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Theosophy of the Bhagavad Gita

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This past October, co-editor Marty Lyman started attending a six week course in practical application of the precepts in Chapter Six of the Bhagavad Gita. Concurrently the same topic was chosen by the Blavatsky Net. In addition, we are in communication with Dr. Chris Bartzokas of the Wales Theosophical Study group. They are engaged in the study of the Bhagavad Gita and Voice of Silence. We look forward to some fruitful interchange with them.

The following study in the Bhagavad Gita was contributed by Dallas TenBroeck on the Blavatsky network of Internet.

Mr. Reed Carson has suggested that we ought to look to see if there are any similarities between the exposition of Theosophy as offered by Mme. Blavatsky and the teachings of Krishna in the BHAGAVAD GITA, which is 5,000 years old.

He further asks if we can trace the “6 Principles of Man and Nature” in the Gita teachings. Here are some thoughts:

Part One

The Scope of the Bhagavad Gita

Mr. Judge introduces his rendition of the Bhagavad Gita in the following words :

If the story of the Mahabharata be taken as that of Man in his evolutionary development the student will then



have before him an account of that evolution.

The blind king Dhritarashtra is the human body which is acquired by the immortal Monad in order to go through the evolutionary journey; the mortal envelope is brought into existence by means of Tanha, or thirst for life. He is blind because the body without the faculties within is merely senseless matter, and thus is “incapacitated” for governing.

The Theosophical scheme holds that there is a double line of evolution within us.

The Kurus represent the more material side of those two lines. They represent the “Lunar Pitris” (also named Barishad, and Somappa). They are the “fathers” or the embodied instincts and intelligence that were developed as “skandhas” during the Moon cycle of life that preceded our present Earth Cycle of evolution.

And, second, there is the more spiritual side of our natures and characters. This spiritual side, represents all the virtues and wisdom acquired through experience, and, the immortal Spark.

They (the Pandavas) represent the “Solar or Agnishwatta Pitris.” Arjuna, and the rest of the Pandavas, his four brothers, represent the more spiritual characteristics of mankind. Arjuna is also named “Nara,” or man. We find that man has been called a Solar/Lunar being for this reason.

Krishna is Narayana, or the Spirit-

tual Man. He is One who has perfected himself many incarnations and cycles in the past and who has been entrusted (as a wise and compassionate Dhyani) by Nature with the task of guiding mankind in his present evolution.

The Bhagavad Gita represents the kernel of this advice. He incarnates from time to time to impart this advice in a manner that will be understood during a cycle. Krishna ushered in the Kali Yuga in the year 3,102 BC, and it has 427,000 years still to run. The Bhagavad Gita was offered by him so that this advice will serve as a guide to the thoughtful among men, from cycle to cycle, so as to embrace the whole of that period.

The Kurus, the lower or personal portion (Kama-Manas) of our nature developed first. They obtain power on this plane for the time being, and Duryodhana their chief (oldest son of the blind King Dhritarashtra), “prevails,” so that the Pandavas or the more spiritual parts of our mind nature (Buddhi-Manas), are banished temporarily.

The long wanderings and varied hardships of the Pandavas are wanderings caused by the necessities of evolution before these better parts are at last able to make a stand for the purpose of gaining the control of Man’s evolutionary struggle. Their aim is to raise the whole of man’s nature to the highest level possible, incarnation by incarnation, by encouraging him to seize his lower nature and discipline it.

The hostile armies who meet on the plain of the Kurus are those two collections of human faculties and

powers, on one side; the personal and lower [that] tend to drag us down.

And on the other, the noble and spiritual, aspiring towards spiritual illumination, knowledge and wisdom; [that] inspire us to raise our plane of consciousness towards the universal, the permanent and the eternal.

This story has reference also to the cyclic rise and fall of nations and of the whole race. The battle refers not only to the great warfare which mankind as a whole carries on, but also to the struggle which is inevitable as soon as one unit of the human family resolves to allow his higher nature to govern him in his life.

Opposition from friends, from the habits he has acquired, and from those which arise from heredity, will all confront him.

Then, it will depend on how he listens to Krishna, the Logos (the Higher Self), shining and speaking within, whether he will succeed or fail." (Gita, Introduction, pp. xii-xv.)

Interpretations of the Gita

The poem can be read in many different ways, depending upon the view-point taken, e.g., whether it is considered in its application to the individual or to cosmogenesis, or to the evolution of the Astral world or the Hierarchies in Nature, or to our moral nature, and so on.

The Bhagavad Gita tends to impress upon the individual two things:

- 1st. selflessness, and
- 2nd. right action.

The studying of it and living by it will arouse the belief that there is but one Spirit and not several; that we cannot live for ourselves alone, but must come to realize that there is no such thing as separateness, and no possibility of escaping from the collective Karma of the race to which one belongs, and then, that we must think and act in accordance with such belief (Gita, Introduction, pp. xvi-xvii)

The Bhagavad Gita means "The Song of the Lord." It was originally recorded orally in Sanskrit. Later it was put into the Devanagri script, the "writing of the Gods."

In that language every word and syllable has its own note, rhythm and tone associated with it. These are interior meanings, correctly used only by the wise.

Within the "written words" will be found indications of the guides and keys to correct pronunciation, which lead to deeper study. We, however are limited to the written words and their implications. To this we apply, as Mr. Judge suggests in his Notes, "the psychology of the orient."

"The psychological system of the Hindus underlies every word of this poem. We cannot afford to ignore anything whatever that is connected with the events. Mr. Judge proposed to study the Bhagavad-Gita by the light of the spiritual lamp, which the Spiritual Soul will feed and increase within us if we attend to its behests and diligently inquire after it." Gita Notes, pp. 2-5

I — Vedic Literature — The Setting of the Gita

The sage Vyasa served as interpreter, or revealer of the true meaning underlying the “form” in which the Vedas were recorded. Vyasa is a title of respect for one of the highest Gurus (teachers). The Bhagavad Gita is chanted by the 28th Vyasa bearing that title. Incorrectly, he has been called the originator of the Utara Mimansa, the sixth school of Indian Philosophy, Vedanta, the origin of which is far earlier.

