

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 73, No. 5

March 2003

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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THEOSOPHY COMPANY (INDIA) PRIVATE LTD.

40 New Marine Lines, Mumbai 400 020, India

THE REALM OF THE INNER CONSCIOUSNESS

As the eagle of the mountains, having soared high in the air above the earth, wings its way back to its resting place, being fatigued by its long flight, so does the soul, having experienced the life of the phenomenal, relative and mortal, return finally unto itself, where it can sleep beyond all desires, and beyond all dreams.

—*Chandogya Upanishad*

IN SPITE of the spectacular advance of scientific knowledge which now enables us to attempt what was always thought impossible, we still remain ignorant of our own selves. We are able to conquer time and space in the objective universe, achieving a walk, and then a rendezvous, in outer space, but the realm of our own inner consciousness is still *terra incognita* for the large majority of people. This age of technology has focused our attention on the external and the phenomenal, and driven us to absorb ourselves in the multiplicity of sensuous perceptions made increasingly available through the radio, television, and all the other electronic media and audio-visual aids. We depend more and more on the experiences of outer sounds and external sights, finding no time or inclination for introspection or silent thinking. This makes for nervous tension and emotional unbalance, and indeed would lead to madness did not sleep intervene and compel each and every one to withdraw from the outer world and turn inwards.

We all admit the physiological advantages derived from sleep,

and psychology today is exploring the sphere of dreams. But the spiritual state beyond dreams is still unknown and unacknowledged. In that state, which all experience when the body is asleep and the dreams woven of our desires have been set at rest, we touch the hem of the radiant garment which clothes our transcendent and immortal Self. The door to the knowledge of that larger Self lies beyond the dream state. Therein lies the secret of our Divinity.

This truth, ignored and even ridiculed in our materialistic and mechanistic civilization, was known to the ancients and is recorded in all great spiritual traditions. From the very beginning sleep was inaugurated by ecstasy: “And God sent an ecstasy upon Adma, and he slept.”

In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, the psychology of the three states of consciousness, waking, dreaming, and the state beyond dreams, is set forth in a masterly fashion: “The Spirit of man has two dwelling places: both this world and the other world. The borderland between them is the third, the land of dreams.”

In ancient Greece, Homer assigned two gates to two kinds of dreams, the Gate of Horn and the Gate of Ivory, the former to true dreams, the latter to false ones. Virgil repeats the idea:

There are two gates of sleep, whereof one is said to be of horn, and thereby an easy outlet is given to true shades; the other gleams with the sheen of polished ivory, but false are the dreams sent by the spirits to the world above. (*Aeneid*, vi)

Pliny is quoted as saying that there are two types of dreams, the ordinary ones which are caused by physiological and emotional disturbances, and true dreams, “sent by the Gods.” While science continues to explore the outer world, modern psychology is increasingly aware of the dream state, the borderland between the two worlds, “this world and the other world.” Only a few, the spiritually and mystically inclined, firmly convinced of the reality of the Divine Self, are conscious of that “other world.”

The ordinary dreams of the *svapna* or dream state are psychic experiences rooted in the personal consciousness, while those beyond the *svapna* state are spiritual experiences pertaining to that

dimension of human consciousness which transcends the personality.

While a student of psychical research, a psychiatrist, a psychotherapist can occasionally gain a useful clue to the character of his patient by looking into the ordinary dreams of the latter, there is considerable risk in making the patient probe into his *svapna* state without sufficient knowledge of the dangers involved and without the protection that only spiritual awareness can ensure. The need of this cycle is the cultivation by many of faith in the existence of the Spirit, “The gold-gleaming Genius, swan of everlasting,” and the leading by them of the life necessary to unfold awareness of that Spirit.

Rightly did René Guénon remark: “Nineteenth-century materialism closed the mind of man to what is above him; twentieth-century psychology opened it to what is below him.”

The issue between gross and brutal materialism, which denies all but the eternal phenomenal world, and the believer in the psychic is not yet determined. To the materialist there is only the outward man. To the psychical researcher the true man is the man *below* the mind. That is the sphere of dreams, the “unconscious,” or rather the “subconscious” of modern psychology.

The present cycle of human evolution is one of considerable upheaval. A great psychic mutation is taking place and, as is the case with all new developments in their early phases, it is accompanied by many distressing signs. The old values are being discarded and new ones have not yet emerged. Many have lost all sense of purpose. To them life has become meaningless, and we witness much confusion and destruction, leading to a sense of blank despair.

To the wise ones who know this change was due, there is no cause for despair. They see behind the present distress but the false starts and the misguided attempts which precede a new period of growth. Our epoch, however, is not without its dangers, and among these is that of the development of psychic powers and faculties. Strange and abnormal things are happening more and more, and, as foreseen by Madame Blavatsky as far back as 1887,

“psychologists will have some extra work to do, and the psychic idiosyncrasies of humanity will enter on a great change” (*Lucifer*, November 1887). It was precisely to guide humanity safely through this critical period that the Theosophical Movement of our era was started, stressing the need for a clean and unselfish life, reiterating the ancient teachings, calling upon man to seek the life of the Spirit, that life which transcends the personality and belongs to the innermost consciousness. Sleep is a door to that realm if we make our waking life pure and noble.

This is done by an increase of concentration upon high thoughts, upon noble purposes, upon all that is best and most spiritual in us while awake,” explains W. Q. Judge, whose death anniversary will be commemorated on the 21st of March, the day of the Spring Equinox. In grateful memory of his labour of love, we give below a few extracts from his writings. May they inspire many to seek the Way to the Light of the Spirit, and thus gain “the free space of spiritual life”:

The daily waking life is but a penance and the trial of the body, so that *it* too may thereby acquire the right condition. In dreams we see the truth and taste the joys of heaven. In waking life it is ours to gradually distil that dew into our normal consciousness.

Our dreams present an opportunity to us as waking men and women to so live that the Inner Self may more easily speak to us.

But there are dreams and dreamers. Not every person is a real dreamer in the old sense of that term. Some dreams are visions of the night. The real man then sees many acts of life, of history, of family, of nations. He is not bound by the body then, and so makes immediate conclusions.

To remember what happens during sleep is to be a conscious seer.

We must be patient, because it takes time to find out how to walk, and much time is spent in getting hold of cues. A great deal depends on purity of thought and motive, and breadth of view.

The subject is one of enormous extent as well as great importance, and theosophists are urged to purify, elevate, and concentrate the thoughts and acts of their waking hours so that they shall not continually and aimlessly, night after night and day succeeding day, go into and return from these natural and wisely appointed states, no wiser, no better able to help their fellow men. For by this way, as by the spider’s small thread, we may gain the free space of spiritual life.

