

## *Mahatma Letter Twenty-Two*

K. H. to A. O. Hume (extract), Fall 1882

Did it ever strike you,—and now from the standpoint of your Western science and the suggestion of your own Ego which has already seized up the essentials of every truth, prepare to deride the erroneous idea—did you ever suspect that Universal, like finite, human mind might have two attributes, or a dual power—one the voluntary and conscious, and the other the involuntary and unconscious or the mechanical power? To reconcile the difficulty of many theistic and anti-theistic propositions, both these powers are a philosophical necessity. The possibility of the first or the voluntary and conscious attribute in reference to the infinite mind, notwithstanding the assertions of all the Egos throughout the living world—will remain for ever a mere hypothesis, whereas in the finite mind it is a scientific and demonstrated fact. The highest Planetary Spirit is as ignorant of the first as we are, and the hypothesis will remain one even in Nirvana, as it is a mere inferential possibility, whether there or here.

Take the human mind in connection with the body. Man has two distinct physical brains; the cerebrum with its two hemispheres at the frontal part of the head—the source of the voluntary nerves; and the cerebellum, situated at the back portion of the skull—the fountain of the involuntary nerves which are the agents of the unconscious or mechanical powers of the mind to act through. And weak and uncertain as may be the control of man over his involuntary [functions], such as the blood circulation, the throbbings of the heart and respiration, especially during sleep—yet how far more powerful, how much more potential appears man as master and ruler over the blind molecular motion—the *laws* which govern his body (a proof of this being afforded by the phenomenal powers of the Adept and even the common Yogi) than that which you *will* call God, shows over the immutable laws of Nature. Contrary in that to the finite, the

“infinite mind,” which we name so but for agreement sake, for we call it the infinite FORCE—exhibits but the functions of its cerebellum, the existence of its supposed cerebrum being admitted as above stated, but on the inferential hypothesis deduced from the Kabalistic theory (correct in every other relation) of the Macrocosm being the prototype of the Microcosm. So far as *we* know the corroboration of it by modern science receiving but little consideration—so far as the highest Planetary Spirits have ascertained (who, remember well have the same relations with the trans-cosmic world, penetrating behind the primitive veil of cosmic matter as we have to go behind the veil of this, our brute physical world—) the infinite mind displays to them as to us no more than the regular unconscious throbbings of the eternal and universal pulse of Nature, throughout the myriads of worlds within as without the primitive veil of our solar system.

So far—WE KNOW. *Within* and to the utmost limit, to the very edge of the cosmic veil we know the fact to be correct—owing to personal experience; for the information gathered as to what takes place beyond we are indebted to the Planetary Spirits, to our blessed Lord Buddha. This of course may be regarded as secondhand information. There are those who, rather than yield to the evidence of fact will prefer regarding even the planetary gods as “erring” disembodied philosophers if not actually liars. Be it so. “Everyone is master of his own wisdom”—says a Tibetan proverb, and he is at liberty either to honour or degrade his slave. However, I will go on for the benefit of those who may yet seize my explanation of the problem and understand the nature of the solution.

It is the peculiar faculty of the involuntary power of the infinite mind—which no one could ever think of calling God—to be eternally evolving subjective matter into objective atoms (you will please remember that the two adjectives are used but in a relative sense) or cosmic matter to be later on developed into form. And it is likewise that same involuntary mechanical power that we see so intensely active in all the fixed laws of nature—which governs and controls what is called the Universe