The “Vedas” are the most ancient records, still partially accessible to orientalists, setting forth a record of spiritual wisdom regarding the origins, purpose and functioning of our Earth. The Vedas are four in number (Rik, Sama, Yajur, Atharva). Vedic commentaries, are divided into four groups: the Sanhitas, the Brahmanas, the Aranyakas, and the Upanishads.

The “Sanhitas” contain hymns in descriptive praise of the Vedic “Gods.” The attributes of these “Gods” form a key to the qualities, when perfected, in Nature and in Man. These qualities (Sattva-Rajas-Tamas, or Wisdom-Action-Indifference - and their combinations also 3 in number) have to be perceived, understood and applied. If one considers that the ATMA is the ONE PRINCIPLE, then the 3 Gunas and their 3 permutations makes 6, which is the total of the “principles” of nature and of man that theosophy speaks of (SD I 157, SD II 596, 593, 612).

The “Brahmanas” describe vedic rituals and sacrifices. The external “formal rites” conceal an inner significance. They indicate an ideal and disciplined life based on a knowledge of the interaction of those principles. This leads to a process of self-purification to be tried and tested by the “pilgrim.” This can be studied, and then used by the aspirant to initiation.

The “Aranyakas” allegorize those rituals and sacrifices and offer philosophical interpretations of them. They compass the disciplines adopted by those who seek, while living and working in the “World,” that inner solitude and retirement which leads inward to the Higher Self (the “Ray” of the Absolute, the Monad that is innate to all beings), and thence to the Universal Vision.

The “Upanishads” contain for beginners living in the world and driven by karma, the next step in learning the inner philosophy of the Vedas. Each of the Vedas has some of the Upanishads, appended to it.

One hundred Upanishads are known; of these eighteen are considered major and on these Sri Shankaracharya has written explanatory commentaries. They are: Isavaga (or Isa), Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukiya, Aitareya, Taittiriya, Chandogya, the Brihadaranyaka, and the Bhagavad Gita which is placed in the Maha Bharata (an Itihasa, or history). It opens the Kali Yuga, and forms the key-note for our cycle.

The Vedas and their accompanying explanations, called Brahmanas (commentaries, explanations, used by the Brahmins), and Upanishads (expositions and illustrations of the

secret meanings for the chelas) are written in a seven-fold code, capable of being interpreted in six ways, besides the seventh which unites them all, and is to be explained only by a Sage, a Rishi.

There are seven hundred slokas or verses in the Gita, distributed in definite proportions among the 18 (10 + 7 + 1) Chapters—suggesting a numerical relation to the “seventeen rayed” Central Spiritual SUN of our Universe.

H.P.B, in “*The Secret Doctrine*,” gives a survey of the seven-fold division of the Universe. A devoted student, using this hint, can recover the mystic “keys” as he proceeds. He will find his inner progress represents the key that opens to him depths of meaning underlying the merely physical.

Besides the Brahmanas and the Upanishads, the student will find in Indian lore: the Puranas (ancient commentaries), and the Itihasa (history) of vast cycles, and of events overseen by the Raja-Rishis, rulers of the past. These records present living ideas, and ideals for use in daily life by those who listen to them.

Indian life, in the villages, and away from the pressures of western civilization, still finds these ancient sacred stories recited so as to keep alive the flame of a superior intuition burning in the minds of the simple folk. The Brahmins were constituted, by natural inclination, the preservers of this wisdom.

The Maha-Bharata, of which the Bhagavad Gita is a portion, belongs to the Itihasa (history). Krishna, the avatar (a self-

willed incarnation of Vishnu) makes it sublime as teaching, and practical as the “Gita” or Song of the Lord.

Ancient India was named Bharata-Varsha and was, in that glorious past, “the land of active (spiritual) works; the land of initiation and of divine knowledge (SD II 369).” But in course of time the ancient cycles of the golden, silver and bronze ages closed, and the wisdom studied there was forgotten.

The glories achieved in them now become the subject for plays, dramas and cradle tales. The inroads of selfishness, and a forgetfulness of the tenets of spiritual wisdom in its broad sweep of compassion for all, have brought us to this sorry cycle of dreary waste, mean objectives and petty ambitions—all terminating with the death of this present “personality.” A sure perception of the immortal inner Higher Self has generally been lost. The sense of purpose, of training and learning has been lost—for a while.

Sanjaya — the Witness

In the Gita, Sanjaya, can be said to stand for man’s undying consciousness. In one aspect—he is also the “scribe,” or the Divine Witnesses — the “Lipika,” whose duty it is to inscribe the events and choices of all life on the ineffaceable tablets of the Akasa. It is his duty to relate the discourse between “Sun”-Krishna, and “Moon”-Arjuna to the “physical body,” whose intelligence is symbolized by that focus, its ruler, the blind King Dhritarashtra.

The Kali-Yuga Cycle

At the opening of Kali Yuga, the “Iron,” or dark age of difficulties, of effects following swiftly upon their causes, are placed the events, historical, psychical and spiritual, that form the setting of the war at Kurukshetra (symbolic of the personality—”Field” of the Kurus—passions).

This “Kali-Yuga,” an age filled with “dark deeds, and mean ambitions,” began at the death of Sri Krishna. This event, The Secret Doctrine states occurred at midnight on the 18th of February in the year 3,102 BC. The first 5,000 year cycle of this vast period to cover 432,000 years ended in 1897/98. almost a hundred years ago.