THE WORK BEFORE US

THE outer work of the United Lodge of Theosophists—its meetings and its publications—is known to many. Also known are the Three Objects of the original Theosophical Movement, in the light of which the history of that Movement, its triumphs and failures, its many vicissitudes, can be studied. But hidden behind all these outer and exoteric happenings and events there is the Inner soul, the Esoteric Reality. Without the Soul, the very existence of the body becomes meaningless. So also no one can truly comprehend the nature of the Theosophical Movement without taking into consideration the Esoteric “Soul-Reality.” But we must not err about the Soul of the Theosophical Movement the way people err about the soul of man and the spirit of the universe. It is only by a careful study of psychology and philosophy that we learn what the human soul is, whence it comes, how it grows, whither it marches. So too by a study of the history of the present Theosophical Movement, of the philosophy underlying it, we can comprehend the meaning and significance of the soul and body of Theosophy in our time.

H. P. Blavatsky, the founder of the Movement, was a personage of remarkable spiritual knowledge and perception and she knew, when she launched the Movement in 1875 on the stormy waters of our civilization, what none of her colleagues and co-workers seem to have suspected. She had a clear vision of the strength behind her work, and the weakness of human nature, not only in the world outside but right within her own camp and fold. She knew well that very soon after her death the society she established, the body she created, would break up, but she also knew that the Soul of Theosophy would go marching forward, spreading light and guidance and inspiration all around. It is very necessary to distinguish between the infallible nature of the philosophy of Theosophy and the fallible nature of the students of Theosophy. From the very beginning in the Theosophical Movement, the Wisdom of Perfected Men and the folly and limitations of mortal minds struggled side by side, causing both the concord of progress and the confusion rooted in human disunity, discord and frailty.

An extract from a letter written by H. P. Blavatsky in 1888, to her most trusted pupil and friend, W. Q. Judge, shows the clear vision she had of what was going to happen to the original Theosophical Society, and to the many students of the Wisdom-Religion she taught. She wrote:

Night before last I was shown a bird’s-eye view of the Theosophical Societies. I saw a few earnest reliable Theosophists in a death struggle with the world in general, with other—nominal but ambitious—Theosophists. The former are greater in number than you may think, and *they prevailed* as you in America *will* prevail, if you only remain staunch to the Master’s programme and true to yourselves....The defending forces have to be judiciously—so scanty they are—distributed over the globe, wherever Theosophy is struggling against the powers of darkness. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 5-6)

Mr. Judge, who had his training under H.P.B. and who developed his own soul-perception under her guidance, thought it fit to publish this personal message to him immediately after the death of the teacher. This letter is one of the great landmarks of Theosophical history. It gives a clue not only to those who are students of Theosophy but also to the public in general. It distinguishes between genuine Theosophists and nominal Theosophists. Genuine Theosophists are those who follow the Programme of the Masters, learn and teach the Philosophy they taught, and above all practise the Law of Brotherhood, rising above differences of race and religion, of sect and creed, of caste and society.

U.L.T. earnestly and sincerely tries to follow that Programme and to promulgate that Philosophy. First, we do not claim that U.L.T. is the only body that stands for truth; we do not say there are no others who are doing the work of the Masters except those who are the promoters and associates of U.L.T. A Master once wrote: “There is more to this Movement than is evident of the surface.” Therefore we have not only tolerance but appreciation of the good work done in many quarters—in public life, in the social world, in the sphere of literature, in the province of art and culture. Our task, however, is with the souls of men and women. While we admire the labours of those who feed and clothe the body, those

who try to improve the slums of the senses and of the mind, we ourselves confine our activities to helping human souls, teaching them to fight their own battles and providing them with the nourishment and the wherewithal to fight their battles successfully.

The Inner Reality of U.L.T. may be said to be threefold: “There is the earnestness, sincerity and devotion of its students and associates, who though weak and fallible feel the power and the strength of Theosophy, which power they try to embody in themselves. (2) There is the Philosophy of the Wisdom-Religion which these students study and practise, and that effort strengthens the Inner reality. (3) There are those Great and Blessed Ones who are the Immortal Philosophers, Records of the Wisdom-Religion, Guides and Friends of the earnest and sincere students.

The students and associates of U.L.T. are like the incarnated of embodied soul; their strength and weakness reflect themselves in the work done by U.L.T. for the world. The Philosophy of Wisdom-Religion is like Buddhi which illuminates the mind. The Blessed Ones who are the Real Founders of the Movement, who sent H.P.B. into the world, are like Atma, the Supreme Spirit. As students and members control their sense and their lower natures, they receive more and more of the light of Buddhi, Wisdom-Religion, *Bodhi-Dharma*, and as these student-members practise and promulgate it, as they spread the Light, they come closer to the Great Ones—the Souls of Virtue, of Beauty and of Power. We welcome all, because the Light is for all—not only those who are whole need the physician, but those who are sick. Those who want to heal their hearts, to enlighten their minds, to serve their fellowmen, come in confidence, but with humility. They enter the temple of Theosophy, but leave behind the dirty shoes of pride and egotism. Our work is for humanity, and we derive our sustenance from the Elder Brothers of the Human Family, the Fathers of the Human Race. In serving humanity, in educating the souls of men and women, we in return derive for ourselves the greatest of prizes, the mightiest of benefits—the blessings of those whose hands are strong, whose heads are wise, whose hearts are compassionate.

THE LAW OF OUR BEING

CAN there be any nobler or more worthy object of pursuit for us than the study of our own nature and of great Nature, in order that we may understand them completely and thus be able to use all our powers and faculties to the highest good, not for ourselves, but for others? We are so busily engaged in actions, one following instantly upon another, that it is but rarely that the ordinary person pauses for a moment to consider the nature of action itself, and yet it is through action of some kind that everything that is came into being and maintains its existence, whether for an ephemeral moment or for the entire life cycle of our earth or even of the solar system.

Let us look, then, at Karma, which means action, yet implies much more than we are accustomed to associate with that term. Let us consider that the power of action is in us; it is in every organ, every cell, every molecule, every atom of our bodies; it is inherent in our feelings, in our emotions, in our desires, in our memories, in our imagination, in our hopes and fears, and equally in our thoughts, because all these are but names for different forms of eternal action.

