

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD—A LIVING FACT

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun. Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye. But let each burning human tear drop on thy heart and there remain, nor ever brush it off, until the pain that caused it is removed.

These tears, O thou of heart most merciful, these are the streams that irrigate the fields of charity immortal. 'Tis on such soil that grows the midnight blossom of Buddha, more difficult to find, more rare to view, than is the flower of the Vogay tree.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

MAXIM Gorky's poignant short story, "Her Lover," is about a woman of loose morals who approaches a college student with the request to write down a letter, which she dictates, addressed to her lover. A few days later, she returns with a queer request to write down a reply from this lover to herself, also dictated by her! Later, she confesses that in reality, no such lover existed, but that such exchange of letters made life bearable for her. It is with some pain and shame that the student, who had initially tried to avoid her out of self-righteous feelings, realized that alongside him, not three yards away, lived someone who had nobody in the world to treat her kindly, affectionately, and this person had invented a friend for

herself. The story ends with Gorky's insightful and ironic remark:

And who are the fallen classes, I should like to know? They are, first of all, people with the same bones, flesh and blood and nerves as ourselves. We have been told this day after day for ages. And we actually listen....Or are we completely depraved by the loud sermonizing of humanism? In reality, we also are fallen folks, and so far as I can see, very deeply fallen into the abyss of self-sufficiency and the conviction of our own superiority. But enough of this. It is all as old as the hills—so old that it is a shame to speak of it.

Yes, it is indeed a shame that though every religion down the ages has *preached* this doctrine of brotherhood, we still have among us the lonely, the poor and the persecuted. *The Theosophical Glossary* defines "Humanity" as a "great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed, physically and morally. Unless, however, it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals." Mr. Judge points out that universal brotherhood is a fact in nature, whether we recognize it or not. It is a sound doctrine and yet we fail to practise it because we have denied it in the heart.

For our efforts towards social amelioration to be fruitful, they must have the foundation of human solidarity. A large number of people are suffering from poverty, misery and disease—their mental and spiritual faculties remaining dormant. On the opposite end of the social scale are those living the life of material luxury and careless indifference. "The white race must be the first to stretch out the hand of fellowship to the dark nations and must be the first to call the poor despised 'nigger' a brother." This may not be palatable to all, but he is no Theosophist who objects to this principle. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*, p. 2)

Modern man experiences isolation and a deep sense of insecurity and anxiety, all of which arises out of the feeling of separateness. It is by drowning ourselves in work, amusements, drinks and drugs, and buying ever-new things that we seek to escape loneliness,

anxiety and insecurity. Each of us lives in a world of his own, maintaining superficial contact with others. What are our feelings when we desire attention, approval, fame, success or power? We may feel elated, momentarily, but can we compare it to the sublime feeling of peace or true happiness, which we experience when we contemplate nature, or enjoy the company of friends, or when we choose to share in the joy of another's success?

"Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men." With our set pattern of thinking and feeling we refuse to adjust with other minds and hearts. Only those people interest us who share our tastes and outlook on life. As Professor C. S. Lewis remarks, such companions with common interest create a barrier between themselves and others and thus form a *partial brotherhood*. Depending upon the kind of things held in common, there can be partial brotherhood of extremely fanatic and despotic people. At times, these partial brotherhoods can become dangerous. Alone among unsympathetic companions, we may hold certain views and standards timidly, not too sure if we are right. But when a group of people holds certain views, right or wrong, they tend to be assertive. *True* brotherhood is not forming such an exclusive body. Sometimes there are subgroups within such groups. H.P.B. mentions a Scottish couple who felt that only the two of them possessed the keys to Heaven. But even between the two of them, in the absence of her husband Jamie, the wife said, "na certain about Jamie," *i.e.*, she was sure of herself going to heaven but she was not so sure about the goodness and worthiness of her husband Jamie. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 32)

We look at people with prejudice and preconceptions, forgetting that the inner state of the person is known only to the Law of Karma. How can we arrive at any fixed and final conclusion about a person? People change, don't they? Bertrand Russell jokingly remarked that only his tailor thought he could have changed over a period of time, as he measured him afresh every time he went to him. We see only what we want to see. It is so easy to overlook faults in the

people we like. Come to think of it, how do we treat ourselves? A little reflection makes it plain that we are not perfect. There are things in us that must be plainly detestable to others. But we have learnt to forgive these negative aspects in us. Hence, Jesus said, “Love thy neighbour as thyself.” Mr. Judge advises, “Don’t try to feel...more actively friendly to this or that person.” We are also asked to cast no one out of our heart, but remember him in our prayers.

As Francis Thompson so beautifully expresses, we are all interconnected on the inner planes:

All things by immortal power,
Near or far, hiddenly
To each other linked are,
That thou canst not stir a flower
Without troubling of a star.

