

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE NEEDS OF THE CYCLE	37
THE CHRIST-BIRTH	41
THE SPIRIT OF QUEST	45
LAW IN THE UNIVERSE	49
PATIENCE SWEET	52
THE UPWARD WAY	55
JUSTICE TO ALL BEINGS	60
CAN THE FUTURE BE KNOWN?	63
“TRY IS THE BATTLE-CRY”	65
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	67

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THE NEEDS OF THE CYCLE

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The future lies in the present and both include the Past. With a rare occult insight Rohel made quite an *esoterically* true remark, in saying that “the future does not come from before to meet us, but comes streaming up from behind over our heads.” For the Occultist and average Theosophist the Future and the Past are both included in each moment of their lives, hence in the eternal PRESENT.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN a single life, a person is under the influence of numerous cycles—daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, annual and, proceeding further, of larger ones. He has his own individual cycles pertaining to his bodily transformation, to his psychic nature, etc. Likewise, there are cycles which affect the life of groups of men and women—family, community, nation, race, and Humanity as a whole.

Each person, therefore, is influenced by his own particular cycles, as well as by those pertaining to the complex Nature without. He is affected by the changing seasons of the year, while he has his own incarnational seasons—the spring of youth, the summer of manhood, the autumn of adult years, and the winter of old age. Moreover, he has his own psychological seasons: every year he passes through the repetitive changes in his moral-mental nature which correspond to the seasons of Mother Nature. Further still, just as a single day has its changing phases, from dawn to twilight,

from twilight to dawn, so also with man.

One fundamental difference is this: the cycles of Nature are a rhythmical procession; but man's free-willed actions make his own cycles erratic, in the sense that they often do not coincide with those of Nature. Human pain and suffering may be said to be the result of the personal cycles not synchronizing with those of and in Nature. When we are asked to "help Nature and work on with her," it is implied that our human plans should go by nature's dependable clock. Motion there always is, everywhere. Rhythmic motion spells order, progress, harmony and peace, as erratic movement, action contrary to Nature's law of Universal Brotherhood, spells chaos, retrogression, discord and strife.

In the life of Nature and of Man certain days have a special significance. In Nature there are the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, the summer and winter solstices, and so on. These are conjunctions of cycles—the closing of one cycle when its influences have completed their decline, and the opening of another with the rising of its influences. Similarly, there are important days in national and racial cycles; and likewise in the lives of individual human beings.

The earth's journey round the sun brings us back once more to the Winter Solstice, the New Year according to Nature's clock. Each turn of this annual cycle, which is not a circle but rather like a spiral should bring us to a higher level. It should be a different man or woman in each case from the one who joined last year in the exchange of greetings and felicitations appropriate to the day. A year is an appreciable part of the time available for our life's journey. Has it seen us marching on, or sitting by the road, or perhaps even falling behind?

Mankind in its totality, in fact, should be much farther on than it is. Ignorance about man's own nature, mental laziness and the selfishness engendered by a false sense of separateness—these are largely responsible for the retardation of the race as a whole. But the whole is a sum-total of its parts. Individuals rousing themselves to effort can help all, for "no man can rise superior to his individual failings without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is a part."

Theosophists have a grave responsibility; theirs is a many-sided mission; but the most important aspect of that mission is his own self-elevation by the individual student of the Esoteric Philosophy. The many make the One, and every single member of a unit, such as the human family, makes or mars its fate. Keeping this philosophical principle in mind, the Theosophical aspirant must acquire, as quickly as possible, the cosmopolitan outlook. Rising above creedal and communal, national and racial prides and prejudices, he must try to evaluate events and problems from the point of view that the world is one, that humanity is a family. To become a real cosmopolitan he must have discernment to eschew that which is bad or ugly or weak in the habits and customs, manners and methods, of his own people, to adopt better substitutes, learning from those of other lands and other nations. Neither political action nor social reform, neither legislation nor administration, neither science nor religion, neither philosophy nor art, by itself can bring enlightenment. Lop-sided development and one-sided consecration will not aid the right unfoldment necessary for world improvement. Every organ of the whole man must be brought into action.

Similarly, we require a knowledge which synthesizes all branches of learning and all methods by which such learning is acquired. This is impossible if by synthesis we mean a complete collection and collation of all knowledge so far acquired by the researches of men. But in reality synthesis does not mean that. Just as mind is not a collection of the activities of the five senses of knowledge and the five organs of action but is superior to and the controller of them, so also there is that learning which is superior to all knowledge developed by the senses and the emotions. This synthesis is the soul of knowledge, and Theosophy is that synthesis. But the student must acquire the art of applying Theosophy in understanding and expounding all worldly learning. What is true and what is false, what is good and what is bad, what is beautiful and what is ugly—this should be decided with the help of Theosophy. Theosophy is the refuge of the devoted and the earnest who desire to save not only their own souls but also the souls of those who are eager to participate in the work of world upliftment.

To each earnest student of life, which every practitioner of Theosophy is, these days of December-January offer a suitable opportunity for renewing the resolve to be a real friend and comforter to all his fellow men. The 20th-century world would have been different had the majority of those who came into the Theosophical Movement in the 19th century been truly loyal to their ideals and ideas, devotedly faithful to their doctrines and teachings, and had studied sufficiently to make adequate applications of what H.P.B. and her Masters set forth. Shall we not learn the lesson that Theosophical history teaches, and makes practical applications of it, keeping ever in view that Theosophy is in the world to effect the leavening of the race-mind?

WITH every man that is earnestly searching in his own way after a knowledge of the Divine Principle, of man's relations to it, and nature's manifestations of it, Theosophy is allied. It is likewise the ally of honest science, so long as the latter does not poach on the domains of psychology and metaphysics.

And it is also the ally of every honest religion—to wit, a religion willing to be judged by the same tests as it applies to the others. Those books, which contain the most self-evident truth, are to it inspired (not revealed). But all books it regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE CHRIST-BIRTH

CHRISTMAS is generally known as the festival of the nativity of Christ. It is regarded as the Birthday of Jesus, the teacher recognized by Christendom. Though generally known as a Christian festival, it is not exclusively so; it was already observed by the entire pagan world long before the era of Jesus. It is quite clear from historical and documentary evidence that before the fifth century there was no agreement as to the actual date of Christ's birth, and till then the calendars do not speak of it.

In the religious history and the mythology of many peoples we become familiar with numerous Sun-Gods who are all born at the time of the winter solstice, round about the 21st of December. Thus the Romans were celebrating the Rite of Mithra which they had adopted from Persia, and the birth of Mithra, the Sun-God, was celebrated on the 25th of December. Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says:

The Roman Christians, ignorant of the real date of Christ's birth, fixed the solemn festival on the 25th of December, the *Brumalia*, or Winter Solstice, when the Pagans annually celebrated the Birth of Sol.

From Central America where civilization flourished in far distant times we have the examples of Mexican, Aztec and Yucatan Gods, all born of Virgin mothers and all born round about the 25th of December. The Venerable Bede, who lived in the eighth century, says of ancient Britons:

The ancient people of the Angli began the year on the 25th December when we now celebrate the Birthday of the Lord; and the very night which is now so holy to us, they called in their tongue "modranecht," that is, the mother's night, by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil they performed.