What we all need is not more powers, but a better understanding of the powers and nature that we have. The teachings of Theosophy are directed to that end. Theosophy, while it deals with action as that word is ordinarily used—the manifested output of the power resident in everyone—takes us at the same time to the source from which issues the never-ending stream of action, of which we are all slaves. The power of action is in every one of us and in every aspect of our make-up physical, mental, moral, psychical and spiritual; and it is not only in us but everywhere in Nature, even in so-called inorganic matter. This power of action does not take the same form in the lower kingdoms of Nature as it does in us, but all the same it is there in all things. We see it throughout the vegetable kingdom and the mineral kingdom, and the whole molecular world that from the standpoint of our ocular perception appears to be static is, nevertheless, engaged in constant action.

Theosophy calls to our attention that the principle of action, the power of action, is the power of the Omnipresent Deity. Whether a hell is created or a heaven; whether we think of the earth or of the waters, or of the manifold forms of life that live on the earth or under the waters—all are the products of action, and god or Deity is veritable the Supreme Power that underlies all action, all existing things. Anyone can see that that Power is no being, but is the animating principle of each being.

Every atom is a god; every mineral is a god; every vegetable, every animal, every man, every being, visible or invisible, good or bad, is a god, a being in whom resides the power of action, a power which nothing can take away from that being. Slay a man, but the power of action has not ceased in that slain body. The man when alive possessed some kind of a cohering power which kept a measure of peace in the discordant elements that made up the physical body; but the King being withdrawn, action does not cease. Decomposition of the bodily elements is as much of an action as is any other we know of.

If we turn to modern science, we shall find that its theory of action is very simple; it is all the result of: Matter—something which action pushes or pulls; Force—that which pushes or pulls matter and into which all matter is resolvable; Law—which governs the creation, preservation and destruction of anything. The Universe of science is made up of these three. Now, certainly our nature has matter in it—our bodies; has force in it—the energies we exercise every day, in all the departments of our being, consciously or unconsciously; and certainly we are, each one of us, governed by law. But there is also inherent in us the power to choose what we will do or what we will not do—the power of intelligence.

How far can a person act? As far as he has power and as far as he wills; but there is the third factor—as far as he has intelligence, as far as he knows and understands the nature of his own power and of Great Nature around him. So we have three factors: the power to act; the power to choose, and the intelligence that the being may possess. What makes men act, rationally or irrationally, creatively or destructively? The secret lies in the mystery of our

own being, and we should begin to understand something of it.

Turning within ourselves, we find that there is present in us the power of action. Next, observation shows us that the power of action resides in everything and is one power. Our experience within and our observation without show us that wherever there is action there is life, and turning once more within we find that action depends not only upon life but upon the intelligence of the life, and that life everywhere does not possess the same intelligence. And then we come to see that every being is a god in the only sense in which the word “god” has any rational or true moral meaning. In every being is the power to see, the power to do according as he sees, and the power of intelligence. Each one is a Perceiver, is a soul; and, what is more, he power of perception exists everywhere; that is to say, this is a universe of Soul and Spirit.

What is it that acts all the time, that thinks and chooses and reasons and experiences? What is the law of action? What is the result of action? Everything we think or say or learn yields a sensation to us. Everything that contacts us from outside is expressible in terms of feeling. Men do not act according to their reason. They do not act according to their power of perception. They do not act according to their judgment. They do not act on the basis that they are Soul and Spirit. The actual basis of their action is simply what they *feel* at the moment. If we flatter someone, he will be our friend because we have given him an agreeable and happy sensation. If we tell the same person that he is a liar, we have converted a friend into an enemy; we have changed his whole nature in a flash.

One whose actions are based on his emotional nature at once puts all the other principles of his nature in abeyance or in servitude to his emotions, and anybody who has studied human nature, as a pianist has studied the octave, can play on his nature in a tune he chooses, can do with him as he will. The day is already at hand when, without realizing it, people are becoming the victims of the power of suggestion. This is black magic, when exercised to benefit oneself at someone else’s expense. But if the power of action is one and is present everywhere in Nature, then when a person

benefits himself at another's expense, he has just as much set up the cause of ruin for himself as one who injects a deadly poison in his foot, instead of in his arm, thinking he will remain unhurt thereby. The body is one, its members are many. So, if there is but one Spirit, then any action set up by any being must in time reach out and affect all beings. Any action set up by anyone in any portion of his nature must, in time, reach out and affect his whole nature, and then he gets the reaction of the whole upon the part from which the action originated, and that working out of the reaction we call Law.

When a person realizes that there is no power which he ascribes to his God that is not in him or is not in an atom, then he begins to get a realization of what is meant by the Omnipresent Deity, an understanding of the ancient teaching that every being is a god. If we go back to the beginning of any action we ever performed, we shall find that it was preceded by and came from some feeling we had, and that feeling was based on some idea we held, and it was we who *chose* that idea as the basis of action. So, no matter what we do, we can trace the action back to the feeling, the thought, the will; that is, the choice, the motive. And here we get a real basis for the consideration of our actions, or anybody's actions—what is the motive?

Now, if a person's perception of his nature and of Great Nature is such that he believes his life, his will and his actions to be distinct and separate from other's life, will and actions, then he will act in a separative way. If life is in fact one and a person acts as if life were split up into millions of independent entities, he will have produced the same result as when a child stubs his toe and then kicks the rock against which he stubbed it! If a wolf is caught in a trap, it will gnaw its leg off trying to get away; it thinks the leg is part of the trap! So a person acts according to what he *sees* to be the foundation of existence. He sees either unity or separateness. If he sees separateness, his actions, that is to say, his motives, his ideas, his feelings and their expressions, will be selfish. It is as if he used his own hands to ruin another member of his own body. So we, who are an indivisible part of the One Life, are constantly in a

struggle with other indivisible parts of that same Life, and the result is friction. Friction produces heat; heat produces pain. Each being who is in friction with another sees the other as the cause of his pain, and thinks that if only he can destroy that other his pain will cease. So, according as we believe ourselves to be separate or united, we shall act selfishly or unselfishly.

In a universe of law, no compromise is possible. There are no favoured people, no favouring gods. The law of this universe for each being is the same; it is the law of his own being. Having the power of action, he acts on the life around him, and life being one, he suffers the reaction, whatever it be, in company with all others. All the great Teachers humanity has had, have affirmed the reign of Law in the universe. The Buddha said: "Each man's life the outcome of his former living is." Jesus put it: "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.... Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." St. Paul stated: "Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." What we are reaping now we have sown in the past. What we are sowing now in motive, idea, feeling and action, that sowing we will reap tomorrow, next year, next life. So the real idea of Brotherhood, which is the law of Compassion does not rest on a physical basis, or on an emotional basis, or on a reasoning basis. It rests on the essential identity of all life and on the law of our being, which is the same for all.