H.P.B. explains it by means of an analogy. Humanity as a whole is the stem that grows from the spiritual root. If we hurt the stem, every shoot and leaf will suffer, and so it is with mankind. Any injury to the plant will affect the whole course of its future growth and development, just as a cut in the finger may make the whole body suffer and react on the entire nervous system. Every physical action has its moral and everlasting effect. If we hurt a person, his pain and suffering is not restricted to himself but spreads and affects not only his neighbours but people of other nations, *in good time*. Unless we accept at least as an *axiomatic truth* that by wronging one man we wrong not only ourselves but also the whole of humanity in the long run, no brotherly feelings such as preached by the great reformers are possible. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 45-46)

Charity begins at home—but it does not end there. There is first the need to have this brotherly love among students of Theosophy. We are asked to form “a *nucleus* of Universal Brotherhood.” The most important part of the atom is the nucleus, as the strong intra-

nuclear forces not only hold together various components *within* the nucleus, but also keep the electrons revolving in the outer orbit. Likewise, when a few students are united on the basis of similarity of aim, purpose and teaching, they can attract other like-minded students and in time high spiritual influences would be directed towards it and the same would radiate from this nucleus, for the benefit of all. It is stated that if the students would succeed in carrying out their duty as Theosophists, they would soon find the misery in and around the area of that branch to be visibly diminished. A Master of Wisdom writes:

A band of students...who would reap any profit spiritually, must be in perfect harmony and unity of thought. Each one individually and collectively has to be *utterly unselfish*, kind and full of goodwill towards each other at least—leaving humanity out of the question. There must be no party spirit among the band, no backbiting, no ill-will, or envy or jealousy, contempt or anger. What hurts one, ought to hurt the other—that which rejoices A must fill with pleasure B.

Co-disciples share a special bond. The family-bond or bond of friendship may get exhausted in a few incarnations, but not so the bond between co-disciples. It is not disciple-to-disciple relationship, but primarily with the Guru, and through him all the disciples are related. Hence the Master says that none could be so blind as to think that it is the first time one has contacted Theosophy. It is converging lines of Karma that have drawn each and all to Theosophy. “Know then that it depends now upon each of you whether you shall henceforth struggle alone after spiritual wisdom through this and the next incarnate life, or in the company of our present associates, and greatly helped by the mutual sympathy and aspiration.” *The Voice of the Silence* says: “Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing Vina.” When a disciple refuses to adjust and persists in being separate and assertive, then like the overstretched string which breaks, he may find a crack developing

in his inner consciousness and the silver string that binds him to his divine nature might be stretched unduly, making it difficult for him to get guidance from the Master within. Being in harmony is very important. We may not agree with another, and yet acknowledging his uniqueness, we may accept the peculiarities of his nature. Why should we want our sons or pupils to be made in the image of ourselves, like a chip of the old block?

Human solidarity is the corollary to Universal Unity. There is the same divine spark shining in every human heart. We have to cultivate the art of looking beyond the personality, the outer garments, which delude us into thinking that we are separate from others. There is the wonderful dialogue between the Master and his disciple:

“Lift thy head, oh Lanoo; dost thou see one, or countless lights above thee, burning in the dark midnight sky?”

“I sense one Flame, oh Gurudeva, I see countless undetached sparks shining in it.”

“Thou sayest well. And now look around and into thyself. That light which burns inside thee, dost thou feel it different in anywise from the light that shines in thy Brothermen?”

“It is in no way different, though the prisoner is held in bondage by Karma, and though its outer garments delude the ignorant into saying, ‘Thy Soul and My Soul.’” (*S.D.*, I, 120)

SCORN the “intellectual” as much as the world esteems it. What men consider intellectual is a certain facility to produce brilliant thoughts. Nothing is more vain. We make an idol of our intellect. We take pride in our own thoughts. We must reject not only human cleverness, but also human prudence, which seems so important and so profitable.

—FRANCOIS FENELON

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT—ITS MISSION

If the Theosophical Movement were one of those numerous modern crazes, as harmless at the end as they are evanescent, it would be simply laughed at—as it is now by those who still do not understand its real purport—and left severely alone. But it is nothing of the kind. Intrinsicly, Theosophy is the most serious movement of this age; and one, moreover, which threatens the very life of most of the time-honoured humbugs, prejudices, and social evils of the day.... Think of this, and you will easily understand the reason of such a relentless persecution by those others who, more observant and perspicacious, do see the true nature of Theosophy, and therefore dread it.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

AS time rolls onward, testing of hearts among students of Theosophy is taking place with an accelerated speed. Each one who calls himself a student-server of Theosophy must ask himself, if he has not already done so, and ask himself afresh if he has done so in the past, whether he has been true to the Original Programme which emanated with the Original Impulse set in motion in 1875 when the most serious Movement of our age was launched.

The mission of the Theosophical Movement was clearly and definitely programmed by H.P.B. under the direct guidance of her Masters. In giving a Message to W. Q. Judge she gave one to every student-server of the Cause of Theosophy. She wrote:

Well, my *only* friend, you ought to know better. Look into my life and try to realize it—in its outer course at least, as the rest is hidden. I am under the curse of ever writing, as the wandering Jew was under that of being ever on the move, never stopping one moment to rest. Three ordinary healthy persons could hardly do what *I have* to do. I live an artificial life; I am an automaton running full steam until the power of generating steam stops, and then—good-bye! * * * 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 numbers 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. And last night I saw *-* and now I feel strong—such as I am in my body—and ready to fight for Theosophy and the few *true* ones to my last breath. The defending forces have to be judiciously—so scanty they are—distributed over the globe, wherever Theosophy is struggling against the powers of darkness.

She wrote and she wrote and she wrote—all that she had to. For whom? For all who wanted to serve the Theosophical Movement which she inaugurated. Each student-server must teach himself to “remain staunch to the Master's programme” and must educate himself in intellectual honesty to be true to himself.

H.P.B.'s mission was to change the Manas and Buddhi of the race by a wide-spread promulgation of the Teachings of Theosophy. She founded the Theosophical Society for the study of the subjects she treated of in *Isis Unveiled* (see her dedication to it). If she struck that note of study in her first work, she repeated it with particular emphasis in her last book—*The Key to Theosophy*. That book she wrote so that all her pupils might learn and teach the one philosophy.

