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Cover: "Relief with enthroned Maya ruler", by artist Chakalte', 770 CE, showing a regional governor named Tiloom, offering an elaborate headdress to the king, Bird Jaguar IV, of Yaxchilan, Chiapas, Mexico, seated on the right. Photographer: James Doyle, 1 April 2016. <metmuseum.org/essays/ancient-maya-sculpture> (See p. 30 of this issue for an article related to the Mayas.)

This journal is the official organ of the President, founded by H. P. Blavatsky on 1 Oct. 1879. The Theosophical Society is responsible only for official notices appearing in this journal.

Freedom of Thought

As the Theosophical Society has spread far and wide over the world, and as members of all religions have become members of it without surrendering the special dogmas, teachings and beliefs of their respective faiths, it is thought desirable to emphasize the fact that there is no doctrine, no opinion, by whomsoever taught or held, that is in any way binding on any member of the Society, none which any member is not free to accept or reject. Approval of its three Objects is the sole condition of membership. No teacher, or writer, from H. P. Blavatsky onwards, has any authority to impose his or her teachings or opinions on members. Every member has an equal right to follow any school of thought, but has no right to force the choice on any other. Neither a candidate for any office nor any voter can be rendered ineligible to stand or to vote, because of any opinion held, or because of membership in any school of thought. Opinions or beliefs neither bestow privileges nor inflict penalties. The Members of the General Council earnestly request every member of the Theosophical Society to maintain, defend and act upon these fundamental principles of the Society, and also fearlessly to exercise the right of liberty of thought and of expression thereof, within the limits of courtesy and consideration for others.

Freedom of the Society

The Theosophical Society, while cooperating with all other bodies whose aims and activities make such cooperation possible, is and must remain an organization entirely independent of them, not committed to any objects save its own, and intent on developing its own work on the broadest and most inclusive lines, so as to move towards its own goal as indicated in and by the pursuit of those objects and that Divine Wisdom which in the abstract is implicit in the title "The Theosophical Society".

Since Universal Brotherhood and the Wisdom are undefined and unlimited, and since there is complete freedom for each and every member of the Society in thought and action, the Society seeks ever to maintain its own distinctive and unique character by remaining free of affiliation or identification with any other organization.

THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

Founded 17 November 1875

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The Theosophical Society is composed of students, belonging to any religion in the world or to none, who are united by their approval of the Society's Objects, by their wish to remove religious antagonisms and to draw together men of goodwill, whatsoever their religious opinions, and by their desire to study religious truths and to share the results of their studies with others. Their bond of union is not the profession of a common belief, but a common search and aspiration for Truth. They hold that Truth should be sought by study, by reflection, by purity of life, by devotion to high ideals, and they regard Truth as a prize to be striven for, not as a dogma to be imposed by authority. They consider that belief should be the result of individual study or intuition, and not its antecedent, and should rest on knowledge, not on assertion. They extend tolerance to all, even to the intolerant, not as a privilege they bestow but as a duty they perform, and they seek to remove ignorance, not punish it. They see every religion as an expression of the Divine Wisdom and prefer its study to its condemnation, and its practice to proselytism. Peace is their watchword, as Truth is their aim.

Theosophy is the body of truths which forms the basis of all religions, and which cannot be claimed as the exclusive possession of any. It offers a philosophy which renders life intelligible, and which demonstrates the justice and the love which guide its evolution. It puts death in its rightful place, as a recurring incident in an endless life, opening the gateway to a fuller and more radiant existence. It restores to the world the Science of the Spirit, teaching man to know the Spirit as himself and the mind and body as his servants. It illuminates the scriptures and doctrines of religions by unveiling their hidden meanings, and thus justifying them at the bar of intelligence, as they are ever justified in the eyes of intuition.

Members of the Theosophical Society study these truths, and theosophists endeavour to live them. Everyone willing to study, to be tolerant, to aim high, and to work perseveringly, is welcomed as a member, and it rests with the member to become a true theosophist.

Functional Unity — I

TIM BOYD

ANYONE who finds themselves drawn to a spiritual path, even if only as a subject of study, quickly comes in contact with grand ideas. Ideas attempting nothing less than an understanding of the nature and relationship of the universe and the self. It is a common experience for one to feel dwarfed in the presence of such far-reaching thought. However, continued exposure to such demanding ideas produces a different effect. Although the enormity of the idea does not change, our sense of standing *before* it, can shift to a sense of standing *within* it. The feeling of being an integral, if infinitesimal, part of a greater whole can become the new normal for us. Our ongoing self-exposure gradually moves us to an awareness of sharing, in its expansive life and power.

One of the big ideas, perhaps The Big Idea, underlying both the work of the Theosophical Society (TS) and its individual members is expressed in the TS motto, which in its original Sanskrit reads: *satyān-nāsti paro-dharma*. As translated it becomes: There is no religion higher than Truth. It is a phrase that appears in several places in the *Mahabharata*, but was first encountered by H. P. Blavatsky and Colonel Olcott in their early days in India as the family slogan of the Maharaja of Benares. Some have pointed to the inadequacy of the translation. Any attempt at translation involves some degree of approximation. This is especially true for the Sanskrit word *dharma*. It is a rich word that has a variety of meanings depending on context. In the *Bhagavadgitā* Krishna speaks to Arjuna of his dharma, or duty, to fight in the coming battle. In Buddhism the cosmic laws embodied in its teachings are referred to as the Dharma. It is a word which can mean law, duty, religion, character, quality, nature, or anything "which is established".

From the point of view of an organization like the TS, created to "form a nucleus of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity", the emphasis on religion as dharma, a mode of conduct conducive to spiritual growth, makes sense, but may be too limiting. The fact is that there is no religion, science, philosophy, practice, person, place, or thing higher than Truth. No dharma exceeds that which is its source. Another way of saying it might be: Nothing is higher than Reality. But what is Reality/Truth? It is a question that must be asked even though it has no possible final answer. In the words of Lao Tzu: "The Tao which can be named is not the eternal Tao."

The scriptures of the world and

theosophical literature give indications about Truth. A wonderful and poetic image used to describe teachings that attempt to move one toward Truth is: Fingers pointing at the moon. Whether it is religion pointing, or science, or philosophy, or art, all of them give indications of where to look, based on their perspective. Much like a group of people standing in a circle pointing at something in the sky, each one seems to be pointing in a different direction. The key is to be able to fully "stand in their shoes", stop looking only at the finger, and start looking up. The image is also instructive because it is the moon they are pointing toward — a source of light, but reflected light. No one points toward the sun, the true source, which our eyes are not capable to behold. It blinds us to everything but itself.

In the *Bhagavadgitā*, Krishna, the incarnation of the Supreme Divinity, proclaims: "Having pervaded this universe with a fragment of Myself, yet I remain." In the Bible, Moses sees the burning bush and hears the voice of God coming from the fire. When he asks who is speaking, the answer he receives is: "I am that I am". Again, as a translation from Hebrew to English it is approximate. Other ways of translating say "I am who I am", or "I am what I will become". I have even heard it said as "I am that, and that, and that (ad infinitum)" — the idea being that God/Truth/Ultimate Reality is omnipresent and appears in and as all things.

Another approach to the encounter with Truth is the *Prajñā-pāramita Sutra*, the Highest Perfect Wisdom Sutra, of Buddhism. In contrast with the positive approach of trying to say what Truth "is", it takes the negative approach of saying all the things that it is not, stripping all away until nothing remains. This empty, unqualified space is equated with wisdom, reality, Truth. The *Sutra*'s list of negations is impressive for being so all-encompassing:

> This is the original character of everything; not born, not annihilated, not tainted, not pure, does not increase, does not decrease. Therefore, in emptiness no form, no sensation, no recognition, no conceptualization, no consciousness. No eye, no ear, no nose, no tongue, no body, no mind, no color, no sound, no smell, no taste, no touch, no object of touch, no eye, no world of eyes until we come to also no world of consciousness, no ignorance, also no ending of ignorance, all the way through to old age and death, also no ending of old age and death. No suffering, no cause of suffering, no nirvana, no path, no wisdom, also no attainment because no non-attainment. Every Bodhisatva depends on Highest Perfect Wisdom because mind meets no obstacle. Because of no obstacle, no fear is born.

The takeaway for us is that Truth/Reality cannot be divided into parts, or qualities. Wholeness, indivisibility, oneness, unity, interdependence are the terms which come closest to suggesting the direction of our enquiry.

When he was 34 years old J. Krishnamurti gave one of the most impactful talks of his life. The occasion was the annual camp of the Order of the Star in the East

(SOE), the organization formed around him and the expectation of his role as the World Teacher. Three thousand people had gathered for the annual meeting. Having come to the conclusion that both the direction of the OSE and the expectations of its members were not just misplaced, but were actively opposed to a genuine search for Truth, he chose that occasion to announce that he was formally disbanding the organization. In his speech he said: "Truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect." He went further to clearly state his mission in the world saying: "My only concern is to set man absolutely, unconditionally free."

The remaining almost six decades of his life were spent in trying, and if we are honest, failing in that effort. The self-evident fact that humanity has not transformed, regardless of the clarity of his message and his globe-spanning travels to share it, is not a reflection on Krishnamurti or the truth of his message.

Throughout human history great people have come and lent their insight and efforts to attempt to transform human consciousness. It is a long list which includes such names as Jesus, the Buddha, Lao Tzu, Muhammad, Plato, Confucius, Shankaracharya, all of the Masters of the Wisdom, and continues with the names of countless others such as HPB, Krishnamurti, Vivekananda, H. H. the Dalai Lama, Annie Besant, Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu, Thich Nhat Hanh, Rumi, and so on. The essential problem is not with the messengers, or their message. The problem is the enormity of their mission. It is a mission for the ages with no possibility for short-term fulfillment. In the Mahachohan's letter the statement is made that, "No messenger of the truth, no prophet, has ever achieved during his lifetime a complete triumph."

A question we might ask ourselves is: What is it about the human condition that makes us so resistant to truth? Is it a conscious choice we make to turn our backs on our own experience? Or is it the result of some inherent blindness or insensitivity?

A philosopher made the comment that "We do not possess imagination enough to sense what we are missing." Living in a part of the world where cold winters are the normal experience, the necessary response to such weather is to "bundle up", to wrap oneself in enough layers of clothing that the body's temperature can be maintained. Hat, gloves, sweater, scarf, thermal underwear, boots, heavy socks, and a coat are required just to walk out the door. A consequence of this process is that one's sensitivity diminishes.