What is Man ?

Our waking consciousness, is that state of consciousness when the fight between the “true,” and the illusions of the “false” is constantly waged. This is a fact, not history or narrative only, but the human situation in which we all share.

The Historical Kurukshetra

An historical war was used by Vyasa, to illustrate the secret story of the “fight for the right” that is constantly in progress within every man-mind. Every man and every woman is such an aspirant: an immortal Soul-Mind, an eternal Pilgrim. The Bhagavad Gita is sung to us.

The historical battle on the plain of Kurukshetra (some 50 miles north of modern Delhi) took 18 days, and the number of chapters in the Gita-Song is 18. Sanjaya, meaning “the

completely victorious” (the jiv-atma) is already endowed with that spiritual faculty called the “divine Eye.” Krishna awakes this power in Arjuna in the 11th Chapter of the Gita, so that he might see the Universal Form including all beings in evolution.

This is the manifested Universe, which in another sense, is an aspect of Krishna himself, and of Arjuna, as he grows to understand.

Arjuna, sensing his immediate unreadiness, begs Krishna to withdraw this power and permit him to again “see” Him as his friend, and counselor. He does not lose the memory of the experience, and from that point on the discourse assumes the nature of instructions to the devotee who labors to attune himself to the Universal divine virtues, the Paramitas transcendental which are his true inheritance.

Who is Krishna?

The principles of the Bhagavad Gita are the same today, as when 5,000 years ago, Krishna, the primeval teacher, took advantage of the opening of a closing cycle that allowed Him to return to the stage of the Earth as an incarnation of the Universal Self, an example of the perfection that all men can attain, and for the help and the instruction of his many chelas, which Arjuna represented. Krishna reincarnated voluntarily as a prince who used the disguise of a shepherd—a divine shudra.

Krishna is the ancient name of the undying, universal Spirit. This Spirit radiates “a portion of” Itself in countless millions of “rays,” each having a potency identical with that One Source, and each “ray” has, in turn, accepted

the burden of being again enveloped by matter so that it may assist in the evolution of self-consciousness in each unit of that “substance.”

It supports and guides evolution individually and collectively. It is that which preserves and continually circulates the creative life-force (jiva) that unites all beings. “It” (or as Krishna, “HE”) lives in the hearts of all, and therefore is our own true center. He resides in our own heart.

He is not “outside,” nor is He a remote, an abstract “Deity,” or “a jealous God” that is to be feared and propitiated by empty words and ceremonies in some man-made temple. He is our very own Higher Self, the “Secret Self,” which is the universal SELF, and has been called, more intimately, “the Self of all creatures.”

Who is Arjuna ?

Arjuna (or Nara), also a prince, represents each of us as a Soul, a Thinker. He also represents symbolically, the whole of humanity. Krishna (or Narayana) is the Divine, the Perfected Man. He is the spiritual guide, He is the Example of actual Success in attaining the Highest level of Universal Perfection. Therefore he is the Inspirer of all devotee-pupils. He is the original teacher of the Vedanta. He is that great Spirit, which is seated as “the Ego in the hearts of all beings.” Krishna is called a poorna avatar, or an embodiment of the consciousness of the Universe, the One Spiritual Being—Mahavishnu (that One who is the supporter and container of All, the embodied Wisdom, and the primeval Sage). [See SD I 207-210.]

Arjuna, prince of India, represents in ourselves the “man-mind,” or the embodied mind: It is, therefore, the highest aspect of the Lower Manas. This mind works with and through the brain. Through that instrument and its astral counterpart it mixes and mingles with every aspect of the “Personality.”

Under the influence of the One Consciousness which unites it to the highest at the further end, the embodied mind, Kama-Manas is endowed with self-consciousness, Ahankara, or “awareness of his separate being.” It is the basis for selfishness. He can say: “I am I.” He can hold a dialog within, between the two aspects of his own mind: the “Lower Manas” (Arjuna) discussing “right action” with Krishna (the “Higher Self”).

Arjuna, like us all, is three-fold: body, soul, and Spirit—each aspect being conscious on its own plane, as well as being aware of the other two on theirs. He is aware that each represents an aspect or is a mixture of the 3 universal qualities: Sattva (Truth, Spirit, Goodness), Rajas (energy, activity, forcefulness), and Tamas (inertia, sloth, laziness). In total: seven. In this way, “man” is called a “miniature Universe,” and concentrates in himself every power to be found in It. It is the development of the control of these powers and qualities that forms the subject of true occultism, or wisdomism—the “Song of Living” the Gita.

What is the Importance of the Bhagavad Gita ?

Its wisdom is seen in our minds as a logic that arouses our intuition, our own responsive

heart-wisdom. It therefore uses ideas and sounds which reach the heart of listener, evoking practical idealism and altruism. As an allegory, it illustrates cooperative life.

In the rhythms of the verses used will be found an echo of those universal and eternal laws which frame the harmony of the Universe. They affect our whole being and help to make us powerful for good to others. Hence it is chanted—or, sung. Hence, it is also called: “The Song of the Lord.” Hence, unselfishness, sacrifice and compassion are the natural expression of those key qualities, welded into a unit by the “iron” will which lead to man’s perfection of understanding and wisdom.

What is the Human Situation ?

Wisdom is a statement of nature’s condition. It resides in the innate, spiritual Self, and speaks to the human situation. We, as Mind-Ego, using the embodied mind, reflect from within into our physical brain-consciousness a portion of the light of Eternal Wisdom. We as brain-minds (Lower Manasic beings) have to choose to achieve a greater purity in daily life, so that we may better understand and reflect It, and more faithfully fit ourselves to offer It to others who are seeking for It.