Karma is the law of Compassion. In time we shall see that Life is One, that we and all other beings are now, and always have been, incessantly in action; that is, all are sowing and are incessantly reaping what they have sown before, and the sowing is always of the same nature as the reaping; the reaping always of the same nature as the sowing. Is there no hope? There is, because with the power to act in any direction comes the power not to act in that direction. When it is impressed on the minds of all that whatever we reap is the fruit of the crop that we ourselves sowed, and that pain is a teacher, for pain means "no thoroughfare" this way; when people see that Nature will not harm them, they will not think of

hurting their fellows, they will see that the law of life is trust, service, duty; they will see that the only happiness we can find comes from obeying the law of our own being.

Once we begin to study our nature from inside out, we find that we are spiritual beings first, last and all the time; that knowledge and power can be had and retained only on a spiritual basis. Once we see what we are suffering from; once we see that the hand that smites us is our own, we shall gain the courage to do that which our heart longs to do. Everyone would rather give than receive; everyone would rather do good than evil, and yet we do an awful lot of evil. Why? We lack the faith, the confidence and the conviction that this is a universe of justice, of mercy and of charity, and that justice, mercy and charity endure for ever. We get that faith, confidence and conviction through the contact of our spiritual nature with our human nature. Ordinarily, when we think of the immortal and the eternal, we do so from the basis of the mortal and the evanescent. When we think of brotherhood and of charity, we think of them in sectarian terms, or in terms of political parties or social cliques. We do not think of brotherhood in terms of the spiritual identity of all beings; if terms of the fact that the whole of manifested existence is a vast field of evolution; that what we now are, every great being once was.

Such a being kept is moral nature awake by service performed for his fellows. He kept his reasoning power awake; he used his reason to guide his moral nature in the same way as a person's legs carry him but his eyes tell him which way to travel. And by the cultivation of his moral nature and his reason he came to that point where he could see what barrier stops us. If a healthy person performs actions which are against what we know to be the laws of health, he loss his health. We do not see that there are also laws of psychic and spiritual health. We do not seem to understand that memory and knowledge are faculties and functions of consciousness which may be expanded without limit, which may be gained or lost, and that it is absolutely impossible for one to gain spiritual knowledge so long as there is any taint of moral selfishness and self-interest in him. It is impossible for one who is

given to telling lies to have any understanding of what is meant by truth and what results from being truthful unless and until he quits falsifying. The road to spiritual knowledge lies through the unselfish use of our faculties, our powers and functions, whatever they are, for the benefit of the One Life of which we and all others are a part. It is not possible for a selfish person to understand what knowledge may exist in a world of unselfishness. It is not possible for one who tries to develop his moral nature by starving his reason to know what powers flow from the right use of the intellect.

The teaching says, "To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second." Let us look around at those things we seek. We seek wealth—in order to do good, in order to be happy, we say. But are the wealthy really doing good? Are they happy? We want power—again, we say, in order that we may do good, that we may be great statesmen. What are we doing with the power we have, and what good could the greatest statesman who ever lived do in the world today? If Christ were to come back to the earth now, would he tell us anything new, or would he repeat the ancient saying that he and his predecessors reiterated: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." That is the beginning of living according to the great law of Compassion. Such a life gives to us an invisible armour that will protect us, as in the parable Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were protected in the fiery furnace.

SELF-CONTENTMENT

THE Second Chapter of the *Gita* speaks of one who is confirmed in spiritual knowledge as being “happy and content in the Self through the Self.” How can one be happy and content “*in* the Self,” and what does “*through* the self” mean?

One thing is certain: no one who has ideals and imagination can be happy and content merely in the personality. The personality gets hurt, suffers, is frustrated, angry, etc. It has aspirations of some kind or other and is by no means content with whatever comes to pass. Therefore, happiness and contentment come from something in us which is not affected by the personality. We can call this “something” Manas in the body—not higher or lower Manas, but that consciousness or awareness in us which is able to analyse and commune with itself from its already known premises, and therefore to understand what is happening around and within its vehicles of emotion, desire, etc., without being coloured or absorbed by them.

Why should this dissociation from feelings and wants and wishes bring happiness? How can we be happy without feelings? How happy when wishes are frustrated, when our feelings are affected and cause us pain?

The *Gita* tells us what kind of a man it is who has spiritual knowledge. We do not possess this knowledge today, for our knowledge is based on intellectual understanding, or our preconceived ideas and our limitations, without due understanding of either time or space, and certainly not of Universal Law. The happy, contented disposition or conditions our aim. In the Second Chapter, Krishna tells us how to attain it. When, for example, things go wrong, when adversity besets us, we have to make our mind steady and undisturbed. Only then can we view these troubles without letting the emotions of anxiety, fear and anger arise, and when these do not arise, contentment, if not happiness, results.

How can we view adversity with such equanimity unless we have realized, to some extent, that there is that centre in us, the Self, which is beyond these happenings and which is not

fundamentally anxious that this or that should or should not happen, is not fearful of what may happen, or angry at whatever does happen! Let us search for the root of these emotions. We learn that the first thing to forsake is “desire”—not just one desire, but every desire that enters into our heart. Heart there stands for the seat of emotions and is not to be confused with the mind or thinking faculty. If we are asked to forsake every desire that arises from the emotions, then *we* must be distinct and separate from those desires that are thought-produced and emotion-produced. To realize this, is the first stage.

A later stage is reached when we go beyond our present thought-world. To find who *we* are, we have by effort to get to some point within us which remains undisturbed by our ordinary daily life of feeling-thought. There must be such a centre, for what happens in daily life to desire, emotions, etc., shows us a permanent aspect of our being which goes through all such daily happenings. We know that all passes away in time, that we move on to new surroundings each day, new desires arise, new difficulties crop up, but the same *we* experiences them. We, therefore, are not the desire, nor the anger, nor the anxiety, nor the fear that we experience; we remain separate from all these thoughts and feelings unless we become absorbed by them.

Thus, in time, we come to understand that no happenings, whether favourable or unfavourable, can really affect us if we are not too anxious, or fearful, or angry, about the results of actions. Hence we are told not to think of happenings as favourable or unfavourable, pleasant or unpleasant, good or evil. In time we shall be happy—not emotionally excited, but at peace and without anxiety, fear, or anger, quietly accepting all that comes, content and unruffled. The really happy person is not bothered whether things are going well or ill, for with his personal desires and dislikes at rest he receives all with an equal mind.