Picking up a dropped coin, dialing a mobile phone, feeling the touch of the air, taking keys out of your pocket are normal activities that are prevented by the gloves and layers of protective garments. We are literally insulated from the surrounding world. The process of human incarnation and embodied living is similar. Whether we view it as *kośa-s* (literally sheaths or coverings), bodies, vehicles, identities, or fields of consciousness, with birth, much like the person going out into the cold, we

are insulated from experience by layers of progressively more dense material.

A comic writer made the remark, equally humorous and profound: "Life is full of miserableness, loneliness, and suffering, and it's all over too quickly." So, how do we navigate through this world in the face of those fleeting moments of peace, contentment, and happiness which present a starkly contrasting view of life's potentials? Like a portal revealing sporadic but brief glimpses into another world, we sense a different possibility, one we would choose for ourselves if only we knew how to get and stay there. The problem we face is that it is the rare individual who receives any training along these lines. Few families and no schools are grounded in it.

The religions of the world give indications and some practices, but tend to focus on separative theologies. Contemporary science claims to explain all, but can provide no guidance in the non-physical sphere of consciousness. In our modern world we are left to our own devices, largely dependent on the fact that at some point the combination of our dissatisfaction and a growing yearning for a deeper experience will ultimately lead us to some alternative path. Fortunately, this is in fact the way it works. There is the old expression that "When the student is ready the teacher appears", and I would add, "unfailingly".

It is in the nature of things that the Ageless Wisdom has always existed in some form in all cultures and among all people. Advanced souls qualified to assist in one's inner unfoldment, though mostly unrecognized, are also universally present. A feature of the teachings is that it meets each person at their specific level of need and in the form best suited to their unfoldment — for some it is a book, for others a group or movement, for others it is a person. All of these fulfill the role of teacher for a time. For the mind that has not yet cultivated some degree of quiet, deeper teachings on the experience of union and selflessness, would be only theoretical. So, the teachings on quieting the mind and becoming present, along with the theory, are the initial remedy. With quiet comes the possibility for a previously unavailable clarity, range of thought, and sensitivity.

Among other things, the Ageless Wisdom tradition is rich in information. Addressing, as it does, the formation, direction, and unfoldment of the potentials within us and the universe, its range of knowledge and complexity is vast beyond our comprehension. The challenge for us in approaching it can be a confusion on just where to start. Investigations over millennia by students and realized beings on the entire range of inner and outer life seem to point in one direction. Every aspect of our study, insight, experience takes place within one all-encompassing greater life. Oneness, or radical interdependence describes the experience of enlightenment, *moksha*, liberation, and is the direction of our searching.

Starting where we are now, how do we approach such an exalted understanding?

(*To be continued*)

A Trip to the Beach with Mme Blavatsky

[This month, the Theosophical Publishing House, Adyar, will be releasing a new volume of H. P. Blavatsky's writings containing material previously unavailable in English. The book is part of the *H. P. Blavatsky Collected Writings* series and marks its concluding volume as planned by the compiler, Boris de Zirkoff. Comprised of English translations of the various series that HPB wrote for the Russian papers, the volume, titled *Russian Serials*, offers an insightful account of American life during the author's time there, her attendance at a reception for the new Viceroy of India, and her visit to the Blue Mountains of Madras and the mysterious tribes that inhabited it. *Russian Serials* can be considered a companion piece to the other previously translated volume from the Russian papers, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan.*

The following excerpt translated from the *Tiflis Messenger* of 25 September (13 September in Russian old-style calendar) 1878, written under the pseudonym of the "Voice", is exemplar of HPB's narrative style to be found throughout this book. It is based on an actual trip HPB, Col. Olcott, and a TS member took to East Hampton, NY, in July 1878. Olcott records in his Diary that during the time they spent at the beach, HPB "presented a most amusing appearance, paddling about in the surf with her legs, and showing an infantile glee almost to be in such splendid magnetism" (cited in Gomes' *Dawning of the Theosophical Movement*, 1987, p. 184). The rest of the story is continued in the book now obtainable from TPH Adyar. — Michael Gomes]

THE heat is tropical. The hot, white walls of buildings, the iron fences of the gardens, the railing of the balconies, and the wrought iron, openwork, ornamented steps of porches in downtown, make the miserable citizens ascending them hurry up on their toes. On the sixth of July, in New York alone, they counted thirty-two cases of sunstroke; and on the ninth they recorded seventy-four!

At the present moment, the centrifugal forces of city life have definitely the upper hand over the centripetal. Everything and everybody rushes away from this hot center of town. The "Voice", drawn by this general exodus, does not set itself in opposition to the human current which bears it along. Hoarse and about to collapse for breath, it, too, climbs the high stairs that lead to the elevated railroad, some eighty feet above the street, and buys a ticket to Coney Island. Settling down in

one of the luxurious coaches, on a seat made of sea grass, it waits for the railway to rush it fifteen miles to the shore of the northern river. The entire pleasure trip costs ten cents.

The train speeds along carrying thousands of perspiring gentlemen and ladies who are fanning themselves. It soars high over the heads of the pedestrians; it either thunders over the roofs of lower houses, or rushes like a whirlwind but a few steps from the windows of the eighth floor of higher buildings. All their windows are open and the interior furnishings of the lodgings can be clearly seen. Their inhabitants are all more or less undressed, and sometimes rather curious and strange pictures flash before the eyes of embarrassed strangers.

Speaking of the elevated railway, which was opened to the public only six months ago, one should not fail to mention the landlords' revolution which threatens the city. The whole of New York is beginning to be covered with such railways. They crisscross each other like a thick network over the roofs of the buildings and darken God's light. The trains leave every quarter-of-an-hour and, as already stated, run but a few feet from the walls and windows of some of the houses, starting at four o'clock in the morning and ending half-an-hour past midnight. Imagine the situation of the unhappy inhabitants of these streets! Not to open the windows in the rooms where people are being smothered in the summer, is tantamount to slow death; open these — and the rooms are immediately filled with thick fumes and soot. The latter settles on the furniture, blackens the walls and spoils everything in the house. To complete the pleasure, for twenty-and-a-half hours, out of twenty-four, every fifteen minutes, there is the strange rumbling and whistling of the trains above the very heads of the condemned victims. These constant thunderpeals shake the houses to their foundations. The inhabitants have to shout and strain their chests as ordinary speech is completely drowned out by this infernal noise. The constant jangle to the nerves makes people go mad, and sleep becomes impossible. Thirty-eight medical men have sent a petition to the railway company on behalf of their patients. Those who could do so have moved to other parts of the city, and landlords are threatened with complete ruin.

In the meantime, we are rushing like a whirlwind from one end of the city to the other. Now we are on the banks of the river, at the pier where steamers take the overheated inhabitants to various islands in the vicinity of New York. Such islands are innumerable. Two of the main ones are Coney Island and Long Island. On the latter, which is one hundred and eighteen miles long and some twenty-three miles wide, are scattered a great many villages, but no single town. Coney Island is the favorite outing place for New Yorkers. Sea bathing there is wonderful; however, staying there several days in succession, one is apt to get an inflammation of the eyes, so brilliant is the glare of these immense flats covered with a silvery-white

sand sparkling like snow in the sun. Huge steamers, five hundred feet in length and built like houses three stories high, leave New York for the Islands every half-hour during this summer season. Right now, we ourselves are about to start on one of them.

On the shore there is shoving, noise, and shouting. On deck, you almost have to fight for a chair. Another minute, and the steamer is just one solid mass of human heads; but the happy thought that in half an hour you will be standing on the soft sand of the island, on the shore of the cool and boundless ocean, upholds your faltering strength.

A whistle, a strident hissing sound, and the steamer pulls out, calling, by the way, at eight different piers for other passengers, before it finally starts on its journey. At long last, it turns and heads out towards the open sea.

The view is really magnificent . . . the entire shore is covered with forests, luxurious parks, and villas.

The harbor of New York, according to those who know, is the most beautiful in the world, and surpasses even that of Naples. As you proceed towards the sea, the harbor takes on an even more fairy-like appearance, as a limitless azure expanse. It is dotted with ships, steamers, and yachts. Huge in size, and one of the most convenient on the face of the earth, it could serve as a refuge for several mighty fleets, and still have plenty of room. Now we have passed Staten Island, a lovely island reminding one of Amalfi, near Naples, which is inhabited mainly by Germans and the fiercest of mosquitos. The entire harbor begins to be covered with a light mist through which thousands of flags with gilded tips and other decorations sparkle in the sun in a multicolored fiery play.

Little by little that too disappears and merges in the velvety, shimmering distance. We round Governor's Island with barracks standing empty since the end of the war; then Fort Lafayette, where ruins of a once mighty fortress, intended for political criminals, sadly protrudes, overgrown with grass. In our time, such criminals have become a mere legend; they have scattered and disappeared. . . .

And now in the bluish and misty distance shine the silvery shores of Coney Island. A cool and damp whiff of air rises. A few more minutes and we are at the landing. Our feet are sinking deep in the hot sand, but a fresh sea breeze gives us new strength. The sweating crowd suddenly dries, and everybody rushes towards the bathhouses by any and every road. Without warning, the marksmen lined up for their target practice at the firing range, some people daringly cross the firing line which leads to the target. Sometimes a stray bullet reaches a live target. But this is an event that is quite customary and does not surprise anybody. . . . It interests only the coroner and insurance companies.

The arrangement of the bathhouses here is entirely different from that in Europe. Long rows of shanties are built some 150 feet from the sea. In them, people undress and array themselves

in the most curious costumes: the men — in multi-colored tricot; and the ladies in short flannel pants and jackets. Both sexes bathe together and run along the shore and wide road half-naked and streaming with water. All this takes place very quietly and with no embarrassment whatsoever. Custom and the mode have transformed into a perfectly proper pastime which in the city would have been the very limit of indecency. Young girls of the higher — I'm sorry, of the richer — set climb with their bare legs onto the shoulders of men, and, establishing their balance, dive into the sea head first. To observe this Sodomo-Gomorrhean company is worth a trip to the island. And beyond this noisy crowd tumbling in the water, there is the ocean, the limitless blue ocean, which every summer season slyly swallows up dozens of careless swimmers.

