

Marie M.

My dear Friends,

I have had two questions sent me by my correspondents to answer. One writes: "If, in our Higher natures we already are -- and always were -- divine, why was it necessary to leave the Father's house of Unity and encounter the ignorance and blindness of unreality? Was our free-will, if we had it, inherently dual?"

This is a very interesting point. It is the question of why the divine spark ever came out into manifestation, and entered the great way of evolution and development.

To begin with let us visualise the threefold nature of man as described by St. Paul, who, H.P. Blavatsky tells us, was an Initiate of the great Brotherhood of perfected men. He speaks of body, soul and spirit. The word "body" comes from the Anglo-Saxon "bodig" which also gives us the word "abode." Hence this body is not really us, though we have become completely identified with it in consciousness, but our temporary "abode." So H.P.B. tells us that we should look on it as the house in which we must live for a time. The Master K.H. calls it "the horse on which we ride." That is a better simile, for it is a living thing, and has a dim elemental consciousness of its own, apart from ours. When a person gets what is called "senile decay," it really means that the spirit is turning homewards towards the Heaven world, and leaving the body consciousness, with its memories and habits, in control.

St. Paul says that we have a soul too. The word in the Bible which is translated soul is the Greek word psyche which gives us the words psychic and psychology. Both these rather modern sciences, at least in the West, study the powers of the soul which are thought, emotion and will. But think how these change and develop. They cannot be the real man who is eternal. That person is the spiritual man, deep within. Says the Voice of the Silence, "All is impermanent in man except the pure, bright essence of Alaya." Alaya is the omnipresent Divine Life which permeates and informs all things. Now we can understand the saying of Professor Radhakrishnan, President of India, "Life is God, recognition of this fact is spiritual consciousness."

In The Secret Doctrine the disciple says to the Guru, "I sense one flame, O Gurudeva, and countless undetached sparks shining therein." These undetached "sparks" are our spiritual selves, who have never left the "Garden of Eden," that is, the inner spiritual realms, but have put down a limited representative to gather the fruits of these worlds of experience. Mr. Leadbeater used to say that it was like putting out an arm and then drawing it back. And the arm thinks it is the whole thing! That putting out and drawing back is called by us a "life." The eternal man does this for very many lives. Why? Because the divine possibility seeks contact with the material planes in order to develop vehicles of consciousness on all the planes of Nature.

It is this desire of the divine possibility in each of us to contact matter and the material worlds, to conquer and understand them, which leads him out into manifestation. The "undetached sparks" are unconscious, nescient, but by sending their representatives down here into matter they slowly evolve self-consciousness and self-motivation, and one day become conscious "gods" endowed with the full powers of that Life and Consciousness from which they came. And thus a "Son of God" is born from him who seemed only to be a "son of man" That long journey of the spirit, out into manifestation and back again, is described by H.P.B. in The Secret Doctrine. The return home, she says, is brought about "First by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts, checked by its Karma." And in that same passage she says that Adepts "become, they are not made." We are all incipient adepts.

This tremendous journey of the spirit in man is called by Plato the two great arcs, and by the Indian scriptures the Pravriti Marga, or the Path of Out-going and the Nivritti Marga, the Path of Return. This great cycle is called in the Christian scriptures the Fall (into matter) and the Redemption (into Spirit). On the out-going path the spirit evolves vehicles of consciousness on all the planes of Nature-- and there is no form of consciousness without its uphadi or sheath. Each of these rules in turn, and by ruling develops. On the Return Path the divine nature itself begins to awaken, and takes over. This is the "birth of the Christ" in us, "the hope of our future glory." The gradual purification and growth of the aspiring soul and body, have prepared the way for the birth of the spiritual consciousness in man.

That was always our ultimate destiny. As St. Augustine puts it: "We were created for Thee and our souls are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

The story of the Garden of Eden is a very ancient allegory of this evolution of man. It is far older than the Christian scriptures or even the Jewish ones, for the picture of a man and a woman with a tree and a serpent has been found on stone and jewels in the ruins of ancient Chaldea. The serpent is an age-old symbol of the product of a former evolution, an Initiate, or "Naga," serpent. Did not the Christ tell His disciples to become "as wise as serpents"? Thus was the nascent divine possibility led out of the Garden of Eden and brought under the play of the "Pairs of opposites" as the East would call it, and drawn to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, as the West would phrase it.

What does the unceasing play of the "pairs of opposites," and everything has its opposite, do for man? It slowly evolves self-consciousness and self-motivation. Why? That he may know how to choose the good and reject the evil, says the Bible. So this great cycle of the out-going and return of the spirit in man has a wonderful and splendid purpose. He goes out ignorant and undeveloped. He returns a god in wisdom and power, understanding all the planes of Nature and able to function on all of them. In the story of the Garden of Eden there was another tree, guarded by a Cherubim with a flaming sword. The Cherubim symbolises that Higher Consciousness (Light on the Path calls it "the Warrior within") and the sword is always emblematical of the will. When the hour is ripe the "lower" self will become one with the "Higher" self, and the consciousness of immortality will be his.

My correspondent asks if our free-will is inherently dual? Our free-will is first of all exercised down here to get things for the little self. But by that he grows. When the spiritual consciousness is born, his little will has become the One Will, the will of the Universe. Let me put it in the words of Lord Tennyson:-

"Our wills are ours, we know not how,
Our wills are ours to make them Thine."

The Christ calls the Higher nature in man "the angel in a man that doth always behold the face of my Father in heaven." Sometimes He also speaks of that Higher consciousness as the "pearl of great price," which is hidden, and has to be dug for, and at the price of all that a man hath. The difference between the soul who descends or falls into matter and the soul who has returned, is the difference between a new-born babe and a full-grown man. We may say why do we have to grow to our stature and fullness with so much pain and trouble? But it is a universal law of Nature. Every form of life begins in an infinitesimal beginning, and the wonder of it is that in that tiny beginning is held all the promise and potency that is afterwards revealed. Who, looking at an acorn would realise, if he did not know, that here lies the future giant of the forest? And who, to look at ordinary man, can realise that here is a god in the making?

Christmas is approaching, my friends, so let me send you, every one, my very best wishes for your happiness and welfare at Christmas time and in the New Year. I would like to send each one of you a card and a letter, but that would run into hundreds!

I have not been able to answer the other question this time. I will do that next time.

Your affectionate friend,
Clara M. Codd

In Catholic Churches, I believe, three masses are celebrated at Christmas time. One at midnight, typifying the birth of the Cosmic Christ; one at dawn typifying the birth of the Christ on earth; and one on Christmas morning typifying the birth of the Christ spirit in the human heart. -- C.C.

From your secretary: I forgot last time to remind you that the New Year for pledges began on Nov. 1st. -- R.D.