or the Cosmos. There are some modern philosophers who would prove the existence of a Creator from motion. We say and affirm that that motion—the universal perpetual motion which never ceases, never slackens nor increases its speed, not even during the interludes between the pralayas, or “nights of Brahma,” but goes on like a mill set in motion whether it has anything to grind or not (for the pralaya means the temporary loss of every form, but by no means the destruction of cosmic matter which is eternal)—we say this perpetual motion is the only eternal and uncreated Deity we are able to recognise. To regard God as an intelligent spirit, and accept at the same time his absolute immateriality is to conceive of a nonentity, a blank void; to regard God as a Being, an Ego and to place his intelligence under a bushel for some mysterious reasons—is most consummate nonsense; to endow him with intelligence in the face of blind brutal Evil is to make of him a fiend—a most rascally God. A Being however gigantic, occupying space and having length breadth and thickness is most certainly the Mosaic deity; “No-being” and a mere principle lands you directly in the Buddhistic atheism, or the Vedantic primitive *Acosmism*. What lies beyond and outside the worlds of form, and being, in worlds and spheres in their most spiritualized state—(and you will perhaps oblige us by telling us where that beyond can be, since the Universe is infinite and limitless) is useless for anyone to search after, since even Planetary Spirits have no knowledge or perception of it. If our greatest adepts and Bodhisattvas have never penetrated themselves beyond our solar system,—and the idea seems to suit your preconceived theistic theory wonderfully, my respected Brother—they still know of the existence of other such solar systems, with as mathematical a certainty as any western astronomer knows of the existence of invisible stars which he can never approach or explore. But of that which lies within the worlds and systems, not in the trans-infinitude—(a queer expression to use)—but in the cis-infinitude rather, in the state of the purest and inconceivable immateriality, no one ever knew or will ever tell, hence it is something non-existent for the universe. You are at liberty to place in this eternal vacuum the

intellectual or voluntary powers of your deity—if you can conceive of such a thing.

Meanwhile we may say that it is motion that governs the laws of nature; and that it governs them as the mechanical impulse given to running water which will propel them either in a direct line or along hundreds of side furrows they may happen to meet on their way and whether those furrows are natural grooves or channels prepared artificially by the hand of man. And we maintain that wherever there is life and being, and in however much spiritualized a form, there is no room for moral government, much less for a moral Governor—a Being which at the same time has no form nor occupies space! Verily if light shineth in darkness, and darkness comprehends it not, it is because such is the natural law, but how more suggestive and pregnant with meaning *for one who knows*, to say that light can still less comprehend darkness, nor ever know it since it kills wherever it penetrates and annihilates it instantly. A pure yet volitional Spirit is an absurdity for volitional mind. The result of organism cannot exist independently of an organized brain, and an organized brain made out of nihil is a still greater fallacy. If you ask me “Whence then the immutable laws?—laws cannot make themselves”—then in my turn I will ask you—and whence their supposed Creator?—a creator cannot create or make himself. If the brain did not make itself, for this would be affirming that brain acted before it existed, how could intelligence, the result of an organized brain, act before its creator was made?

All this reminds one of wrangling for seniorship. If our doctrines clash too much with your theories then we can easily give up the subject and talk of something else. Study the laws and doctrines of the Nepalese Svabhavikas, the principal Buddhist philosophical school in India, and you will find them the most learned as the most scientifically logical wranglers in the world. Their plastic, invisible, eternal, omnipresent and unconscious Svabhavat is Force or *Motion* ever generating its electricity which is life.

Yes; there is a force as limitless as thought, as potent as boundless will, as subtle as the essence of life, so inconceivably

awful in its rending force as to convulse the universe to its centre were it but used as a lever, but this Force is not *God*, since there are men who have learned the secret of subjecting it to their will when necessary. Look around you and see the myriad manifestations of life, so infinitely multiform; of life, of motion, of change. What caused these? From what inexhaustible source came they, by what agency? Out of the invisible and subjective they have entered our little area of the visible and objective. Children of Akasa, concrete evolutions from the ether, it was Force which brought them into perceptibility and Force will in time remove them from the sight of man. Why should this plant in your garden to the right have been produced with such a shape, and that other one to the left with one totally dissimilar? Are these not the result of varying action of Force—unlike correlations? Given a perfect monotony of activities throughout the world, and we would have a complete identity of forms, colours, shapes and properties throughout all the kingdoms of nature. It is *motion* with its resulting conflict, neutralization, equilibration, correlation, to which is due the infinite variety which prevails. You speak of an intelligent and good—(the attribute is rather unfortunately chosen)—Father, a moral guide and governor of the universe and man. A certain condition of things exists around us which we call normal. Under this nothing can occur which transcends our every-day experience, “God’s immutable laws.” But suppose we change this condition and have the best of him without whom even a hair of your head will not fall, as they tell you in the West. A current of air brings [comes, brings cold] to me from the lake near which, with my fingers half frozen I now write to you this letter. I change by a certain combination of electrical, magnetic, odyllic or other influences the current of air which benumbs my fingers into a warmer breeze; I have thwarted the intention of the Almighty, and dethroned him at my will! I can do that, or when I do not want Nature to produce strange and too visible phenomena, I force my nature-seeing, nature-influencing self within me to suddenly awake to new perceptions and feelings and thus am my own Creator and ruler.

