

Sri Krishna Prem, excerpts from *Man, The Measure Of All Things*

Theosophical Publishing House (1969)

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The flame of consciousness that burns in our hearts is the Flame which shines so brilliantly within the Universal Mind; the one consciousness that shines in all beings, the 'Light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world' (St. John, I,9 -> compare what H.P.B. has to say on the symbol of the Swan, *hamsa*, and its anagram *so 'ham*: S.D., I, 78 *et seq.*)

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The solution to the mystery of Being is then to be found within or at the root of our own beings, within our own hearts. Every individual can find for himself the solution to the mystery, but he cannot convey that solution to others; he can only point out the way that he himself has travelled, and affirm the reality of his knowledge. He factually knows the truth, for his own being is that truth; any expression of that truth here, however, is necessarily in terms of this present state with all its inherent falsities.

... All consciousness being one, what is true of the consciousness which manifests or burns in his own heart will be true of that which burns in the great Universal Mind, the Heart of the Cosmos.

'Sages who searched with their hearts's thought discovered
The Existent's kinship in the Non-existent.'¹

This verse explains how it is that by knowing the blazing Dragon of Wisdom, the One Darkness is also known; or that, as Jesus put it, 'he who hath seen the Son hath seen the Father'²; and it teaches the disciple how, by searching in his own heart's core, he may come to learn for himself 'the Existent's kinship in the Non-existent', to know in very truth That which transcends all knowledge.

There are two directions in which the ancestry of man may be traced; one along the line of his physical parentage, the other along that of his spiritual being – that inner being by virtue of whose presence he is Man. The first we may call his manifest ancestry, and the second his unmanifest, shut off from our normal vision by the bright light of out-turned consciousness, just as the Above is shut off by the Shoreless Sea of Fire in the previous verse. Between the two extremes of man's body and his Spirit lies an area of physical, emotional and mental characteristics whose source may be traced in either direction. For all such characteristics we can find precedents both in terms of physical ancestry and in terms of patterns impressed on the individual psyche by the garnered experience of previous lives (*samskāra*). One line of

¹ *Rig Veda*, X, 129. 4

² *Gospel of St. John*, XIV, 9

Hindu thought envisages the Universal Mind as similarly finding within itself the pattern of things 'as they were before'.

Although, then, the veil has been drawn behind it, and the bright consciousness of Universal Mind is, as it were, turned away from the unmanifest parents, those powers which brought Mind into being are still there, and we have now to find in manifestation existent representations of those unmanifest beings. This divine birth has not, however, the discrete material objectivity of human birth and so we do not find the parents as separate beings, but as modes of Universal Mind.

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To become Man and not just a menagerie of men, women, children and animals caged in a single body, we have to find the one central Light of consciousness, the effulgent Ray whose essential unity cannot be altered by the diversity of the parts in which it shines. This is that One, whose unity is intrinsic, who is essentially 'the One without a second'.

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We, with all our limitations, are the spear-head of the evolution, the growing point of 'the root that grows in the water of life'. We are its products and its instruments, not its rulers. It has given rise to our human state, though in itself it is independent of it. In us and through us the luminous consciousness of the lower forms of life has come to incandescence: a shining flame of consciousness capable of soaring up from time to timelessness, a spark that can become a Sun in which God and Goddess, lover and beloved, are eternally one, joying in the conscious knowledge of their union. We, among all beings, have it within us to pursue the evolutionary aim, not now with blind strivings but with conscious intent. We can, if we will, cease from running after the phantom forms of externalised desire and find the living reality within the calmness of the ever-present.

Without doubt, we have to beware of confusing egotistical with essential values, of confusing our personal, ephemeral aims with the divine purpose. But neither must we hang back from accepting the divine charge that has been laid upon us, the charge to perfect ourselves as Men.

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The perfected man of the universe is ... a clear window through which the ever-existent universal sun is shining. The evolution of the race ... is something to be individually achieved by each man, an achievement as utterly individual as is birth or death.

The living forces of the evolution ... urge us to effort, but it is now we who have to make the effort, for the divine purpose cannot be effected except through its highest creation, Man. ... Man is indeed the measure of all things, but if we refuse our manhood, ... then the ultimate purpose of the universal process will not be achieved through us, and our lives will become as meaningless as the pessimistic philosophies say they are.

... Only in the heart of man is there anything to be gained or lost. ... The goal is to be achieved individually.