-risk populations. Vitamin E may still safely be considered an effective tool in the primary prevention of disease, especially when taken as a preventative over longer periods of time.<sup>1</sup> In addition, a recent study from Tufts University found that vitamin E was beneficial for reducing incidence of upper respiratory infections in elderly persons. Even the FDA has recognized the potential benefits of vitamin E reducing the risk of cancer in allowing the qualified health claim, "Some scientific evidence suggests that consumption of antioxidant vitamins (including vitamin E) may reduce the risk of certain forms of cancer. However, FDA has determined that this evidence is limited and not conclusive."

While the safety of vitamin E is well-established, the general health risk for too much vitamin E is low. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) set an Upper Tolerable Intake level for vitamin E at 1,000mg or 1,500 IU per day. This upper limit is established to represent the maximum intake for a nutrient that is likely to pose no risk of adverse health effects in most healthy persons in the general population. The recommendation of 400 IU per day of vitamin E for good health falls safely within these limits.

[http://www.naturemade.com/WellnessTopics/wt\\_articles.asp?articleid=186&kbid=1046](http://www.naturemade.com/WellnessTopics/wt_articles.asp?articleid=186&kbid=1046)

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### *Synchronized Thinking*

## Brain activity linked to schizophrenia, skillful meditation

The collective activity of huge assemblies of brain cells, as reflected in their rhythmic electrical discharges, contributes to the derailed perceptions and thoughts of schizophrenia as well as to the heightened mental states achieved by experienced meditators, two new studies find.

Results from both investigations, slated to appear in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Science, coincide with earlier reports that a certain form of synchronized electrical activity in groups of brain cells fosters perception, memory, and consciousness (SN: 3/11/00, p. 167).

All these studies rely on electroencephalogram (EEG)<sup>1</sup> recordings of the rate and intensity at which cells on the brain's surface send messages. Of particular interest are the gamma waves produced when masses of neurons emit their electrical signals around 40 times a second.

Many neuroscientists suspect that gamma activity occurs when various chemical messengers foster efficient communication across large swaths of brain tissue.

"The absence of gamma activity is related to dysfunctional neural circuits that cause some of the core symptoms of schizophrenia," reports psychiatrist Robert McCarley of Harvard Medical School in Boston, who directed one of the new studies.

McCarley's team studied 20 people with schizophrenia and 20 who had no mental disorder. As EEG data were collected, participants looked at either of two computer-screen images containing four partial circles resembling open-mouthed Pacman figures. In one image, the shapes were placed and oriented to create the illusion of a square in the center of the figures. Each volunteer pressed a key to signal perception of the square.

Study volunteers with schizophrenia made substantially more errors and took longer to respond than the others did. During this task, only the mentally healthy volunteers exhibited gamma activity at the back of the brain, where much visual processing occurs. In the people with schizophrenia, neural synchronization also occurred but at a frequency below the gamma range, indicating weaker integration of critical neural networks. Those who had experienced intense hallucinations, delusions, and disorganized thinking showed the lowest-frequency synchronization.

Although the volunteers with schizophrenia had for years taken various antipsychotic medications that diminished their symptoms, none of the drugs had pushed neural synchrony into the gamma range.

John H. Krystal, a psychiatrist at Yale University School of Medicine, says he's "cautiously optimistic" that a focus on gamma activity will yield insights into how the brain malfunctions in schizophrenia.

In the second new study, directed by neuroscientist Richard J. Davidson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, gamma activity gradually expanded across the brain during meditation by eight people skilled at the practice. These

<sup>1</sup> The recent study reported in the December issue of *A. T. used MRI scans.* — Ed., *A. T.*

individuals had under-gone Buddhism-based mental training for between 15 and 40 years. Meditators who had trained for the longest time displayed the most gamma activity.

Considerably smaller amounts of neural synchrony turned up during meditation in the brains of 10 college students who had just begun the practice. They had received a training session in meditation the week before testing and had then practiced the technique for 1 hour each day.

The experienced practitioners also exhibited substantially more gamma activity while at rest and not meditating than the students did. Further research needs to confirm that meditation training directly cultivates this brain response, rather than that people with high gamma activity are attracted to meditation, Davidson says.

These new findings are provocative but hard to interpret, remarks neuroscientist J. Anthony Movshon of New York University. "No one has convincingly linked gamma activity to any underlying brain mechanism involved in thinking or perception," Movshon says.

Nonetheless, neural synchrony "could be a gateway to understanding all sorts of mental activity," McCarley holds.  
—B. BOWER

SCIENCE NEWS



## The Golgotha of Life

BOOK REVIEW

[*A Course in Miracles*, published for Foundation for Inner Peace, by Viking of Penguin Books USA Inc., 375 Hudson St., NY, NY 10014]

I invite any of the subscribers who have read this book or have opinions on it to write in and give *The Aquarian Theosophist* their opinion—even write us a book-review if you are willing to do so.

There are axioms and sentences that one can hardly argue with such as these:

“Its only purpose is to provide a way in which some people will be able to find their own Internal Teacher.