All students, individually or in groups, have the solemn duty to study, apply and promulgate Theosophy. Straight Theosophy. But what is straight Theosophy? In *The Key to Theosophy* H.P.B. has clearly pointed out what students should learn and what they should teach.

ENQ. Then is all this metaphysics and mysticism with which you occupy yourself so much, of no importance?

THEO. To the masses, who need only practical guidance and support, they are not of much consequence; but for the educated, the natural leaders of the masses, those whose modes of thought

and action will sooner or later be adopted by those masses, they are of the greatest importance. It is only by means of the philosophy that an intelligent and educated man can avoid the intellectual suicide of believing on blind faith; and it is only by assimilating the strict continuity and logical coherence of the Eastern, if not esoteric, doctrines, that he can realize their truth. Conviction breeds enthusiasm, and “Enthusiasm,” says Bulwer Lytton, “is the genius of sincerity, and truth accomplishes no victories without it”: while Emerson most truly remarks that “every great and commanding movement in the annals of the world is the triumph of enthusiasm.” And what is more calculated to produce such a feeling than a philosophy so grand, so consistent, so logical, and so all-embracing as our Eastern Doctrines?

While the student's first duty is to acquire knowledge of Theosophy, including “metaphysics and mysticism,” he is asked to promulgate four important and fundamental teachings to all. What are they? (1) Universal Unity and Causation; (2) Human Solidarity; (3) the Law of Karma; (4) Reincarnation. And H.P.B. adds: “These are the four links of the golden chain which should bind humanity into one family, one universal Brotherhood.”

In this connection it is very important to note that Theosophy has teachings both for the mind and for the heart. Our mind as well as our heart needs to be educated. Within our body is not only the Mind which always thinks straight, the Heart which always loves aright, but also the mechanistic and machinating mind, the heart blinded by personal affections and aversions. The Human Soul has at its service the wisdom and compassion of the Spiritual Soul, but it is also influenced by the Animal Soul—more subtle than the chameleon. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul.

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the “Eternal Man”; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

Shun praise, O Devotee. Praise leads to self-delusion. Thy body is not Self, thy SELF is in itself without a body, and either praise or blame affects it not.

Self-gratulation, O Disciple, is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. Thereon he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself.

False learning is rejected by the Wise, and scattered to the Winds by the Good Law. Its wheel revolves for all, the humble and the proud. The “Doctrine of the Eye” is for the crowd; the “Doctrine of the Heart” for the elect. The first repeat in pride: “Behold, I know,” the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: “Thus have I heard.”

The true student-server of Theosophy teaches himself to repeat—“Thus have I heard.” Immediately following the above is the verse: “‘Great Sifter’ is the name of the ‘Heart Doctrine,’ O Disciple.”

The Esoteric Philosophy, constant and consistent, ever tests the devotee-altruist. It has done so in yugas gone by; it will do so in eras yet to come; it is actually accomplishing the task at the present hour.

The butterfly paused in flight to think: No change could take place without drawing from the only source of energy that the entire universe drew from....All change had to draw from constancy. If it were not for the Constant, there would be no changes. And if it were not for changes, one wouldn't even think of the Constant.

—NEERAJA RAGHAVAN

HIGHER ASPIRATIONS

From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed.

—*All's Well That Ends Well*

THE ANIMAL has in it the rudiments of desire which take the form of instincts as well as of sympathies and antipathies. These make the animal rely on its senses to find food and shelter and security. They provide it with cunning and camouflage and with the feelings of love, envy, hate and revenge. Desire, when it is allied to a body, works in this manner. It is a natural outcome of the fusion of these two principles. Desire when clothed in matter evolves heterogeneity from stone and plant upwards, till the higher species of the animal kingdom attain to a dim reflection of intelligence.

When in the course of evolution the mind of man incarnated within the completed animal form, it found the desire aspect of the animal matter unchanged. It was thus that “instead of ‘an untainted mind, heaven's first gift’ (Aeschylus), there was created the eternal vulture of the ever-unsatisfied desire, of regret and despair coupled with ‘the dreamlike feebleness that fetters the blind race of mortals’” (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 413). Where the mind of man is lost in the labyrinths of desire-dominated senses, it knows of no god except he who on supplication can add to one's sense of pleasure, no guru except he who can enlarge one's area of indulgence. In such a set-up, there is no room for love or sacrifice except for the love and the sacrifice that are to be found in the jungle life of reptiles, animals and birds. The ennobling emotions of the poet and painter, the urge for the divine that makes of a man a missionary and a martyr, are absent, and not being needed are not tolerated when circumstances force them upon the attention of the man who is dominated by the jungle law of the animal.

The god in man begins with Manas, mind; but not with that part of Manas which has lost itself in earthly desires and refuses to be dislodged. To the lower consciousness of the animalized Manas, each man is separate from the others, and therefore it argues that its own felicity can be legitimately heightened by a continuous series of depredations carried out in other men's territories. To such, brotherhood is only the creation of man's fancy and he has therefore no compunction to exploit it for his own benefit. Charity for him is an expedient for obtaining fame. In his hands, it becomes a convenient medium for an ostentatious parading of power. Courage becomes a weapon that can put dread in another, while patience can be used, as in fact it is used, by the scorpion and the spider, the lion and the leopard, to secure their prey. Noble aspirations cannot arise in such a human-animal combine where it is the animal that retains full control and dominates decisions.