Nothing in Nature reminds us as much of a woman as the ocean; its caprices and fantasies quickly come and go, and no one can predict their hour. The ocean receives its color from the sky, and its turbulence from the currents of air. Its very existence, with its constant flirtation with, and mirroring of, the elements, depends upon the latter; but in spite of that, just like a woman, it constantly and daringly calls them out to battle. If you throw yourself into it in a rough manner, or go too far out, it will treat you disdainfully and without pity — and like a woman will try to ruin you. But if, on the contrary, you treat it gently and cleverly, and trust yourself carefully and quietly to its treacherous waves, it will carry you along on its high crests, and will cradle you like a child upon the breast of its loving mother. . . . ✧

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

H. P. Blavatsky
The Key to Theosophy

Blavatsky's Model of the Human Mind

PABLO SENDER

IN this article, we will explore the various levels of consciousness within what we call the "mind", based on the model presented by H. P. Blavatsky in her writings. Our focus will be on the three "middle" principles, namely:

1. ***Kāma***: The principle of desire, often referred to as the *animal soul*, since it first develops within the animal kingdom.
2. ***Manas***: This is the principle of mind itself. Commonly called the *human soul*, it represents the faculty that develops distinctively within the human kingdom.
3. ***Buddhi***: Frequently translated as *spiritual soul*, this principle serves as the wellspring of spiritual wisdom and love. At our current evolutionary stage, it remains largely latent in most human beings.

According to theosophical teachings, *manas* operates on two distinct levels: lower and higher. As Blavatsky stated:

> The mind is dual in its potentiality: it is physical and metaphysical. The higher part of the mind is connected with the spiritual soul, or Buddhi, while the lower part is connected with the animal soul, the Kāma principle.[1]

The lower *manas* corresponds to what we conventionally understand as the *mind* — the realm in which everyday thinking occurs. However, beyond this familiar aspect exists a higher dimension that we might characterize as the "spiritual mind" — a consciousness that functions independently of the physical brain and sensory apparatus. Let us examine this distinction more thoroughly.

The Higher Mind

In her conversations with students on *The Secret Doctrine*, Blavatsky described the higher mind as follows:

> In its inherent nature or essence, it is omniscient, for it is part of the Divine Mind.[2]

This statement requires clarification. When Blavatsky speaks of the higher mind as "omniscient", she does not suggest that it knows everything in an absolute sense. Rather, she means that on its plane of existence — beyond physical constraints — the higher mind perceives without error. Whatever it apprehends, it apprehends correctly and completely.

A fundamental characteristic of *manas*

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is that it serves as the source of our sense of "I-ness" or ego.[3] At the level of the higher mind, this manifests as awareness of oneself as a spiritual individuality (a human soul). Because higher *manas* possesses this spiritual sense of identity, Theosophy refers to it as the "higher ego".

Regarding this higher ego's state of consciousness, Blavatsky explains:

> The real Ego does not think as his evanescent and temporary personality does. . . . In the thoughts of the real man,[4] or the immortal "Individuality", the pictures and visions of the Past and Future are as the Present; nor are his thoughts like ours, subjective pictures in our cerebration, but living acts and deeds, present actualities.[5]

While we are familiar with thinking as it occurs at the level of lower *manas* — expressed through the brain — thinking at the level of the higher ego operates in an entirely different manner. First, it transcends our conventional divisions of time into past, present, and future. To the higher mind, the future (insofar as it has been determined by karmic actions) is as evident as the present. Likewise, the past remains perpetually accessible.

Moreover, thought at this level constitutes action. On the higher mental plane, to think is to act — to create effects, generate forms, and transform the surrounding environment.

The Lower Mind

We have thus far examined the qualities of the higher mind operating on its native plane. However, a profound transformation occurs when this omniscient consciousness attempts to function on lower planes of existence. As Blavatsky explains:

> But once that it has been brought to incarnate on earth, it takes up all the materiality and all the finite attributes, so to say, and the qualities of the personalities it incarnates in.[6]

This passage illuminates an important concept: when the higher mind expresses itself through the lower principles and ultimately through the physical brain, it becomes "veiled" by the attributes of these denser planes. Its perceptual abilities become constrained by the physical senses, and it loses its inherent omniscience — it can no longer perceive reality as it truly is. This limitation gives rise to what Theosophy terms the *lower mind.*

At this level, the experience of thinking differs substantially from what was possible on the higher planes. As Blavatsky states, the lower mind becomes the seat of:

> . . . the human quality of thinking, or animal cogitation, rationalized owing to the superiority of the human brain. [This is] the *kāma*-tending, or lower *manas.*[7]

She further clarifies that "the thinking principle . . . is only a little higher than the *instinctual* element in the animal".[8]

These statements highlight how the lower mind tends to follow *kāma.* When driven by the desire-nature, the thinking faculty operates under what we might call "instinctual" motivations — self-preservation, pleasure-seeking, pain-avoidance, and similar drives.

However, as an individual evolves through successive incarnations, the lower *manas* gradually learns to disentangle itself from *kāma.* This evolutionary

process creates the possibility for independent activity of the lower mind — a thinking that can operate, at least temporarily, free from the influence of desires. Since this kind of thought is based on information brought by the physical senses, this aspect of *manas* is frequently called the "concrete mind".

The Bridge

Theosophical literature postulates that there is a chasm between the higher and lower minds. However, this divide is not insurmountable. There exists a mediating element capable of bridging this gap, which Blavatsky termed *antahkarana*. She stated:

> The *antahkarana* is therefore that portion of the lower *manas* which is one with the higher, the essence, that which retains its purity; on it are impressed all good and noble aspirations, and in it are the upward energies of the lower manas.[9]

While part of the concrete mind (lower *manas*) gravitates toward desires, thus operating *as kāma-manas*, another aspect maintains the purity of the higher *manas*. In other words, the lower mind possesses the intrinsic capacity to resonate harmoniously with the higher through what Blavatsky called *manas-antahkarana*. When is this aspect active? She said:

> *Antahkarana* [is active] only during those moments when it aspires towards its higher half, and thus becomes the medium of communication between the two. It is for this reason that it is called "Path".[10]

Thus, whenever the concrete mind aspires toward spiritual elevation, a bridge between higher and lower is built. Since *antahkarana* constitutes part of the lower mind, it can transmit perceptions from the higher realm into our everyday consciousness. Every spiritual inspiration we receive, and every aspiration toward higher principles we experience, functions through this *antahkarana*.

If we neglect this mental faculty, however, Blavatsky warns that it may atrophy, rendering us incapable of spiritual thought or receptivity to spiritual influences. Conversely, the more we activate this aspect of the mind, the more readily it channels inspiration from above and generates further spiritual aspiration. As she notes:

> The lower consciousness mirrors aspirations unconsciously to itself and then itself aspires and is elevated if things are in accord. Such an aspiration would be a tendency towards Theosophy; this instinct, if developed, becomes a conscious aspiration.[11]

Initially, *antahkarana*, bringing the influence of the higher nature, propels us toward spiritual development, even if somewhat unconsciously. But as we become increasingly aware of this inner spiritual impulse, our aspiration becomes a conscious intention. Our devotion to spiritual principles, to theosophical wisdom, to ethical conduct — all strengthen the bridge of communication, and a higher form of thinking becomes accessible in everyday life:

> There are persons who never think with the higher faculties of their mind at all; those who do so are the minority and are thus,

> in a way, *beyond,* if not above, the average of humankind. These will think even upon ordinary matters on that *higher* plane.[12]

As individuals learn to connect with the higher mind, the latter begins to express some of its influence through the "brain-mind" — the consciousness that operates through the physical brain. Such individuals can approach even mundane matters from this elevated perspective, exhibiting tendencies toward cooperation rather than competition, and compassion rather than aggression, and similar qualities.

The transition from lower or concrete thinking to higher or spiritual consciousness occurs through cultivating this "aspiring mind" (*manas-antahkarana*) — through meditation, pursuit of virtues, service to others, and similar practices. Any endeavor oriented toward spiritual growth and unity strengthens the aspiring mind.

The Divine Mind

To complete our exploration, let us briefly examine *buddhi-manas* or the divine mind. As we have seen, higher *manas* naturally gravitates toward *buddhi.* When these two principles unite, the spiritual aspirant experiences enlightenment. Blavatsky characterizes it thus:

> Spiritual knowledge or esoteric wisdom [is] a knowledge not attainable by ordinary intellectual processes, and only to be gained by mystical enlightenment or the awakening of the Buddhic elements in man.[13]

Buddhi-manas is the revelation of the divine *plus* human intellect and self-consciousness.[14]

The awakening of these "buddhic elements" bestows upon the individual what we may call spiritual or mystical wisdom. This is not merely a conceptual understanding of spiritual matters, but a direct perception of spiritual realities.

This union between *buddhi* and *manas* occurs gradually. Before it is complete and permanent, there exists an intermediate condition in which individuals may only momentarily "touch" *buddhi,* before returning to their manasic center of consciousness. Blavatsky designated this temporary state where *manas* connects with *buddhi* as *manas-taijasa*:

> *Taijasa* means the radiant in consequence of its union with *buddhi*; *i.e.*, *manas*, the human soul, illuminated by the radiance of the divine soul. Therefore, *manas-taijasa* may be described as a radiant mind; the *human* reason lit by the light of the spirit.[15]

She clarifies its nature further:

> Remember that if it can be said of *buddhi-manas* that it is unconditionally immortal, the same cannot be said of the lower *manas*, still less of *taijasa*, which is merely an attribute . . . because it is the same *manas* only with the light of *buddhi* reflected on it.[16]

Thus, *manas-taijasa* represents a mind that is temporarily illuminated by *buddhi.*

The Model of the Mind

Having briefly described the different states in which *manas* can operate; we can now appreciate Blavatsky's comprehensive model of mind. This understand-

ing can serve as a map of consciousness and a guide in the process of raising consciousness:

1. **Divine mind (*buddhi-manas*)**: The enlightened consciousness. Before this state becomes permanent, one can experience *manas-taijasa*, or the illumined mind.
2. **Spiritual mind (higher *manas*)**: The consciousness that perceives spiritual principles — unity, harmony, love — as realities (not just as mere concepts or abstractions).
3. **Aspiring mind (*manas-antahkarana*)**: The condition where the lower mind strives toward its higher counterpart or endeavors to act in harmony with spiritual principles.
4. **Concrete mind (lower *manas*)**: The consciousness that is based on sensory perception, memory, and conceptual knowledge. This operates when addressing situations that do not engage personal emotions or desires.
5. **Desire-mind (*kāma-manas*)**: The state where lower *manas* functions instinctively under the influence of personal emotions and desires.