The Christmas festival is the drama, the representation of a divine and mysterious event—the Birth of Christos, the *Avatara*. It is a

drama that the early Christians borrowed from the Pagans, and it is good that they so borrowed it; but unfortunately its real significance is not understood by the masses of Christendom today, nor is it explained to them. Jesus was not born on this day; the early Christians incorporated in their religion this festival, feeling the need for it in a moral and spiritual way.

Christmas is the festival of birth—the Birth of Divinity, of Christos, of Avalokiteshwara, of Krishna. In the process of human evolution, in accordance with the great Law of Cycles, cosmically, Divinity manifests through special Incarnations, and, psychologically, in special ways. The doctrine of Avatars or Divine Incarnations has two phases or aspects: one cosmical, the second psychological. There are appearances of great cosmic Avatars; they are macrocosmic phenomena. Secondly, in our own individual human unfoldment there are appearances, the afflatus of our own Divinity, our own spiritual Atma, and such are microcosmic phenomena. Nothing takes place in Nature that does not also occur in the human kingdom; and the appearance of Great Avatars has its counterpart in the life of men and women. The Great Birth, the Supreme Birth, is that very rare phenomenon in Nature when in a human individual, evolving onwards and upwards, the Great Purusha, Uttama-Purusha, enters and manifests Himself. Evolution in the human kingdom is a long process; yuga after yuga, man struggles; he sins and suffers and grows as he attempts to gain virtue and abandon vice; after many lives he frees himself from the enslavement of Nature, *Prakriti*; he becomes pure, *Suddha*, and then he develops higher spiritual powers or *siddhis*, and becomes *Siddha*—Proven-Soul, a Perfected Soul. He becomes fit to hold in the casket of his heart the living Image of *Uttama-Purusha*, the Supreme Man, call Him Krishna or call Him Christ, call Him Mithra or call Him Osiris, call him Odin or call Him Apollo. This is the Great Mystery, the advent of the Divine Man into the Living Temple of the Human Heart. It is to this secret and sacred Mystery that the *Gita* refers when it says that “among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am.” This rare Being is described

in the same chapter as the “Mahatma difficult to find.”

Coming to the psychological aspect: Each one of us has a dual nature; it is not merely the duality of lower and higher or evil and good; it is the duality of two distinct lines or pedigrees which mix and mingle in man. In part of our nature each one of us is a lunar being—a *Chandra Vamshi*; in another part of our being we are solar—*Surya Vamshi*.

The Moon has one very striking characteristic: it changes in its phases every hour, every day. From crescent to half, from half to gibbous, from gibbous to full, then waning from full it becomes new and invisible for a day or so. This is a good representation of our personal nature—ever changing.

Look at the Sun: it is ever full, rises and sets every day in the glory of fullness. This is our higher nature—the spiritual Individuality.

When the lunar or personal nature comes under the control and guidance of the solar or spiritual, it becomes full of radiance and light. We must make an effort to be born as the full moon, to live as the full moon and to die as the full moon. That is the message of the Buddha Festival. It is said that He was born at full moon, He attained Nirvana at full moon, He passed away when the moon was full.

Our practical question now is how we shall increase, how we shall enhance the power of the Solar Pedigree in us so that here on earth we may shine like the moon when it is full. *The Voice of the Silence* says: “Destroy thy lunar body,” that is, the *kama-rupa*, and “cleanse thy mind-body,” that is, the *manasa-rupa*. These two forms of life have to be dealt with—the destruction of *kama*, passion; the cleansing of *manas*, mind. These two processes are simultaneous, must go together; mind cleansing produces the death of *kama*. The final death of the lower passions brings to birth the Higher Man. Living as desire entities, we are familiar with the phenomenon of death. We say we are born to die. Every child who is born is sure only of one thing—that it is going to die.

The festival of Christmas brings to human attention the miracle of Birth. Why not so live that life is a perpetual creation, a series of births? It is rightly said that death disappoints the Soul; then why not take precautions against the snare of death? We die perpetually,

continuously, because of delusion, *moha*, born of ignorance, *avidya*. The Birth of the Soul if perpetually brought about by *kriya-shakti*, creative activity, would take human beings not from death to death, but from one birth or awakening to another birth and awakening. Let us attempt always to awaken to new realities. The process of ever being born takes place because *Atma*, the Superior Luminous Self, has begun to create within the purified heart. That Superior Self is Krishna or Christos, the *Uttama-Purusha*, the Divine Man, and His Birth is the real celebration of Christmas.

WE gain infinitely more than we lose in abandoning belief in the reality of Divine Revelation. Whilst we retain, pure and unimpaired, the treasure of Christian morality, we relinquish nothing but the debasing elements added to it by human superstition. We are no longer bound to believe a theology which outrages reason and moral sense. We are freed from base anthropomorphic views of God and His government of the Universe, and from Jewish Mythology we rise to higher conceptions of an infinitely wise and beneficent Being, hidden from our finite minds, it is true, in the impenetrable glory of Divinity, but whose laws of wondrous comprehensiveness and perfection we ever perceive in operation around us....The argument so often employed by theologians, that Divine revelation is necessary for man, and that certain views contained in that revelation are required for our moral consciousness, is purely imaginary, and derived from the revelation which it seeks to maintain. The only thing absolutely necessary for man is TRUTH, and to that, and that alone, must our moral consciousness adapt itself.

—WALTER R. CASSELLS: *Supernatural Religion*

THE SPIRIT OF QUEST

WHEN a person, through suffering or through a spirit of quest, begins to ask questions as to what is God, what is Spirit and Soul, why two natures, divine and beastly, fight within him, there is the first awakening. To ask questions, to express honest doubts about one's beliefs and habits, one's religious and social practices, is a healthy sign. An inquiring soul has awakened and is ready to enter the great School of Life. Just as our physical body goes through phases from conception to birth, so also with the soul. The inquiring, awakened soul begins to use his mind and reason—that is his moment of conception. But between conception and actual birth there is a period—for the body it is nine months; for the soul that period is indefinite and depends on the effort the mind makes to learn and to apply what is learnt. The inquirer can shorten the period of the antenatal life of the soul by his own endeavours. If he uses his mind and reason perseveringly, he will come to the next stage. That soul, purifying himself, gaining knowledge which enlightens, unfolds the calm and tranquillity that bring to birth a faculty higher than reason—intuition.

Intuition is direct perception. We understand a subject by reasoning, going from one step to another, more or less laboriously; but intuition is like turning on a floodlight in a dark room, which enables us to see at a glance what is in that room. All of us possess the faculty of intuition, but in most of us its action has been atrophied. It is a faculty that develops with use and decays with neglect. With purity of life and practice of right knowledge, intuition gradually begins to function.

Can we learn to experience the power which is peace, and express the sacrifice which is joy, day after day? To produce that result, can any ordinary human being undertake the work of reforming himself, forming himself anew, and becoming as one “newly born”? He can—by Right Living. But what is Right Living?

There are two divisions into which Right Living as an art and a science naturally falls. What not to do is one; what to do is the

other. Those who are eager to live the Higher Life, naturally desire to get rid of their weaknesses of character. The sensuous man wishes to overcome his lust; the impatient and irritable woman desires to acquire patience and contentment; a young man wishes to lose his timidity and become a hero; a young girl desires to get rid of her shyness and acquire grace and inner stamina; and so forth. It is but natural that having seen our own moral blemish we aspire to get rid of it.

