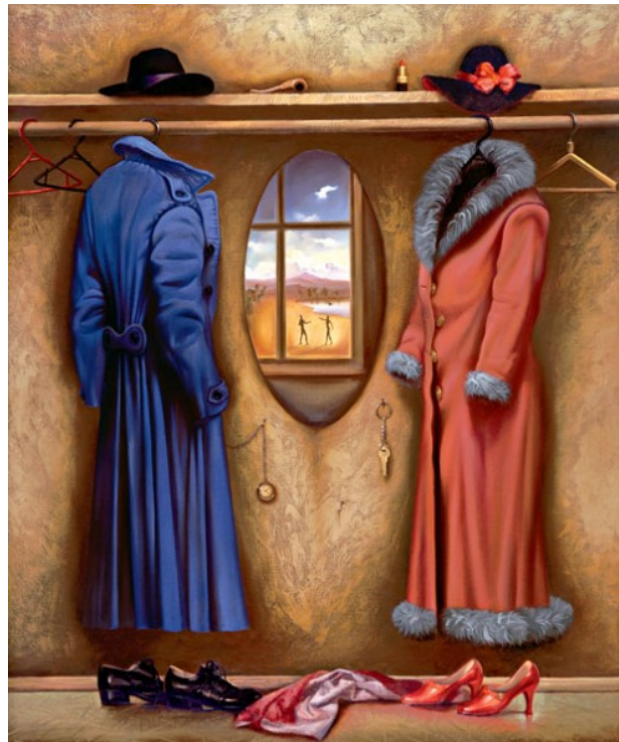


# *The Triune Nature of Emotions*

After Bhagavan Das' Science of the Emotions



Wardrobe by Vladimir Kush

## Contents

Bhagavan Das' Science of the Emotions	2
Desire came first	3
E-motions are Desires + Thoughts, ever shifting towards either of two opposing directions of Force	4
Self-control	6
Fear came later	7
Table 1. Primal trinity of E-motions in the East and the West	8
Table 2. Triune nature of feelings and E-motions proper	9
Table 3. Triune expressions of the One Life	10
Bhagavan Das (1869–1958)	11
Annotations to Tables	12



Αι κινήσεις αἱ ἀνθρώπιναί.  
Lucius Flavius Arrianus<sup>1</sup>

## Bhagavan Das' Science of the Emotions

Manas-mind, its vehicle, kāma-desire, and their interplay with other minds through karma-action are hard concepts to grasp without an appreciation that they are a single dynamic trinity and not three ontologically distinct ideas. In his *Science of the Emotions*, Bhagavan Das undertakes a bold and incisive study of the continuum of Desire-Thought-Action, where he demonstrates elegantly and unambiguously that “emotions” and “feelings,” mostly mixed and lumped together by the ignoramus, are none other than the workings of this mysterious triplet.

Having recognised that mastership of the mind's pendular māyāvic movements swinging back and forth the Centre of Being is prerequisite to success, in whatever domain it chooses to focus upon, Das traces the nature of Desire, its relation to the principal e-motions and their sub-divisions, and proceeds unravelling the aetiology of attitudes and their implications for behaviour. His *Science of the Emotions* sheds light on lower propensities which, if left unchecked, will go on demeaning character and disgracing kith and kin. It instructs, amuses, and enlightens through a series of pithy essays. It even lays bare the distinguishing qualities between confusingly similar emotions, from Devotion and Worship, to Smile and Laughter. Though it remains the definitive text for those after self-knowledge, sadly, it has not been kept in print.

Our selections here and elsewhere are from the 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. of 1924.<sup>2</sup> We have also uploaded a PDF of Das' 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. of 1908, and appended herein a précis of the achievements of this remarkable man.

This document is by no means self-explanatory. It is an aide-mémoire for those who have already understood Das' premises and is normally discussed during tutorials. It has been released for Students overseas and may be of benefit to intuitive visitors to this site.

EDITORS

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<sup>1</sup> Arrianus: *Epicteti Dissertationes* (1894, Schenk ed.), 2.20.19

<sup>2</sup> Dās B. *The Science of the Emotions*. (1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1900, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 1908); Adyar: Theosophical Publishing House, 1924 (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)



## Desire came first

Desire *per se* is ir-rational,  
a-vidya, a-jnana.

Its fulfilment is the end;  
cognitions and actions are the  
means; end and means are al-  
ways passing into each other.