In its journey toward the highest, the human soul begins with the desire-mind — the ability to think serving merely as a vehicle for satisfying desires. As evolution progresses, intellectual interests gradually draw the mind away from desire, enabling one to engage in certain matters objectively. Eventually, the lower mind begins to be inspired to look beyond itself toward spiritual dimensions, initiating a path of spiritual search. This ultimately leads to awareness at the level of the higher mind, allowing the aspirant to perceive as realities those spiritual teachings that the lower mind had aspired to. Subsequently, the higher mind gradually becomes illumined by *buddhi*, and this illumination intensifies until the two principles achieve complete union. At this stage, the enlightened human operates in the divine mind, becoming a fit vessel for *ātman*, the higher self. ✧

Endnotes

1. *Blavatsky Collected Writings* (*BCW*) vol. 10, p. 222.
2. *The Secret Doctrine Dialogues* (*SDD*), pp. 562–63.
3. The word "ego" simply means I-ness. There exists both a lower, personal I-ness (the object of study of psychology) and a higher, more spiritual I-ness that is transpersonal. The latter is the "higher ego" referenced here.
4. Blavatsky uses the term "man", derived from the Sanskrit root that also gives us "*manu*", meaning "the thinker". Thus, "the real man" refers to the higher ego, not the embodied and gendered personality.
5. *BCW* 10, 248.
6. *SDD*, 563.
7. *The Key to Theosophy* (*KT*), p. 184.
8. *KT*, 119.
9. *BCW* 12, 710.
10. *BCW* 12, 633.
11. *BCW* 13, 365.
12. *BCW* 10, 222.
13. *BCW* 13, 6.
14. *KT*, 159 fn.
15. *KT*, 159 fn.
16. *KT*, 159.

Evolution of Matter from Consciousness — Allegory in the *Mahabharatha* revealed by Masters — II

VANAMALA DEEPAK AND SRIDHAR MELUKOTE

Children of Satyavati

Satyavati/Matter has three children: Vyāsa, Chitrāngada and Vichitravirya. Vyāsa was her child from Rishi Parāshara prior to her marriage to Shantanu. Satyavati smelled of fish, and was called Matsyagandhā (fish-smelling). The symbolism is that Matter filled with obsessive desires is fish-smelling. It has to purify itself with contact with saints on the banks of the Ganga/Consciousness.[10] Hence, Satyavati goes on pilgrimage ferrying passengers on the Ganga. Her father puts her on this job hoping that some saint will cure her of her fishy smell. She is as yet unmarried to Shantanu/*brahman.* (Matter/Satyavati is dormant and has no power of Consciousness/*brahman* yet.)

When Parāshara (the son of Kundalini/Shakti) unites with Matsyagandhā, she acquires the lotus smell (meaning that she is purified and acquires the power to unite with the main king of the land, Shantanu/*brahman.* This means that Matter/Satyavati, when awakened by *Kundalini-śakti* gets the power to unite with Consciousness/Shantanu. Matsyagandhā (sense-infatuated Matter) becomes Satyavati (pure) and Vedavyāsa is born. This means that by the power of Guru-given *sādhana* (Parāshara gives a *mantra* to Matsyagandhā), matter-bound senses disappear and lotus-like experiences flower.[10]

Vedavyāsa derivation: *vid* — knowledge of substance; *vyās* — to know the substance superficially (materially) and in detail (intuitively). Vedavyāsa, represents the conscious ability to know both: Duality/Relativity/*maya* and Singularity/*brahman* by discrimination/wisdom/knowledge using insight or intuition.[11]

Chitrāngada and Vichitravirya symbolise Divine Primordial Element/*mahātattva* and pure Causal/Divine Ego/*ahamkāra.* **Chitrāngada**: Sages state that, with the presence of some Consciousness/*parama-purusha* (Shantanu) in *prakṛti* (Satyavati), *prakṛti* becomes transmuted. This transmutation is called *mahātattva,* the Great Substance. This universal/macrocosm/

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samashti is symbolised by Chitrāngada, the first son of Satyavati. The 24 principles evolve due to the presence of *mahātattva*, which is called *chitta* in Man/microcosm/ *vyashti*, and is the basic inclusive mental consciousness in Man/he microcosm. This conscious awareness or *mahātattva/chitta* breaks down into twenty-four parts.[12] Hence, Chitrāngada dies at an early age. **Vichitravirya**: The presence of consciousness in *prakṛti*, also causes the arising of self-rulership in oneself, which feeling is called *ahamkāra*. Universally/ macrocosmically it is called *aiśvarika-ahamkāra* (*samashti*) or divine primordial universal ego, which does not have a sense of the present.[13] Divine ego at the microcosm (*vyashti*), the sense of "I"/ ego — the experience — is the pure/ divine ego in the causal body of man, which separates the soul from *brahman*. This divine causal ego/*aiśvarika-ahamkāra* is symbolised as Vichitravirya. He has two wives, Ambika and Ambālika. (The wives symbolise *manas* and *buddhi,* or doubt and certainty of knowledge). Vichitravirya dies after marriage, symbolic of Man's pure divine/causal consciousness becoming contaminated by its contact with subjective consciousness of duality, *māya* (negative and positive — doubt and certainty of worldly knowledge when perceived from the senses and intellect — Ambika/Ambālika). Divine ego is lost by outward deformations of this *māya* creation.

Wives of Vichitravirya

Amba, Ambika, and Ambālika are the daughters of the king of Kāshi. They are brought by Bhishma to give them in marriage to Vichitravirya (divine causal ego). The allegory: Kāshirāj, knowledge, revealing everything by which he rules. The three daughters of knowledge (Kāshirāj) are: **Amba**, knowledge of the world by sense experience; **Ambika**, knowledge of the world by the sense of questioning/doubt — negative state of mind/*manas*; **Ambālika**, sense of certainty/positive state of knowledge gained through the intellect. Bhishma bringing the daughters to be married to Vichitravirya means *ābhāsa-chaitanya* revealing knowledge of creation to the divine causal ego. But, Amba wants to marry Madrarāj (meaning that sense experience wants to unite with the sense pleasures below the navel — *madra*). Ambika represents negative doubt, perception without discriminationfrom the *manas* and senses; and Ambālika, positive discrimination/certainty of intellect.[14] Positive/certain knowledge coming from the intellect/*buddhi* and negative/ doubtful knowledge coming from the senses and *manas* are the forces acting on the divine ego. This is the symbolism of the marriage of Vichitra-virya and the daughters of Kāshirāja — Ambika and Ambālika.

With the death of Vichitravirya, Vedavyāsa, his step-brother sires children with Amba and Ambālika. Vedavyāsa symbolises the guru-given knowledge of intuition (relativity and discriminating power/insight). When Vedavyāsa (insight) unites with Ambika (negative doubt of consciousness lacking discrimination), blind Dhṛtarāshtra/*manas* is born. *Manas*

is sense consciousness and its knowledge comes from the senses, mainly the power of seeing. Its knowledge is imperfect/doubtful as it lacks *buddhi*/discriminating power. Seeing is believing for *manas*.[15] Since the eyes are constantly active, *manas*/mind is unsteady and restless, making knowledge by doubt blind. Hence Dhṛtarāshtra is born blind.

When Vedavyāsa (relativity and discriminating power/insight) unites with Ambālika (positive certainty of consciousness/intellect/discrimination) the pure transparent child, Pandu/*buddhi* is born. *Buddhi* can perceive/learn steadily with concentration. *Pandu* means white/pure. Hence, Pandu is pale/white in colour and wise.

Blind mind and pure intelligence: Dhṛtarāshtra and Pandu

Sages say that the human body is a kingdom. It has four parts. The upper part is the North and is full of divine power. The lower part is the South, full of pleasures and madness. The front part is the East signifying *pravṛtti*-oriented worldliness and the back part is the West — *nivṛtti*-oriented liberating works.

Dhṛtarāshtra is symbolic of the sense mind, also called *manas*. *Manas* and the senses are blind, they lack intelligence. The sense mind is worldliness-oriented and pleasure-seeking; mixing with Gāndhari (the power of desires) it creates Duryodhana (the ability to fight in an evil way, also vainglorious desire) and ninety-nine other children.[16]

The hundred children are the hundred negative sense-tendencies that come from each of the ten senses (five senses of perception, *jñānendriya-s*, and five of action, *karmendriya-s*). Through Vaishya (the servant of Gāndhāri), the second wife of the sense mind (Dhṛtarāshtra), another son is born, Yuyutsu, meaning the desire to do (psychological) battle (to the senses). In the war, Yuyutsu fights against the Kauravas.[17]

The clan of the blind mind, Duryodhana (lusty desire), and the ninety-nine other Kauravas (the ninety-nine other sense ten-dencies), guided by Kṛpa (*avidya*), and Drona (*kṛpi-pati* — husband of Kṛpi) is symbolic of the *samskāra-s*, and along with Karna, are very powerful.

Karna is Kunti's son from Surya, the sun god, whom Kunti begets before she is married to Pandu (intellect). She invokes the sun god by *mantra*, symbolically, the power of the centre of the eyebrows. Karna, hence is the power between the eyebrows/*ājnā-chakra*, but this power is not united with *buddhi* (Pandu) and is hence, oriented towards *pravṛtti* or worldly pleasures. Hence, Karna joins the Kauravas who are also oriented towards *pravṛtti*, but being the power of *ājnā*, he is very powerful, and the Kurus consult him in all matters.

Pāndu is symbolic of *buddhi* or intellect. *Buddhi* always focuses on *nivṛtti* or Salvation. *Nivṛtti*'s activities are focused in the *sushumnā-nādi*, at the back of the body, away from the kingdom of desires. (Hence in the story, Pāndu renounces the kingdom). Intellect's (Pāndu's) wives are the *sushumnā* power in the spine. The

spine has two parts to it, hence Pāndu has two wives, Kunti and Mādri.

Kunti is the part of the spine above the navel that can call forth divine powers. After having united with Pandu (the Intellect), this segment of the spine, now on the path revealed through intellect (her husband's permission), gives birth to three sons on the three *chakra-s* of the spine, *viśuddha, anāhata and manipura* — Yudhishthira, Bhima and Arjuna.[18]

Mādri is the part of the spine below the navel that has the power to cause delusory intoxication. When *śakti* goes below the navel (symbolically, Kunti teaching the *mantra* to Mādri by request of her husband/Pāndu, thus, intellect entering the lower *chakra-s*), two children are born in the lower *chakra-s* — *svādhishthāna and mulādhāra* — Nakula and Sahadeva.[19]

Later, Pāndu, attracted to Mādri, dies (due to the earlier curse of inability to enjoy his wives), meaning the Intellect, attached to the lower *chakra-s*, gets deluded and dies, that is, Man's intellect dies when he indulges in the lower pleasures. Mādri also dies with him; meaning, sense pleasures stop when Man loses his intellect/ability to discern. Sensory overindulgence makes Man go insane (as in drug addiction, promiscuity, and so forth) and he cannot enjoy anymore. The senses kill Man ultimately — Pāndu dies due to his attraction to Mādri.