This requires from us, as personality, what has been called “the sacrifice of knowledge.” We have to discipline ourselves to become students of the environment. Our Karma, works through Nature, and it places before us situations which we chose earlier. “Arjuna” is each one of us.

We are not isolated. We are part of a great and glorious army of disciples. Each is

able to sacrifice his apparent isolation, his selfish nature to do those needful and compassionate works where he is at present, on behalf of the Great Law.

What are the Metaphysical Implications?

The Sun (Spiritual Source of life for us and our solar system), whose true glory it is impossible to “see” with our physical eye, represents the mysterious “Central Spiritual Sun,” or Krishna in his primeval and Universal condition. The True Sun is hidden by a “vase of golden light.” It is remembered daily by all true Brahmans when they repeat the Gayatri verse. (WQJ Art. I 583.)

In Sanskrit “Krishna,” means the “dark one;” or, occultly: he who stands as shield between the manifested and the Real. He is the Pythagorean Petroma, the Interpreter of the True, and he absorbs, in his compassion, the brilliance of the ‘Central Spiritual Sun,’ thus shielding all creatures from the destructive light of truth complete, while preserving the many planes of living and experience in the field of the Universe, in which all beings evolve. This field, as a whole, is Intelligence. The “One Consciousness” that gives each being its sense of identity at the level where it lives. It also serves to unite the opposing poles of “Spirit” and “matter” at all points, and is the conduit of rapport between every living creature and the rest. In man this uniting agent is the Mind, linked to the emotional, feeling nature. [SD II 79-80]

Krishna, the Higher Self is Pushan He is the one who holds the “vase of golden light” He is that power within that shields our embodied minds and personality from the “Sun” of the

One Spirit until such time as we become one with Him and are able to become a conscious portion of that protective “shadow,” and thus protect and shade others.

This is one of the interpretations suggested by the Gayatri verse, used every morning by all true disciples, to recall to the awakening memory the source, oneness and purpose of living. It is also symbolic of the eternal and indestructible form which the devotee is ever constructing for his use, transmuting it out of living matter which he attracts to himself as a basis, while studying, testing and applying these doctrines.

Krishna and Vishnu (the force of preservation, of continuity—of reincarnation and karma) are one. Vishnu is that aspect of the triple World of Spiritual Energy in manifestation called symbolically: Brahma-Vishnu-Siva, or the conjoined and eternal powers of creation, preservation and regeneration.

These rebecome active after every grand cycle of Pralaya (general rest and dispersal of forms—not annihilation), comes to its close and the manifested Universe awakens to a new “Day” to resume its interrupted development.

It is the Eternal “Vishnu” who places and enlivens the seeds of past karma for all beings that were alive and “awake” at the close of the last Manvantara. This “seed” finds itself placed by Nature symbolically in the “womb” of Brahma, the “creator enveloped in his protective Egg.”

It is he who returns them to active awareness and through “Natural Impulse”

rejoins each individual “spirit” in time and space to its skandhas, those material vestures that provide it with the appropriate vehicle so that it may resume its interrupted work and pilgrimage in the planes of materiality..

When a great cycle closes, he, as Siva dances the entire assemblage of manifested worlds into pralaya or “rest.” The polarity of all and energies and forces of all the beings involved in evolution are carefully preserved and then wrapped in slumber, so that each may reappear when the Maha-Yogi (great Initiator) regenerates them, dancing them back into the vortices of life in the new “day,” so that each may resume its evolution. A fresh Manvantara begins.

The rhythms of time cycles, and the ever on-going purposiveness of Life, sweeps all living beings forward without any exceptions. This fact is the source of the teaching: “nothing ever dies.” It is only rested, transformed and reborn so as to continue its appointed work. Every being in the Universe is in very truth an “Eternal Pilgrim.”

Every morning our awakening symbolizes in a small way this great event. Hence, the first thoughts of morning should be significant ones.

Glory be to Krishna, ever faithful guide, protector of all the lives.

[To be concluded next month].

Letters received

Appreciation

Dear Brother;

I heartily send my letter of appreciation for your very wonderful contribution towards enlightening my people and I through your great spiritual magazine *The High Country Theosophist*.

I would like to drive into your mind the fact that none of your magazines you've so far mailed to us have mislaid their destination. All of them are intact in the shelf made for them in my room, and the purpose for which they had been sent has been realized in no small way. Theosophy as a way of life has been thoroughly imbibed in by many people in my locality, "Ohaozara."

We are very sorry for our inability to write earlier than now. It has been due to circumstances beyond our control and chiefly due to increases in postal charges, hardship and difficulty in obtaining what one wants in terms of foreign exchange.

Now we very humbly put it across to you that we are very highly interested in your theosophical magazine but cost is a hardship for us. We therefore still solicit your kind assistance in this direction.

My group is made up of both youths and adults. Some are students of higher institutions of learning. We need certain materials from you to keep us steadily on the path of truth. They are as follows:-

1. Books on Theosophy
2. Audio and Video tapes for meditation, lectures [that] enable us to see other vital activities of our people over there..
3. And other important materials that would help us know the divine truth more.

Sadly, the June issue of the high country magazine revealed the death of my spiritual friend Liesel F. Deutsch.

I almost became petrified at the Post Office when I glanced at the front cover of the magazine. My wife felt disturbed due to the demise of this knowledgeable servant of God and humanity.

... Liesel was somewhat aged before she passed on; Jupiter would have spared her life to enable her to further more alleviate the sufferings of mankind.

The woman was my undaunted spiritual mentor for so many years. In some degree, she took care of my spiritual development and her efforts have not been wasted.

I would be grateful if what I wrote on the other foolscap could be published in the theosophical magazine. It is a tribute to her.

Thank you for giving my letter in loving consideration.