By individualising, Pursuant  
Desire brings self to a focus.  
(Consciousness' Descending  
Arc)

By destroying false indivi-  
dualities, Renunciant Desire  
proceeds to demolish the walls  
of separateness. (Conscious-  
ness' Ascending Arc)

Desire-Kāma is, . . . essentially, Un-reason, the Irra-  
tional, the Arbitrary, the Un-reasonable, for which  
no reason can be assigned, *A-vidyā*, *A-jnāna*.<sup>3</sup>

. . . The World-process is an endless cycle, a perpet-  
ual rotation of these three, a vicious, or a virtuous  
circle, as you please, a *māyā*, an illusion — but by  
which and out of which, we snatch self-realisation.  
Life is — living. A stream is — flowing. A conscious  
organism, a living body, an individual, is a perpetual  
desire, a flame, a force incessantly absorbing and  
rejecting material, the absorptions and rejections  
being cognitions or actions.<sup>4</sup>

No doubt, the whole truth is that Energy is triune  
or triple. Yet it is not wrong to say that it is Desire  
more especially. The cognitive and active aspects of  
Energy are the reflections in it of the Self and Not-  
Self respectively; and the Desire-aspect may well be  
said to be Energy itself, Shakti proper. It specially  
corresponds to Man (*i.e.* individualised Energy), in  
the triplet of God — Nature — Man (the triplet being  
taken in the sense of particular solar systems) which  
is the Self's Energy long-circuited, long-drawn-out.  
This Shakti-Energy manifests by the individualisa-  
tion of the Universal Self into pseudo-infinite jiva-  
atoms, individual selves (and then re-dissolution of  
them into the Universal Self). And (pursuant) Desire  
is, *par excellence*, the individualiser, the bringer of  
the self to a focus, the intensifier of its separate exist-  
ence and feel (while renunciant Desire disinte-  
grates). The “ruling passion,” the persistent desire  
or emotion, makes the “character,” characterises the  
individual. We all feel that Desire initiates all mani-  
festation, all activity. Love creates, hate destroys,  
reason only helps to make order and to preserve, in  
between. *A-vidyā*, the perpetual cause of manifesta-  
tion, *i.e.*, individualisation, is, etymologically, un-  
reason, blind passion, Desire, *a-jnāna*, *tamas*, *moha*.  
Hence we have such statements, [as]

“The person is desire.” [*Brihad-aranyaka*, IV, iv, 5]

<sup>3</sup> *Science of the Emotions*, p. 67 fn.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid*, p. 34



“A person is what he aspires after.” [Gita]

“Kama, Desire, existed, appeared, first. It was the seed of mind, *manas*. The sages sought and wisely found in the heart, the primal kinsman, the root, of the existent in the non-existent.”

[*Rig-Veda*, X, 29, 4]<sup>5</sup>

## E-motions are Desires + Thoughts, ever shifting towards either of two opposing directions of Force

Pleasure and Pain are not mere “aspects” of self. They are “degrees” of self.

“Pleasure” and “Pain” are *degrees* of the self, rather than *forms* or *aspects* of it. It may be said, by somewhat stretching the use of words, that they are connected with the “measure,” the “bulk” of the self, rather than with its “form”; and as such they pervade and overhang all the life of the self and its manifestation in the three *forms* or *aspects* of cognition, desire, and action. The feeling of the increase, expansion, growth, *moreness*, of the self is Pleasure;<sup>6</sup> of

its decrease, contraction, decay, *lessness*, is Pain.

“There is no joy in the little; greatness is joy . . .

But the Final Greatness is that in which (*i.e.* is attained when) the Self sees, hears, knows No-Other (*i.e.* finds It-Self Alone Everywhere and None Else to dispute Its Sole Supremacy).”<sup>7</sup>

The Desire for union implies awareness that such union is possible.

. . . Love, the desire to unite with something else, implies consciousness of the possibility of such union, and that its full significance is this: an instinctive, ingrained, inherent perception by each individual self, each *jivātmā*, of its essential underlying unity, oneness, *eka-tā*, with all other *jivatmās*, all other selves; unity in the being of the All-Self, the Universal, Abstract, Inner Self, the *Pratyagātmā*; and

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<sup>5</sup> *Science of the Emotions*, pp. 30-32