Thus, the positive aspect of the mind/*buddhi*/pure intelligence, has five sons, the five *tattva-s* or vibratory elements that create all matter: earth, water, fire, air (*prāna*, life force) and ether. In the body of Man, they manifest in the five spinal *chakra-s* — centres of life and consciousness — to create and sustain the body; and as awakened spiritual consciousness in the spinal centres, they give divine powers to the *yogi*. After the death of Pāndu and Mādri, Kunti (the higher *chakra-s*), along with the newly awakened powers of the five *chakra-s* (Pandavas) goes back to the kingdom (body) to rule it with their divine powers.

Spiritual symbolism of the five Pāndava brothers

Thus, Kunti (the power of dispassion) united with Pāndu (*buddhi*) gives birth to:

• **Yudhishthira**: calmness — ether element in *viśuddha* — born by the power of Dharma/righteousness.

• **Bhima**: life force/*prāna* — air/*vāyu* element in *anāhata* — born by the power of Vayu/Pavana.

• **Arjuna**: self-control — fire element in *manipura* — born by the power of Indra/king of the gods.

And Mādri (the power of attachment to dispassion) united with *buddhi* (Pandu) gives birth to:

• **Nakula**: adherence to rules — water element in the *svadhishthāna* — born by the power of the Ashvins.

• **Sahadeva**: resistance to evil — earth element in the *mulādhāra* — born by the power of the Ashvins.

As mentioned earlier, the Pandavas are born of two mothers. This represents the two parts of the spinal cord: the first containing the first three *chakra-s* (till the navel) born of Kunti and the second,

lower end (spinal nerves/ganglia till the base of the spine), the twin sons of Mādri. The three higher centres enable direct spiritual activities and the two lower centres help indirectly (by adherence to good and resistance to evil).

The one wife of the five Pandavas, Draupadi, is symbolic of the life force/ *prāna* in the body that is coiled at the base of the spine/*kundalini*. This power awakens and as it moves up, it unites with the five *chakra-s* and produces powers in the *sādhaka* called *siddhi-s*, symbolising Draupadi producing a son with each of the Pandavas.

In short, Man's soul consciousness has descended into body consciousness. The senses and the blind *manas* (Dhṛtarāshtra) and *buddhi* (Pandu), both exist in the body. There are constant fights between the forces of *manas* cum senses (for external pleasure) and the *buddhi* (for Soul consciousness/peace).[20]

The game of dice/ the game of delusion

In this game man loses his soul bliss (divine nature) in gambling with the pleasures of matter/ the senses. The sense mind (Dhṛtarāshtra) takes over man's whole body (the kingdom). The senses then throw out / exile *buddhi* or intelligence of the soul. The whole body is ruled by the senses influenced by heavy desire (Duryodhana).[21] Man, living in the pleasure of the senses (Kauravas), will finally suffer from ill health, greed, anger, sex, jealousy, egotism, and so on. He then uses his *buddhi*-intelligence and its children (Pandavas) to war with the senses to get back the lost kingdom (body) under the guidance of his Master (Krishna).

Paramahansa Yogānanda says that Man evolves in twelve-year cycles (12 years to puberty, 24 years to adulthood, 36 years to maturity, and so on). Hence, *buddhi* (Pandavas) takes 12 years (exile period) to get back their kingdom (taken over by the sense habits — Kauravas). The 13th year of *ajñāta-vāsa* (disguise) is symbolic of *samādhi-yoga* meditation. During this meditation (*samādhi*), Man accumulates many soul qualities (the support of many kings) to war with the senses (Kauravas). In *samādhi* meditation, the *buddhi*'s powers of divine soul qualities become very powerful — the Pandavas become very strong — they awaken psychological astral powers.[22]

The children of *buddhi*/Intellect with an army of spiritual habits try to reclaim the kingdom (return from *vanavāsa*). But the sense tendencies fight back for the body (kingdom). So, with the help of Krishna (the guru-awakened soul-consciousness) the war is fought (war is *sādhana* for spiritual evolution) to get back the kingdom from Ego (Bhishma) and the sense tendencies (Kauravas).

Krishna is the supreme person, *kṛshna-chaitanya, kutastha-chaitanya*, consciousness of *brahman*, existing in creation. The awakened spinal *chakra-s* unite their powers along with the advancing *kundalini* force with this *kṛshna-chaitanya* in the *kutastha* or *ājñā chakra*. *Kutastha-chaitanya* is also called *sākshi-chaitanya*. (For example, in a

theatre, the light illuminates, at once the actors, audience, the owner and musicians, but is not involved in anything that they are doing, and continues to be there even after they are gone.) Similarly, *kutastha-chaitanya*, remains apart from the sensory works of the *manas* and senses, *buddhi*/intellect, *aham*/ego, and *chitta*. He simply reveals the truth of them with His own light and remains the same Self-Effulgent one, whether they are there or not.

The *kutastha* is aware of whatever happens in the human mind (*manas/buddhi/aham/chitta*), hence is also called *sākshi-chaitanya*. Since it remains aloof, uninvolved and detached from all work, thing or authority — not part of any of the states of the mind — it is incorruptible and totally in the present/timeless.

The light of *brahman*, Consciousness, lives in all souls and reveals all about their minds, but the mind is not able to know Him! The smallest thing is appearing because of *kutastha-chaitanya* but the individual soul is not able to know that.[23] Krishna, similarly remains aloof in the war, never fights, but reveals everything to the Pandus. He is the cause of the transformation and victory of good forces against the worldly forces.

With Krishna, the Pandava forces (children of Intellect) win. Meaning, with the help of the Light of the *kutastha-chaitanya*, the *ābhāsa-chaitanya* (reflected light inside the *jiva*) gets knowledge of everything. Without external light, no knowledge is possible for the *jiva*. All things are revealed by *kutastha-chaitanya*; nothing can be re-vealed by the mind of the *jiva*. Hence Krishna is the fundamental cause of Victory.

The battlefield is thus man's body — Kurukshetra — the field of action. It is in this field the children of the blind sense-mind, and the children of *buddhi*/pure intelligence, fight each other.

As mentioned in the introduction, Paramahansa Yogananda says the hundred sense inclinations are the product of five *jñānendriya-s* and five *karmendriya-s*. These ten sense organs produce ten evil tendencies each. Lahiri Mahasaya, elaborates on these Kaurava names and says these evil tendencies are produced in different directions of the body.

[The army of a hundred sense inclinations briefly delineated by Paramahansa Yogananda are: Duryodhana/material desire; Dushasana/anger; greed; avarice; hate; jealousy; wickedness; lust; sexual attachment; sexual abuse; promiscuity; dishonesty; meanness; cruelty; ill-will; desire to hurt others; destructive instinct; unkindness; harshness of speech; harshness of thought; impatience; covetousness; selfishness; arrogance; conceit; pride of caste; pride of social birth; racial pride; false sense of delicacy; highhandedness; saucy temper; impudence; ill-feeling; quarrelsome attitude; inharmoniousness; revengefulness; sensitive feelings; physical laziness; lack of initiative; cowardice; absentmindedness; mental sloth; spiritual indifference; unwillingness to meditate; spiritual procrastination; impurity of body; impurity of mind; impurity of soul; disloyalty to God; ungratefulness to God; stupidity; mental weakness; disease-

consciousness; lack of vision; littleness of mind; lack of foresight; physical ignorance; mental ignorance; spiritual ignorance; impulsiveness; fickle-mindedness; sense attachment; enjoyment in seeing evil; listening to evil; tasting evil; smelling evil; touching evil; thinking evil; willing evil; feeling evil; speaking evil; remembering evil; doing evil; fear of disease; fear of death; worry; superstition; swearing; im-moderation; too much sleeping; too much eating; dissimulation; pretence of goodness; partiality; doubt; moroseness; pessimism; bitterness; dissatisfaction; shunning God; and postponing meditation.]

Conclusion

The great Masters say, constant attachment to material senses/pleasures bring ill health, worries, ignorance, and lack of spiritual life. The soul forces (Pandavas) must fight the sense habits (Kauravas) to establish peace, wisdom, abundance and health. Every person has to fight his own internal battle of Kurukshetra. It is a war not only worth winning, but in the divine order of the universe and in the eternal relationship between the soul and God, a war that sooner or later must be won. The seeker of liberation begins by understanding the mysterious workings of this universe. All men yearn to know their origins and the creator, *brahman* — God. Various names are used to suggest that single Entity. By comprehending this creation bit by bit, man ascends back through the highway of Consciousness to his true home.

(Concluded)

Endnotes

10. Swami Sri Yukteshwar Giri, 2018, *Srimad Bhagavad Gitā. Spiritual Commentaries of Yogiraj Sri Sri Shyama Charan Lahiri Mahasaya and Swami Sriyukteshvar Giri*, iUniverse, Bloomington, IN, USA. (**SY**), 289

11. SY, 289

12. SY, 299

13. SY, 299

14. SY, 299

15. SY, 300

16. SY, 301

17. Paramahansa Yogananda, 1999, *God Talks with Arjuna — The Bhagavad Gita*, Chapter 1–5, Yogoda Satsanga Society of India, Kolkata-76 (**PY**), xxxix

18. SY, 300

19. SY, 301

20. PY, xxxiii

21. PY, xl

22. PY, xli

23. SY, 302

It is only when the mind is free from the old
that it meets everything anew, and in that there is joy.

J. Krishnamurti

Sree Narayana Guru — Messenger of Universal Brotherhood

K. Dinakaran

Col. H. S. Olcott, founder President of the Theosophical Society (TS), in his *Old Diary Leaves*, Sixth series, mentions the tragic condition of the lower castes, *paraya-s* (Pariahs), who were considered so by the so-called upper castes in Kerala, India. The condition of other communities was also very pathetic in Kerala. He founded the first TS lodge in Kerala in 1882 at Palakkad, then Palghat, which was part of the Madras Presidency under British rule. He personally experienced the ugly face of the caste system prevalent at that time. A large portion of society was illiterate, poor, and under the clutches of various superstitions. Olcott states:

> The inhabitants . . . have kept to their ancient customs and beliefs with peculiar tenacity; . . . practitioners of sorcery abound and some of the worst aspects of black magic, such, for instance, as lycanthropy — the changing of the sorcerer's astral body into the appearance of wolves and other wild animals — are said to be rife.