Why should having no likes or dislikes be so important? Would we not be phlegmatic, lethargic individuals if we just received whatever comes, without caring about anything?

Likes and dislikes originate in the senses and organs. What the

senses like, we call pleasure; what they do not like, we call pain. The senses have become the agents of mind-desire activity. We are thus led away by our senses instead of controlling them and getting from them just the help we need in our evolution. Having let them go astray, we now must begin to control them. The senses and organs are the horses that draw the chariot and that run away with it (producing disease, pain, etc.) and also with the driver of the chariot, leading him into all kinds of difficulties. Hence the advice to withdraw them from their wanted purposes or sensations, and make them draw our chariot where *we* will.

But even this control is not enough; it may lead to *hatha-yoga*. The further stage is to understand what being happy and content “through the Self” means. Beyond that which we call “I” is the power and strength and wisdom of the Self whose ray the “I” in the body is. It is only when the “I” turns towards this Self that the real wisdom of that Self can manifest. Tranquillity of thought comes when the heart is obedient to the will, when the “I” realizes that it is no longer the actor or possessor of anything, even though it act without covetousness, selfishness or pride, having abandoned all desires. Desires will still arise in the heart, but they will no longer affect the person or disturb him, because they are not mind-fostered. If we realize that desires, lusts, etc., can never be gratified to the full, for they ever keep growing, we shall see their falsity and shall let them die as they arise in the mind.

Ceasing to be obsessed by desire and emotions, the “I” is able to become the instrument of the Self whose ray it is. It then begins to “embrace wisdom from all sides.”

This is difficult and it would seem that the effort would engage our thought and will every hour of the day, and for lives! So it will, but Krishna gives us the key to accomplishment—dependence on the Supreme Spirit, which is even greater than the Ego. We may call it dependence on Law if we will—trust, confidence, reliance. If we look upon all these saying of Krishna as statements of law, then life becomes the laboratory where we can prove their truth. We become masters of our life; every happening is a challenge. The will always reacts to a challenge, not always to a “test”!

Meeting a challenge calls for effort, and seems to take us out of the realm of like and dislikes, emotions and feelings, and makes of the challenge a contest.

But let us beware of pride and self-confidence as we understand that word! It is altogether different from self-confidence and SELF-confidence!

THEOSOPHICAL STUDY

IN his article, “Theosophical Study and Work,” Mr. Judge gives many important hints and ideas that are as applicable to the students of today as they were in 1890 when the article was written. It has been reprinted in *The Heart Doctrine*. Two other articles on the same subject, reprinted in *Vernal Blooms*, also provide much food for thought; these two are: “Of Studying theosophy” and “Much Reading, Little Thought.” In as much as a study of Theosophy, as also its application and promulgation, is the duty of present-day students, if H.P.B.’s injunction in the closing portion of her *Key to theosophy* is to be carried out, it is as well that we pause and think just what the study of Theosophy implies.

The very first step, perhaps, is to see the necessity for such study. Just as food is a necessity to keep our physical body functioning, so also our inner nature needs food. The right kind of food is important in both cases. Therefore, the study of Theosophy, or of any particular aspect of it, must become a matter of necessity, and not merely of convenience. Often people say they will take up the study of Theosophy, or engage themselves in living a better life, when they have the time for it, and for them that time seldom comes.

Seeing the necessity for study is, therefore, the first important consideration. Next is our attitude of mind. Are we approaching the study as seekers after knowledge, as inquirers and students, or are we approaching it with a view to finding our own opinions confirmed or because we want something new to believe in? If the latter, then we might as well give up at the outset.

Enthusiasm, zeal and perseverance are necessary for study, but these will not be present if we keep our minds closed, or if we accept anything and everything that Theosophy teaches, without any thought on our part. That is why in his article, “Of Studying Theosophy,” Mr. Judge gives us at the very outset a series of “don’ts,” which should “first engage the student’s attention.”

The actual study of the teaching comes next. Students often think that, because they are able to repeat exactly what has been

written, they have understood and know all that is to be known on the subject. All down the ages people have blindly repeated sacred texts word for word, with no understanding, and they are no wiser as a result. We must first understand the words themselves, and then get behind the words to the ideas. What is the idea that the teacher or writer is trying to convey? It is only when we have understood the ideas that we are able to give expression to them, to promulgate them, and side by side with this comes application of what is studied. We must be able to express our ideas in clear and simple language which the most ordinary mind can understand and grasp. This cannot be done unless we have assimilate the subject ourselves. Take the idea of Reincarnation as an example. Are we able to answer satisfactorily to ourselves all the objections against this doctrine that are commonly raised? Are we able to apply it in our own daily life? Unless we can do this, our power of expression or promulgation will be limited and others will not benefit by our efforts. Therefore, it is not merely studying words, but getting behind them to the ideas, that is important.

Getting to the “seed” ideas is a still further step. It is the assimilation of one or two important ideas, rather than a mass of undigested ideas, that is needed. In any book that we take up for study—for instance, *The Ocean of Theosophy*—either from the table of contents, or chapter by chapter, we should pick out what we feel are one or two or three seed ideas, and see how they are developed in subsequent chapters throughout the book. In doing this, our knowledge on any particular subject will grow. A plant or a tree grows from a tiny seed, and so does our knowledge of Theosophy.

Often, when giving a talk or a lecture, students have so many ideas to offer on a subject that there is not time to develop them or carry them to their logical conclusion. It is far better to limit oneself to few seed ideas, and develop them, because thus our own assimilation of a subject will be helped.

Assimilation is, therefore, another important aspect of Theosophical study. Theosophy is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages, as the First Item of *The Secret Doctrine* points out; it is “the

uninterrupted record covering thousands of generations of Seers whose respective experiences were made to test and to verify the traditions passed orally by one early race to another, of the teachings of higher and exalted beings." We are further told that the Wise Men of the Fifth Race passed their lives "*in learning, not teaching.*" This was done "by checking, testing, and verifying in every department of nature the traditions of old by the independent visions of great adepts." Theosophy, therefore, is not an evolving philosophy, as so many modern-day philosophies are, and we need not hesitate putting its well-tested teachings into practice. Theosophical ideas must, therefore, become, as Mr. Judge points out in "Much Reading, Little Thought," an "integral part" of our "constant thought." To take again the idea of Reincarnation: Do we live our day-to-day life as if we believed in Reincarnation? Do we live to "eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die"? Or do we act as souls, preparing our mental luggage for a future incarnation? Are we making friends or enemies for the future? This is all part of the assimilation and application of our study.