<sup>6</sup> *Why* and how this third *appetite* to multiply? To *be* and to *increase* are intelligible from the ordinary egoistic standpoint, but why to *multiply*, with consequent responsibilities, etc? The metaphysical reply would be somewhat like this. Egoism and altruism are both inherent in the *Jīva*; Egoism, because it is individualised, limited; altruism, because it is Self, the Universal. The former causes the feeding and the swelling of the cell; the latter (in combination with the fact and law of the many-ness of Matter) causes the fission of the cell into two, when the second becomes the centre of a new life, the locus of another *jīva* which, in certain stages of evolution and kingdoms of nature, remains dependent upon and relation with the parent, to the satisfaction of the “spiritual affections” of both. “Ambi-valence,” doubleness, egoism-altruism, pleasure-pain, in the widest sense, is characteristic of the World-process, and especially of sex. Egoism, culminating in the supremely self-assertive action of sex, breaks over into the supreme altruism of procreation and up bringing of another. Opposites are always passing into each other. (*Ibid*, pp. 40-41)

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid*, p. 21; [quoting *Chhândogya Upanishad* 7, 23, 1 & 7, 24, 1.]



the consequently inevitable endeavour of these individual selves, these fragments of the one Self, to break through the walls separating each from each — the walls that have disrupted the original “One Self” into the “many selves” — and thus merge into each other and re-form the single whole.<sup>8</sup>

**E-motions are manifested as physical movements towards pleasure or away from pain, in expectation and imagination.**

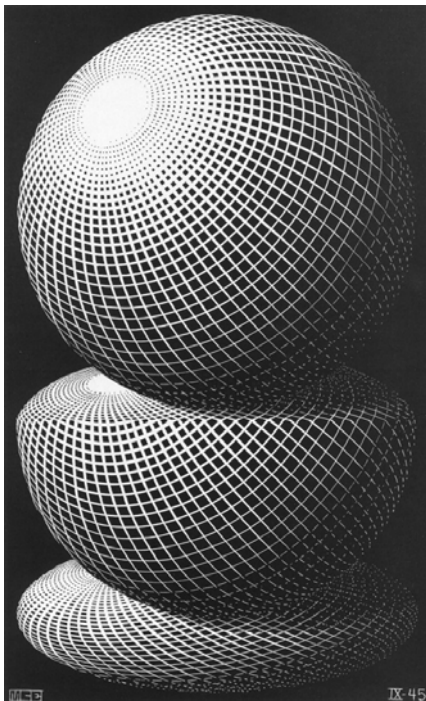
. . . the two elementary Desires are: (i) the Desire to unite with an object that causes Pleasure; and (ii) the Desire to separate from an object which causes Pain; in other words, Attraction and Repulsion, Like and Dislike, Love and Hate, or any other pair of names that may seem best.<sup>9</sup>

**E-motions after Das —**

Emotions are *desires* either to perpetuate a situation if pleasurable, or to escape out of it if painful; and the prospective fulfilment of the desire, or the defeat thereof, in expectation and imagination, gives the foretaste of the corresponding Pleasure or Pain, and makes the pleasurableness or painfulness of the total mood. The Emotion thus begins in, and looks back to, a feeling of positive Pleasure or Pain.<sup>10</sup>

**E-motions after Plutarch —**

. . . (2) The soul has three movements — impression, impulse and assent. The movement impression we could not remove, even if we wanted to; rather, as soon we encounter things, we get an impression and are affected by them. (3) The movement of impulse, when aroused by that of impression, moves person actively towards appropriate objects, since a kind of turn of the scale and inclination occur in the commanding-faculty. So those who suspend judgement about everything do not remove this movement either, but make use of the impulse which leads them naturally towards what appears appropriate. (4) What, then, is the only thing they avoid? That only in which falsehood and deception are engendered — opining and precipitately assenting, which is yielding to the appearance out of weakness and involves nothing useful. (5) For action requires two things: an impression of something appropriate, and an impulse towards the appropriate object that has appeared; neither of these is in conflict with suspension of judgement. For the argument keeps us away



Three Spheres by Maurits Cornelis Escher

<sup>8</sup> *Science of the Emotions*, pp. 25-26

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 25

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 22-23



from opinion, not from impulse or impression. So whenever something appropriate has appeared, no opinion is needed to get us moving and proceeding towards it; the impulse arrives immediately, since it is the soul's process and movement . . . (7) For the rationale of suspending judgement does not deflect sensation or implant a change in the irrational affections and movements themselves, which disturbs the occurrence of impressions; it merely removes our opinions, but makes natural use of all the rest.<sup>11</sup>

## Self-control

**Immoderate motions and speech are mere servitude towards a lower self,**

Most people apparently believe that they are free to the extent that they are permitted to yield to their lust.<sup>12</sup> . . . lack of power in moderating and checking the emotions I call servitude.<sup>13</sup>