While commenting on the social condition of the *paraya-s,* he says:

> I may say in parenthesis, that nowhere are the difficulties of my poor friends the Pariahs, so merciless as in this strip of a physical paradise [Kerala]. The hatred of the caste people is so exaggerated that, if a Pariah is walking on a public road and sees a caste man approaching at a distance, he is obliged to give utterance to a peculiar cry of warning and before the caste man reaches him, must turn off into a field beside the road, turn his back and hold his hands over his mouth, so that by chance not even a whiff of his breath might be wafted in the direction of the other.

The situation of other lower castes in Kerala and other parts of India were similar, but it was in the worst form that it existed in Kerala, which made Swami Vivekananda call it a "lunatic asylum" after seeing it firsthand during a visit.

It was in this social background that Sree Narayana Guru was born in a small village in Kerala in 1855 in the Ezhava community. He was educated in the traditional way under a teacher, and learned Sanskrit, Tamil and Malayalam.

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He acquired the skill of writing small *stotra-s* and poems on *devi-s* and *deva-s*. He was the contemporary of Vallalār (Rāmalinga Swāmikal) (1823–1874), Ramana Maharshi (1879–1950), Chattambi Swāmikal (1853–1924), Vaikunda Swāmikal (Ayyā Vaikundar) (1809–1851), (Thykkāttu Ayyāvu Swāmikal) (1814–1909). Both Sree Narayana Guru and Chattambi Swāmikal learned some yogic practices from Thykkāttu Ayyā.

Aruvipuram Temple installation

As per the request of devotees who were prevented from entering temples with high-caste ritual performers (*poojari-s*), Sree Narayana Guru installed a *śivalinga* at Aruvipuram on a Sivarāthri (festival dedicated to Śiva) in 1888. The priesthood questioned his authority to install a deity, being a non-brahmin, but he silenced them with the reply: "I installed an Ezhava Siva (the Ezhava community was considered a lower caste)", mocking the very foundation of casteism. He wrote this quartet and placed it at the entrance of the new temple:

jāti-bhedam mata-dvesham
etumillāte sarvarum
sodaratvena vāzhunna
māṭṛkā sthānam-ānitu.
(This is the model abode,
where all live in brotherhood,
without caste discrimination
or religious rivalry.)

Guru consecrated many temples for the use of devotees and dissuaded them from worshipping elementals. He substituted such evil deities with Śiva, Subramanya, Sarasvati, and so on. For him the temple is a place where people come and assemble with purity of mind and body. He stressed the need for personal hygiene and cleanliness of temples' surroundings.

A specialty of Guru is the wide variety of temples consecrated by him. At one place he installed a mirror implying the ancient exhortation: "Man, know thyself". He installed a lamp at another temple declaring: "Let there be more light". The *aum,* or *pranava-mantra,* was the deity at another temple. At Sivagiri, where he set up an *āshrama*, he inaugurated a temple with the deity Sri Sārada — the Goddess of Wisdom, as per Indian philosophy.

Sree Narayana Guru's teachings exemplify a close similarity with Theosophy:

- One caste, one religion, one God for humanity.
- Whatever be the religion, it is enough if humanity becomes good.
- Ask not, think not, and talk not about caste.
- Acts that one performs for one's own sake should also aim at the good of other human beings.
- Gain freedom through education.
- Gain strength through organization.
- Gain prosperity through industry.
- Liquor is poison: make it not, sell it not, drink it not.

Guru travelled the length and breadth of Kerala and Tamilnadu and some parts of Karnataka to spread the message of the universal brotherhood of humanity. He very rarely travelled outside India. Only twice he visited Sri Lanka (then

Ceylon) as per the request of the disciples.

Guru's Major Works

He wrote more than sixty poems and *stotra-s* in Sanskrit, Tamil, and Malayalam. This includes small poems of five *śloka-s* to larger ones of a hundred *śloka-s*. The major work of Guru is *Ātmopadeśa-śatakam* ("One-hundred Verses of Self-Instruction") The seventh verse of this work declares the existence of *jivan-mukta-s* or Mahatmas:

> To wake ever more,
> ever sleepless to remain,
> as if for this today
> you are not fit,
> then in the service
> of those silent ones who,
> ever dwell awake to AUM,
> absolved from birth,
> steadily fix your form.

Anukampa-daśakam ("Ten Verses on Compassion") and *Brahmavidyā-panchakam* ("Five Verses on Wisdom of the Ultimate Reality" are also worthy of mention.

Pilgrimage to Sivagiri

In 1928, based on devotees' requests, he announced that those who observe ten days of self-purification according to the Buddha's principles of five purities — of body, food, mind, word, and deed — can do a pilgrimage to Sivagiri every year. He also set eight objects for the pilgrimage similar to the *Ashtānga-mārga* of Lord Buddha, namely, Education, Cleanliness, Devotion to the Supreme, Organisation, Agriculture, Commerce, Handicrafts, and Technical training. Here we can see his farsightedness to uplift a community which was so illiterate and ignorant that the only job assigned to them by the society was toddy-tapping (producing an alcoholic drink from the palm tree).

Guru was not a silent spectator of the social movements and agitations at that time for the removal of social stigmas like untouchability and caste discrimination. He visited the Vaikom Satyāgraha shelter where Indian National Congress leaders with the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi were agitating for temple entry and the permission to walk on the roads near the Vaikom Mahadeva Temple.

Guru's meetings with eminent people

When Mahatma Gandhi visited Sivagiri they had a conversation on the *varnā-śrama-dharma* (the division of duties according to social class and stage of life) prevailing in the Hindu community. Gandhiji, a self-declared *sanātana-dharma* (eternal law or religion) practitioner, asked Guru, pointing to the nearby mango tree: "You say, all are one and the same, look there, the leaves of the same tree are different." Guru replied: "Taste them, they all are the same." This answer silenced Gandhiji, and he bowed to him.

Rabindranath Tagore visited Guru and remarked: "I have been touring different parts of the world. I have never come across one who is spiritually greater than Sree Narayana Guru."

Romain Rolland, mystic and writer who visited Guru, described him as a "*jñānin* of action".

Meeting of Maharshi Ramana and Guru

Sree Narayana Guru met Maharshi

Ramana in 1916 at Thiruvannāmalai Ashram. The two sages reportedly stood facing each other for a moment as if their eyes were speaking to each other. After this silent encounter Sri Narayana Guru sat under a *chāmba* (rose apple) tree and narrated some lines to his disciples. Later on this very small philosophical poem in Sanskrit came to be known as *nirvṛti-panchakam*. (Five Verses on Tranquility) which goes:

> 1. What is your name? Where are you from? What is your caste? What is your profession? How old are you? He who is free from such questions alone attains tranquility.
>
> 2. Come! Go! Don't Go! Come in! Where are you going? He who is free from such discussions alone attains tranquility.
>
> 3. When did you go? When did you come? From where did you come? Who are you? He who is free from such questions alone attains tranquility.
>
> 4. Me or you, that or this person, inside or outside? He who is free from such discussions alone attains tranquility.
>
> 5. Equal towards the known and the unknown, without discrimination between self and others, then why is this difference? He who is free from such questions alone attains tranquility.

In 1928, when Sree Narayana Guru was resting at Sivagiri Ashram during the last days of his mortal life, Ramana sent his disciples to look after him. Ramana said to one of his disciples on Sree Narayana Guru's visit to his Ashram: "Guru was a great man. He had nothing to speak with me. He knew everything."

Sree Narayana Guru and the TS

Sree Narayana Guru and the TS in Kerala always shared a good relationship. When Dr Annie Besant visited Calicut (now Kozhikode), Kerala, Guru asked her to lay the foundation stone of a temple to be constructed by him. In those days it was highly revolutionary since lower caste Hindus were not permitted to even go near temple premises. Guru was given a warm reception at Annie Hall, Calicut, and was presented with a *mangala-patram* (encomium), by the leaders of the TS, which amply describe him:

> We recognize in you a born leader of men, a genuine descendant of the ancient saints of our motherland, a true *brahmana* soul sent out by the guardians of humanity for the uplifting and redemption of a community, of whose spiritual interest those who call themselves high caste have grown so sadly oblivious.

The great Malayalam poet Kumāran Āśān, a close disciple of Sree Narayana Guru, wrote a poem on Dr Annie Besant and presented it on her birthday on 1 October 1918, in which he praises her as the "Lamp of *parabrahma-vidyālaya* (school of The Wisdom)". She had been just released from her internment at Ooty by the British Government.

With the blessings of Guru an organization named "Sree Nārāyana Dharma Paripālana (SNDP) Yogam" was formed in 1903 to propagate the teachings of Guru and to uplift the downtrodden com-

munity in Kerala. This paved the way for many such organizations to come up in different communities to remove superstitions and outdated customs such as child marriage, prohibition of widow remarriage, depriving girls of education, untouchability, and so forth. When the SNDP Yogam had its 10th Annual Conference at Calicut it was presided over by Manjeri Rama Iyer, a theosophist and associate of Dr Besant in the Home Rule movement.

World Religions Conference at Alwaye (now Aluva) Advaita Ashram in 1924

The *Sanathanā Dharma* magazine, the organ of the Kerala Theosophical Federation, reports the details of this World Religions Conference held at Alwaye, Kerala, on 3–4 March 1924. Guru invited the representatives of various religions to this conference, and they were asked to present the teachings of their particular religions. At the entrance of the Ashram he placed a board declaring the object of the Conference: "To know and make known, not to argue and vanquish." He was stressing the essential unity of all religions irrespective of their outward customs and beliefs.

He invited Justice Sadasiva Iyer, the then General Secretary of the Indian Section of the TS (1924–25), to preside over the meeting. Two of the speakers of the Conference were Manjeri Rama Iyer and Ramakrishna Iyer, who were leaders of the TS. They spoke on Theosophy and the Theosophical Society, and on Buddhism. Representatives of other religions such as Hinduism, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Sikhism also spoke on the occasion. At the end of the Conference, he declared his intention to open a school at Sivagiri Ashram known as "*Brahma-vidyālayam*" to teach about all religions to aspirants. It was a novel step in history for the unity of religions. The School was opened two years after his *samādhi* in 1930 and still sheds light to true seekers.

H. P. Blavatsky in her magnum opus, *The Secret Doctrine*, vol. I, states that "far back in the mists of a forgotten past there was among the Hindus only 'One Veda, One Deity, One Caste'". Sree Narayana Guru's slogan was not different: "One Caste, One Religion, One God, for humanity".

