

The Spiritual Significance of Motherhood

by Geoffrey Hodson

Chapter -1-

The Influence and Work of the World Mother

Christianity, Hinduism (and other great World Faiths all teach that there exists a Being here on our earth Who embodies in perfection all the highest attributes of the Feminine Aspect of both the creative Deity and the human race, including human motherhood. She, the all-compassionate One, gazes with infinite tenderness and concern upon life on earth. What must She see? A frankly ruthless and nakedly cynical violation and desecration by man- chiefly, though not entirely, by the male- of everything holy and beautiful for which She stands. She must see everywhere throughout the world irreverence, abuse and cruelty- the continual infliction of unnecessary suffering by man upon man, and by man upon the animal kingdom

If it were not that She must also know that this epoch is a phase out of which there will grow a nobler, a fairer, a kinder and a more gentle civilization, surely Her heart would be unbearably torn by what She must see. If we add that in Her divine love She voluntarily remains near to humanity, that She is not only an outside observer, not only a great Spirit removed from us, not only an ascetic Adept who long again attained to a spiritual mountain top, but that in a mysterious way She is actually present within our hearts, and especially within the hearts of every woman and child, what an almost unbearable experience such nearness to mankind would be!

I am myself profoundly convinced that such a Being exists and that, beyond human understanding. She is the perfected embodiment of all that is highest and noblest in womanhood. Her heart, I believe, is filled with love and compassion for us all and, while She does see our sins, She does not condemn us. Rather does She draw nearer to enfold us in Her arms of love, even whilst we transgress.

St. Catherine of Sienna, when for a time she had lost contact with her Lord and in her own eyes had fallen deeply, asked, "Lord, where wast Thou amidst all that failure?" In what is called the mystic locution, when the devote communes with God and hears His voice, the Lord answered, "Daughter, I was there with thee in thy heart." So She, the Mother of the World, is here with us in our hearts, as well as brooding maternally over all humanity, especially now when a new racial birth is occurring, the racial Christ-consciousness being "born". (See Theosophy Answers Some Problems of Life- also by Geoffrey Hodson)

Let us now look at our world and see some of the problems with which we- and so the World Mother, since She is one with us- are confronted.

In the world of today we observe a great reliance on force and cunning. "Let him take who has the power and let him keep who can" is the general philosophy, particularly under totalitarian regimes, I am aware of the existence of the United Nations and its wonderful subsidiary agencies, but it must be confessed that, by some people, honour, morality and goodwill have come to be regarded only as useful means to a selfish ends. In the ultimate, all right still tends to be founded on power.

Then consider the greatest casualty of the Second World War- loyalty. When the Spanish Commander outside Madrid said he could easily conquer the Capital City because he had four columns outside and a fifth column within, the world pounced on the phrase like a writer who had been seeking a word. "Fifth Column" has since come to connote the great corroding influence in the world today. Other times have had their traitors but never before have such large numbers of people been willing to band themselves together in disloyalty to bring about the downfall of the system within which they live and are nourished, and to act secretly and subversively even while under the protection of the National they seek to destroy. "Fifth Column" "Fifth Column" is now a fear-inspiring phrase, a tocsin of calamity, if ever there was one; for how can we build a brave new world unless we have loyalty?

The world She loves and serves is also deeply sullied by organized crime and vice, such as drug peddling, even to children and adolescents, prostitution, white slavery- horrible to contemplate when thinking of the World Mother and ideal womanhood.

Other evils deeply affecting the progress, happiness and health of mankind, particularly the birth of a new and nobler race of man, with which process the World Mother may also be presumed to be concerned, consist of monopolies, cartels, price fixing, corruption in public, professional and business life, soil exploitation and timber denudation. All these bring gain to the few but result in poverty, and in some parts of the world in famine, to the many.

Other serious evils must be known to Her. The colossal consumption of alcohol, for example, takes more lives than war, ruins homes, degrades men and women, brings immeasurable sorrow and loss everywhere, but very great gain to a few who do not hesitate to foster the evil in order to acquire that gain. Then think of the wholly unnecessary and brutal annual slaughter of hundreds of millions of animals for food which also brings immense profit to the few, ugliness to civilization, ill-health to millions, agonized suffering to food animals and degradation to the slaughterman.

All these wickednesses are voluntary and quite deliberate. The infliction of the greatest possible disaster to one's fellow-men and to animals in order to bring gain for oneself is deliberately chosen by all too many people as a most desired way of life and means of making money.