**marring fortunes.**

Mend your speech a little,  
Lest it may mar your fortunes.<sup>14</sup>

**The Pythagoreans considered fluctuations and extremes, whether physical or mental, as tell-tale signs of an anomalous life.**

For they so attended to their bodies, that they might always remain in the same condition, and not at one time be lean, but at another, abounding in flesh. For they considered this to be an indication of an anomalous life. In similar manner, also with respect to the mind, they were careful that they might be mildly joyful with uniformity. But they expelled rage, despondence, and perturbation. *And it was a precept with them, that no human casualties ought to be unexpected by those who are endued with intellect, but that they should expect every thing may happen which it is not in their power to prevent.* But if at any time they were in a rage, or oppressed with sorrow, or any thing else of this kind, they separated themselves from the rest of their associates, and each by himself alone, endeavoured to digest and heal the passion.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 450; [Plutarch on behalf of the New Academy, in: Living without opinions: *Against Colotes* 1122a-f.]

<sup>12</sup> Spinoza: *Ethics* V, 41, i schol. (tr. Curley)

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.* IV, pref. (tr. Parkinson)

<sup>14</sup> Shakespeare: *King Lear* act I, sc. 1

<sup>15</sup> Iamblichus: *Life of Pythagoras*, p. 270 *et seq.*, tr. Taylor; [citing examples of restraint.]



## Fear came later

**Though both mind and body are moved by fear, the causes of fear are neither good nor bad.**

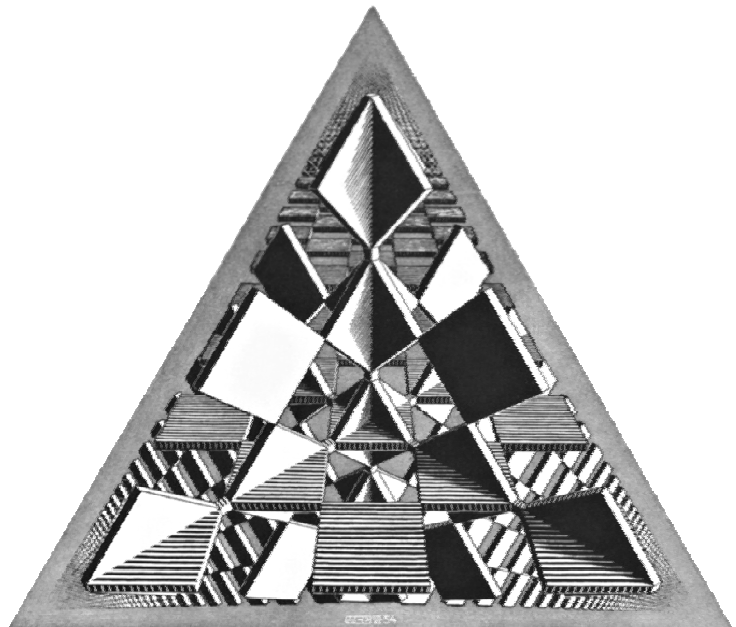
. . . Experience had taught me that all the things which regularly occur in ordinary life are empty and futile, and I saw that all the things which were the cause or object of my fear had nothing of good or bad in themselves, except insofar as [my] mind was moved by them . . . <sup>16</sup>

**Fear can only arise from the possibility of another entity from *without*.**

[Viraj, the self] was afraid. Therefore people [still] are afraid when alone. He thought: "Since there is nothing else but Myself, what am I afraid of?" Thereupon His fears were gone; for what was there to fear? Assuredly, it is from a second [entity] that fear arises. <sup>17</sup>

**But, as All is ONE, fear is a matter of personal opinion.**

It is not things themselves that disturb men, but their judgements about things. For example, death is nothing terrible, otherwise Socrates would have thought so; what is terrible is the judgement that death is terrible. So whenever we are impeded or disturbed or distressed, let us blame no one but ourselves, that is, our own judgements. <sup>18</sup>



Three Intersecting Planes (woodcut, 1954) by Maurits Cornelis Escher

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<sup>16</sup> Spinoza: *The Emendation of the Intellect*, etc., 1

<sup>17</sup> *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, I, iv, 2; (tr. Nikhilananda)

<sup>18</sup> *The Hellenistic Philosophers*, p. 418; [Epictetus' *Manual*, 5.]



**Table 1. Primal trinity of E-motions in the East and the West**

Annotations to this and the following tables are shown in *p.* 12 as endnotes.