There is also a wider aspect of Theosophical study. All that we have considered so far applies to individual study. In the U.L.T. we have collective or group study carried out by means of study classes and other meetings. By the exchange of ideas with other students, our knowledge is broadened. Collective or group study will be exactly what each makes it. Mr. Judge, in "Theosophical Study and Work," points out that if a Branch as a whole is weak in study and application, this "affects not only the immediate associates but also projects into the great universal current an influence that has its weight in the destiny of the race." A U.L.T., or a study group, has a sphere of influence which embraces the immediate neighbourhood in which it is. If the members are weak in their study, and as a consequence poor in application, then the influence emanating from the lodge or group will also be weak. If Theosophical ideas are eventually to change the minds and hearts of men, they must be injected into the thought atmosphere of the race. With so much of destructive thinking going on today, the world is in need of constructive thought. This can and must come from a

group of students intent on the study of Theosophy.

There is another way of looking at this wider aspect of Theosophical study. A weak student will weaken the Lodge or study group he is in; a weakened Lodge or study group will weaken the whole U.L.T. movement. We are thus, in Mr. Judge's words, "theosophically speaking, keepers and helpers of each other....Each Branch is separately responsible for its own actions, and yet everyone is helped or injured by every other. These reciprocating influences work on the real though unseen plane where every man is dynamically united to every fellow man."

If collective study is to be effective, then each should come to the meeting prepared. This cannot be done ten minutes before the meeting begins, by a hasty reading of the portion assigned the week before. The preparation for the next meeting should continue throughout the week, if we are to contribute anything to the group study, which requires a sharing of our knowledge. If, therefore, we go unprepared, it means we are benefiting by the results of the study of others, but are giving nothing in return.

The attitude of mind with which we attend a meeting is also important. In as much as the object of our study, individual or collective, is that Theosophical ideas may gradually permeate the thought atmosphere, and others may benefit from them, our own inner attitude must be such that others will be attracted. They will not be so attracted unless we are able to hold these ideas as a continuous attitude, unless we manifest them in all that we do. Therefore, while the correct study of Theosophy is important, equally important is the attitude of mind with which we approach the teachings, and what we expect to obtain from them.

We should "never delude ourselves into believing that we can accomplish in a single lifetime what has taken avatars innumerable existences to achieve." We can, though, get our mental luggage ready for another incarnation, and as a beginning has to be made, the proper study of Theosophy is the first step.

THE DAUNTLESS ENERGY

HAVING conquered illusion and become indifferent to the pairs of opposites, with our gaze fixed on the Truth we perceive, it would seem as if all was well, and all we needed was energy to go on and on! But this is not so, we are told. The greatest obstacle on our path arises within ourselves—the pride of achievement. How wonderful we are! On what pinnacle we stand! With such thoughts, we are on the way to failure. We need to protect our mind from these thoughts. On the path of *Virya*, we shall fail if we have not realized completely the difference between the lower man and the Higher Man, the Thinking Self, for we shall then mirror back the things of the earth. Before we can enter the gate of *Dhyana*, we must be incapable of mirroring back anything of the earth. Earthly thoughts must find no place in our consciousness.

We can well visualize what energy we shall need, what strength of mind and heart, to reach the goal ahead. The phrase given to us, “Diamond-Soul,” is mantram. “Make hard thy Soul against the snares of Self; deserve it only when we have realized the fact of immortality. Illusion has been conquered; reality dimly perceived; the passing illusions have been seen to be such. All thoughts have been stilled; the consciousness has been centred on the ONE. Time has ceased to be. That which has been acquired is “ceaseless contemplation” on *Sat*. Hence the picture is given of an alabaster vase, white and transparent. Only the golden flame of *Prajna*, the energy of Spirit, is seen within. We are that vase. Nothing now separates us from the ALL. The mind has reached a condition of fixity; though-impressions may batter against the outside of the vase, but complete non-attention to them kills them before they have affected us.

But, in spite of all dangers and failures, the courage that began to work in us when we developed *Kshanti*, ad led us on through the other doorways, has remained undaunted and undiminished.

What will help us to keep up our courage? Only the memory of why we are undergoing these trials—the *Dana* virtue—love for our fellow men. Treading this arduous path is just not worth the trouble if self-benefit is our sole aim. Nothing but appreciation of

the *need* to succeed, because of the help we can render others, can possible urge us on through the final stages.

Hence it is that when the goal is reached all Nature is affected, for we have made our links throughout, and therefore all benefit by our success. Just as we have received help, so now we must give help, and all we have gained passes through us back into the world of forms. Our mind grasps the vision of boundless space. We are free.

Yet, having freed our minds from all thoughts, it is necessary at this stage to make our inner ear receptive if we would not lose all we have gained. Having become deaf to roarings as to whispers, we have to hear the great cry which arises from infinity, the cry for help. We must *feel* for the suffering of others lest we lose ourselves in Bliss. To attain the impenetrable armour against illusion, while at the same time making it possible for the within to express itself without, is our task.

Our sense of responsibility brings us to the stage when we help to build the “Guardian Wall.” This is the final struggle. Let us not think this easy, for we are warned that we must “look forward always with awe and trembling to this moment, and be prepared for the battle.”

If we find any step easy, we must beware, for we are under the power of illusion. We must possess, we are told, adamant will. What will maintain this strength of will? Only the persistent practice of *Dana* throughout the *Paramita* Path. It is the foundation and fruition, the key to true renunciation. One maybe perfect in all the other *Paramitas*, but without the constant practice of *Dana*, until our love becomes all-embracing, the final step cannot be taken. Our aim is not liberation from the world and its affairs; it is renunciation of the bliss of *Nirvana*, in order to remain with our suffering fellow men.

Is it possible for us to come to this stage? Yes, it is, for others have done it. All we need to do is to learn the steps, have a pure motive, and call on the “warrior” within, knowing that there is no failure if we persevere. It is worth the effort!

SERVICE OF FELLOW-MEN

AGAIN and again in Madame Blavatsky's writings she stresses the brotherhood of man and the responsibility that rests on each for service of his fellow-men.

She laid great stress on altruism in her writings, and it may be helpful to bring together some of her statements bearing directly on the response which should be ours to others's woes and sorrows.