In each man, be he the vilest, there is incarnated the Higher Mind. Unlike its ray—the lower mind—it is not enmeshed in animalism. It is free from tainted desire. However, it has one disability. It can act only through its lower counterpart and so long as that lower is swathed in the heady fumes of lust, anger and greed, just so long must that higher remain a silent spectator of its wayward progeny. It is here that Karma steps in to play its beneficent role. Where the innate goodness of the man or the circumstances of his life are not strong enough to arouse that latent force which, if aroused, will draw him towards his higher potencies, there pain and sorrow come in to fulfil their great duty. To the afflicted of fortune, to the miserable who draw their breath in pain, comes the great question: Why? If they have in them the noble instincts of piety or of a desire to “work righteousness” (*Gita*, VII, 16), then their great suffering may make them take the first step away from their disastrous moorings in the false. This may be their hour of salvation; but it may also turn out to be their hour of greatest danger. For, if the past Karma was loaded with ignorance, the harassed Soul may try to seek its solace in embracing orthodox creeds or in

rushing into the hands of soothsayers or of the practitioners of necromancy. Such an one is without a teacher, hope, or consolation, and it becomes the duty of the earnest practitioner to seek out such a harassed soul before it gets pushed into erroneous and often dangerous ways. It is to such an one that help is to be given and the Law expounded—individually.

He who volunteers to cure despair has to know how to tend his patient during the first few hours when, because of the turning on of the inner light, he sees the sordidness of his previous actions. Revulsion is an emotion which by its very force may preclude any possibility of either deliberation or study. Equilibrium is essential to all art, and the student-server has to so work as to help in the process of the establishment of equilibrium in his subject. Emotional upsets are as dangerous for psychic ills as they undoubtedly are for hospitalized patients under intensive care. Aspirations cannot grow and flower in an atmosphere of turbulence. It is for this reason that each aspirant is expected to build a heaven of peace—a vale of refuge—within himself. But this work of building—the laying of brick upon brick—has to be done by the aspirant himself. No one else can do it for him. Hampered by the fruits of wrong sowings in the past, beset by the blemishes of character that he himself invited, the aspirant has now to remedy all these by entering upon a course of discipline and adopting a few ascetic rules.

To gain even a modicum of success, he has to cultivate the habit of self-reliance. Now, self-reliance does not connote only the popular meaning of fending for oneself. It also means, and chiefly so, that reliance has to be laid upon one's own indwelling, immortal Self. But this inner Self must for years remain at best a mere hypothetical entity to a mind that for the first time struggles to emerge from the egotism and fanaticism that materialism and selfishness generate. Reliance must therefore be transferred for the time being on teachings that are universal, altruistic and true for all times and ages. These teachings have come to us directly

from the Wise Ones who have realized the SELF. The *Dhammapada* and the *Sermon on the Mount*, the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the *Stanzas of Dzyan* embody these teachings, while *The Voice of the Silence* is the book *par excellence* for help in leading the life. It is at the imperishable flame that burns within these treatises that the candle of aspiration has to be lit.

An effort at a more meaningful understanding of the laws of cause and effect and the application of these to daily living brings the conviction that in Nature rigid justice rules, and further that it is dispensed by an intelligent force that adjusts the effects to the hidden motives as well as to the erroneous convictions of the person. When this realization dawns upon the soul, it starts craving for real knowledge and for the companionship of those who are either pupils or pupil-teachers in the school of Life. Probably for the first time it formulates an aspiration that is disconnected from things of matter as also from mundane desires.

But this aspiration may remain as a potency on the planes of thought and feeling and not work itself out in action if the soul lacks the strength of Will which alone can give life to that aspiration. In the initial stages, the higher will—one that is free from impure desire—has no great force. Like any muscle it is built up slowly through the agency of enthusiasm coupled with a rigid and often a severe course of discipline. Pitted against the superior force of the will that the lower desires have at their command, it must wilt and surrender unless it is tended and preserved through both good and evil circumstance. Aspirations need sustenance just as much as do the lower desires. They have to be fed continually, lest by disuse or neglect they wither and atrophy. The food that nourishes aspirations is of a rare quality and has to be searched for painstakingly. No high aspirations can dawn upon the person nor survive long in a mind that is hourly filled by images of selfish cravings and forbidden desires.

The nether soul, however low it may sink, has at moments a premonition of its high parentage. It dreads that reminder which

steals upon it in those rare moments when silence descends upon the soul. To avoid this, it rushes into feverish activity by surrounding itself with things and persons that may take the mind away from the dreaded contact with Truth. The man of the world least enjoys the company of that which reminds him of his degradation. It is self-knowledge alone that paves the way for true aspiration—an inner turning of the soul towards the Divine.

Lofty aspirations and earthly desires go ill together. This is so for the reason that the higher gets defiled by the very presence of the lower. The force of the higher dwindles and ceases to hold any attraction for the man as soon as the citadel of his mind is captured and occupied by evil. It is a fact that lust and envy and greed do carry away by force the heart of even a wise man who is striving for perfection. The student of Theosophy is made aware of all this even at the early stages of his training in self-discipline. His intellect grasps the validity of the few metaphysical and moral rules presented to him, but his inner heart, his inmost desire, must accept these as the basis of his new orientation.

Immersed in the pleasures of sense-life, yet at times casting longing glances at the higher existence, the soul passes through joys and miseries that seem to chase each other despite all efforts to achieve some slight degree of stability. Such knowledge as is offered by religion, science and philosophy seems to be based on shifting hypotheses and is inadequate to explain the buffetings of life, the glamour that vice has on certain natures and the reason why man is dragged through life willy-nilly to destinations which are not his to know nor his to question. There are souls who in hours of tranquility have tried to search for that knowledge which can build for them an oasis of calmness in the midst of the raging storms. They often fail and then dejection claims them as its own. It is for such persons who struggle and fail and become despondent of ever freeing themselves that the Theosophical endeavour exists. *The Voice of the Silence* gives the injunction to the fortunate student to go out in search of such a soul in agony, and having found him

out, to extend to him the help and solace that the Good Law has in store for the seeker of truth. It is in such that has to be kindled the flame of aspiration. The new aspirant has to be told that his higher desires can take deeper roots only when he cuts across all selfishness and deliberately arouses in himself a feeling of devotion to the interests of others.