**The will-to-become-an-individual<sup>1</sup> giving rise to mental functions as perceived**

	East	West
Illuminating the other two →	Cognition-jnanam	Intellect (cognition) <sup>2</sup>
Energising <sup>3</sup> the other two →	Desire-ichchha <sup>4</sup>	Feeling (emotion)
Moving the other two →	Action-kriya <sup>5</sup>	Will (volition + desire)



After Confiscation (1859) Fedinand Georg Waldmüller, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden



**Table 2. Triune nature of feelings and E-motions proper**

	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>M</b>
	Self	Not-Self	Self-Consciousness Individuality <sup>6</sup> propelled into action by Universal Energy or Primary Shakti. <sup>7</sup>
<b>Two feelings proper</b>	Pleasure	Pain <sup>8</sup>	Indifference to either
	Feeling of increase, expansion, growth, moreness. <sup>9</sup>	Feeling of decrease, contraction, decay, lessness.	
<b>Giving rise to</b>	Attraction	Repulsion	Neutrality
	To like.	To dislike.	To remain impartial.
<b>A wish</b>	to be nearer.	To be more distant.	
<b>A desire</b>	to take in, to absorb, to embrace.	To throw out, to push away, to repel.	
<b>A yearning</b>	to be united with object that causes pleasure.	To be separated from object that causes pain.	
<b>And the primary emotions</b>	Love-raga	Hate-dvesha	Equanimity-vairagya
<b>Emotion, then, is either</b>	<i>. . . a desire to perpetuate a situation if pleasurable. The prospective fulfilment thereof of the desire in expectation and imagination gives a foretaste of pleasure.</i>	<i>. . . or, a desire to escape out of a situation if painful. The prospective defeat thereof of the desire in expectation and imagination gives a foretaste of pain.</i>	<i>Cf. "Unexpected, pure, just, impartial, devoid of fear, and who have forsaken [personal] interest in the results of action."<sup>10</sup></i>



**Table 3. Triune expressions of the One Life<sup>11</sup>**

	<b>A</b>	<b>U</b>	<b>M</b>
<b>Aim and Objectives</b>	Evidence (pramana) and the means of ascertaining evidence (sama)	Fact (prameya) corresponding to the discrimination between the real and the unreal (viveka)	Doubt (samkhaya) corresponding to the dissatisfaction with the world (vairagya)
<b>Altruism–Egotism</b>	Other-interest or altruism (parartha)	Self-interest or egotism (svartha)	Supreme-interest or universalism (paramartha)
<b>Attributes</b>	Passion (rajas)	Ignorance (tamas)	Virtue (sattva)
<b>Beginningless Tradition</b>	Succession of Self dying	Succession of Non-Self being born (samsara)	World Process of unremitting deaths and births
<b>Cause–Effect</b>	Cause (karana)	Effect (kriya)	Efficient actor (karta)
<b>Eternal Bird in Time (a-ham-sa)</b>	I (a)	Am (ham)	He (sa)
<b>Existence</b>	Being	Non-Being	Becoming <sup>12</sup>
<b>Feelings Proper</b>	Pleasure	Pain	Indifference to either
<b>Immortal Triad</b>	Atman	Buddhi	Manas
<b>Learning Process</b>	Cognition (jnana)	Action (karman)	Desire (kama)
<b>Sankhya Philosophy</b>	Spirit-Consciousness (purusha) Power, an ever becoming Subjectivity	Matter-Nature (prakriti) Wisdom, Objectivity in its purest abstraction	Energy-Life-Justice
<b>Solar Radiations</b>	Fire (pur)	Flame (phlox)	Light (phos)
<b>Time Divisions</b>	Past	Future	Present
<b>Unity–Trinity</b>	Unity of Spirit	Trinity in Nature	Expressing an ever Unknown and Unknowable Cause
<b>Valentinian Worlds</b>	Pneumatic (Spiritual)	Hylic (Material)	Psychic (of Soul)
<b>Vedanta Philosophy</b>	Truth	Knowledge	Endlessness
<b>Yoga Philosophy</b>	Mind (chitta)	Its modifications (vrttis)	Their restrain, control, or inhibition (nirodha)



## Bhagawan Das



Dr Bhagwan Das was born at Varanasi on 12th January 1869. After a brilliant career as a student, he joined government service as a deputy collector. But he was too great a man to remain a relatively minor government official for long. Learning, more especially of religions and philosophy, was of absorbing interest to him. For a time he came under the influence of Dr Annie Besant in collaboration with whom he founded the Central Hindu College. This institution developed in time into the Benares Hindu University. Later, he founded the Kashi Vidya Pith, a national university and was its head for a number of years.