Next, there is the desire to learn, to gather knowledge, to exercise the moral limbs and unfold virtues, to develop the mind and evolve faculties. In the minds of most people who aspire to become better and nobler, there is some idea-image, some picture of a great character in history or in literature. This feeling that people possess is not meaningless. It is indicative of the heart-aspiration for betterment of oneself, for improvement of one's own life, for the ennobling of one's own labour and actions.

So people desiring to reform themselves come upon prescriptions—what not to do, what to do; how to fight moral weaknesses, how to steady the wandering mind; what not to eat, what to eat; where to go, where not to go; and so on. Let us not begin with our weaknesses; let us not start out by saying, “I desire to control my wandering mind; I wish to kill out my lust; I want to defeat my impatience; I am going to fight my timidity”; and so forth. How then to begin? “The fight is in the mind” is a good aphorism to remember. All our moral weaknesses, our evil tendencies and bad habits, are rooted in the mind. Milton uttered a great truth when he said:

The mind in its own place, in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven.

The fight is in the mind, and the beginning of real reformation is in and of the mind. But what about our moral weaknesses? Do we know how to attack them? If we begin to handle a gun before we have learned how to use it, we might injure ourself! So let us acquire knowledge of the “holy war” and how to wage it. When a person tries to fight his anger, but does not know how to go about it, in his very effort to overcome anger he will lend the force of his

own thought to that evil, and the anger will continue to live. Fear of a weakness produces resentment in our lower nature, and that particular weakness grows. People waste time by beginning at the wrong end. The weakness we fear will leave us if we turn away from the programme of “thou shalt not” to the programme whose first item is—knowledge of first principles.

By reading and by study, the mind should be occupied with principles of right philosophy. That is the first step. The minds of most people are full of notions of all sorts. Ask anyone what his principles of life and conduct are, and he will be puzzled. *There* is the real difficulty. To acquire the principles by which we should live, implies that we are learning how to hold and to handle the “gun” to fight the enemy of our moral blemishes and vicious tendencies. All know that to lie, to lust, to rob, are evil things, but why are they evil and how to overcome them? They have no knowledge of that. Once we acquire the fundamentals of right philosophy, we ourselves shall be able to formulate our own principles of life. So we must get busy with our minds and bring to them right food, proper nourishment.

It is said that the Higher Life, often called the Holy Life, commences when a person begins to love God. But what is Love and what is God? Theosophy, as a philosophy, teaches as its first fundamental proposition what God or Deity is. Correct knowledge about Deity also informs us about the right practice of what is called Love. Acquiring a correct conception about God or Deity, about the manifested universe and man's relationship to it, brings to birth a new attitude within us. The values of all things undergo a transformation when by study we see what man is, what his relationship to the universe is, and what functions he is called upon to perform as a part of Great Nature. This knowledge brings about Reformation. Without that knowledge, we assign a particular set of values to the people and objects around us. When that knowledge brings to birth the new attitude in us, those values undergo a change. The world and its humanity look very different; our friends and kin, our religion and customs, everything is seen in a new light. Our own weaknesses look different; our fight against them takes a

different form; our life has a new meaning; and our heart throbs with a new joy and a new vitality.

The immediate moral result of this knowledge acquired by and in the mind is perceived by us in our own lives. A new power or force, a new *shakti*, begins functioning in us—call it love, call it sacrifice, call it the spirit of service. It is an inner change. It makes the student go to his books and his exams with a new purpose—preparation, not only for earning his own livelihood, but for the service of all human souls. It makes the businessman, the banker, the industrialist, the manufacturer, the shopkeeper, the clerk, think about his duty to the community at large; not just for his own profit or pay does he toil, but to serve the community by his work in factory, office or shop. It makes the woman in the home endeavour for a nobler purpose than home-making; she wants her home to become a centre of purity and beauty where the grace of hospitality, the charm of friendship, the harmony of affection, radiate Light for all. That inner change is the first step towards the true spiritual life. It activates the real heart of man. Most people live by and in their likes and dislikes; some live by and in the mind, using their reason; but the real life begins when the Heart functions. Mind-knowledge is one kind of knowledge; it is called the Eye Doctrine; but spiritual knowledge is named the Heart Doctrine, the Hidden Knowledge, called in the *Gita* Esoteric Knowledge—*Guhya-Vidya*.

In Chapter Nine is to be found the magnificent promise of Krishna to all men and women: even a great sinner can reform himself by right resolve. But we must resolve, *i.e.*, go to our own mind and there perceive the great truth that man is divine, and that the Temple of God is the human heart. The world is full of casteless men and women; many of them are “untouchables” because of their vices. By right resolve to acquire and practise knowledge, we become truly human, and by self-effort we are born again, we become *Dwijas*—“Twice-Born”—men and women who live in their hearts, who work with heart-energy for the regeneration of the world. They are those selfless Sacrificers who, forgoing the rest of Emancipation, remain on Earth in the service of all human souls.

LAW IN THE UNIVERSE

THE general concept of mercy is that it is the power (usually exercised arbitrarily) of withholding punishment for a known wrong done, *e.g.*, a magistrate, governor or king may remit (within limits) the sentence imposed on a convict. *Webster's Dictionary* defines it as “clemency, leniency, disposition to forgive; pity, compassion.”

Justice, long considered a prerogative or function of kings and their delegates, has traditionally been represented by equipoised scales; injustice, by the unbalanced scales. Is the latter state mercy? The dictionary says justice is “conformity to law; impartiality, fairness, honesty in dealings.”

Those who know they have done wrong and who fear the just consequences, generally seek mercy, or the remission, or postponement, or delay, or mitigation of due punishment, by prayers to God or gods, or by petitions to a court of law, etc.

What underlies the whole concept of justice is an innate recognition of the operation of Law in the Universe—in Nature and in Man; of the fact that moral law prevails as inexorably on the ethical plane as it does on the physical. Innately, we know that Law is implacable: “Utter-true its measures mete...tomorrow it will judge, or after many days.”

Modern science demonstrates the reign of Law throughout the departments of physical Nature that it has investigated and analysed. To an increasing degree, it expresses the relationships and interactions in Nature in mathematical terms.

Orthodox religions have traditionally considered themselves arbiters of the moral nature of man, and the priests of all religions have generally arrogated to themselves the role of intermediaries between man and God, or gods. Innately, many feel the falseness of this position, but most have neither the knowledge to eradicate the fear of the unknown, nor the enthusiasm and energy to search for Truth by themselves.

Why and how does Theosophy explain and reconcile the apparently opposing concepts of justice and mercy? Simply because

the Theosophical philosophy takes into account all factors. Let us see what these are.

In regard to God, Theosophy says that It is a Universal and Eternal PRINCIPLE, all-pervasive and immanent in the essential nature of all men and all beings in the entire universe. The goal of life is the ultimate perfectibility of all beings—the conscious awareness of the wisdom inherent in one’s omniscient spiritual nature, which is but a ray of the One Spirit, the One God. Priests and orthodoxies are eliminated at one stroke, for each man is in contact with the ray of the Deity within himself, and can know it for himself and by himself.