Fraternally yours, Rev. Isaac P. Okorie

TRANSITION OF A SPIRITUAL GIANT

by
Isaac P. Okorie

It is indeed through solving problems in accordance with the highest light we have that inner growth is attained. Liesel F. Deutsch was truly a genuine theosophist, judging from the kind of life she led.

As an illuminated soul, she attempted to reach out to many persons, sharing with everyone the very truth and wisdom contained within the doctrines of theosophical principles.

Liesel was kind, loving, sympathetic, helpful and humble. In no aspect of life did she not display an impersonal love for her fellow human beings. Because she was willing to reach out in love, she made an impressive breakthrough with the message of theosophy here in Ohaozera, L.G.A. Ebonyi State of Nigeria. Even though she had never come to West Africa in person, all the members of our circle, nevertheless, regarded her transition as the greatest shocking event of recent times. I feel sure that all people, theosophists especially, whose lives touched hers will feel keenly the sudden passing away of this great mystic.

We must thank the creator of life who caused the incarnation of sister Liesel on this plane of consciousness. She really worked -- as a conscientious, selfless worker and deserves a higher wage. Liesel lived to identify with the sufferings of mankind. She was inspired by the transcendental knowledge that came to her from the heart of God. We thank the cosmos for a life well spent and send our greetings to her lovers in Syracuse, New York and to theosophical students all over the world.

Adieu Liesel!

Fraternally yours Rev. Isaac P. Okorie

SECRET DOCTRINE QUESTION AND ANSWER SECTION

**CONDUCTED BY GEOFFREY A.
BARBORKA**

I

Readers of The Canadian Theosophist are invited to participate in this I feature by sending their questions to The Editors to be forwarded to Mr. Barborka.

Question. What reincarnates?

Answer. Although the answer to this question may be given in as brief a manner as the query-in two words-the significance of the response is gained when the reason for it is supplied, namely, the reason for *The Secret Doctrine's* response, as well as the need for understanding the constitution of man-usually referred to as the seven principles of man. For this study has greater meaning than is usually suspected. Here is H.P.B.'s recommendation:

“. . . study well the Principles of both the Kosmos and ourselves, dividing the group into the permanent and the impermanent, the higher and immortal and the lower and mortal, for thus only can we master and guide, first the lower cosmic and personal, then the higher cosmic and impersonal. Once we can do that we have secured our immortality.” (S.D. III, 514 3rd ed.; V, 489, 6 vol. ed.)

Following the advice, the permanent consisting of the higher and immortal constituents, usually referred to as the higher triad-is first listed:

Atman-The Divine Spark (The Monadic Essence)
Buddhi-The Discriminating Principle

Manas-The Mind Principle

The impermanent--consisting of the lower and mortal constituents--the lower quaternary:

Kama-The Desire Principle
Prana-The Life-Principle
Linga-sarira-The Model Body
Sthula-sarira-The Physical Body

There is no need to consider the mortal components here: these do not reincarnate.

Atman is defined as that which: ... neither progresses, forgets, nor remembers. It does not belong to this plane: it is but the ray of light eternal which shines upon and through the darkness of matter . . ." (S.D. I, 244 or. ed.; I, 264 3rd ed.; I, 289 6 vol. ed.)

It does so by means of Buddhi, its upadhi (a term which may be rendered "a veil of spirit.") These two principles, Atma Buddhi, are termed the Monad, which in its turn requires an upadhi.

--- In other words, the two higher principles *can have no individuality on Earth, cannot be man, unless there is*

(a) the Mind, the *Manas-Ego*, to cognize itself, and

(b) the terrestrial *false* personality, or the body of egotistical desires and personal Will, to cement the whole, as if round a pivot (which it is, truly), to the physical form of man." (S.D. II, 241; II, 252, 3rd ed.; III, 244 6 vol. ed.)

Thus it is Higher Manas-Manas *Ego* which reincarnates, termed the Reincarnating Ego.

In *The Key to Theosophy* H.P.B. poses the question: "What is it that reincarnates?" and answers it:

"The Spiritual thinking Ego, the permanent principle in man, or that which is the seat of *Manas*." (p. 121 or. ed.)

Question. What is (a) the Reincarnating Ego; (b) the Spiritual Soul; (c) Sutratman; (d) Immortal Self?

Answer. If the questioner had in mind to ask: "Are these terms synonymous?" the response would be: No--not in the sense H.P.B. uses the terms.

(a) The Reincarnating Ego is defined as Higher Manas. For, continuing the cited extract from *The Key to Theosophy* as to what it is that reincarnates:

"It is not Atma, or even Atma-Buddhi, regarded as the dual *Monad*, which is the *individual*, or *divine* man, but Manas; for Atman is the Universal ALL, and becomes the Higher Self of man only in conjunction with *Buddhi*, its vehicle, which links it to the individuality (or divine man)." (p. 121)

(b) The Spiritual Soul is defined as buddhi (S.D. I, 157; I, 181 3rd ed.; I, 212 6 Vol. ed.); also in *The Key to Theosophy*:

-what we call the two principles or aspects of *Manas*, the higher and the lower; the former, the higher Manas, or

the thinking, conscious Ego gravitating toward the Spiritual Soul (Buddhi); and the latter, or its instinctual principle, attracted to *Kama*, the seat of animal desires and passions in man.” (p. 120)

(c) The Sutratman: this is a Sanskrit compound used in Vedantic philosophy, which as its terminal component indicates is linked with Atman; sutra means thread, and Atman is usually translated “the Self.” The Thread-self may be described as that golden cord which enables man to manifest on earth, linking the immortal Self with the impermanent vehicle. This is *The Secret Doctrine’s* explanation of the term rather than the Vedantists’ for the comment is made that “their explanation differs somewhat from that of the occultists; to explain which difference, however, is left to the Vedantins themselves.” (S.D. I, 17; I, 45 3rd ed.; I, 82 6 vol. ed.) Later, in the second volume this definition is given:

“In each of us that golden thread of continuous life-periodically broken into active and passive cycles of sensuous existence on Earth, and super-sensuous in Devachan-is from the beginning of our appearance upon this earth. It is the *Sutratma*, the luminous thread of immortal *impersonal* monadship, on which our earthly lives or evanescent Egos are strung as so many beads according to the beautiful expression of Vedantic philosophy.” (S.D. II, 513; II, 540 3rd ed.; IV, 82 6 vol. ed.)