While commenting on an allegory mentioned in the *Bhāgavata Purāna*, HPB talks of the Hamsa, "a fabulous bird, which, when given milk mixed with water for its food, separated the two, drinking the milk and leaving the water; thus showing inherent wisdom — milk standing symbolically for spirit, and water for matter". She also states that there is mention of a caste named Hamsa which was "the 'one caste' par excellence".

The term Hamsa, or Paramahamsa, is attributed to highly enlightened humans who have achieved the highest qualifications of discrimination and who could see the essence of things. Sree Narayana Guru was such an enlightened soul. Known as Sree Narayana Paramahamsa his message is very relevant at this time and even in the coming centuries. ✧

The Mayas — II

ALICE DIXON LE PLONGEON

AFTER carefully measuring everything so that Dr Le Plongeon might make, as he since has, a restoration of the once beautiful mausoleum, we proceeded to excavate. An arduous undertaking, because we were unprovided with implements of any description. A wall five feet thick of solid masonry formed the shell of the monument, and to our surprise we found the interior filled with loose stones, none weighing less than twenty pounds; liquid mortar had been poured among them, not sufficient, however, to make a solid body to hold them together.

The removal of these stones was a tedious task, because after we had made a shaft down into the centre, to touch one on either side entailed the falling of a hundred. We had no planks, no ropes, no nails; the great knife, called *māchete*, had to serve all purposes. With saplings from the forest we constructed a palisade to prevent the stones from crushing us. The saplings were tied together with thick vines, called in India *jungle ropes*. With such primitive means Dr Le Plongeon also succeeded in constructing a derrick — or at least what served as one — a lever like those used in Egypt and other parts of the Orient to draw water from deep places. We drew stones. Our Indian workmen were unwilling to have the tomb opened, believing that if they touched anything there the soul of the prince would bring upon them sickness, if not death, before a year elapsed; consequently they worked badly and slowly. Six feet below the summit we found a perfectly level floor, a few inches thick, made of concrete, the upper surface covered with fine plaster, painted bright yellow. (I need hardly tell you that among the Mayas each colour had its special meaning.)

Beneath the floor there were more stones, down to the level of the ground; then a second floor. Through this we likewise broke, and again our expectations met with nothing but loose rough stones. But after a few hours' work we began to pick up from among them curious round buttons, apparently bone, with double holes bored through their backs. Soon a large round stone urn came to view. It required three men to remove the heavy lid. Notwithstanding its size, the urn

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Alice Dixon Le Plongeon (1851–1910) was an English photographer, archeologist, and author. She was interested in Theosophy and was one of the first people to excavate and study the ancient Maya sites of Chichen Itza and Uxmal, which she related to Atlantis. From *The Theosophical Siftings*, vol. 3.

contained only some dust, which we took to be the remains of a human brain, and a large round apple-green jadeite bead. On a level with that urn, and quite near, a finely-sculptured white stone head was soon discovered. The workmen immediately called the figure "an enchanted King". The head was nearly double life-size, and there was much speculating as to the form and posture of the lower part of the statue, yet hidden beneath rough, heavy stones. On the following day we found a third floor, the head and shoulders of the statue rising through a hole in the middle of it. This floor being removed we discovered a second urn, larger than the first and containing partially cremated matter, the heart and viscera of the person represented by the statue. These remains have been analyzed. There was also an oblong head of jadeite, of that peculiar, apple-green colour which is found only in Burmah, being the rarest of all the jadeites. It would be interesting, indeed, if some person, having psychometric powers, could trace the history of this stone. In the same urn were small flat rings of mother-of-pearl, and some red cinnabar.

On the base, which was one piece with the statue, we found 64 beautiful arrow points, 32 on each side, some white, others green, said to be of jade, though we are inclined to doubt this, jade being too hard a substance to be worked, as these points are apparently, by chipping. The statue was too large and too heavy, weighing 3,000 pounds, for our men to hoist up a shaft without proper machinery, so we made an opening in the side of the monument, and an inclined plane down to the statue, which was some feet below the earth's level. Then, from the forked trunk of a tree, and a stone ring, a rough capstan was formed, with which to draw out the monolith. Ropes were indispensable. These our men manufactured from the pliant bark of a tree called *habin*. By these means, and after surmounting much obstinate disobedience on the part of our men, we at last brought the statue above ground. The posture is shown in the volume, *Sacred Mysteries*, already mentioned, but it conveys a very imperfect idea of the beauty of that ancient work of art, as it was when we first looked at it. One side of the body was perfectly white, the other a light brown, the flesh-colour of the natives. The garters, bracelets, and sandal-straps were of red and yellow; a ribbon round the neck was also red. From this hung a very curious breast-plate, like some now in use among high officials in Burmah. Between the extended hands, and resting on the abdomen, was a circular plate, like a modern soup-plate, representing Honduras Bay, the posture of the figure being intended, as said, to indicate the contour of what was once the Maya Empire.

Without nails or screws, Dr Le Plongeon managed to contrive a cart on which to remove the statue. We also had to open and level a road over which to convey it. At the end of fifteen days we had it away from the territory of the Indians, and within the military lines of the State. At that time a revolution broke out in favor of Porfirio Díaz, actual President of Mexico. Our men were no longer permitted to bear

arms, and we could not ask them to work in such exposed places without means of defense. In the forest we built a house over the statue, and went to study the ruins existing on islands near the east coast of Yucatan. During our absence, and at a time when Dr Le Plongeon was grievously wounded, the statue was seized by Mexican authority, and conveyed to the capital, where it now is in the Mexican National Museum. It was not properly taken care of, and when we visited that museum we found not only all the colour gone from it, but moss forming on it. Nevertheless, when Dr Le Plongeon asked permission to take a mould of it, the Mexican Government sent him a written permit, *provided he would not injure the statue*! . . .

Concerning the individual whose status we have been discussing, there is very much to be said, more, indeed, than can possibly be crowded into this discourse. Startling as it may sound, I assure you that that personage seems to have been the living origin of the myth of Osiris in Egypt. There are so many facts pointing to this conclusion that we cannot close our eyes to it, and when Plongeon's new work is published, many readers will probably agree with us. (It will be interesting, indeed, to have it shown that Osiris was ever a living person, and not merely a solar myth. But the Troano manuscripts. show that the Mayas "personified the forces of Nature", as did the Egyptians. TPS [Theosophical Publishing Society, London.])

I have already mentioned some fresco paintings which we found in one room. It was in a shrine, built to the memory of that same person. The dedication on the outer entablature of the edifice reads thus: "Mó" — (this was the name of his wife, and we all know that Isis is likewise called Mo, spelt Mau) — "Mó craves to fervently invoke Cob, the warrior of warriors." A grand portico led into the shrine, and there we excavated from beneath the fallen roof a superb altar, supported on fifteen figures, after the manner of caryates [caryatids]. It reminded us of altars erected at the entrance of Egyptian tombs, on which fruit and flowers were presented every year, as among the Mayas, to the souls of the departed.

But the altar itself is almost a *facsimile* of certain ancient structures yet existing in the old city of Angor-Thom, Cambodia. Not two of the caryates are alike. Some have a triple breast-plate, triangular apron, and curiously fastened girdle; three things exactly as we see them used by officers of high rank in Burmah. It is only one more link added to a long chain of similarities, connecting certain Eastern and Western lands, and showing that in remote ages intimate relations must have existed between them. Could you see the Maya and Indo-China altars side by side, you would be amazed at the astounding similarity! You will remember that Valmiki, in his beautiful poem, the "Ramayana", tells us that Maya, the terrible warrior, magician, and architect of the Danavas, took possession of, and established himself in, the southern part of India, in Dekkan particularly, (Maya is here spoken of under the male aspect, as the

chief of Kabiri, the warrior kings. Maya is as frequently seen under its female aspect as Mai, Mo, or Moon, *i.e.*, the Moon, or Isis — passive nature — TPS) that Maya was a great navigator, whose ships sailed from the Western to the Eastern ocean, from the southern to the northern seas. And, strange to say, the etymology of the word "Davana" is, in Maya language, "He who has his house upon salt waters". I must ask your kind forbearance if, without bringing forward the many facts on which we base our opinion, I say that we have been forced to the conclusion that this ancient American civilization, if not the mother of ancient historical nations, was at least a great factor in the framing of these cosmogonic notions and primitive traditions, and in teaching them many of their arts and sciences.

Is it not admitted by geologists that the Western continent is the oldest? Hence it is the one on which biological conditions necessary to man's existence must perforce have been first developed. Would it not seem that civilization, like the heavenly bodies, following an eastward course,after completing a cycle of 10,000 years, at the end of which, according to the Egyptians, the souls gone West must return and begin a new earthly existence — civilization, I say, after many ups and downs, is returning to its birthplace to gather in its mother's lap fresh vigour before starting anew on its peregrination around the world? Watch its course. See how Western civilization is already invading Japan, China, India, and other Asiatic countries. History repeats itself. Its actual line of travel is that which it followed in bygone ages.

During a second expedition to the ruins of Chichen, we opened the tomb of the elder brother of the warrior Coh, that of a high priest named Cay, or Huancay, a word meaning in that language "the wise fish", which brings to mind Oannes, the personage, half-fish, half-man, said by Berosus to have brought civilization to Mesopotamia. The exterior of the monument was ornamented with beautifully carved stones, the greater number of which had fallen. Some represented fish, others sacred symbols. On the largest slab was a human face within the distended jaws of a snake. Around the face we found the name Cay, written in Egyptian as well as Maya hieroglyphs.

The tomb itself, like that of Coh, was square; its four sides facing the cardinal points. Thirteen steps on each side led to the top platform, which was 13 feet above the ground and 52 feet square. In its centre was a large slab, on which formerly was a statue, about double life-size, in the same posture as that of Coh. At the base of the monument we found the lower half of the statue. On the north side of the monument we opened a trench, and found it constructed similarly to the one previously opened. We had to prop back the stones as before. After ten days' work we reached the monument. There we found, on a level with the earth, a figure lying on its back, thickly coated with loose mortar. One leg was broken off below the knee, but we found it underneath the figure, and adjusted it in place to make a picture. The head rested on a stone painted bright red, represent-

ing a snake's tongue. The statue was in a squatting posture, but if standing would have been six feet high. It was of white stone, and was painted dark brown. The head was small and apparently hairless, painted blue, and over that, from the forehead down to the shoulders, were red streaks. Doubtless every one of these things had a significant meaning.