In her First Message to the American Theosophists, sent in 1888, she defined the essence of Theosophy as "the perfect harmonizing of the divine with the human in man, the adjustment of his god-like qualities and aspirations, and their sway over the terrestrial or animal passions in him." And she added: "Kindness, absence of every ill feeling or selfishness, charity, good-will to all brings, and perfect justice to others as to one's self, are its chief features. He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also—he who preaches the gospel of good-will, teaches Theosophy."

In *The Theosophical Glossary* she defined Kama as "the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE."

And in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 14) we are enjoined to let our Soul "lend its ear to every cry of pain," and to let "each burning human tear" drop on our heart and there remain; "nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed."

In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 53) she wrote: "...he who works for himself had better not work at all; rather let him work himself for others, for all. For every flower of love and charity he plants in his neighbour's garden, a loathsome weed will disappear from his own, and so this garden of the gods—Humanity—shall blossom as a rose."

In *Lucifer* for October 1889 she wrote: "Nothing of that which is conducive to help man, collectively or individually, to live, not

'happily,' but less *unhappily* in the world, ought to be indifferent to the Theosophist-Occultist. It is no concern of his whether his help benefits a man in his *worldly* or *spiritual* progress; his first duty is to be ever ready to help if he can, without stopping to philosophize."

In the closing paragraph of *Isis Unveiled*, "true faith" is defined as "the embodiment of divine charity."

What is due to humanity at large is said on page 194 of *The Key to Theosophy* to be "full recognition of equal rights and privileges for all, and without distinction of race, colour, social position, or birth," such due not being given when there is any failure to show another "the same justice, kindness, consideration or mercy which we desire for ourselves."

And H.P.B. practised what she preached.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Popular Science (November 2002) names 10 “brilliant” scientists of the year 2002—those who caused a stir within their disciplines—and comments editorially:

It’s a conceit of the modern mind to believe we live in the most interesting, volatile, and momentous of times. Measuring and documenting change has become a sort of ticker-tape obsession....In a culture supercharged by marketing pressure, a cellphone that plays *La Cucaracha* when you’re within 500 feet of a margarita bar can plausibly be cited to advance the case for human progress, or at least Lifestyle Progress.

Still, when you read about the men and women on our roster of some of the new bright lights of scientific research—you can’t help but get excited about a quickening, a stirring in the huge, amorphous organism that is the scientific enterprise. What may distinguish science in the 21st century is a breaking down of barriers between disciplines. The life sciences, materials science, computer science, chemistry, physics, and the rest now conspire to solve problems at the nanoscale junction of the animate and the inanimate world.

The recognition that all scientific disciplines are interlinked is one of the encouraging signs of the times. The next step for men of science should be to accept what Theosophy has always asserted, that *all knowledge* is a unified synthesis, and that true science, Religion and Philosophy have all sprung from the same source and have a common purpose—the pursuit of truth. As H.P.B. wrote in her article “Is Theosophy a Religion?”:

Truth is one, even if sought for or pursued at two different ends. Therefore, Theosophy claims to reconcile the two foes [science and religion]....the teachings of the two are incompatible, and cannot agree so long as both Religious philosophy and Science of physical and external (in philosophy, *false*) nature, insist upon the infallibility of their respective “will-o’-the-wisps.” The two lights, having their beams of equal length in the matter of false deductions, can but extinguish

each other and produce still worse darkness. Yet, they can be reconciled on the condition that both shall clean their houses, one from the human dross of the ages, the other from the hideous excrescence of modern materialism and atheism. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 1*)

Astronomers have always been fascinated by Venus, whose position as our nearest planetary neighbour makes it one of the brightest objects in the night sky. Though now considered inhospitable for harbouring life, new research shows that it might once have been Earth’s twin planet, complete with giant rivers, deep oceans and teeming with life. *The Sunday Times* (London) reports that two British scientists have found “powerful evidence” that rivers as big as the Amazon once flowed for thousands of miles across Venus’s landscape, emptying into seas similar to our own. They have used radar images from a National Aeronautic and Space Agency (NASA) probe to trace the river systems, deltas and other features that, they say, could only have been created by water.

Adrian Jones, a planetary scientist at University College, London, who carried out the research, says the findings suggest that life on Venus could have evolved parallel to that on Earth. “If the climate and temperature were right for water to flow, then they would have been right for life too. It suggests that life could once have existed there,” says Jones.

Life of the sort we know may not be present on Venus; but how much do our scientists know of the type of life that exists on other planets? The Wisdom of the Ages asserts that “wherever there is an atom of matter, a particle or a molecule, even in its most gaseous condition, there is life in it, however latent and unconscious (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 258). We are further told:

Venus is the most occult, powerful, and mysterious of all the planets; the one whose influence upon, and relation to the Earth is most prominent. (II, 31-32)

According to the Occult Doctrine, this planet is our Earth’s

primary, and its spiritual prototype....Archaic tradition...states that Venus changes simultaneously (geographically) with the Earth; that whatever takes place on the one takes place on the other; and that many and great were their common changes (II, 31-32)

Every world has its parent star and sister planet. Thus Earth is the adopted child and younger brother of Venus, but its inhabitants are of their own kind....All sentient complete beings (full septenary men or higher beings) are furnished, in their beginnings, with forms and organisms in full harmony with the nature and state of the sphere they inhabit.

Venus is in her last Round. (I, 165)

The power of talk and the art of listening make a pair. In a special section in *Utne Reader* (July-August 2002), the opening article by Margaret J. Wheatley stresses the need for meaningful conversation and how it “gives birth to actions that can change lives and restore our faith in the future.” More, it can “initiate significant social change.” When people sit down and think together, “when they discover that they share a common concern, that’s when the process of change begins.” Unfortunately, conversation sometimes gets soured and degenerates into people shouting angrily.

For conversation to be meaningful, we have first to train ourselves to become patient listeners. When we listen attentively to other people’s viewpoints, it broadens our perspective and moves us closer to one another. “When we listen with as little judgment as possible, we develop better relationships with each other,” writes Wheatley.

In another article, “Deep Listening,” Jaida N’ Ha and Jon Spayde dwell on the “surprising pleasure of not talking”:

Listening is the foundation of conversation. Through hearing others carefully, we are able to step imaginatively and empathetically into their shoes, and to experience the world from an entirely different point of view, if only for a few moments. California salon enthusiast Shelley Kessler advocates

listening “between the lines” as someone speaks, “hearing the feelings and the intentions as well as the words. It requires tremendous discipline.”

Active listening is not easy. For one thing, most people think about four times faster than they speak. When you’re listening, it’s easy to tune out a speaker while you turn over your own ideas....If you regularly jump to conclusions about where someone is headed and then stop listening, discipline yourself to pay attention long enough to find out whether your assumption was correct....