Such are some of the plainly discernible phenomena of the particular phase of evolution through which mankind is now passing. In consequence, most people go on living their everyday life half-frightened, half indifferent, not daring to think into the future and, as Thoreau said, "in quiet desperation". So we, the people of the world see- as She, the World Mother, must also see- the ghastly, tragic comedy that is being performed on the international, national, political and economic stages, where the fate of mankind is being largely decided and individuals find themselves relatively helpless. No wonder disillusionment, bitterness and cynicism characterize the thinking and the outlook of youth and adult alike.

Hence the deep significance of those Movements which focus attention on certain aspects of this problem, particularly those concerning the birth of a new and higher Race of men and the life and work of woman in the world. There are all too few of such Movements on earth, born out of tenderness and compassion for humanity, out of a spiritual vision and a recognition of the existence of a Feminine Principle in God, in all Nature and in man.

If I may here introduce a personal note, I well remember how the vision of the veritable existence of the World Mother first dawned upon me many years ago. I think I was privileged to see Her, however faintly, not only as an ideal, or even as One in the succession of Personifications of the Mother Aspect of Deity, but also as a wondrous living Being, the Exquisite Jewel in the Hierarchy of Earth's Adepts, the World Mother for this epoch, the Star of the Sea, as She is severally named.

Some thirty years ago it fell to my lot to try and collaborate with certain physicians in London in a search for the root cause of disease. Our thoughts were constantly led back to prenatal life where it seemed that the seeds of disease, the tendency to disease, latent disease, first appear. In consequence, it was decided that I should attempt clairvoyant (clairvoyance, an extension produced by self-training and used in full waking consciousness, of the normal range of visual response, now known as Extra-Sensory Perception or ESP) investigations (see "The Miracle of Birth, also the description of Plates 29 and 30, and Chapter IV of The Kingdom of the Gods by Geoffrey Hodson) . Two of the doctors owned a large Maternity Hospital, and so ample opportunity for observation was provided. In certain cases, investigations were made day by day and week by week into the prenatal development of the new mental, emotional, etheric and physical bodies of the reincarnating Egos . In certain cases the studies were followed right through to the birth itself. Some of the principles of human incarnation were observed and support gained for the view that susceptibility to disease can be observed in the human embryo.

Gradually, as the time of delivery came near, a sheen of beautiful pure blue began to unveil and tinge the auras of both the mother-to-be and the devas (Sanskrit word) meaning "shining ones", the Angelic Hosts.) responsible for part of the work of building the new bodies. As the last weeks went by, this blue deepened in the auras of the devas , who began to assume Madonna-like forms. This culminated in the appearance at the time of birth of the Mother of the World as a veritable Presence, presiding over the "miracle" of human motherhood and childbirth.

As a result of these experiences, I feel that I came to know at least that She Exists and a little of what may be seen in Her eyes and in her Heart- a divinely tender, maternal solicitude for all mankind. I learned, I think, that motherhood should ideally be as conscious as possible, though never at the cost of undue pain: for certain expansions of consciousness can then be experienced

which can effect, can exalt, the consciousness of the mother and through her that of the whole Race.

How may She be truly envisaged? Whilst the beautiful Madonna blue is probably universal, the form in which She presents Herself is apparently adapted to those who see Her. Possibly their own minds shape the vision of Her into a familiar form. As those of us who were then studying prenatal life were all Christians, She in Her compassion may have deliberately adopted the Madonna form so that we might recognize her.

A Chinese lady once invited me to her home and showed me her beautiful garden. Amongst the trees were statues of Kwan Yin, Goddess of Wisdom and Compassion, the Feminine Logos of Chinese Buddhism. My hostess said to me, "I have had thirteen children and on more than one occasion Kwan Yin Herself saved my life. When the pangs of birth became unendurable and I would die, I saw Her there beside my bed. She stretched out Her hand towards me and immediately the pain was eased and the lost poise and steadiness restored, not once, but many times."

Thus I have come to believe, even to know, that there is such a wondrous and glorious Being on our Earth as the World Mother, that She is very near to human mothers during pregnancy and at the time of birth. I have also learned that She ever seeks human agents and human helpers who will serve in Her name and endeavour to live in Her presence. Whilst women especially represent Her, She also needs men of honour to be her knights, ever ready to fight for the weak and the exploited and to guard with knightly loyalty all women and children, as true knights should. Unhappily, men tend to forget the ideals of chivalry, save those who are still knightly in their nature.