If this be so, then the many laws that science records are the uniform, impersonal and punctual workings of the Universal Mind throughout Nature. This binds every aspect of Nature, every faculty, every being to every other; there can be no “escape,” no propitiation. If Nature’s laws are so relentless, so just, how, then, are they merciful? The mercy aspect is to be found in the implacable, unchanging nature of Law; because it is merciful, it puts wrongs right; without emotion it demands that right shall prevail, that harmony shall be established, and so it gives us the opportunity to learn the lesson that life has to teach.

The Third Fundamental Proposition of the Theosophical philosophy posits the harmonious evolution of all beings in the universe and the ultimate merging of self-consciousness into Universal Consciousness; the mind faculty of personal perception broadens into universal perception. To gain this perception, we have to see that all beings of whatever nature or degree interact on one another, on all planes—physical, emotional, mental, moral, spiritual. This is the basis of Brotherhood, the basis of mercy, of charity, but we do not yet see it; or, if occasionally glimpsed, we do not retain awareness of the vision and do not use it practically to motivate our every thought and deed.

Why, then, do we do wrong? It is because our desires and wants, united with the mind faculty, create in us a sense of “I-ness,” of separateness, of selfishness. The vision of Unity is temporarily obliterated by personal sensation.

What, then, can we do? The solution lies in the study and understanding of the three universal Fundamentals outlined above, in working out their implications in daily life, and in proving their validity for ourselves. Then comes self-improvement, the building of virtue into our character because we realize that “rigid Justice rules the World.” We thus become Law-abiding.

Karma is the name given to the universal Law of cause-effect-cause. The justice of the Law resides in its exact balancing of the effect with the force generated to create the cause. Its mercy resides in the fact that it gives us another chance to learn and to improve and to work on ourselves. No one is damned eternally or punished for ever. This is not the Law of Nature.

True mercy is not personal favour shown to an individual. If we could see that in their highest aspects mercy and justice are synonymous, then we would set aside emotional considerations and accept the situations we are placed in by Karma as opportunities for which we ought to be grateful, opportunities to work out effects and to surmount undesirable characteristics in ourselves. True forgiveness would then imply ceasing to brood over past wrongs—the application of the teaching: “Look not behind or thou art lost.”

MIXED people, mixed institutions: therefore time, tolerance, and patience, suffering wheat and tares to ripen side by side as they sprang up in the field. That reform itself needs reforming which plucks up the man in rooting out his sins. Heaven’s Kingdom comes not by violence but by persuasion. Love is the soft but mighty curb. Pure power sleeps in reserves, and is benign and beautiful. “Yet half his strength he put not forth.” Reserves are God instinctive, and checks from within.

—BRONSON ALCOTT

PATIENCE SWEET

THE third *Paramita* is defined as “patience sweet, that nought can ruffle.” It follows *Dana*, or the cultivation of love immortal, and *Shila*, or the establishment of harmony in word and act. We have seen how in practising the *Shila* virtue it is difficult not to lose hope when the path ahead is not clear, and how the beginning of the perfection of the virtue of patience has to be made. We saw how fear breeds doubt and impatience. Therefore, to have patience means that there is sufficient faith and strength to walk steadfastly the Path that leads to the goal ahead, and to recognize that the soul is indestructible and the goal reachable.

Patience is not *Viraga*, though the beginning of the cultivation of the *Viraga* virtue has to be made, for we can patiently await the fructification of our hopes only when we have become indifferent to pain and pleasure, impervious to both. Therefore, Mara, the power of illusion which prevents us from rising above the pairs of opposites and from taking a balanced point of view, is our enemy.

We see again how necessary at all stages is the firm faith based on the knowledge we already possess of the immutability of LAW. This faith must be cultivated. *Nothing matters except to go on*—to formulate to ourself certain things as true that we feel to be true, and then increase our faith in them, as Mr. Judge wrote. However fearful we may be, we will not lose our balance if such faith is ever with us. Courage comes with the faith that the *real* in us is indestructible, that nothing can hurt us but ourselves, for all troubles really come from within and not from without. The within is the field of operation for all troubles and tribulations, and it is there that they are to be dealt with.

“To dare, to will to achieve and keep silent” is the motto of the true Occultist. Courage and patience come from the heart and are truly possible only when we rely on the heart. The power of the Spirit chases away all darkness, and if the heart is responsive to the Spirit, then it, too, dispels all darkness, illusion and doubt. But we must allow time to work the miracle, and must remember the

teaching that at the right time the results will appear.

We are told what is the root cause of doubt and darkness. We hide the light of Spirit because we are still selfish. “No light that shines from Spirit can dispel the darkness of the nether Soul, unless all selfish thought has fled therefrom.” And what causes selfish thought? The absence of the realization of the indestructibility of man, and the presence of the belief that body is all-important. We must get to the point when we can say, “I have renounced this passing frame; I have destroyed the cause: the shadows cast can, as effects, no longer be.”

We are told that at the threshold of the next *Paramita* we have to face the great war between the higher in us and the lower. “One of the twain must disappear; there is no place for both.” The remaining portals on the *Paramita* Path cannot be passed by the lower man ruled over by the lower mind which awakes illusion. Mind must, therefore, conquer body and senses and emotions before the next step is taken on the Path. Let us learn well that the “Soul cannot be hurt but through the erring body.” Body must be seen as an instrument of the Soul; it cannot be allowed to act on its own, in a separative, isolated manner. To give up the feeling of separation is to feel the strength of unity. To close one’s eyes is to lose sight of the goal. Inattention, passivity, thought of one’s safety or well-being and forgetfulness of others, are fatal. From fear comes terror; from terror, death. We have to leave behind attachment to the body, leave behind the conception of “I-am-ness.” Instead, there has to be the strength to fight on and on, for there can be no return, no turning back!

Once this is accomplished, we pass through the gate of *Kshanti* and start on another, even more difficult, Path. To make progress on this Path, we must reach the condition indicated in *Light on the Path* and “look for the warrior and let him fight” in us. Patience should have taught us to have “no longer any care as to the result of the battle.” Why? Because the result we envisage is personal; all that is important is “that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat.” Cool and unwearied, we can learn by the power gained through pain and the destruction of pain. The woe of

life and the efforts made to overcome it enable us to learn the lesson that life has to teach, and that lesson of harmony is in the form of a melody, a song. Then we have to “remember it faithfully,” so that it becomes a part of us and so that we learn the meaning of the mystery which surrounds us. We are now ready to pass on.