He was not only a philosopher, but a prominent public figure as well. He was an esteemed member of the Central Legislative Assembly of undivided India. He presided at a number of social and political conferences. He was associated with the Hindu-stani Culture Society and was president of the National Committee on Communal Riots. As a fighter for national freedom, he courted imprisonment.

An erudite scholar in Sanskrit, he coined a large number of Hindi words. He wrote no less than 30 books, a number of them in Sanskrit and Hindi. A majority of his works concern philosophy and ancient Indian lore. He studied other religions, as also diverse subjects like psychology and socialism. He wrote books on these subjects as well. He was thus a many-sided personality with achievements to his credit in several fields. His pre-eminently distinguished position in the country was recognised when the highest national award of Bharat Ratna was conferred upon him. He passed away on 18th September 1958, rich in years and in honours.

Dr Bhagwan Das will be chiefly remembered as a thinker. He tried to bring the West nearer to the east and made the old intelligible in terms of the modern. He wrote “. . . the thoughts, the ideals, the ways of human communities require exogamous alliances . . . for a new lease of richer life. Any honest exchange of commodities spiritual, as well as material, is profitable to both the parties concerned.” He was a great believer, in synthesis. To quote him again, “In essentials, in principles, in great things, unity; in non essentials . . . liberty; in all things, charity; this should be our guiding star.”

This great son of India is no more, but the ideas which he expounded live on. The Indian P & T Department is happy to issue a special postage stamp in memory of the great philosopher on the occasion of his birth centenary.

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## Annotations to Tables

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<sup>1</sup> *I.e.*, Desire, libido, the will-to-be and to-become.

<sup>2</sup> According to Kant.

<sup>3</sup> But always hidden and unperceived by the uninitiated.

<sup>4</sup> *Cf.* Ichchha-shakti, *Sk.* [From *iccha* desire, will + *shakti* power.] Will power or the force of desire; this power of the will is one of the occult forces of nature. Its most ordinary manifestation on the physical plane is the generation of the nerve currents necessary to set certain muscles in motion for the accomplishment of the desired object, and the paralysing of other muscles. A yogi generally performs his wonders by using ichchha-shakti combined with kriya-shakti. Desire arouses or motivates the will, which then moves in accordance with the direction given it through the desire, which always partakes of mental activity. From this general basis, the adept with his knowledge of the laws of nature can utilise certain desires of a lofty character, which arouse the corresponding will on the different planes. — *Cf. Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*

<sup>5</sup> *Cf.* “Man knows, desires, and endeavours.” (Nyaya Philosophy)

<sup>6</sup> Experiencing phenomena of consciousness (*vr̥ttis*) or ways of existing, moods.

<sup>7</sup> *Shakti, Sk.* [From the verbal root *shak* to be powerful, energetic, to have force.] The feminine aspect of *fohat*; one of the seven forces of nature, of which six are manifest and the seventh partly manifest. It is energy that proceeds through itself, not being due to the active or conscious will of the one that produces it. *Shakti* in another sense is soul-power, the mental-psychic energy of the god as of the adept. In the *Mahabharata*, Draupadi, the wife or *shakti* of the five Pandava brothers, represents a spiritual power they all possessed in common. In legends and tales of the ancient peoples, the wives of the great heroes mystically represent the aggregate of the *shaktis* or spiritual powers that the heroes had individually attained. — *Cf. Encyclopedic Theosophical Glossary*

<sup>8</sup> Pleasure and Pain are “degrees” of Self; not forms or aspects of it.

<sup>9</sup> *Cf.* “There is no joy in the little; greatness is joy . . . But the final Greatness is that which (*i.e.*, is attained when) the Self sees, hears, knows No-Other (*i.e.*, finds It-Self Alone Everywhere and None Else to dispute Its Sole Supremacy).” — *Chhandogya*, 7, 23, 1 & 7, 24, 1. (*qu. Science of Emotions*, p. 21)

<sup>10</sup> *Cf. Bhagavad Gītā*, 12 vs. 16

<sup>11</sup> From Bartzokas CA. (*Ed. & Comp.*). *Compassion: the Spirit of Truth*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Gwernymynydd: Philaletheians 2009. *Cf.* section “Thoughts and emotions are one and the same,” pp. 295-98, *ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> By mutual pervasion and interdependence of A and U. *Cf.* Shakespeare’s “to be, or not to be.” (*Hamlet* 3, 1).