A great Mahatma once wrote: "Not till woman bursts the bonds of her sexual slavery, to which she has ever been subjected, will the world obtain an inkling of what she really is and of her proper place in the economy of Nature." (See *The Paradoxes of the Highest Science*, by Eliphas Levi, page 171)

On one other memorable occasion an Angel Teacher opened my consciousness into some realisation of the present holder of the Office of World Mother, who is Mary, the mother of Jesus. She also attained perfection and chose that one of the seven roads open to the Adept which leads out of the human into the Angelic Kingdom of Nature. The Angel showed me that "She labours ever for the cause of human motherhood, and even now is bending all Her mighty strength and calling her Angel Court to labour for the upliftment of womanhood throughout the world. Through Her angel messengers, She Herself is present at every human birth, unseen and unknown, it is true, but if men would but open their eyes She would be revealed.

"She sends this message through the Brotherhood to men:-

"In the Name of Him whom long ago I bore, I come to your aid. I have taken every woman into my heart, to hold there a part of her that through it I may help her in her time of need.

"Uplift the women of your race till all are seen as queens, and to such queens let every man be as a king, that each may honour each, seeing the other's royalty. Let every home, however small, become a court, every son a knight, every child a page. Let all treat all with chivalry, honouring in each their royal parentage, their kingly birth; for there is royal blood in every man; all are the children of the KING."

"All nations have recognized, honoured and worshipped this Maternal Principle in Nature. All their exoteric religions have personified it as a Goddess, an Archangel Mother of universes, races, nations and men. These personifications of the World Mother are amongst the very noblest concepts of the human mind, which in creating, reverencing and serving them reaches its highest degrees of idealism, devotion and religious self-expression. Such reverence, such devotion and such worship as are offered to World Mothers are therefore worthy of the deepest respect and, gross superstition apart- ever to be resisted- may usefully be encouraged. For through human devotion, human beings may be reached from on high. Through human aspiration, higher love and supplication, man is susceptible to both his own Spiritual Self and the influence of the Adept Ministrants of mankind. The Madonna ideal, for example, has been and still is of incalculable value in consoling, purifying and ennobling humanity. Through it, a realisation of the Mother-Love of God has been brought within reach of millions of suffering and aspiring people. The concepts of Kwan Yin, Isis, Ishtar, Parvati and other Goddesses are similarly founded upon the existence, nature and function of the same great Being. Perhaps, because I am a Christian and the cases I was examining were also

Christian, the Madonna-like forms here pictured presented themselves to my mind.

"The planetary World Mother is conceived in certain schools of occult philosophy as a highly evolved, Archangel Representative and Embodiment on earth of the Feminine Aspect of the Deity. She is also thought of as an Adept Official in the Inner Government of the World, in whom all the highest qualities of womanhood and motherhood shine forth in their fullest perfection." (See Kingdom of the Gods pages 242-243)

Such are some of the thoughts and the ideals which have awakened in me since I passed through those experiences of many years ago, followed as they have been by others. Is it not worthwhile to be associated with such an ideal and with such a work as Hers? I feel strongly urged to appeal to those similarly moved, that they will participate and contribute to the best of their ability that this, Her Work, shall not only live on and prosper, but that it shall enter on a great era of activity in Her Name, which is the Name of Compassion, Wisdom and Universal Love.

Chapter -2-

THE DESCENT TO BIRTH OF THE HUMAN SOUL

The situation in the world concerning woman, womanhood and the maternal and paternal functions is deplorable, being chiefly characterized by the absence of reverence. Humanity, or at least some parts of western humanity, seem to be losing the sense of holiness. When a Nation loses its sense of the holiness of life in any aspect, and particularly in that of the maternal function, then that nation is in a moral decline. As I travel through the Nations of the world, I see evidences of that decline. The moral standard everywhere is far too low. That is why I welcome and value so greatly such a Movement as the Mothers' Research Group of America.

I feel there cannot be too many such Movements and branches of such Movements, and that is indeed practical Theosophy. I hope many of you who can spare the time from existing obligations, which must always come first, will feel moved to help in this beautiful, much-needed work.

I am now going to offer, undogmatically, some ideas concerning the process of the descent of the Ego into incarnation- ideas born of the study of Theosophy and of attempted research into pre-natal life.

Let us imagine that we are functioning in our Causal Bodies and watching the process of descent to birth. What are we likely to see? First of all there will have been consultation between certain high Authorities, Intelligences connected with the outworking of karma, racial, national and individual. These beings are partly concerned with the evolution of the Egos of humanity, give careful consideration to the evolutionary necessities of Egos about to descent to birth. These Representatives of the Lipika (a Sanskrit word. (A uniting) Great karmic deities of the Cosmos, agents of the law of cause and effect) are participating at the Causal level and there will be One Who might be called the Presiding Angel for the period and processes of pre-natal life Who, under Its seniors, makes the decision. This Angel knows the whole of the karma of the Ego- pleasure-giving, pain-producing and neutral. It also knows, often by consultation with Its Seniors, how much of beneficence and how much of adversity can be worked out in the new incarnation without hurting, injuring or holding up the progress of that Ego.