KNOWING something as to our essential nature, knowing something of the purpose of life, and that life is all made up of learning, knowing that the universe is all alive, and that there is in reality no injustice save that which we inflict upon ourselves by re-action, we should take an entirely different view of life and put these ideas into daily practice. We would take the position which most of all we need to take—that of our own responsibility, which religions have taught us to shift on to some God or devil. Recognizing that each one of us is from the same Source and going towards the same goal, though the path will vary with the pilgrim, we will act toward each one as if he were a part of ourselves. Like us, each one is moving onward—perhaps below us, possibly above. From the one above, we can obtain help. To the one below, we can give help. Such is the interdependence which should exist between all conscious beings; and under such a conception our civilization would not be as it is now. We should not find every man’s hand raised against every other man. We should not see those in poor case finding fault with the wrong conditions, but finding fault rather with their own wrong relations to others at some time when they abused the power they had. We should see each one trying to discipline *himself*, trying to bring himself into proper relation with all the rest—not so much outwardly, perhaps, as inwardly; for we may be sure that if we make clean the inside of the bowl, the outside will take care of itself. We have no greater duty to perform than to make clear and clean our natures—to make them *true*, to make them in accord with the great object of all life, the evolution of soul.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE UPWARD WAY

The direct effect of an appreciation of theosophy is to make those charitable who were not so before. Theosophy creates the charity which afterwards, and of its own accord, makes itself manifest in works.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

DURING any age, there take birth a few aspiring Souls who bring back with them fragments of the true knowledge which they had gathered in other lives. Born with this heritage from a forgotten past, they do not require the tardy processes of reasoning to be convinced that the perennial knowledge exists and is in the custody of the wise among men. They readily understand that re-embodiment and reincarnation are universal and that where life evolves, there, within it, resides an intelligence that retains in its memory the programme and the plan for that life. The more discerning among them find that there is a law which is unerring, the workings of which though hidden from sight display an intelligence all their own. This law works through all forms—seen or unseen, active or seemingly inert—to synchronize evolutionary impulses with the grand ultimate purpose towards which each must contribute and each gravitate.

The natural impulse which propels the lower kingdoms towards their evolutionary objectives is in man replaced by a motive power that is both self-induced and self-devised. Man alone has the right to choose, the power to discriminate the right from the wrong, and the freedom to exercise his will to achieve ignoble ends. He may thus choose to embrace evil and go counter to the universal plan. Because of his wrong choices, he may in time be pulverized and his puny personal force crushed and dissipated by the onrush of the great and overwhelming tides of the force that moves in tune with the universal will. Nevertheless, freedom of choice exists and it is this which makes him man. In general, a person’s actions are a mixed fare of reflexes, impulses, emotions, desires, thoughts and feelings. At various times, he portrays the sly fox, the frolicking

lamb, or the venomous serpent. But he is also in rare moments the humble devotee, the ardent searcher for truth, the defender of the weak, and the seeker for that which he calls god. No life below the human can cognize the eternal nor have a concept of the infinite. It does not possess the instrumentation that can make such perception possible. No animal-man can differentiate between the eternal and the non-eternal till the pain and torture of lost quests for happiness make him subdue the animal part of himself. He can then look inward for that which alone will help him to transcend the ephemeral pleasure and pain.

Both Patanjali and Vyasa show—the one in the *Yoga Sutras*, the other in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—that true knowledge wells up within the individual the moment that the impediments to its inflow are removed. This knowledge which is *sui generis* deals with the essence that resides at the core and centre of all things visible or invisible to the eye. Very few possess the one-pointedness that will enable them to penetrate to that inner essence. Man in this age is too prone to choose the easier road of evaluating all things by the familiar norms of sense-perception. The mortal aspects are thus probed, analysed and meticulously tabulated with no attention paid to that energy which inhabits the form analysed and which being non-matter becomes imperceptible to instruments of matter. Matter cannot understand Spirit and any effort on its part to do so must culminate in the distorted forms of an earthy imagining. The non-eternal mind of man, when it attempts to ponder on immortality, vests it with the robes of mortality. So doing, he does the reverse of what he is expected to do. Instead of raising his consciousness to Spirit, he tries to drag the Spirit down to the level of matter.

The evolutionary progress of man cannot be achieved by a mere movement from one incarnation to another. Neither can the man of flesh abandon his earthly garments and invest himself with heavenly raiments by the aid of material things, which include the help of bell, book, and candle of any religion. To advance, he has to shed his animal aspects. To get the desired effects, he has to generate such causes as can produce those effects. Therefore is it said that for man evolution is through ways and means that have to

be induced and devised by his Self. The first such means is the building up of an unshakable conviction that the goal can be reached and that if in the past men have reached the terrace of enlightenment, he too may, incarnations hence, achieve what they did. This conviction and the courage that it brings with it must remain through all circumstance and be present during the hours that follow upon defeat, failure and death. Such conviction if rooted in blind faith will not be able to stand up to ordeals such as these. The conviction has to be immortalized in true faith, that faith which *Light on the Path* describes as a great engine, an enormous power, a covenant or an engagement between man's divine part and his lesser self. The man has to realize that something of him does survive the interludes between death and life and that in the unknown part of himself he is immortal and of the nature of the infinite.

Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of Alaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface." Several important considerations follow upon an acceptance of this statement. The chief of these is that all search restricted to forms of clay must necessarily remain frustrating and futile. The forms of clay are mortal and lie shattered at death. Thus go the mortal possessions of the mortal brain, the mortal junk gathered over a long lifetime, money and fame included, as also the fruits of charity, sacrifice and austerities if these were motivated by a selfish and therefore a mortal desire. To come out from among the multitude, the disciple has to make his obeisance to the crystal ray that is within him and which he himself is in the inmost essence. He has to remove his gaze from the clay forms on which it is riveted and centre it on the immaculate beam of light which is within him as it is within the other forms which make up humankind. Like Narcissus of the classics, man adores his own form, adorns it, tries to give it the greatest comfort, is most exercised at its illness and dreads the coming on of death. Adoring his own form, he gets into the habit of adoring the forms that surround him and that through affinity attract him. As long as his gaze is firmly fixed on these forms, he remains of the earth earthy, a student of the deceptive

knowledge that his senses can supply. Unfortunately, to the one intoxicated by the heady wine of matter, the sense-knowledge acquired is real, something of which he is proud and which he is apt to parade forth at each opportunity. The wise one sees in such knowledge only an amassing of false learning, a treasuring of that which would be of no value beyond death. The drunkard descending to low levels of consciousness conjures up fantastic images which to him are real but which to the average person appear as bizarre and grotesque.

No mere poring over books, no self-imposed ascetic practices, no plodding service over the years can culminate in the person gazing upon the one true Light, unless he turns his back upon the ephemeral and concentrates the energies of his body, mind and soul in the endeavour to reach the Supreme. If to identify himself with the immaculate beam, wealth, fame, fortune, family and name have to be given up, then they have to be surrendered with no regrets. In fact, by the dedicated man as by the “man of meditation” the shedding of these trappings is considered no high achievement because it comes as a natural outcome to his endeavours. Others may wonder how the great feat must have been achieved in anguish and pain. To him, it is a natural and an unhurried flowering of his life’s desire, a majestic sweep of flowing waters that rising in far-off sources, move in measured flow to pour and merge themselves into the starlit sea.

To reach to his high estate, he has to start his ascent from lowly levels. But even at the initial stages of his endeavour, the goal has to be clearly defined, the footholds that lead to higher elevations planned and cut in the rising perilous slopes that have to be conquered all the way from the foot-hills to the icy summits. The Sixth Chapter of the *Gita* is eminently suited to aid the student in defining his goal and in providing guidelines for his efforts for the future. In it, the steps in discipline are clearly marked, the goal set out in unmistakable terms. The quest is shown to be that of the Supreme Spirit. The ways to reach it are indicated to be through a steadfast devotion to that ideal. Krishna says that this devotion is possessed only by him who has spiritual knowledge and

discernment, who, having controlled his senses, stands upon the pinnacle, and who in the company of sinners or the righteous remains of equal mind. Krishna goes on to say that this degree of devotion can be achieved by the man who ascends to meditation through the renouncing of all intentions and through severance of attachments to such actions as would lead to the involvement of the senses.