The chief hindrances to the learner who aspires are memory pictures of past escapades aroused and even lashed into fury by the sights and sounds that pour in from the great world outside. If, therefore, the automatic action of memory has to be checked in one direction, it has nevertheless to be strengthened and developed in another. The memory of events that have ennobled the moment and made it rich, the remembrance of other people's sacrifices that have prompted us to copy their example, even though it be on a lower key—all these are helps towards nobler dreams and bolder visions. The aspirations which first arose in a Christ or a Buddha have created forces for good that still have survived in the earth's atmosphere, still urge on the neophyte, still lend hope and courage to the fallen and the needy.

The real source of lasting aspirations must be sought in the yearnings of the inner heart. Says *Light on the Path*:

Look for it [the harmony] and listen to it first in your own heart. At first you may say, It is not there; when I search I find only discord. Look deeper. If again you are disappointed, pause and look deeper again. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced—but it is there.... Underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Find them, and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it... Know that it is certainly within yourself. Look for it there, and once having heard it you will more readily recognize it around you.

CRAVING FOR CELEBRITY STATUS

Man is here to evolve and finally to exceed himself to become what he is potentially.

—ERICH FROMM

SOCIAL Psychology recognizes that human “needs” are the motivators for human behaviour and existence. One branch of Aryan Psychology has classified “motivation,” that prompts us to strive, into four categories of pursuits (*Purushartha*). These are: pursuit of pleasure (*Kama*); an acquisitive impulse for wealth and possessions (*Artha*); higher pursuits which take on the quality of one's duties, such as religious practices, nurturing one's family, etc. (*Dharma* or Duty); lastly, seeking after liberation from the compulsions of rebirth (*Moksha*). The pursuit of *dharma* is broad enough to rise to still higher ideals, *viz.*, charity, sacrifice and austerity, which are specifically recommended by most religious scriptures.

Behavioural Psychologists try to explain “motivation” on the basis of the hierarchy of physical and psychological “needs,” such as, biological, emotional and still higher needs. For instance, one may be motivated by an emotional need for affection, to be identified with and be accepted as member of a group such as the family or any human society to which he is related. Rejection or self-isolation may give him a profound sense of insecurity. Higher than these are the subtler and more refined needs to fortify his “self-image.” It seems that any threat or deprivation of any of the above-mentioned personal “needs” may create tension and sometimes deviant behaviour.

Recent inquiry shows that there is no end to man's striving after desire- or “need”-satisfaction. Once the lower and immediate needs are, more or less, gratified, the higher needs come to the fore so that the person may strive to fortify his self-worth and to remain at the top. In an ambitious person there is an inordinate passion for

personal advancement and to stand out and be counted. He finds pleasure in his celebrity-image, though it is described as “fifteen-minute” joy and fame!

Some teenagers too dream about being superstars and want to imitate adult behaviour. Ambitious parents drive these young ones to achieve a premature reputation and stardom, causing stress and sometimes stunted emotional development. Such overbearing preoccupation with achieving striking physical beauty of the female shape and skin, and glamorous looks, has been an age-old craze in women, and now, even in men.

All these cravings after social distinction and celebrity-status demand a heavy price to be paid. They entail the loss of peace of mind, of the power of moral discrimination and other virtues of “emotional maturity.” In seeking an edge over others, in a thickly competitive field, an individual may lose friends and real well-wishers. Recent increase in cardio-vascular disease at the prime of life, and depression with anxiety disorder (as stated in the Executive Health Report) are some of the debilitating ailments expected by the year 2010 in developed countries (*Business World*, February 2006, New Delhi). Truly, as Thomas Grey puts it: “Path of glory leads but to the grave,” both actually and figuratively! What then is the remedy against the over-zealous striving after those eluding values called distinction, achievement, glory and reputation, which few can deserve without irresponsible sacrifice of the truly precious things like solidarity with others, respect for fellow-beings and concern for their needs?

Can there be a truly healthy “motivation” directed toward individual and social productivity, growth, competence and superiority? Some “humanistic” motivation psychologists like Dr. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers have stressed that there exist less recognized but vital and *truly “higher” needs* exhibited by some, which are not directly related to the above-mentioned familiar motivations of ordinary people. There is a “healthy” will towards “the actualization of human potentialities,” which only a few

individuals truly succeed in experiencing, being the highest human motivation.

One important characteristic, among others, of a “self-actualized” person is an awareness of having a sense of mission and purpose in life. His life is productive and full, and his behaviour has naturalness and spontaneity. He identifies with humanity and its concerns and lives a life of usefulness to himself and to others.

Students should rejoice that there are indeed some enlightened thinkers and humanist philosophers who use the modern technique of scientific inquiry and arrive at certain conclusions which corroborate with the age-old philosophy of the Aryans, regarding the higher nature of Man, his mission and his true welfare.