After such consultation with Its colleagues and certain Officials in the Adept Hierarchy, the Presiding Angel portions out in general, and very flexibly, the karmic position for the new life. All karma, let us remember, is good karma, because it is harmonizing, balancing and educative. Before birth the amount of karma, adverse and beneficent in its outworking, which is to be expressed and at what levels- mental, astral or physical- in the life about to begin, is decided upon. That knowledge will then be handed on to the building devas at the mental and astral levels, and it is part of their office to make the very most of the situation and to see that any adverse physical tendencies, malformations or disease are offset by benefices, to the end of the best possible result. They cannot, however, work against the karma of the person. If we think of the descending Word-Force of the Ego, sounding down into the mental, astral and physical worlds as a formative agency which will build the corresponding bodies (This is a manifestation by man, as microcosm, of precisely the same processes by which the Logos, as macrocosm, forms universes out of pre-cosmic substance by the agency of Will-Thought-Sound.) then you can think of the karma from past lives as a lateral energy. Where there has been cruelty and the abuse of the body, the resultant discordance could impinge on

the descending Word-Force and cause a dissonance, which in its turn will produce malformation, deficiency or weakness down in the physical body.

Then there is the whole karmic question of the choice of country, which is not in the least accidental. The karma of the incarnating Ego must harmonise reasonably well with the karma of the Nation. If the Ego has a karma which could be reasonably worked out under the stress and strain of war, or disruption, or revolution, or catastrophe, or flood, or famine, or whatever it might be, and there is a Nation which is going to endure those afflictions, then, other things being equal, that is the Nation to which such an Ego would be sent. If, on the other hand, an Ego does not have an adversity of that kind waiting in suspension between lives for its precipitation when the conditions are ripe, then a neutral country like Switzerland or somewhere else which was not going to be seriously affected by the war, or invaded by the enemy or injured by catastrophe, would be chosen. The main factor to be considered would be the harmonization of the two karmas.

Next comes the selection of the city and the neighbourhood in which the Ego will be born. These also are not chosen by mere chance. The outworking of karma is seen in the choice of fellow citizens and in what is going to happen to the city and the neighbourhood, none of which is haphazard. That brings us to the choice of parents. This involves the perpetuation of personal or Egoic links from former lives, for nearly always there are links of love between the Egos of children and those of their parents, I said nearly always, for sometimes there is a bond of discord, and even dislike, and that also can draw people together and children into a family. Then you get the phenomenon of a child in a family who does not fit in, who is the cause of distress, and who eventually leaves to find his own happiness elsewhere. Both sides have had the opportunity to harmonise the situation, however, and if they are wise they will have done so. Parents who have such discordant children in their families should take good care to try and do their utmost to resolve that discord into harmony, to serve and never to neglect them under those conditions. Then the problem is more or less solved and will no recur. This knowledge is part of the practical value of our philosophy. Of course, the true Theosophist would act in that way in any case, but humanity as a whole does not always do so. It would be well if we took as our guide in all problems of karma, the injunction always to be kinder than the situation demands.

Let us remember that big issues are at stake in a great number of our human relationships- far bigger than we realise- and that when we meet and are drawn, or not drawn, to each other, casually or intimately, karma is all the time being both worked out and generated for the future. Wisdom should therefore always be applied. We should try never to generate adversity by inflicting pain unnecessarily, and endeavour always to be wise and balanced in the conduct of human relationships. With children especially there should be the greatest possible kindness, love and care, however poor the response might be and however difficult the situations.

Where the karma of the incarnating Ego has been very adverse and there are mental or physical deficiencies, or both, it should be remembered that the parents are really being honoured by being chosen to help the Ego through very grave adversity. As far as is sane and reasonable, keep the child at home, surround him with all possible love and care, help the Ego through this time, remembering that this is a kind of call- from God if you like- to shepherd and shelter someone through a dark period in a series of incarnations. Where, however, the other members of the family suffer unduly, and the situation is rather, hopeless, then it would not be wrong to consider provision outside of the home, so long as it is helpful.

Other matters to be considered when an Ego descends to birth are those of the class or caste to which the parents belong, the opportunities for education and a start in life which they can offer, the environment and special possibilities and openings which would be provided, the educative curriculum, the type of school and teachers. All of these are also given consideration in the choice of parenthood. Some further factors include within fairly wide and flexible limits, the possibility or likelihood of cruelty, as in corporal punishment at home and in school, and the experience of harshness or lack of understanding. These would tend to drive the more advanced type of Egos away. I will be considering these matters in more detail later on.