The italicization of the verb expresses the continuance of the thread-self throughout the cycle of existences. The mortal personalities are called the “evanescent Egos.” The active cycles of existence, of course,

signify incarnations on earth, each one of which is followed by a passive cycle, represented as the super-sensuous interlude in Devachan.

(d) The Immortal Self is Atman, referred to in the above citation as the “immortal monadship,” inasmuch as Atman represents the Monadic Essence, the source of the Monad, Atma-Buddhi. In *The Key to Theosophy* the Immortal Self is referred to as “The Higher Self is Atma, the inseparable ray of the Universal and One Self.” (p. 175)

Question. How was (a) the Reincarnating Ego compounded; (b) its present nature; and (c) its relation to the Manasaputra?

Answer. (a) The answer to this question may best be given by quoting *The Secret Doctrine*, which in its turn quotes from the Book of Dzyan. In the extract “Breath” signifies Atman, for Sanskritists suggest that the root meaning of the verb from which the word Atman is derived means to breathe:

“ ‘First, the Breath, then Buddhi, and the Shadow-Son (the Body) were “created.” But where was the pivot (the middle principle, Manas)? Man is doomed. When alone, the indiscrete (undifferentiated Element) and the Vahan (Buddhi) the cause of the causeless break asunder from manifested life’ unless cemented and held together by the middle principle, the vehicle of the personal consciousness of Jiva.’ ” (S.D. II, 24I; II, 251-2 3rd ed.; III, 244 6 vol. ed.)

With regard to the word “created” (which was placed in quotation-marks), it signifies brought into evolutionary development, be-

cause the passage prior to the quotation reads: “. . . everything proceeds cyclically, the evolution of man like everything else, the order in which he is generated is described fully in the Eastern teachings.” (*Ibid.*) Observe the sentence following the word “created”: “Where was a Manas?” We may supply the answer: It was not yet brought into evolutionary development; hence the declaration “Man is doomed.” That is to say: for three and a half rounds man (literally the thinker) is not able to function as a thinker, because of the nonfunctioning of the Manas-principle. When the Manas-principle was awakened by the Manasaputras during the Third Root-Race the “compounding of the incarnating Ego” was brought about. *The Secret Doctrine* explains what would occur had not the awakening of the Manas-principle been “compounded” (to use the word of the questioner):

“Incarnate the Spiritual Monad of Newton grafted on that of the great saint on earth—in a physical body most perfect you can think of—i.e., a two or even a three-principled body composed of its *Sthula Sarira*, Prana: (life principle), and *linga sarira*--and if it lacks its middle and fifth principle you will have created an *idiot* - at best a beautiful, soul-less, empty and unconscious appearance. ‘*Cogito -- ergo sum*’ (I know--therefore I am) -- can no find room in the brain of such a creature not on this plane, at any rate.” (S.D. 242; II, 252 3rd ed.; III, 244 6 vol. ed.)

(b) The present nature of the compound is set forth in this manner: “It is the *Fifth* and the *Fourth* principles -- *Manas* and *Kama rupa* -- that the dual personality: the real immortal Ego (*if it assimilates itself the two higher*) and the false and transitory personality . . . the

two having to be closely blended for purposes of a terrestrial existence.” (*Ibid.*)

(c) The concept of the relation of the Higher Manas to the Manasaputras is also presented. In the extract which follows, Fire Dhyanis and the Agnishvattas are equivalent terms for the Manasaputras, the hebdomadic essence signifies the septenary essence:

“That class of the ‘Fire Dhyanis which we identify on undeniable grounds with the Agnishvattas, is called in our school the ‘Heart’ of the Dhyani - Chohan Body; and it is said to have incarnated in the third race of men and made them perfect. The esoteric Mystagogy speaks of the mysterious relation existing between the hebdomadic essence or substance of this angelic Heart and that of man, whose every physical organ, and psychic, and spiritual function, is a reflection, so to say, a copy on the terrestrial plane of the model or prototype *above*.” (S.D. II, 91-2; II, 96 3rd ed.; III, 100 6 vol. ed.)

A further hint is given in the following extract, showing that there is, indeed, a potent link between the Manasaputras (here termed “incarnating Powers and Principles”) and mankind:

“While incarnating, and in other cases only informing the human vehicles evolved by the first brainless (manasless) race, the incarnating Powers and Principles had to make their choice between, and take into account, the past Karmas of the *Monads*, between which and their bodies they had to become the connecting link.” (S.D. II, 318; II, 332 3rd ed.; III, 318 6 vol. ed.)

From *The Canadian Theosophist* Vol.49, No. 1 - March 1968

(To be Continued)

The Origin and Evolution of Man

by
Adam Warcup

Continuation: Tape 3, side one

Review: In the first two sessions we covered the area of evolution of monadic life as the first of three streams of evolution. We have the physical and intellectual left to cover.

Physical stream of evolution:

Picture the process in the following way, think of the accumulative process of the monadic essence arriving at its individual points of differentiation that we call the human monad. When we look at the physical, we will look at it from the bottom upwards so that we can see the latent potentiality of that particular individual monad being brought into full function.