“Nothing real can be threatened.  
Nothing unreal exists.  
Herein lies the peace of God.”

I choke on that last sentence, however. There is a kind of separatism running throughout the book, but it could be defended under the necessity of dualism when using language. When we are taught “Love is all there is” and that “Sin is defined as ‘lack of love,’” one does have a sense of agreement, even if they see in it an incredible oversimplification.

I suppose the book and I really part company when it says: “Prayer is a way of asking for something. It is the medium of miracles.” (p. 45)

“Once forgiveness has been accepted, prayer in the usual sense become utterly meaningless. The prayer for forgiveness is nothing more than a request that you may be able to recognize what you already have.” (*Ibid.*)

The book sounds much like the old occult practice of “Affirming and Denying.”

There are thoughts in it worth thinking if one can stomach the Christian vocabulary and the problem of “GOD does this,” and “He does that.” The repetition of phrases like this throughout the book are enough to turn an occultists’ hair gray overnight.

Nor would a paragraph like this say much to a Mystic who actually knows firsthand of the powers inside his circle of Being:

“Let this day be a day of stillness and of quiet listening. Your Father wills you hear His Word today. He calls to you from deep within your mind where He abides. Hear Him today. No peace is possible until His Word is heard around the world; until your mind, in quiet listening, accepts the message that the world must hear to usher in the quiet time of peace.” (Lesson 125, p. 225)

Rational effort cannot lose its potency. Love, all-embracing love is wonderful, but it proceeds from a ground of UNITY, that there is only one *being*.

Cycles are the mesh, the grid in which we live and all of us are subject to some of them, impassive to others. This, regardless of whether we are adepts, Saints, Avatars, etc., or just plain everyday pilgrims.

Yes, we are Rays of the Over-Soul and have a SOURCE, but it is in no sense a HE!! but impersonal, undefinable during our journey as a RAY, or as an embodied Monad.

Where is the concept of Reincarnation, where the sense of Karma? Yes, the Center of Karmic Law is *Compassion*, but for us on the periphery we must do more than pray to harmonize the disharmonies we have begotten, or as *The Key to Theosophy* puts it:

**ENQUIRER:** — One argument more; an argument, moreover, much used by some Christians. They say, "I feel that I am not able to conquer any passions and weaknesses in my own strength. But when I pray to Jesus Christ I feel that he gives me strength and that in His power I am able to conquer."

**THEOSOPHIST:** — No wonder. If "Christ Jesus" is God, and one independent and separate from him who prays, of course everything is, and *must* be

possible to "a mighty God." But, then, where's the merit, or justice either, of such a conquest? Why should the pseudo-conqueror be rewarded for something done which has cost him only prayers? Would you, even a simple mortal man, pay your labourer a full day's wage if you did most of his work for him, he sitting under an apple tree, and praying to you to do so, all the while? This idea of passing one's whole life in moral idleness, and having one's hardest work and duty done by another — whether God or man — is most revolting to us, as it is most degrading to human dignity.

**ENQUIRER:** — Perhaps so, yet it is the idea of trusting in a personal Saviour to help and strengthen in the battle of life, which is the fundamental idea of modern Christianity. And there is no doubt that, subjectively, such belief is efficacious; *i. e.*, that those who believe *do* feel themselves helped and strengthened.

**THEOSOPHIST:** — Nor is there any more doubt, that some patients of "Christian" and "Mental Scientists" — the great "*Deniers*" — are also sometimes cured; nor that hypnotism, and suggestion, psychology, and even mediumship, will produce such results, as often, if not oftener. You take into consideration, and string on the thread of your argument, successes alone. And how about ten times the number of failures? Surely you will not presume to say that failure is unknown even with a sufficiency of blind faith, among fanatical Christians?

**ENQUIRER:** — But how can you explain those cases which are followed by full success? Where does a Theosophist look to for power to subdue his passions and selfishness?

**THEOSOPHIST:** — To his Higher Self, the divine spirit, or the God in him, and to his *Karma*. ("Prayer Kills Self-Reliance," p. 72-73)

The book, in general, destroys the meaning of language. For example, look at this paragraph. We will do it a sentence at a time to highlight the circular thought it contains:

There is no substitute for truth.

And trust will make this plain to you as you are brought into the place where you must meet with truth.

And there you must be led, through gentle understanding which can lead you nowhere else.

Where God is, there are you.

Such is the truth.

Nothing can change the knowledge, given you by God, into unknowingness.

Everything God created knows its Creator.

For this is how creation is accomplished by the Creator and by His creations, and the creations of His Son with them together.

There is one link that joins Them all together, holding Them in the oneness out of which creation happens.<sup>1</sup>

Ancient Wisdom teaches that we are GOD, WE ARE OUR OWN CREATOR, WE ARE THE SON. Why break them into pieces and externalize them? Why kill the idea of self-induced self-devised action? Self-conscious beings ARE NOT CREATURES, but **creators**. We may make ourselves in the likeness of our aspirations, but that “making” originates from WILL not words. When Jesus said “I am the Way, the Truth and the Light.” it was his entire life to which he pointed, not the *uttered sentence*. Every fully initiated human can say the same.