Thus, according to Theosophy, nothing is left to chance, Our lives are lived according to a strict law which provides absolute justice for everyone, and that justice is administered with compassion and wisdom to the end of the greatest possible evolutionary advancement. When the Ego which is about to reincarnate is sufficiently developed, and where there is a choice, then it may be consulted. This would especially refer to the caste or class into which it is to be born- the ruling, aristocratic or

wealthy classes, or those of the artisan or other manual workers. Egos will sometimes choose an adverse situation for the sake, first, of the lessons to be learned, and second, of the service to be rendered. That is why one may find advanced Egos in lowly circumstances.

The Inner Self of an advanced person nearly always has a sense of a mission, knows to a considerable extent what it wants to do with the new life, what contribution it wants to make, what qualities of character it hopes to develop, and what existing faculties are to be increased. A spiritually awakened Ego is well aware of these possibilities and has ideals for the new life. There, again, a great responsibility is thrown upon the parents. They can make or mar the incarnation, and, moreover, quite early in life.

It should always be recognized that it is only the body which is infantile, childish, adolescent, and that the shining Ego is often wiser than the parents, more advanced in evolution, and is seeking to continue the great pilgrimage of life by their aid. Everything which draws out and encourages the highest faculties and attributes should surround the child. Anything which suppresses, unduly represses, causes sorrow or suffering- as by severe corporal punishment, which drives the Ego back in humiliated retreat- should be avoided. Corporal punishment warps the personality, twists it, hardens it, makes it deceitful, can awaken the determination to bully others in turn when the opportunity comes. It solves no problems at all, except the mere temporary ones of local difficulty. As one teacher said to me, "Every time I use the strap or the cane, I consider it to be acknowledgement of defeat."

All of these possibilities and factors and doubtless many more- problems and other influences from past lives and the future mission of the Ego up to Adeptship- all of this is taken into account and given consideration largely in the Causal world as the Ego is about to descend. Particularly is this so with regard to the more advanced and developed Egos.

Let me sum up these ideas before I pass on to a further aspect of our subject. Each cycle of human rebirth is presided over by members of the Orders of Angels which are especially associated with man. At each successive rebirth, individual Egos receive the special assistance of angels responsible for the construction of mental, emotional, etheric and physical forms. These angels operate partly under the direction of representatives of the Lipika. The choice of era, continent, Nation, Religion, parents, environment and opportunity, sex, type and condition of body and degree of potential or actual health and disease, are all decided according to law by these presiding Intelligences. The several karmas of the incarnating Ego, of the natal Nation, of members of groups with whom there will be association, of the whole family and of the future husband or wife and children, are all fully considered. The inherent rhythm of the Monad-Ego (Monad. The one, indivisible Self - the unity; the eternal, immortal and indestructible human Spirit) the ultimate destiny according to Monadic temperament or Ray, the past karma and the immediate and future missions are all reviewed and with unflinching justice the most favourable choices are made under the karmic circumstances.

Then the incarnation begins, very much in the same way as the incarnation of a Logos in a newly emanated Solar System. The Egoic Word, also, is uttered. The microcosmic Logos, which is a human Ego, again turns its attention to the material worlds and utters its Word, or sends out a ray of its own creative power, life and consciousness, which impinges primarily upon the matter of the mental world. Think of it diagrammatically (actually, from within outwards) if you will, as projecting downwards like a finger of fire, or a ray of light, or a beam of creative sound vibrating on the frequencies of the Ego's characteristic Nature, powers and faculties. Impinging on the mental world, this ray sets up a kind of vortex into which surrounding matter from the mental plane, vibrating on frequencies of similar types to the Ego, is drawn in and gradually shaped into an ovoid- the embryonic mental body.

The preponderance of one or other of three gunas, or attributes of matter, rajas- activity, salva- harmony, rhythm and tamas-inertia, is also decided by the Egoic Self and the vibrating Word Forces by which it is expressed down there. In the very substance of which our bodies are built, therefore, complete justice is meted out to us, and they fit us as perfectly as is possible and as karma permits. Then the ray impinges upon the matter of the astral plane and sets up a vortex there into which, similarly, astral matter is drawn and the astral body begins to be built. Again the same principles apply, because only the matter which is vibrating on the same frequencies as those of the Egoic current of creative force is drawn in. Resonance and magnetic properties ensure this.