The first step needed is to build a physical basis within which the other streams of evolution can be focused and thereby bring into function the other aspects of man's being. When we arrived at the half way point of man's evolution we have now produced a very complex physical form with its brain, nervous system and senses that are sufficiently complex to allow the second phase of man's evolution to commence.

Within the matrix of this now complex responsive physical form, the intellectual or psychic form can now begin. This is the beginning of man's complex personal nature with mind and self consciousness. Spiritual

man's being can now take individual birth within the matrix of the physical and developing intellectual complex that represents individual man. These qualities have lainnnnnnnnn latent in his nature right from the start but the complexes of mind and psyche must be developed for the spiritual qualities of man's inner being to flower into a dhyana chohan.

Up until now we have been considering the metaphysical matter. We have been addressing the nature of the underlying life and consciousness of the monad. They are metaphysical because they are not objective from our point of view. Keep in mind though that what we consider as metaphysical is objective and manifest in its own realm. There is a boundary between the metaphysical and physical and we need to be conscious of the movement from a conceptual area to a physical and objective area.

How did we arrive at our physical body? From the Theosophical perspective we start with the metaphysical and then arrive at the justification for physical existence.

We can not look at our present world and look backward in time due to a gross error of refraction. To use an analogy: Think of a stream of water running over some pebbles. As we look at the pebbles we know that a process of refraction has taken place due to physical laws of light. Where we perceive the pebbles to be is in fact not where they are. Similarly, as we look backward in time an analogous process of refraction has taken place in the time scale. We see a virtual image of the past based on the present. The Theosophical position says that this is not so

because the very circumstances of the world itself have been changing over that period of time. The further back in the time the more different circumstances and environment become.. Much of this information deals with periods of time which have long since past and therefore the terms used must be in allegory and symbol. How much is allegory and symbol remains for us to try and work out.

Some scholars like Sri Krishna Prem in his book *Man Son of Man* interpreted this work on a purely allegorical basis. We do not intend to do that here. We will presume that the masters were talking about things as they were but we must keep in mind that there must be some allegory.

We see the world based on our five physical senses now. Even our concepts of the world is largely based on the external world as we now see it. To try and see the world as it was based on what it is now is very highly misleading.

We see the world as our five physical senses now and even our concepts of the world beings is very largely based on the external world as we now see it. To try and use our terms and references to describe the past worlds is highly misleading thus allegory and symbolism must be allowed when trying to understand these passages.

Some recapping points:

- At the birth of our planetary chain of globes, there was no form. All form had to be reconstructed anew.

- There is an outline of the arrival of the various kingdoms. Each kingdom would use the material below it to reconstruct form according to its own manifestation.

- The impetus to provide form comes from the monadic essence underlying that kingdom which provides the indwelling idea.

- This sequence is repeated on each succeeding globe on the first round. Each globe must be built in exactly the same fashion, they are different from each other in degree of substance becoming denser as we go down the descending arc of globes.

- There are three classes of monads constituting the human kingdom and in the first class the lunar pitris are most evolved and must pass through the triple cycle of mineral, vegetable and animal kingdom and assimilate the nature of the newly formed chain.

- We are discussing the human monad evolvment. It is not the lower kingdoms graduating into higher kingdoms.

“... for the “human” Monad, whether *immetallized* in the stone-atom, or *invegetallized* in the plant, or *inanimalized* in the animal, is still and ever a divine, hence also a HUMAN Monad. Therefore, the Kabalists say correctly that “MAN becomes a stone, a plant, an animal, a man, a Spirit, and finally God. Thus accomplishing his cycle or circuit and returning to the point from which he had started as the *heavenly* MAN. But by “Man” the divine Monad is meant, and not the thinking Entity, much less his physical body.

(To be continued)

9-13-99

John Greschner writes:

As a Jnana Yogi, digest this from the *Spanda Karikas* by Jaideva Singh page 11

“The glorious great Lord by his power of absolute freedom assuming the subjective roles of Siva, Mantramahesvara, mantresvara, mantra, vijnanakala, praalayakala and sakala and the role of sphere of objects appropriate for each subject, in the process of gradual descent, displays by way of the play of concealing his inner nature, the succeeding aspects by suppressing the preceding ones, though they serve as the substratum for the succeeding aspects. In the gradual process of ascent he displays the preceding aspects by eliminating the succeeding ones in that case of Jnana Yogis (the Gnostic Yogis).”

“Thus he shows the succeeding ones in a developed form in the preceding ones by making them give up their limitation, and the preceding ones in a limited form by suppressing their higher state (in order of descent). So he shows everything as of the nature of everything else. The usual perception of a difference is due only to limitation caused to appear by him. The teaching of this sastra is meant to destroy this perception of difference.”

The essence of this sastra, and its teaching is that Absolute Consciousness, from its own body and field, contracts into the various tattvas (essence of each stage of manifestation) of the subjective and objective spheres of “being,” that is appropriate to that tattva. As the monad ascends, it withdraws the contracted state into each higher expanded state. It carries the tattva level to a new expanded state from which it had originated.

This is the Shiva Consciousness and His motion of expansion\contraction or Shakti. The descent is like an ocean flowing and becoming a sea, a great lake, a pond, and then a puddle. [Note: John is thinking Theosophically, we would normally want to think of rain becoming a puddle, pond, lake, sea and ocean. Ed.] The water is still water. Consciousness always remains Consciousness, and only the level of awareness changes as it contracts or expands. The Consciousness is witnessing the deepening contraction and expansion of the tattva.

This “Sadasiva” tattva, witnessing of “I am This,” is a higher or more expanded level of Consciousness. It is a more expanded level from the normal human state of consciousness of the ego. The human level is higher than a frog’s, yet, it is all the same Consciousness, just within different manifested vehicles.

From the human perspective where ever you look and whatever you see is the Unlimited Consciousness contracted into that form. It is the play of the human mind dancing in its limited

conditional concepts as the samskaras of the ego. It will lead you to believe otherwise (Maya).