As any group becomes accustomed to active listening and unprepared speaking, you’ll find everyone’s words growing in feeling, meaning, and impact.

An important step for the Theosophical student in living the Higher Life is the control of speech, without which one cannot become a Listener, a *Shravaka*. One cannot hear and speak at the same time. The art of listening can and should be cultivated, for it is the key to real study and to real service. Through it the student can delve deep through words and phrases to reach the underlying ideas. Theosophical writings often deal with subjects far beyond the listener’s knowledge and therefore it is more difficult to get at the underlying idea, free from preconceptions and prejudices. Also, it should be borne in mind, the listener hears in terms of his own language, preconceptions and knowledge, emphasizing what appeals to him, and “fighting” or ignoring what does not. The art of listening is, then, to cut away all non-essentials till the idea stands clear.

Difficult, uneasy times come in the lives of all. Some feel overwhelmed on such occasions, while other face them with patience and fortitude. In *Psychology Today* (November-December 2002), clinical psychologist Robert Markman, Ph. D., gives the instance of the one Diana Solomon and how she coped with her problems. Markman comments:

So much happens in our lives that is unplanned. This uncertainty seems to be a factor of living and not something resulting from mistakes or personal inadequacy. Those who survive and creatively continue seem to have developed a strategy, a way of transforming obstacles into bridges. The intrinsic value of such a worldview is that it enables one to weave daily events (desired or undesired) into a workable pattern. Diana appears to be one of those people who when faced with life-changing challenges (divorce, single parenthood, possible bankruptcy) has marshalled the wisdom of her beliefs to not only cope with the unexpected but also to be proactive in the pursuit of her goals. We can all benefit from the example of her ability to keep life in perspective. However, the decisive element may be the creation and implementation of a viable perspective before hard times come.

Mr. Judge offers this advice:

I would never let the least fear or despair come before me, but if I cannot see the road, nor the goal, for the fog, I would simply sit down and wait; I would not allow the fog to make me think no road was there, and that I was not to pass it. The fogs must lift.

A spiritual perspective of life is the soul of all development, says the Statement of the Brahma Kumaris to the United Nations, presented at the UN World Summit on Sustainable Development at Johannesburg, South Africa (*Purity*, January 2003). The Statement reads in part:

Our world remains under the dark cloud of an excessively materialistic paradigm, one of the consequences of which is that development is too often a narrow concept largely understood only in economic terms. This narrow concept of development can find its roots in a narrow concept of the Self that neglects the larger reality of heart and soul, dims the inner light of the spirit and values, and forgets the essential oneness of the human family.

Lasting development within society will not happen without develop out development of the individual. We need to move from an overly materialistic approach to one that includes the broader and deeper realities of human life and experience: the inner world of our thoughts and values and the innate spirituality on which our worth and dignity are based. We will not be able to get the outer world in order until we have first learned to get our inner world in order and transcend short-term selfishness, consumerism, disregard for others and a corruption of values. We will not see the changes we look for in the world around us—such as the elimination of poverty, violence and injustice—until we first bring about these changes in ourselves....

A spiritual understanding of the self indicates that human worth is not derived from matter and material possessions or measure in consuming, having and doing. We then see poverty not just as relating to a material state; in fact the near-bankruptcy of values such as honesty, love, respect, care and compassion is the greatest poverty afflicting the world today as well as itself causing material poverty. Values and spirituality then are at the heart not just of who we are but also of the political, social, economic and environmental issues we are facing. It is also they, rather than words and numbers, that constitute the foundations of the world we are seeking to build....

Distinguishable from religion, and possible doctrinal divergency, spirituality is concerned with the primary challenge of putting our inner house in order. It is not antithetical to material progress but believes that such progress yields a bitter fruit and carries within itself the seeds of its own demise if values such as responsibility, justice, honesty, sharing and respect are not its guiding polestar.

Human beings do not live by bread alone; nor can the world be changed with words and plans alone. It can only change when our values, attitudes and actions change. Sustainable development, and development that sustains all people, depends at least as much on inner transformation and growth as on material progress and prosperity.

Prof. Ranjit Nair, director of the Centre for Philosophy and Foundations of Science believes that scientists must address global issues and transcend the idea of the nation-state. In the course of an interview with *The Times of India*, he said:

So far as science is concerned, there's a unity of life beginning from the simplest living organisms to the most complex—from single-cell amoeba to humans....A foundational insight of Indian philosophy is, *ekam sat vipra bahudha vadanti*, or "the real is one, though the sages describe it variously." Modern science has provided a way of translating this philosophical statement....

Science is concerned with "hows" rather than "whys". As far as the meaning of life is concerned, science may have no ultimate answers, if indeed there are such answers. But science has fundamentally transformed questions about the origins of life, that were once considered the preserve of religions. Today, even religious traditions seek to reconcile what we [scientists] know with their own special insights. If they acknowledge human rights and equal opportunity, it's thanks in part to science the fundamentals of culture have been influenced by science....

The ethical challenges are profound, now that we're able to intervene at the molecular level. There's a debate on therapeutic versus reproductive cloning. Then there's the interface between humans and machines, the issue of "cyborgs." Genetically modified foods and organisms are areas of contention. These are issues which can only be decided by the whole community. Regulatory norms should be established after a broad debate. We have to tread a middle path between the extreme anti-and-pro-factions. We also have to guard against technology-fundamentalists.

Scientists must address global issues....We have to ask ourselves why there are still so many poor despite scientific advancement. Ethics and science have to be mobilized for larger goals that are well within our reach.

Statement about ownership and other particulars about the magazine "THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT" to be published in the first issue every year after the last day of February

FORM IV
(See Rule 8)

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Place of Publication: | Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020 |
| 2. Periodicity of Publication: | Monthly, 17th of the month |
| 3. Printer's Name: | Gopal G. Thakur |
| Whether citizen of India: | Yes |
| Address: | Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020 |
| 4. Publisher's Name: | Gopal G. Thakur |
| Whether citizen of India: | Yes |
| Address: | Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020 |
| 5. Editor's Name: | M. Dastur |
| Whether citizen of India: | Yes |
| Address: | Theosophy Hall
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020 |
| 6. Names and addresses of individuals who own the magazine and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital: | Theosophy Co. (India) Private Ltd.
40 New Marine Lines
Mumbai 400 020
(A charitable Company) |

I, Gopal G. Thakur, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

17th March 2003

(Sd.) GOPAL G. THAKUR
Publisher