These bodies look like small ovoids, perhaps 10" to 12" high at first. They are almost transparent, with very little colour in them. There is a suggestion of colour, however, a kind of opalescence, like mother-of-pearl, gleaming in the otherwise white aura of the child. These all represent skandas (Sanskrit word. "Bundles" or groups of attributes which unite at the birth of a man and constitute his personality. The results of the past which become seeds for future lives. Karmic results.) properties, capacities brought over from former lives and latent for the time being, until physical life and its experiences bring them out again.

In due course, and not necessarily from the beginning, the physical body will begin to be built. The descent into incarnation can, and not infrequently does, commence before physical conception. Eventually, however, the twin cell is formed and the physical permanent atom (Permanent atom: An atom retained by the reincarnating Ego after the death of his vehicles. The experiences in essence of the body of which it has formed a part are impressed upon the permanent atom and from it the tone or vibratory rate is transferred to the new body when the Ego reincarnates. Vide: A Study in Consciousness, By A. Besant.) is then attached to it by a member of the Angelic Hosts. Then the Ego through the "descending", vibrating ray of creative Life-Force, is in contact with the physical plane and the new physical body begins to be built.

All of this process is watched over and cared for by certain angels. As far as I know- and remember that research in this field is very limited and there is a tremendous amount of it still to be done- there is, under the Causal, Presiding Deva of the incarnation, a Deva at the mental level and another at the astral level. These angels extend their auras around the mother, the vibrating ray and the mental and astral bodies. So far as karma permits, they thus shelter from shock and from intrusion from outside. They are also at work on the adjustment of the mechanism of consciousness. This latter is very delicate; it consists of the seven chakras in the mental and astral bodies and, later, those in the etheric body and the associated, physical nerve centres and glands.

As far as I know, particular types of nature spirits of the four "elements" are at work on our bodies from the moment of conception to the moment of death, building, repairing and regenerating as occasion demands, and in accordance with physical laws. The mystery of the development of a perfect physical body from so small an organism as the twin cell is not yet solved by science. Why certain microscopic areas in the germ develop certain kinds of tissue in a certain part of the body-to-be until the whole, with all its tremendous variety, comes into existence according to the prototype, the pattern or plan, never failing- that is still a mystery and will continue so until the subject is studied from within and from the superphysical worlds.

During this time the mental and astral angels have been at work, supervising the building of the mental and astral bodies and chakras, and their adjustment, whilst the nature spirits themselves are under their direction. Thus, throughout the period of gestation, the physical, etheric, astral and mental bodies are gradually built, according the karma and the evolutionary necessities of the reincarnating Ego. Then, all being well, the time of delivery or birth arrives. At that moment, if all has proceeded satisfactorily, the angels associated with the pre-natal life withdraw at birth and the new personality is then in the hands of man.

The foregoing practically completes what I have to say on this important subject, I might, perhaps, add one further thought, which is that the Ego is only very dimly conscious through the physical body during prenatal life. At quickening, the development of the nervous system has reached a point where a certain small measure of the consciousness of the Ego can manifest, and a little more of the Ego is added to its manifestation as power and life; for it should be remembered that the Inner Self of man is a triplicity and that the formative Egoic ray or current of thought-force is also threefold. The three component aspects and currents of force are expressive of Spiritual Power, Spiritual Life and Spiritual Intelligence. The first two of these play through the physical permanent atom from the moment of conception and influence the building of the embryo. Only when the foetal cerebro-spinal system has become sufficiently established can the third, the Intelligence aspect of the Ego, find a vehicle of expression. Even when this is absent owing to injury, as in the case of insanity of varying degree, the power and the life of the Ego will still keep the physical body alive and the Ego will remain in incarnation so far as they are concerned.

After the quickening, then, the Ego in the embryo is dimly, drowsily aware of warmth, protection, seclusion and safety. From the point of view of the elemental consciousness of the body, and even that of the subtler bodies, birth is a shock, a somewhat sudden extrusion from that comfort, warmth, complete protection and internal nutriment of the gestatory period. Therefore, in

the early days and weeks- yes, and months- but especially in the early days and weeks, that shock should be minimized, I personally think, by as close a relationship with the mother, and as much affection and comfort as is possible.

I find myself completely disagreeing with these modern schools of thought which advise taking the babies and keeping them away from the mothers, only bringing them back to be fed. Some doctors rather advise against frequent picking up, petting and loving babies. They seem to prefer a somewhat strict regime from the beginning, to encourage the development of habit patterns to ease the processes of weaning and upbringing.