But do you think that you are right when saying that “the laws arise?” Immutable laws cannot arise, since they are eternal and uncreated, propelled in the Eternity, and that God himself, if such a thing existed, could never have the power of stopping them. And when did I say that these laws were fortuitous *per se*? I meant their blind correlations, never the laws, or rather the law—since we recognise but one law in the Universe, the law of harmony, of *perfect* EQUILIBRIUM. Then for a man endowed with so subtle a logic, and such a fine comprehension of the value of ideas in general and that of words especially—for a man so accurate as you generally are to make tirades upon an “all wise, powerful and love-ful God” seems to say at least strange. I do not protest at all as you seem to think against your theism, or a belief in an abstract ideal of some kind, but I cannot help asking you, how do you or how can you know that your God is all wise, omnipotent and love-ful, when everything in nature, physical and moral, proves such a being, if he does exist, to be quite the reverse of all you say of him? Strange delusion and one which seems to overpower your very intellect.

The difficulty of explaining the fact that “unintelligent Forces can give rise to highly intelligent beings like ourselves,” is covered by the eternal progression of cycles, and the process of evolution ever perfecting its work as it goes along. Not believing in cycles, it is unnecessary for you to learn that which will create but a new pretext for you, my dear Brother, to combat the theory and argue upon it *ad infinitum*. Nor did I ever become guilty of the heresy I am accused of in reference to spirit and matter. The conception of matter and spirit as entirely distinct, and both eternal, could certainly never have entered my head, however little I may know of them, for it is one of the elementary and fundamental doctrines of Occultism that the two are one, and are distinct but in their respective manifestations, and only in the limited perceptions of the world of senses. Far from “lacking philosophical breadth” then, our doctrines show but one principle in nature—spirit-matter or matter-spirit, the third the ultimate Absolute or the quintessence of the two—if I may be allowed to use an erroneous term in the present

application—losing itself beyond the view and spiritual perceptions of even the “Gods” or Planetary Spirits. This third principle, say the Vedantic Philosophers—is the only reality, everything else being Maya, as none of the Protean manifestations of spirit-matter or Purusha and Prakriti have ever been regarded in any other light than that of temporary delusions of the senses. Even in the hardly outlined philosophy of *Isis [Unveiled]* this idea is clearly carried out. In the book of Kiu-te, Spirit is called the ultimate sublimation of matter, and matter the crystallization of spirit. And no better illustration could be afforded than in the very simple phenomenon of ice, water, vapour and the final dispersion of the latter, the phenomenon being reversed in its consecutive manifestations and called the Spirit falling into generation or matter. This trinity resolving itself into unity—a doctrine as old as the world of thought—was seized upon by some early Christians, who had it in the schools of Alexandria, and made [it] up into the Father, or generative spirit; the Son or matter—man; and into the Holy Ghost, the immaterial essence, or the apex of the equilateral triangle, an idea found to this day in the pyramids of Egypt. Thus once more it is proved that you misunderstand my meaning entirely, whenever for the sake of brevity I use a phraseology habitual with the Western people. But in my turn I have to remark that your idea that matter is but the temporary allotropic form of spirit, differing from it as charcoal does from diamond, is as unphilosophical as it is unscientific from both the Eastern and the Western points of view, charcoal being but a form of residue of matter, while matter *per se* is indestructible, and, as I maintain, coeval with spirit—that spirit which we know and can conceive of. Bereaved of Prakriti, Purusha (Spirit) is unable to manifest itself, hence ceases to exist—becomes *nihil*. Without spirit or Force, even that which Science styles as “not living” matter, the so-called mineral ingredients which feed plants, could never have been called into form. There is a moment in the existence of every molecule and atom of matter when, for one cause or another, the last spark of spirit or motion or life (call it by whatever name) is withdrawn, and in the same instant,

with the swiftness which surpasses that of the lightning glance of thought, the atom or molecule or an aggregation of molecules is annihilated to return to its pristine purity of intra-cosmic matter. It is drawn to the mother fount with the velocity of a globule of quicksilver to the central mass. Matter, force, and motion are the trinity of physical objective nature, as the trinitarian unity of spirit-matter is that of the spiritual or subjective nature. Motion is eternal because spirit is eternal. But no modes of motion can ever be conceived unless they be in connection with matter.