Ancient wisdom encourages a will toward truly worthwhile goals concerning the progressive destiny of man, instead of being obsessed with only personal achievements and seeking short-lived pleasures in celebrity-image. A sense of fulfilment and freedom is surely incidental to and not the main target for achievement of an all-round development in a responsible student. When the latent creative-energy and will are channelled toward higher goals, besides the personal excellence, the unfoldment of hitherto unsuspected latent faculties comes to the fore in the service of fellowmen. True “genius,” for instance, as described by H.P.B., has an awakened divine element within oneself, and is rewarded with legitimate fulfilment unlike that derived from hankering after short-lived glory. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*). Writes James Shirley:

The glories of our blood and state
Are shadows, not substantial things;
There is no armour against fate;
Death lays his icy hands on kings:
Sceptre and crown must tumble down,
And in the dust be equal made

With the poor crooked scythe and spade. (*The Contention of Ajax and Ulysses*)

A too close involvement with the fruits of labour is directly

opposed to the *Gita*'s injunction to strive like a warrior in his duty. *The Dhammapada* mentions the Wise One who charges ahead and out-distances a weak horse—but without *seeking* for a reward of victory. “But what is strength without a double-share of Wisdom!” says Milton. H.P.B., too, warned in her *Five Messages* against the (abnormal) rapid growth of intellectual and psychic nature (which confers power and fame) at the expense of one's moral and spiritual progress.

Let students pray, along with Alexander Pope:

Teach me Heav'n! to scorn the guilty bays,
Drive from my breast that wretched lust for praise;
Unblemished let me live, or die unknown;
Oh, grant an honest Fame, or grant me none.

KNOW then thyself, presume not God to scan,
The proper study of mankind is man.
Placed on this isthmus of a middle state,
A being darkly wise, and rudely great:
With too much knowledge for the sceptic side,
With too much weakness for the stoic's pride,
He hangs between; in doubt to act or rest;
In doubt to deem himself a god, or beast;
In doubt his mind or body to prefer;
Born but to die, and reas'ning but to err;
Alike in ignorance, his reason such,
Whether he thinks too little or too much;
Chaos of thought and passion, all confused;
Still by himself abused, or disabused;
Created half to rise, and half to fall;
Great lord of all things, yet a prey to all;
Sole judge of truth, in endless error hurdled;
The glory, jest, and riddle of the world!

—ALEXANDER POPE

MERCY OF THE LAW OF KARMA

Karma is both merciful and just. Mercy and Justice are only opposite poles of a single whole; and Mercy without Justice is not possible in the operations of Karma. That which man calls Mercy and Justice are defective, errant, and impure.

—U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21

MUCH of human misery and suffering, the many social evils, iniquities and conflicts in international relations, are all due to ignorance of the Law of Karma, the fundamental law of the universe. Theosophy shows that two-thirds of human misery and suffering would disappear of themselves if all men and women understood and lived in accordance with the law of Karma. It is the Law of all laws—physical, psychological, spiritual or moral. There is no other Deity higher than the Law—Law and Deity being synonymous. The many gods of ancient religious pantheons are simply personified symbols of intelligent creative forces of nature, which are specific manifestations and aspects of this Absolute Law of Universal Harmony, called Karma, and which are under its sway. Sang the Rishis in the Kathopanishad:

Through the fear of this the fire glows; through the fear of
this the sun glows; through the fear of it the lord of the gods,
the wind, and death as the fifth, hasten in their courses.

The Law being Absolute, hence, omnipresent and omnipotent, operates in and through every being. In fact, the imperishable centre of every being is that Law of Universal Justice itself. Karma is, therefore, not a law imposed on us from without but constitutes the core and essence of our being. Hence the aphorism: “There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects.”

“Karma is that unseen and unknowable law which *adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably* each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 199). Actions of

beings of every grade affect all beings in the whole universe, creating a disturbance in the harmony of the universe. There is a tendency in the universe to restore the disturbed equilibrium and it is incessantly in operation. This restoration of equilibrium takes place through the being or beings who caused the disturbance by their acts. During this process, the beings through whom the adjustment is effected, feel pleasure and happiness or pain and sorrow, according as the causative actions were in accord with or antagonistic to the Law of Harmony.

In the human kingdom the operation of this law is graphically described as “the law of ethical causation,” implying that every thought, word and deed of man has moral consequences, producing effects in his mental, psychic, moral and physical life. Thoughts and actions of higher and nobler character, in accordance with the law of harmony, are productive of beneficial influence all around, and the effects are reaped in happiness. Those thoughts and actions springing from motivation of the baser, selfish nature of man, which are invariably destructive and disruptive of the harmony of life, cannot but be hurtful to all life; and the person receives the effects of such actions as so much pain and suffering till the disturbed harmony is completely equilibrated and restored, and the parties adversely affected by his actions are amply compensated. This is justice.

No power on earth or heaven can take away or prevent the good tidings as reward accruing to anyone who did right, nor deflect or turn away even by a hair’s breadth the retributive justice reaching the one who did wrong. “Not in the sky, nor in the depths of the sea, nor in mountain clefts is there a place on earth where man can be to escape the consequences of his evil deeds.” (*The Dhammapada*)

The law is impersonal in its action of meting out reward or punishment, and takes no account of status or moral character of the persons concerned. Good and virtuous people placed in life in painfully adverse conditions, and, on the other hand, wicked ones

enjoying what are popularly regarded as the blessings of good life, are not uncommon phenomena in the world. This apparent injustice in life, so vexatious and puzzling to thinking philanthropic minds, and revolting to their conscience, finds its *raison d’être* only in this law of retributive justice. The good man suffers because of some evil done by himself in a past life, and the bad man enjoys a happy life either as a reward for good actions done by himself, or as compensation for injustice meted out to him by his fellowmen, in some preceding incarnation of his—till Karmic justice is satisfied in that direction.