One sees a certain value in it, but a certain undesirable effect as well. The mother needs the outlet for her love provided by the near presence of her baby- maternity is a spiritual as well as a physical experience, bringing expansions of consciousness to the mother which are shared with the Race. They are therefore very valuable and important. The child, in its turn, needs the influence of the mother's aura, her magnetism and her love. Little ones are very dependent, so that as far as the health of the mother, her duties and her environment all permit, the baby should stay, I think, as close to her as possible. I am happy to learn of some reversals of the newer methods of people in that field and a tendency to return to the earlier, more natural treatment of babies.

Chapter -3-

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE CHARACTER AND CONDUCT OF THE CHILD

Theosophy teaches that all manifested divine Power, Life and Consciousness, and so all human Monads or Spirits, radiate from the One Source and pass through the Three and the Seven. In their passage through the Three and the Seven, these three Emanations of the Logos- divine Power, Life and Consciousness- are impressed with the special quality of that One of the Three "Persons" and the seventh Sephiroth through which they pass, are attuned to their vibratory frequency or chord and are stained with their particular colour. The colour of the spectrum and divine attribute which each of these Sephiroths represents is accentuated in each projected Monadic Ray, and thereafter predominates over the other six.

The pure Ray type is rare, admixtures with consequent modification of ideal, temperament and method being the rule. The evolutionary position or "age" of the Spiritual Self usually decides the degree in which the Ray qualities and virtues are displayed and the defects and limitations are overcome. As a general rule, the more advanced the Ego, the more readily discernible in the personality is the primary Ray.

One particular quality is generally regarded as supremely desirable by persons on each of the seven Rays. For the first Ray this is power; for the second, wisdom; for the third, comprehension; for the fourth, beauty; for the fifth, knowledge; for the sixth, one-pointed devotion; for the seventh, order.

Knowledge of the seven Rays is helpful in the comprehension of others, specially of those whose approach to life, methods of obtaining desired ends and ultimate destiny differ from one's own. Such knowledge can bestow upon those who possess it one of the highest virtues. This is a wide tolerance, born of deep understanding, concerning the ideals and actions of other Nations and of other individuals. This virtue is beautifully expressed in the words of the Lord Shri Krishna, who was speaking as an incarnation of Vishnu, the Second Aspect of the Blessed Trinity:

"However men approach Me, even so do I welcome them, for the path men take from every side is Mine. (Bhagavad Gita, IV, translated by A. Besant)

If this knowledge of the Rays is applied to child training, then the eight factors influencing and in large measure forming the character of every child are as follows:-

1-The Ray and more dominant sub-Rays, generally two in number.

First ray Egos, generally with the fifth and seventh Rays, subdominant, manifest the qualities of power, will, and an inherent tendency to independence, which should be respected within the reasonable limits of domestic harmony.

Second Ray Egos, generally with the fourth and sixth Rays subdominant, manifest unity and love, with an inherent tendency to

dependence upon the love of others, which also should be respected, especially in childhood.

Third Ray Egos, generally with the fourth and fifth Rays sub-dominant, manifest reason and inherent tendency to understanding and reasonableness. The purpose of rules, redirection of energy and disciplinary correction should always be explained to such children, though this practice is eminently desirable in all cases.

Fourth Ray Egos, generally with no fixed sub-dominant Rays, manifest an inherent tendency to harmoniousness and love of colour, rhythm and beauty. All children who display these attributes should be granted every opportunity for self-expression and training of the body through the arts.

Fifth Ray Egos, generally with the first and third Rays subdominant, manifest logic and determination, even to obstinacy. These tendencies should be respected, so redirection should always be accompanied by a reasonable explanation.

Sixth Ray Egos, generally with the second Ray sub-dominant and the fifth almost absent in the early years, manifest a desire for love, to be loved, to make love, to possess personally and exclusively. These attributes, and the parental instinct which may accompany them, should be wisely directed along constructive channels and never wholly repressed.

Seventh Ray Egos, generally with the first and fifth Rays sub-dominant and the fourth often well-developed, manifest an inherent tendency to personal dignity. They are peculiarly sensitive to affronts, particularly when accompanied by violence, rudeness and disrespect. This attribute, together with those of the sub-dominant Rays, should always be respected.

2- The phases of evolution which the Ego has reached, through which it will pass, and which therefore are to be accentuated in the new life. Every effort should be made by parents and teachers to discern and be guided by these factors.

3- World thought during pre-natal life and the early years. This influences the personality, in some cases strongly enough to modify, and even temporarily neutralize, the Egoic influences.

4- National thought, tendencies and characteristics. These are inevitably built into the mind of the new personality.