The eyes were open, and the lids painted blue. The lips were red. The ears were pierced, and so was the back part of the top of the head. In the palm and wrist of the right hand there was a groove, as if for a rounded stick to fit in. The figure is apish-looking, and the hands quite peculiar; but fingers and toes were furnished with nails of polished shell, neatly fitted in. Nearly all had fallen. The loins were covered with a scanty garment, like that anciently worn by Egyptian labourers. The right foot is turned in, as if the person had been club-footed. The sandals were fancifully ornamented and secured with red ties. After clearing off stones and mortar, we found that the statue had rested on conoidal pillars, placed horizontally side by side. There were four, 3ft. 3in. high, one foot in their greatest diameter, and painted blue, a colour emblematical of sanctity and mourning among the Mayas, and largely used at funerals by the old Egyptians.

Besides these four pillars we found 178 more. They extended over a space of twenty square feet, and were in places three or four feet deep. Two-thirds of them were blue, the others red. These conoidal pillars remind us of that which represented the Phoenician god, Baal. These found by us were probably emblems of sun-worship. The number 182 was the number of half the days of our year, and of that of Mayas, which had the same number. They also divided the year into lunar months, and like the Egyptians, had an epact of five unlucky days, and at the same time of the year as the people of the Nile.

On a level with the pillars were also twelve serpent heads, with feathers and various signs exquisitely sculptured on them. These were placed so as to face the various points of the compass. From the top of each head there stood up a kind of plume or flame, and on either side of the upper nostril was a perpendicular ornament, like horns. This, we have discovered, represents the opening pod of the Ceiba-tree, which was sacred to the Mayas, a tree being one emblem of their own country. The feathers painted on the snakes' bodies were coloured green, the scales of the belly yellow, as also the edge of the jaws. The inside of the mouth and the forked projecting tongue were red, the fangs and teeth white.

The whites of the eyes were beautifully polished shell, neatly fitted, with a round hole where the pupil should be. These twelve snakes, totems of twelve kings of the Can dynasty (Can being the Maya word for serpent), whose portraits are found in "alto-relievo" on a *façade* in Chichen, call to mind the twelve gods said by Herodotus to have governed the Egyptians before the reign of Menes, their first terrestrial King. On the south side of the excavation, at the statue, but lower down, was a round white urn, about two-

and-a-half feet in diameter. With difficulty four men pushed off the lid, discovering within only a little red substance and a square piece of green jadeite, with a human face, and letters carved on it. There was also a tube of the same precious stone, but the ends crumbled when we handled it. Besides these we found among the red matter many small pieces of turquoise and a ball of natural crystal, the special possession of the high priest and prophet. The urn and serpents being removed, we stood on a level floor. Two feet below we discovered a small pile of bones, those of a crocodile, and on each side of it was a smoke-coloured obsidian spearhead, about seven inches long; also many fragments of pottery, greatly varying in quality.

Below the bones was a concrete floor, perfectly level, and painted bright red, extending throughout the mound. Two feet below again there was yet another floor, the *seventh* in the mound, and bright yellow. Believing there might still be something more concealed we continued the opening on the south side, in which direction the spearhead had pointed. We soon found a solid block of masonry, and within it, its carved surface turned eastward, stood an oblong stone covered with symbols, painted blue, yellow, and red. Later on we found two others like it, and also a sculptured fish, painted red.

We came to the conclusion that the various things found in the tomb of Cay were sacred objects from the temple in which he had officiated, even the curious statue which we have described; while that of the priest himself was on the upper platform, his ashes being preserved in the urn within. The Mayas cremated their dead, preserving the viscera in urns, as the Egyptians did. Elsewhere we found a most beautiful portrait of Cay, carved in the round in pure white marble, not polished, but made to imitate the texture of human skin. We had the joy of seeing that exquisite piece of work just as it was when the artist put his finishing touches to it; for, owing to some event which we cannot now guess at, the beautiful sculpture had been concealed within solid masonry as soon as completed. In order that such a fine object should not be injured, and remembering the fate of the Coh statue, we again thoroughly concealed the portrait of Cay.

An unillustrated lecture is perforce dull, and I sincerely hope that it may be our happiness to bring before you on some future occasion the many pictures which we have; then we can go more deeply into the subject, and speak of many interesting points which it is impossible to make clear without illustrations. To give you an idea of the vastness of the subject, I may say that when Dr Le Plongeon, in March last, delivered seven lectures, he and his audience would have preferred fourteen. Dr Le Plongeon's manuscripts, now ready for publication, have been examined by scholars, who affirm that it will create a sensation among historians and scientists, and they are kind enough to add that it is bound to be recognised as one of the great works of the age.

(*Concluded*)

HPB in the Modern Worldview: Museological, Cultural, and Religious Aspects

ALINA F. MORHUNOVA

THE 12th of August is a special date for everyone who understands the significance of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky (HPB) in the context of the development of world culture, and it is special for Ukraine, and for Dnipro, the birthplace of the extraordinary woman who changed this world. In the house where HPB was born, now named the "Museum Center of H. P. Blavatsky and her family", is being established. The task of creating the Museum Center as a synthetic combination of museum, scientific, cultural, religious, and pedagogical institution involves a wide range of activities that will bring together researchers, cultural and public figures, and teachers interested in its development.

In our opinion, Blavatsky's great merit is that she not only laid the foundations of spirituality but also showed the possibility and necessity of relying on spirituality in all practical areas of human life. Her interests included natural sciences, history, philosophy, religious studies, and psychology. Blavatsky proved herself as a public figure, raising the most pressing social issues: the struggle for women's rights, the problem of Nature conservation, globalization, and the preservation of the world's national diversity and cultural heritage. In addition:

1. It is also important to note her great work in creating the basis for equal and friendly interfaith relations.[1]

> . . . the Theosophical Society was a melting pot. It gathered multiple trends from across the world, ranging from Western New Age Religions to Oriental ancient wisdoms, from spiritual culture to material culture; and at the same time, it gave rise to multiple parallel sociocultural, religious, and political streams which, rising from the theosophical embryo, found a way on their own.[2]

The ideas of the Universal Brotherhood of humanity are not unique to the theosophical movement, they "have been widespread in philosophies, religions,

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and reform movements throughout history before the Theosophical Society (TS) and some modern movements, contemporary with the TS, also constructed versions of this idea".[3] However, the history of the TS is an example of the practical implementation of the ideas of brotherhood and equal relations between representatives of different faiths.

2. Currently, in the cultural space of Ukraine, including in Dnipro, there is a growing interest in the personality of H. P. Blavatsky and her creative heritage. The uniqueness of her personality requires an extraordinary approach to creating a museum space dedicated to her, her family, and her creative work.

In fact, we are talking about a unique centre that aims to implement new cultural trends in our region through a combination of Western and Eastern culture and philosophy. In addition to the museification of the Fadeyev estate as the birthplace of HPB and the coverage of her unique family, there is a plan to organize an interactive exhibition and educational space that will allow for the introduction of elements of museum pedagogy in the work of the HPB Museum Centre, expanding educational activities, familiarising a wider audience with her extraordinary personality — she is included in the list of one hundred outstanding figures of Ukraine. There is also a plan for the creation of an innovative location in the city of Dnipro for the younger generation to study and imitate little-known pages of the national, historical, and cultural heritage of Ukraine.

The Museum Centre offers an introduction to two unique things in the cultural space of Ukraine: the outstanding woman of the 19th century, H. P. Blavatsky, (whose life is unique in itself) and the only museum in the world dedicated to her.

3. Conceptually, the Museum Centre can be presented as a reflection of the "three worlds" of Helena Blavatsky:

The first is the world of childhood, of the family, in which she was formed as a person. The world of her first victories and failures, her studies, her first difficult questions and the search for answers to them, the world of bitter losses, and the love of her family throughout her life, that became the support that helped her survive all the trials of her turbulent life.

The second world is the world of service, the world of her creative activity. This is the world that she created with her own hands and brought to the altar of Truth. This is the world that we can see embodied in her work, which is reflected in numerous memoirs of her relatives, friends, and associates. It is incredibly rich and requires indepth scientific research.

The third world of the future, which sprouts from the spiritual seeds laid down by HPB in her writings, knowledge, and ideas that she brought to the world. This is the field of science, which, through its modern discoveries, confirms the scientific concepts of natural, historical, psychological, and other fields laid down in *her* greatest work: *The Secret Doctrine*. It is also the field of art, whose representatives have created masterpieces of world significance in music, painting, literature,

and so on inspired by *The Secret Doctrine*. But this is really the sphere of the future, because the potential laid down by Helena Blavatsky is only at the initial stage of discovery by scientists and artists of our time. And this world envisages the creation of a modern space for scientific research, for holding seminars and conferences on the topics of the Museum Centre. Her legacy requires cultural understanding and interpretation, including through cultural events: thematic and art exhibitions, concerts, and educational events.

4. The three worlds of Helena Petrovna Blavatsky are transformed, moving from one to the other, forming an indissoluble unity as a bridge from the past to the future. She was and is a person of the future, who stepped into the unknown without fear, so the museum named after her should not only be original, modern, and innovative, but in our opinion, its primary task is to be an indication of the direction of cultural development for our contemporaries and to direct its various activities into the future. ✧

Endnotes:

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We cannot live only for ourselves.
A thousand fibers connect us
with our fellow humans.

Herman Melville

A Field That Breathes

CATALINA ISAZA CANTOR

There is something sacred
about a space where no one is asked to fit,
where the path opens
and no one guards the gate.
Here, Theosophy is not a name to defend
but a presence that invites,
asks nothing,
and allows everything.
Some arrive with questions,
some with longing,
others with doubt.
Each one is welcome.
Each one is free to stay,
or leave,
or return again someday.
The teachings —
they are not monuments.
They are seeds.
They must be planted in living soil
and allowed to grow into something real.
And if they do not serve the soul
or nourish the world,
then we must ask:
what are they for?
Now, new tools speak in new tongues.
Artificial Intelligence
can help us remember
that truth wears many faces.
It can shape learning to the individual,
translate silence into sound,
build bridges across time and language
so that meaning is not lost —
but transformed.
Let the young shape the forms.
Let the elders carry the fire.
Let both sit down together,
not to teach or correct,
but to listen and discover
what still wants to be born.
As for me—
I stayed because I was free to go.
I stayed because no one told me
what to believe.
I stayed because I found companions,
who did not need to agree,
only to walk with me awhile.
This is what matters:
not the books, not the structures,
but the quiet,
and the love that lingers
when everything else is stripped away.

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