Since Karma is implacable, absolute justice, it is also merciful, as justice and mercy are two aspects of one and the same thing. Mercy does not consist in pardoning or remission of sins, as it does not meet the ends of true justice. Mere repentance on the part of the sinner, and pardoning of his sins either by the priest at the confessional, or by the State under man-made laws, or by the magnanimous victim of his sinful act, does not absolve him of his responsibility for his wrongful actions or prevent the retributive justice of Karma reaching him at some time or the other. It compels him to make adequate adjustment through his own suffering proportional to the sufferings he caused by his act. Pardoning of the sinner by the one sinned against is a meritorious act of the latter, who will reap the Karmic merit of it, but that will not deter the retributive justice, set automatically into motion by the act of the sinner, from reaching him.

The offender suffers for many incarnations the effects of his own wrong actions. This chastens and softens his soul, developing in him the qualities of patience, endurance, resilience and inner strength. Solemn experiences of pain and sorrow endured for many lives, deeply etched in his inner nature, at last awaken his inner soul-life, and he begins to search for the meaning of pain and its remedy, understands and sympathetically responds to the suffering of others. It is commonly seen how people challenged by apparently insurmountable adversities in life are able to tap and harness the

enormous power and inner resources of their inner selves, unsuspected and undreamt of by them before, and thus turn adverse conditions to advantage. In short, retributive Karma comes not as a punitive despot but as a friend and a teacher, as an opportunity to cleanse oneself of the effects of past iniquities and evolve higher and higher in soul-life. Adversities of life, if taken in the right spirit, become transformed into opportunities for self-purification and soul development.

The offender who injured another receives his Karmic punishment—in that painful experience lies hidden the seed of his own redemption and inner growth. The one sinned against, receives his compensation in full restoration of every loss and pain suffered by him by the act of the sinner. Thus we see how justice of the law of Karma is at the same time perfectly merciful.

While it is true that “there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life,” (*S.D.*, I, 643-4) yet few know why they suffer. As men and women generally do not remember the causes they themselves produced in former births for the sufferings they experience in the present life, it is but natural for them to feel that suffering has come to them unmerited, while in fact it is merited. While the stern law of retribution takes no account of such a feeling of “*unmerited* suffering,” in its inexorable course of restoration of harmony, it provides for compensation in the post-mortem state of consciousness, called *Devachan*. Retributive Karma reaches the Ego only when it returns to earth life, but in *Devachan*, it is rested, recuperated, is in a state of intense bliss, and the harvest of essential experiences of life is assimilated by it. It is thus and thus alone that Egos can progress and evolve to the final goal of perfection through reward, punishment, rest, discipline and experience. This is the mercy of the law of Karma.

Though retributive Karma reaches the Ego when reborn, the just and merciful law does not cause the effects of its past iniquities to fall at once so as to crush him down, but spreads it over—over

many incarnations, perhaps—so as not to exceed his capacity to bear the pain. Stronger and deeper characters, however, by the power of their vows and spiritual aspirations, cause their past Karma to precipitate more rapidly on themselves than an average person can bear. In either case man himself determines by his own Karma the rate of progress in his soul evolution.

The just yet merciful law provides many opportunities to the wicked man to turn away from his iniquitous course and come on the path of righteousness. This merciful aspect of the law is seen in the fact that in all lands people of a wicked bent of mind are allowed to go on in their destructive course for a long time—even for a whole lifetime. This is illustrated in the allegory of Shishupala in the *Mahabharata* who was allowed to continue to oppose and insult Krishna, who had promised that he would be pardoned of ninety-nine wrongdoings, but would be slain when he made the hundredth wrong. The whirling wheel (*chakra*) set in motion by Krishna, symbolizing the irresistible cyclic course of the law of retributive justice, slew Shishupala when he committed the hundredth wrong.

It is selfish intent, motives and thoughts, which are most destructive, which produce evil Karma. “Vengeance is mine; I will repay,” is an ethical precept taught and exemplified by all great Teachers in view of the implacable law of Karma. He who contemplates vengeance or retaliation against another, who injured him, instead of leaving the Divine justice of Karma to bring about harmonious adjustment, creates a cause for his own punishment and reward for his offender on whom he wreaked vengeance.

With right knowledge, or at any rate with a confident conviction that our neighbours will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, the two-thirds of the World’s evil would vanish into thin air. Were no man to hurt his brother, Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapons to act through. (*S.D.*, I, 643)

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

[In this section we seek to answer frequently asked questions, at U.L.T. meetings or during private conversations and discussions with people who seek the answers in the light of Theosophy. Answers given in this section are by no means final. Only a line of thought is being offered by applying general principles of Theosophy.]

Question: Is cremation the best method for the disposal of the dead body according to Theosophy? If yes, why?

Answer : The Theosophical Society in its early days in America (1876) came into prominent notice by its support of the cremation of one of its members, Baron de Palm. This was the first cremation in U.S.A., under the auspices of American Theosophists. That ceremony was the first scientific cremation in America, although there had been a few open-air burnings before the days of the white occupation. The article “Cremation in America” which appeared in *The Theosophist* in April 1880 described the event and the repercussions thus:

Naturally, such a change as that from burying to burning must be a very gradual one. The public’s reason is first to be convinced, then its unreasoning prejudice removed. The first bold step finds its imitators here and there, and then when the people find that nothing bad has happened to either themselves or the reformers, the change, if a good one, is adopted. This process is going on in the United States with respect to cremation.