It is at the stage when the neophyte tries to free himself from the thralldom of the senses that he finds himself denuded of power to raise an impregnable barrier between himself and the spell that the sense-images cast upon him. He needs must fail and abandon quest and conquest if in ignorance he places sole reliance on himself—the little self that represents the personal animal-man of moods, passions and little aspirations. The lower self has not the strength to leap across the threshold to that place of peace which lies a jump ahead. No amount of service, questioning or humility can work the wonder unless, yearning for the higher light, he turns his back upon matter and the mortal aspects of the manifested. When the scripture says (VI, 5) that “he should raise the self by the Self,” it postulates a call for help from the lower and a response from the higher. Without the help that only the higher can give, the lower can achieve no ends.

The knowledge of the lower and the higher egos within man is essential for him who would seek the upward way. It is a sign of the degeneration of our times that although this knowledge is now readily available, the youth of today is not given this wisdom in the formative years of his life. The mortal aspects are all too familiar; the immortal, remote and almost unattainable; and thus years chase sordid years with wild and miry feet, till late in the life the individual assesses his past and recognizes how futile it all has been. But then it all seems too late. The fire of youth burns low or is extinct and the soul to dare is too often on the wane or at its lowest ebb. It is therefore a primary duty of the student of Theosophy to pass on the priceless knowledge to the young in age as to the young in heart and turn them from sense-intoxicated souls into beings striving towards the Light. Blessed are they who help in the endeavour.

JUSTICE TO ALL BEINGS

SELFISHNESS and competition are the keynotes in this “Age of Progress,” for nations as for individuals. The “struggle for life” and the desire for national and personal “security” are the prolific parents of most human woes and crimes. They are rooted in almost complete ignorance of man’s nature and his relation to the Universe.

Intolerance of other views than our own is pre-eminently the fruit of ignorance and jealousy. It and the world’s other moral ills require for their cure a sound philosophy based on : Universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; and Reincarnation. How do these offer the key to a just and happy world?

Universal Unity and Causation point to the One All, the universal ceaseless Motion which is the basis of all manifested things. A stream can rise no higher than its source, and in presenting this infinite Divine Presence as the root of all, Theosophy affords infinity of opportunity for growth. Witness the heights achieved by Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Tsong-kha-pa and other Great Souls.

The solidarity of humanity rests upon that Universal Unity in essence (the spirit aspect and the source of all degrees of consciousness) and in substance (the material basis from which come all types of forms in which dwells consciousness of varying degrees). Universal Causation means, among other things, that no one can sin or suffer the effects of sin, alone. The action, good or bad, of one reacts upon all and upon himself.

Intellectual realization of human brotherhood depends upon the understanding and the assimilation practically, in daily living, of the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, not as they are so often misunderstood in the modern East, but in their broader sweep and explanation as set forth in ancient wisdom, restated as Theosophy.

Karma is not fatalism, but, like its corollary, Reincarnation, is a teaching full of hope. For, if the present is the outcome of the past, then now, today, it is in the power of individuals and mankind as a whole to counteract old evil causes by right present acts. The future

will then be mitigated to the extent that it will be the combined product of the present and the past.

Equilibrium or harmony in the material world is justice in the moral one. Lincoln enunciated a Theosophical truth when he declared, “Nothing is ever settled that is not settled right.” Or, as we find in the ancient Indian Code, the *Manava Dharma Shastra*:

Justice, being preserved, will preserve; being destroyed, will destroy. Take heed lest justice, being overthrown, overthrow thee and us all.

Can any fail to see a connection between the decades of international competition, prejudice, hatred and the strifes and struggles prevalent today? Or, in India, between the creation of untouchability and India’s manifold problems? Will the lesson be learned or will the teeming millions of sufferers be the unconscious invokers of a new and more terrible Nemesis on a complacent and almost utterly selfish humanity?

The basic teachings of Theosophy offer a worthy purpose for life, in place of the present widespread frustration. They give the masses what is needed to do justly, to love mercifully and to walk humbly with their Inner God, the Ray of the Immortal presence whose voice speaks in their intuition and in their conscience. The leaders of the people will need more, and in the science and the metaphysics of the practical restatement of Ancient Wisdom as set forth in *The Secret Doctrine*, the greatest minds can find their fullest scope.

Theosophy puts forward the *true* Socialism, which does not seek the welfare of any group, not even the largest, but, recognizing the true fraternity of all—older brothers and younger—seeks to promote the Commonweal. The higher socialism involves not a pulling *down* to a common level, but a levelling *up* of all to a higher average status. All cannot be made equal, physically, mentally or morally. But equal opportunities can and should be afforded for each to take the next step in advance for him.

This requires a far-reaching transformation in political and social as well as economic conditions. This will result from *application*

(not mere talk) of the principles involved. It will result in a lessening of the cries for individual “rights” and the voluntary assumption of responsibilities, with little or no thought of personal honours or rewards. The dignity of labour, the risks and responsibilities of capitalists, the stability of family life, the necessary educational and penal reforms, etc., will all receive due recognition and attention if—if our writers, our legislators, our philanthropists, will take a universal viewpoint; a viewpoint based on rigid justice to all beings, themselves included.

EXERTION IS GREATER THAN DESTINY!

It is because the artist loses himself in the reality of that which he describes or depicts or reveals, because of his individual self-effacement, that his work is a spontaneous expression of himself. That is one meaning of the penetrating saying of Jesus: “He that saveth his life shall lose it, and he that loseth his life shall save it.” Personal spontaneity is always objective, always in terms of the independent reality of an object which absorbs us. There is no other self-expression possible. If we block the avenues of the outpouring of self, if we withdraw from the reality of the world, if we allow our actions to be subjectively determined by mere instincts and habits, following our inclinations, we do not express ourselves, we frustrate our own self-expression, surrender our freedom and suffocate all creative spontaneity. The artist does not act by impulse, still less by the compulsion of rules, but by the nature of the reality which he apprehends. By doing this he becomes free and his action becomes a self-expression. In no other way can self-expression be achieved. In particular it cannot be achieved by will or purpose. The man of iron will is always the man who cannot be spontaneous, who cannot act in terms of reality, who cannot be free.

—JOHN MACMURRAY

CAN THE FUTURE BE KNOWN?

WE know the past, and we live in the present, but can the future be known? We are told that all three merge in the Eternal Now. But can the actions of intelligent beings with the power of choice be known in advance? Is omniscience possible to humans?

One of the Ten Items of *Isis Unveiled* tells us: “All things that ever were, that are, or that will be, having their records upon the astral light, or tablet of the unseen universe, the initiated adept, by using the vision of his own spirit, can know all that has been known or can be known.” How can things have their record on the astral light before they have occurred?