5- Local, parental and family mental outlook, which affect the building and nature of the mental body. Strong, well developed Egos overcome factors 3, 4 and 5, but others are moulded by them.

6- The emotional atmosphere of the home and neighbourhood. Harmony, love and self-restraint help greatly, as their opposites can hurt the formation of the emotional character and body.

7- The racial, ancestral and parental physical characteristics which are transmuted through the father and the mother to the child.

8- The immediately preceding incarnation:

(a) All the above influences as they affected the last life

(b) The nature, and especially the failure or success, of that life. Failure, disaster, tragedy, can leave an impression which may reappear in the next life, particularly up to adolescence, though even afterwards.

(c) The major activities and achievements, which also play their part in moulding the character of the new personality.

(d) Any acute suffering, particularly if prolonged, will give a natural tendency to shrink from pain, and inability in a child to contemplate and cope with it successfully. Apparently unreasoning fears may cloud the early years. All of such children should be carefully protected from experiences which arouse fear and every effort should be made to establish in the child a sense of security, safety and freedom from personal attack. The child's hyper-sensitivity to the thought of pain, to the threat of pain, and to pain itself, should not be regarded as a weakness. It should never be punished, but always be regarded with a special tenderness and respect, for it stems from suffering in a former life so acute as to produce extreme sensitivity to pain. This is one of the most important of all factors in child-training at home and at school, and yet one of the most neglected, and even abused.

A whole incarnation can be marred in consequence.

(e) A position of rule, power over others, tyrannical tendencies and cruelty in one life can produce a very difficult personality in the next. Such a new personality can, in childhood, exhibit rebelliousness and unreadiness to co-operate in the management either of its own body, or of the home in general. Most of such rebels have been created by unfortunate conditions and by opportunities for tyranny, major or minor, in former lives, especially the immediately preceding one.

In consequence, the Ego is placed in a difficult position, is handicapped in developing and exhibiting the opposite qualities in the new personality. This difficulty should be recognized and respected. Above all, the child should not be bullied or harshly treated, with a view to "breaking its spirit". Nevertheless discipline must be firm, redirection, not repression, being the ideal.

(f) The manner of death. If "natural", as from old age or disease, then no particular influence will be brought over. If violent, then the next life will inevitably be affected. Certain inherent fears will show themselves, generally related to the circumstances and the cause of premature death. Some examples, as related to the four elements, are: earth- smothering, burial or falling; water- drowning; air- heights, falls, extremes of temperature; fire-burning, explosions, volcanic catastrophes.

Admittedly, the average parent cannot know by seership all of these factors. Most of them do, however, become evident quite early in life.

Knowledge of these principles can serve as a guide to both parents and teachers who seek to discern the factors of major importance. As these are realised, the treatment and the training of the child can be adapted to its special needs.

One principle which emerges and which should never be forgotten is that, though children can be naughty and must be trained by firm handling when necessary, no child is wholly to blame for adverse characteristics. All the above factors enter in to produce both the general and the temporary goodness or badness of the child.

Another basic principle is that virility and effectiveness in a man do not demand roughness, harshness, brutality and so-called "toughening" in childhood. The toughened child is generally cut off from its Ego. A middle course has therefore to be followed in developing the character. A certain sensitivity, tenderness and natural kindness should be blended with a courageous independence and initiative.

The doctrine of reincarnation, which shows the present life as only one in a series of incarnations, with many lives ahead, and the influence of many former lives, is the great key which Theosophy gives to parents and to teachers and, indeed, to all who are responsible for the children of the Race.

Ego . "Self"; the unified triad, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, or the duad (djad), Atma-Buddhi, that immortal part of man which reincarnates and gradually progresses to the final goal- Nirvana. Also the consciousness in man- "I am I" - or the feeling of "I-am-ship". Esoteric philosophy teaches the existence of two Egos in man, the mortal or personal, and the Higher, the Divine and the Impersonal, calling the former "personality, and the latter "individuality". Adapted from The Theosophical Glossary, H.P. Blavatsky.

In Hinduism , the Supreme Deity is worshipped in both Masculine and Feminine Aspects, is regarded as Universal Father of the World and Universal Mother. The Feminine Aspect is worshipped under many names and in many forms. She is chiefly known as Jagadamba, the World Mother, and this concept includes also the Shakti (expressed energy) Aspect or Complements of the Trimurti. These are Parvati, the Complement of Shiva, Lakshmi of Vishnu, and Sarasvati of Brahma.

All women are regarded as representatives of the Jagadamba who is the Mother of all mothers, the Divine Queen of the Kingdom of Motherhood, woman's highest ideal.

END