However to travel on the PATH, we must *become the Path*. This is not done by the ceremonial magic involved in *Affirmation and Denial*.

Where is Cyclic Law in this book? Everything is cyclic. When the book (p. 21 Lesson 13) enjoins you to repeat: “*I am looking at a meaningless world,*” I would retort that each of us is looking at an “environment,” an “experience-grid” we ourselves created and therefore owe it our services, our goodwill and utmost *duty*. It is the fruition of a past cycle, and

<sup>1</sup> After carefully copying the paragraph I shut the book without having jotted down the precise reference. That is *fatal* with a book like this. Even the copy on the Internet did not turn up the reference. Should one of my more computer-savvy subscribers turn it up, I will be beholden! — Ed., A.T.

our *interaction* is creating the future for weal or woe.

Words without deeds turn into the dead sea fruit, and such is the very stuff of organized religion. Service of mankind does not require a priest, but it does require thought and enthusiasm. Enthusiasm gives us the power, and thought restrains our tendency to phantasize. We must start where we are with whatever capacities we have and whatever will we can muster. That’s the first *step*. For with that first step we begin the long, long journey to self-forgetfulness — the *Golgotha of Life* — or in the words of *The Secret Doctrine*, I, pp. 267-8:

Thus proceed the cycles of the septenary evolution, in Septennial nature; the Spiritual or divine; the psychic or semi-divine; the intellectual, the passional, the instinctual, or *cognitional*; the semi-corporeal and the purely material or physical natures. All these evolve and progress cyclically, passing from one into another, in a double, centrifugal and centripetal way, *one* in their ultimate essence, *seven* in their aspects. The lowest, of course, is the one depending upon and subservient to our five physical senses.

Thus far, for individual, human, sentient, animal and vegetable life, each the microcosm of its higher macrocosm. The same for the Universe, which manifests periodically, for purposes of the collective progress of the countless *lives*, the outbreathings of the *One Life*; in order that through the *Ever-Becoming*, every cosmic atom in this infinite Universe, passing from the formless and the intangible, through the mixed natures of the semi-terrestrial, down to matter in full generation, and then back again, reascending at each new period higher and nearer the final goal; that each atom, we say, *may reach through individual merits and efforts* that plane where it re-becomes the one unconditioned ALL. But between the Alpha and the Omega there is the weary “Road” hedged in by thorns, that “goes down first, then—

Winds up hill all the way  
Yes, to the very end. . . .”

Starting upon the long journey immaculate; descending more and more into sinful matter, and having connected himself with every atom in manifested *Space* — the *Pilgrim*, having struggled through and suffered in every form of life and being, is only at the bottom of the valley of matter, and half through his cycle, when he has identified himself with collective Humanity. This, *he has made in his own image*. In order to progress upwards and homewards, the “God” has now to ascend the weary uphill path of the **Golgotha of Life**. It is the martyrdom of self-conscious existence. Like Visvakarman he has to sacrifice *himself to himself* in order to redeem all creatures, to resurrect from the many into the *One Life*. Then he ascends into heaven indeed; where, plunged into the incomprehensible absolute Being and Bliss of Paranirvana, he reigns unconditionally, and whence he will re-descend again at the next “coming,” which one portion of humanity expects in its dead-letter sense as the *second advent*, and the other as the last “Kalki Avatar.”



Modern science . . . Labours under disabilities with respect to the investigation of the Occult quite as embarrassing as those of Religion: for while Religion cannot grasp the idea of natural law as applied to the supersensuous Universe, Science does not allow the existence of any supersensuous universe at all to which the reign of law could be extended: nor can it conceive the possibility of any other state of consciousness than our present terrestrial one.

— H.P. BLAVATSKY

## LOVE

The spectacle of divine Life, moving in the world of Forms, inflames us with love. But why is it that we are smitten with love? What exactly is love? Can any object, however beautiful, suffice to explain the love it inspires in us? “The soul could be attracted by things which are distant from her, and far inferior to her. But when she feels an intense love for them, it is not because they are what they are, but because they have taken on something from above, in addition to what they are by themselves”<sup>1</sup>

The reason we feel love is that some indefinable element has been added to beauty:<sup>2</sup> whether movement, life, or some kind of aura,<sup>3</sup> it kindles our desire, and without it beauty remains cold and inert: “Even in this world, we must say that beauty consists less in symmetry than in the light that shines upon the symmetry, and this light is what is desirable. After all, why is it that the splendor of beauty shines more brightly upon a living face while only a trace of beauty appears on the face of a dead man? . . . Why is an ugly man, as long as he is alive, more beautiful than the beauty of a statue?”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> (*Ennead* VI 7, 21, 10-13)

<sup>2</sup> A Karmic tie from the past? — Ed., A.T.

<sup>3</sup> A Van Gogh painting? — Ed., A.T.

<sup>4</sup> (*Ennead* VI 7, 22, 22-24) The source for entire item is *Plotinus or Simplicity of Vision*, by Pierre Hadot, p.49.