Omniscience means complete knowledge. It is a characteristic of the Universal Mind. The minds of all are derived from the Universal Mind. All consciousness has its seat there. Our human minds differ because they are affected by the partial ideas and partial knowledge that we hold. And since the physical brain, which is the instrument of the mind, is limited in its response to different impressions and vibrations, our knowledge too is limited.

When that aspect of the Universal Mind which is reflected in us is freed from the limitations we have imposed on it, what can prevent us from knowing whatever we want to know? *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 58-59) says that the Universal Mind is “manifested Omniscience” and “is at the root of SELF-Consciousness.”

Let us think along this line : Can anything in the Universe come from nothing? We are told that the action of Karma “may be known by calculation from cause to effect,” and “this calculation is possible because the effect is wrapped up in and is not succedent to the cause.” Since all manifestation is but a reflection of the One Light in which all is contained, and the various reflectors are the different planes through which that Light falls, nothing can be reflected which is not there already.

It might be argued that we humans have the power of choice and can decide for ourselves what we shall do. So how can our future actions be known in advance? Let us not forget that the Universal Mind also operates throughout the Universe, in even the

tinest speck or atom. Each atom, H.P.B. tells us, has the power of choice *within its evolutionary limits*. Man, though a free-willed being, is checked by his Karma in all his efforts. What he will be, depends on what he is now. He cannot accomplish more than what he is capable of accomplishing. Take an example: We know that a child at his stage cannot solve abstruse mathematical problems, but as he grows and puts in the necessary effort, he can know anything he has a will to know. So with us: At any given moment we are bound down by all our past, and on the basis of that past and of the present, we can know what the future has in store for us. But we need not remain bound for all time. If we resolve now to free ourselves of our limitations, and persist in that resolve, we shall surely reach the goal we have set ourselves. It matters not that we make mistakes at the initial stages; they all form part of the final victory.

There is a universal storehouse of knowledge from which each of us can draw. Think of this: from a triangle, with the laws of geometry, the structure of the Universe can be known. From the figures 1 to 10, any and all mathematical problems can be solved. From a piece of stone, any form can be cut. Is not this a proof that *all* is contained in the smallest? It is a chipping away of superfluties and excrescences that frees the indwelling form.

It is a wonderful thought that even the worst condition of decayed matter can be “processed” and be of use—for instance, the processing of sewage into compost.

So, from the matter aspect we see that nothing comes from nothing. Also from the mind aspect we see that by clearing away from it the accumulated dirt and by moulding it properly, the Universal Mind can pierce through.

It is our perception that separates us from the ALL. All is present at all time. It is just we who fail to see it.

“TRY IS THE BATTLE-CRY”

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, August 1974.]

“TRY” is a very small word, but it is a word full of strength. We might compare it to a little key which can open the great Door of Possibilities. Here are some instances of what we could enter upon through that Door, provided we use the Key aright, taken from the correspondence of him whose signature still holds good for all students of Theosophy—“Your brother, William Q. Judge.”

TRY to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world.... Your only true greatness lies in your inner true self.

TRY to put into practice what in your inner life you hold to be right, [and] you will be more ready to receive helpful thoughts and the inner life will grow more real.

TRY to work for others, and rely on your Higher Self.

TRY to take pleasure in doing what is your duty, and especially in the *little* duties of life. When doing any duty put your whole heart into it.

We are all parts of the one great whole, and if you TRY to centre your mind upon that fact, and to remember that those things that seem to trouble you are really due to your own way of looking at the world and life, you will probably grow more contented in mind.

TRY to follow the advice of the *Bhagavad-Gita*: “To whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out, he should subdue it, bring it back and place it upon the Spirit.”

TRY to acquire patient Resignation.... The first step in *becoming* is Resignation. Resignation is the sure, true, and royal road.

The circumstances we are in *are* the best for us if we will only so regard them. TRY to do this, and thus get the best out of them, and escape them in another life.

TRY to make it a part of your inner mind that it is no use to worry; that things will be all right, no matter what comes, and that you are resolved to do what you see before you, and trust to Karma for all the rest.

Let me again insist upon your TRYING to realize in yourselves that you are a part of the All. This is the constant subject of meditation, and will bring the best and most rapid progress.

TRY for patience in all the very smallest things of life every day, and you will find it growing very soon, and with it will come greater strength and influence on and for others, as well as greater and clearer help from the inner side of things.

TRY to get people to practise true theosophy and brotherhood.

No effort, even the smallest, is ever in vain; and knowing this, each one can “TRY, ever keep trying.”

It is one’s duty to TRY and find one’s own duty and not to get into the duty of another. And in this it is of the highest importance that we should detach our *minds* (as well as our tongues) from the duties and acts of others whenever those are outside of our own. If you can find this fine line of action and inaction you will have made great progress.

We must aspire ardently...ever TRYING to purify our thoughts and free ourselves from the attachment to actions and objects.

TRY to progress in harmony; the other kind of progress will then follow in due course. Be a centre of harmony yourself and others will help you in spreading that feeling throughout.

If you will regard all things and events as being in the Self and It in them, making yourself a part of the whole, you will see there is no real cause for sorrow or fear. TRY to realize this and thus go in confidence and even joy.

Arouse, arouse in you the meaning of “Thou art That.” Thou art the Self. This is the thing to think of in meditation, and if you believe it, then tell others the same. You have read it before, but now TRY to realize it more and more each day and you will have the light you want.

On the doors and walls of the temple the word “TRY” is written.

Wrote H.P.B. in the 1880’s, “I trust Judge more than anyone else in the world.” Let those of us whose trust in him today is no less, TRY to put some of these wise precepts into practice.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. George Carey, recently remarked that we have become a society in which “tacit atheism prevails.”

In his essay, “The Poverty of Unbelief” (*Index on Censorship*, Winter issue), Jonathan Ree comments:

The distinction between atheists and believers is perhaps beginning to lose its point: the real distinction is between those who are willing to be intelligent about the problems of existence and those who are not. And if tacit atheism has become the default belief of our age, it needs to be noted that it is no longer the badge of a courageous free spirit but, more often than not, the “do not disturb” sign hung out by the intellectually inert. Of course there are ways in which religious belief can lead to dogmatic folly. Any fool can see that believers are liable to think their gods the only true ones, and such exclusive certitudes can lead by well-trodden paths to fanaticism and murderous intolerance. But that is not the only logic of religious belief; nor is it the most interesting one. Believing in a God also means recognizing the possibility of an intelligence that sees things differently from you, and far better too. In that respect religious belief is a standing lesson in tolerance and pluralism, and indeed in relativism. Relativism in this sense is just a humble tautology, trivial or profound depending on how you take it. It is simply a reminder that the way you look at things is only the way you look at things, and that, however well supported it may seem, it could still, for all you know, be thoroughly and ridiculously mistaken.

Science is no longer the final answer to all questions, and scientists themselves know this more acutely than anyone else. They do not know enough to deny the existence of God. Increasingly a pattern is seen in nature, clear signs of a supreme intelligence, a mind at work in the cosmic scene. This view, today shared by nearly all investigators of truth, makes atheism totally irrelevant.

Nor can the conception of God or Deity be relegated any longer to the realm of the metaphysical. The more science discovers about matter, the more it outgrows its earlier materialistic ideas and has to accept the viewpoint that something other has to be taken into account—Spirit, God, the Divine Plan—whatever name may be used.