All the inner psychic instruments of the Puryastaka i.e. the discriminating intellect of Buddhi at the Kama manas level, Ahamkara (human ego), manas (mind) and even the five tanmatras or five senses are all Unconditional Consciousness in their specific contracted form. You can and will expand any and all of them up through the ascended stages to their original state which is Unlimited Consciousness. Nothing is lost in the process. How could it be?

The contracted state simply becomes the expanded state, the small the large.

THIS IS WHY WE MEDITATE AND DO ALL THE SADHANA (SPIRITUAL) PRACTICES. IT IS IN THIS PROCESS OF EVER INCREASING EXPANSION OF OUR AWARENESS (WITNESSING) THAT WE BECOME AWARE OF WHO AND WHAT WE ARE. BE AWARE OF YOUR MANTRA SO'HAM (I AM THAT), AND THAT ALL INCLUDES EVERYTHING ELSE. DO NOT ALLOW YOUR OLD TAPES AND SAMSKARAS TO LEAD YOU ASTRAY INTO MAYA.

PLENTY REPORT

September 19,1999

Dear Friends of Plenty:

Greetings from southern Belize. It's Sunday, and people in Punta Gorda are making the most of a gorgeous, crystal clear day by the sea. The palm trees are shimmering and dancing in the sun and breeze. Families and friends are strolling along Front Street outside our office in bathing suits on their way to a swimming spot up the road. Troubles are forgotten today. Belizeans know how to do Sunday.

Have we told you lately how important you are to Plenty? How much we love you and appreciate you? Sometimes people here will say, "Give thanks," which seems to mean something like, "I thank you and, because we are one, let's take a moment to be thankful together and add to the amount of thankfulness in the universe."

Never underestimate the ability of a bureaucrat to wake up. The head of USAID-Brian Atwood - is leaving the job after six years, and he felt the need to express himself concerning the state of the world in general and US foreign aid in particular:

"Don't believe those stories about democracy and free enterprise enabling developing countries to lift themselves out of poverty."

Part of the problem, according to Atwood, is what he sees as Washington's pinch-penny attitude toward Third World problems.

“What will it take to wake up our political leaders?” he asked. “More failed states? More wars? More south-to-north migration? More transmission of infectious diseases? More terrorism?”

After six years as head of the Agency for International Development, Atwood will return to the private sector. He could have gone quietly, as his predecessors have done, but decided not to.

“The sad and even dangerous reality is that globalization and the democratic market economy movement have not closed the gap between rich and poor.”

“Economic growth”, he said, “can reduce poverty only with investments in health care, education, job creation, community development and food security. The industrial world is getting ‘shamelessly rich’ while most of the world’s people are losing ground,” Atwood said.

He put the ratio of rich to poor at about 65 to 1, or for every \$65 earned in industrial countries, \$1 is earned in poor ones. About 1.3 billion people live in extreme poverty, he said. Atwood called the government’s international affairs budget “a joke ... there is no money to do anything. It’s outrageous.” [1999 AP Online]

When we first went to Guatemala in the late 1970’s, we started to understand USAID. We would visit their offices in Guatemala City, and some of their staff would come out to our camp at San Andres Itzapa in their black Mercedes Benz US Embassy cars to talk to us. We had an on-going argument. In Guatemala, AID’s primary mission was birth control. Billboards, contraceptives and tube-cutting.

We argued that a more effective approach would be education and helping

people climb out of poverty. Statistics bear us out. With improved standards of living, birth rates go down.

In Belize, USAID is, for the most part, phased out. US State Department funds are largely directed to training judges and police and increased security at prisons. It’s almost as if they’re saying, “We really can’t do anything about the poverty, so we’ll attack the crime that poverty breeds.” This is of course - identical to the strategy in Guatemala - priorities turned on their head. Sometimes we’re so presumptuous as to suggest that part of Plenty’s purpose is to offer an alternative American Foreign Policy.

We’ve added four new members to our Board: Kathryn Hutchens, Director of the Development Office at the Farm, Director of The Coalition Business Center in Lawrenceburg, Tennessee and a member of the Tennessee Network for Community Economic Development; Clifford Figallo, former Plenty volunteer in Guatemala, and now working as Director of Community Development for the on-line magazine, Salon in San Francisco; Karen Heikkala, a recent Plenty volunteer in Belize and a Registered Nurse in Austin, Texas; and Patricia McClintock, a Special Ed school-teacher in Florida. It’s gratifying to have them working with us and be able to make use of their skills, expertise, experience, and openhearted commitment to the goals of Plenty. Their participation will make Plenty better at what it does, as well as able to do more.

Give thanks.

Peter Schweitzer Executive Director

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Website: www.plenty.org

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By floppy disk

3.5 or 5.25 inch (DOS format),
WordPerfect or MS Word
in ASCII format preferable.

By hard copy

Laser printer preferable,
NLQ Dot matrix OK
Good Quality Xerox OK

Unacceptable

Draft mode Dot matrix
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EDITORIAL

OBJECTIVES

THE HIGH COUNTRY THEOSOPHIST is an *independent* Journal and has the following editorial objectives:

(1) To serve the greater Theosophical Movement as a forum for the free interchange of ideas and commentary in the pursuit of Truth and to facilitate various projects in furtherance of Theosophical principles.

(2) To present articles and essays consistent with source theosophy, otherwise known as the Ancient Wisdom as given by The Masters and H.P. Blavatsky, and other theosophical writers consistent with this tradition.

(3) To examine contemporary ethical, religious, metaphysical, scientific and philosophical issues from the viewpoint of the source theosophical teachings.

(4) To impartially examine significant events and issues in the history of the theosophical movement which have affected and shaped its present-day realities.

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