And now to your extraordinary hypothesis that Evil with its attendant train of sin and suffering is not the result of matter, but may be perchance the wise scheme of the moral Governor of the Universe. Conceivable as the idea may seem to you, trained in the pernicious fallacy of the Christian,—“the ways of the Lord are inscrutable”—it is utterly inconceivable for me. Must I repeat again that the best Adepts have searched the Universe during millenniums and found nowhere the slightest trace of such a Machiavellian schemer—but throughout, the same immutable, inexorable law. You must excuse me therefore if I positively decline to lose my time over such childish speculations. It is not “the ways of the Lord” but rather those of some extremely intelligent men in everything but some particular hobby, that are to me incomprehensible.

As you say this need “make no difference between us”—personally. But it does make a world of difference if you propose to learn and offer me to teach. For the life of me I cannot make out how I could ever impart to you that which I know since the very A.B.C. of what I know, the rock upon which the secrets of the occult universe, whether on this or that side of the veil, are encrusted, is contradicted by you invariably and *a priori*. My very dear Brother, either we know something or we do not know anything. In the first case what is the use of your learning, since you think you know better? In the second case why should you lose your time? You say it matters nothing whether these laws are the expression of the will of an intelligent conscious God, as you think, or constitute the inevitable attributes of an

unintelligent, unconscious “God,” as I hold. I say, it matters everything, and since you earnestly believe that these fundamental questions (of spirit and matter—of God or no God) “are admittedly beyond both of us”—in other words that neither I nor yet our greatest adepts can know any more than you do, then what is there on earth that I could teach you? You know that in order to enable you to read you have first to learn your letters—yet you want to know the course of events before and after the Pralayas, of every event here on this globe on the opening of a new cycle, namely a mystery imparted at one of the last initiations, as Mr. Sinnett was told,—for my letter to him upon the Planetary Spirits was simply incidental—brought out by a question of his. And now you will say I am evading the direct issue. I have discoursed upon collateral points, but have not explained to you all you want to know and asked me to tell you. I “dodge” as I always do. Pardon me for contradicting you, but it is nothing of the kind. There are a thousand questions I will never be permitted to answer, and it would be dodging were I to answer you otherwise than I do. I tell you plainly you are unfit to learn, for your mind is too full, and there is not a corner vacant from whence a previous occupant would not arise, to struggle with and drive away the newcomer. Therefore I do not evade, I only give you time to reflect and deduce and first learn well what was already given you before you seize on something else. The world of force is the world of Occultism and the only one whither the highest initiate goes to probe the secrets of being. Hence no-one but such an initiate can know anything of these secrets. Guided by his Guru the chela first discovers this world, then its laws, then their centrifugal evolutions into the world of matter. To become a perfect adept takes him long years, but at last he becomes the master. The hidden things have become patent, and mystery and miracle have fled from his sight forever. He sees how to guide force in this direction or that—to produce desirable effects. The secret chemical, electric or odic properties of plants, herbs, roots, minerals, animal tissue, are as familiar to him as the feathers of your birds are to you. No change in the etheric vibrations can escape him. He applies his

knowledge, and behold a miracle! And he who started with the repudiation of the very idea that miracle is possible, is straightway classed as a miracle worker and either worshipped by the fools as a demi-god or repudiated by still greater fools as a charlatan! And to show you how exact a science is occultism let me tell you that the means we avail ourselves of are all laid down for us in a code as old as humanity to the minutest detail, but everyone of us has to begin from the beginning, not from the end. Our laws are as immutable as those of Nature, and they were known to man an eternity before this strutting game-cock, modern science, was hatched. If I have not given you the *modus operandi* or begun by the wrong end, I have at least shown you that we build our philosophy upon experiment and deduction—unless you choose to question and dispute this fact equally with all others. Learn first our laws and educate your perceptions, dear Brother. Control your involuntary powers and develop in the right direction your will and you will become a teacher instead of a learner. I would not refuse what I have a right to teach. Only I had to study for fifteen years before I came to the doctrines of cycles and had to learn simpler things at first. But do what we may, and whatever happens I trust we will have no more arguing which is as profitless as it is painful.