Whither science? Many are not happy about its trends. Should governments be in control of science, or do individual members of society have a say in the matter? The journal *Purity* (September 2002) has this to say:

Science today has acquired an awesome hold on civilization. Scientists themselves can no longer look upon their work merely in a private or personal way. The love of research or the challenge of an immense technical problem is no longer the major justification for scientific work. It is now necessary for scientists to look at their work as an integral part of human living and the world picture....They each have a profound obligation to examine their work in the light of possible results....

Governments should not be in control of science. Scientists must be left free to think, explore and create without interference of ideology or politics. However, the price of freedom is always responsibility, and therefore, scientists must be responsible to civilization as a whole and to its well-being....

This brings us, inevitably, back to the individual. The values we choose to live by as individuals will qualify the values of our civilization. If enough of us choose to live by the value of sharing, then the world economic problem can eventually be solved. If we pursue justice, then we can create a world in which all people live in right relationship to one another. If we live with a spirit of co-operation and harmlessness, then we can secure the peace for our children, and their children, and all children to come. And if enough of us live by a love of truth, then the tyrants and demagogues will wither and fade

for lack of fertile earth in which to flourish.

Instances of people certified as dead by a doctor later reviving, are not uncommon. In one recent case, a policeman in Osaka who was summoned to a hospital to assist with a post-mortem investigation was shocked to find the man still breathing and moving in the mortuary, after he had been pronounced dead from a heart attack. He actually died four days later, still unconscious.

Such cases might be more common than anyone realizes, say Hitoshi Maeda and his colleagues from Osaka City University Medical School, who cover the case in the journal *Forensic Science International*. There have been 25 recorded cases worldwide of the “Lazarus phenomenon” in recent years, says Maeda. His team recommends that medical authorities exercise caution and not be hasty in pronouncing a person dead.

H.P.B. sounded a strong warning against disposing too soon of seemingly dead bodies and explained the possibility of resuscitation of an apparent corpse by the re-entry of the astral body—that possibility existing until decomposition of the vital organs has proceeded so far that if reanimated they could not perform their customary functions; until, in other words,

the mainspring and cogs of the machine, so to speak, are so eaten away by rust, that they would snap upon the turning of the key. Until that point is reached, the astral body may be caused, without miracle, to re-enter its former tabernacle, either by an effort of its own will, or under the resistless impulse of the will of one who knows the potencies of nature and how to direct them. The spark is not extinguished, but only latent—latent as the fire in that flint, or the heat in the cold iron. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 483-84).

How long can a person live without food? A 64-year-old Gujarati

mechanical engineer, Hira Ratan Manek, is said to have survived only on boiled water and sunlight for 411 days. American scientists are investigating the feat, in the hope that they could develop a technique to enable astronauts to go without food for long periods. The team of eight U.S. doctors and scientists examining him includes eminent neuroscientist George Brainard, currently at Wilmington, Delaware. (*The Times of India*, August 27)

A panel of 20 Indian doctors headed by neurophysician Sudhir Shah had earlier monitored the fast in Ahmedabad. They had scanned the subject's body with Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) before and after the fast, in addition to a host of other tests. The most amazing part of the feat was that the subject was physically active and carried on all normal activities during his fast.

Such feats of fasting are not uncommon among yogis and ascetics. The rationale of such phenomena is given to us in a succinct statement in the *Supplement to The Theosophist* for December 1883 (p. 32): “Akasa is the mother of all phenomena and the source of nourishment of him who knows how to use it.”

Elsewhere it is stated by H.P.B.:

Yogis and ascetics are not the only examples of such protracted fastings; for, if these can be doubted and sometimes utterly rejected by sceptical science as void of any conclusive proof—for the phenomenon takes place in remote and inaccessible places—we have many of the *Jainas*, inhabitants of populated towns, to bring forward as exemplars of the same.

Does laughter have any beneficial effects on health? The evidence is mounting that it does. Studies at the Laughter and Stress Busting Clinic in England suggest that we are laughing much less today than in the past. This is because of the hustle and bustle of modern living in a stressed-out society.

Laughing and smiling do improve our health. If we look at two

patients with similar health problems, the one with a sense of humour is more likely to recover faster, say the experts. Laughter relaxes the body and reduces stress levels and tension by releasing “endorphins” (chemicals) in the brain which lighten our mood and create a feeling of well-being.

Scientists have found that facial expressions have a profound effect on our emotions and that we feel much better when we smile than when we frown. Robert Holden, who is the leading authority in this field and author of *Laughter, the Best Medicine*, says that a sense of humour has a beneficial effect on the body's immune system and hormonal system, whereas serious expressions are damaging and destructive. People who laugh and smile are less likely to have stress-related disorders.

Laughter is relaxing, but a warning needs to be sounded. Let laughter be free and clear; let it not be nasty, mean or sneaky. It shows bad taste to laugh, far less to rejoice, at the discomfiture of another. It is one thing to “laugh with,” quite a different thing to “laugh at.” There is a laughter of the lower order, of which one should be really ashamed; that is not for Man, the unfolding god, but for creatures degraded to conditions lower than the beasts of the jungle, whose prey are the unwary, the ignorant, the innocent. Let our laughter be that of “sweet fun” which restores sanity—the sanity of truth and of wisdom that sees beneath the seeming incongruity of things their fundamental unity.

Spirituality is not confined to any special practices, any set rules, or metaphysical studies. “Make everyday life your spiritual practice,” writes Suma Varughese in *Life Positive* (August 2002). How spiritually evolved we are, reflects in our day-to-day lives: at work, at home, in the discharge of our duties or in our recreation. How we relate to people, how we react to provocations or respond to adverse or favourable circumstances, is what really counts. Spirituality in the truest sense is the science and art of living, says Varughese:

Even the most sublime philosophy or spiritual experience is of no use if it does not transform our lives. Spirituality in the truest sense is meant to be hands-on, experiential, applied. It is meant to be the alchemy that can convert the dross of our everyday lives into the purest gold; the formula that can transform the uncertain wins and gains of our lives into the most glorious paen of triumph; the master key to the mystery of life....

Spirituality is the discovery of our true self. Hidden beneath the sheaths of our body, emotions, thoughts, feelings and personality, is the subtle essence of who we are, immortal, immutable, whole, perfect and complete—spirit. The spiritual quest involves coming in touch with this aspect of ourselves and eventually to establish ourselves within it....

In order to herald the true self, we must first eliminate the false. We must learn to disidentify with our body, emotions, thoughts, etc. We can only do this by becoming aware of the conditioning that has created these identities in the first place. The sum total of our past thoughts, experiences, upbringing and genetic inheritance have created the likes, dislikes, interests, talents, habits and attitudes that we falsely believe is us. This conditioning must be allowed to unspool if we are to arrive at what is real and unconditional within us.

Life becomes more meaningful and purposeful as we find that all the random events of our lives are adding up to a definite pattern....This creates awareness of the intrinsic link between us and the universe and between all living beings. A reverence for all that lives pervades us.

We have the potential to realize this “higher life.” How we can do this through everyday living is something each one must work out for himself or herself.