Orthodox religions in the West object to cremation because it makes impossible the *literal resurrection of the body*, in which they believe. But as the faith in that illogical dogma is weakened the objection to cremation also will be found to lessen. The prejudice against cremation seems to be dying rapidly in the western world. There were over 100,000 cremations in the United States

from 1924 to 1928; England has shown an annual increase of 20 per cent in the number of cremations; and so too in Scandinavian countries. The figures might be higher in our times. Parsees, who hold the fire to be sacred, object to the Hindu method of burning the body, as corrupting the purity of fire. However, in the scientific method, the flame does not touch the body, as the body is placed in a retort, like a very clean oven with bronze doors. The gas furnaces heat the air to a very high temperature of 2800 degrees, which carries off as gaseous substance, everything except bones. This desiccation of the body by intense heat is in line with the ancient Iranian practice of exposing the corpse to the direct rays of the sun to bring about the drying-up process. (*The Theosophical Movement*, November 1933)

Cremation, *i.e.*, burning the body by lighting the fire or in an electric crematorium is considered to be the best method of disposing of the physical body, for various reasons. Primarily, cremation facilitates quick disposal of the physical body and it is comparatively a more hygienic method. Moreover, it helps to separate psychic body or Kamarupic shell from the physical body. Mr. Judge writes:

Cremation has no direct effect on any of the sheaths or vehicles, but it must have the indirect effect of freeing the astral form from the influence of the material body and thus give the astral a chance to more quickly dissipate....From a sanitary point of view cremation is of high importance, as it does away with injurious matter or matter in such a state as to be injurious to the living. (*“Forum” Answers*, p. 102)

Death of the body implies that now the body is going to dissolve into its constituent elements, the *Panchamahabhutas*, and cremation expedites this process. Mr. Crosbie puts it thus:

The death of the body means a return of the “Lives” of the body to their respective elements. In cremation this return is immediate. The Ego then has no point of physical contact and

is free to work out and assimilate the experiences of the life last lived....When considered from every point of view, cremation is beneficial. There is a psychological effect from it, too, on those who are left behind; for as soon as the cremation is completed the bereaved at once feel that release. (*Theosophy*, March 1929)

Occultism for its own reasons favours cremation. H.P.B. wrote:

There are occult reasons why cremation should be an imperative necessity, and all Theosophists should gladly welcome and hasten the day when this “purification by fire” will be an accomplished fact. (*Lucifer*, May 15, 1890)

Question: Often, a student of Theosophy finds that when the mind is taken up by everyday life and its problems and duties it is difficult to concentrate on Theosophical study and *vice versa*. Is there any technique by which we can fix our mind in either direction with ease?

Answer: The difficulty in switching the mind between everyday life problems and duties, and Theosophical study, arises because of the lack of adaptability and flexibility and calls for proper training of the mind. Concentration is defined as the power to apply the mind, at any moment, to the consideration of a single point of thought, to the exclusion of all else. In other words we need to train the mind so that it can come unglued from one task and can be fixed on another task *when* we want and for *as long as* we want. To acquire such concentration, we are asked to cultivate *Abhyasa* and *Vairagya* or constant practice and detachment. As Eugene Herrigel points out in his book, “Zen, in the Art of Archery,” man is a thinking being but his great works are done when he is not calculating or thinking. We have to acquire “Childlikeness” through long years of training in the art of self-forgetfulness. When a child holds the proffered finger of the adult, its grip is so firm that one marvels at the strength of the tiny fist, but when it lets the finger go, there is not the slightest jerk. It is able to do so because the

child is able to turn from one thing to another, completely unselfconsciously. Our grip on the task on hand must be firm, but when needed we must be detached enough to leave it and attend to another task. We must have trained the mind and cultivated the will so that “at will” we can move from one task to another.

The *sine qua non* condition for one desirous of developing such (spiritual) will is cultivation of unselfishness, readiness to be guided and assisted by one’s Divine nature and willingness to go through whatever the Higher Self may have in store by way of experience and discipline. It is devotion to the interests of others. If the task in hand is not a pressing duty, then, we must be able to drop it at once and attend to the needs of another, even if what we were doing was interesting and what the other person desires is not to our liking. When the mind is trained to switch from pleasant to unpleasant tasks, *at will*, without grumbling or resisting, then by degrees we may acquire that ability to switch from Theosophical study to everyday duties and *vice versa*.

We tend to form grooves in our thoughts and our actions. It is this tendency of the mind that we need to check. Our mind has a tendency to follow a fixed pattern. When we remain long enough in a particular state, or are accustomed to one method of work, etc., that becomes our comfort zone, which we are reluctant to leave. We must break these grooves or moulds of thought. As suggested in the article, “Breaking the Moulds of Thought”:

People who are lost unless they get up at the same moment, dine at exactly the same time, and follow the same daily routine, are slaves rather than masters of punctuality, slaves to the automatic action of their bodily “lives” as much as is the animal. Just as a machine demands that little margin for free action among its parts...so punctuality has its fluidity. “The right time and the right place” is not a fixed formula. (*The Theosophical Movement*, January 1948)

We should not look upon Theosophical studies, and mundane life with its duties and problems, in compartments. The latter is

the field for application of the former. Sooner or later we must learn to make our theosophical and mundane life one unbroken continuum. Also, when we stop looking at either of them as irksome or less important and love both equally, then it will be a question of going from one pleasant thing to another.

In practice, however, the ideal thing is to spend each day under a planned schedule. There is the time for work and the time for leisure and rest.

In the final analysis, each student must decide how much time and energy he or she is going to devote to Theosophical work and study. Committed students are able to *daily* devote certain amount of time and energy to doing works of charity, mortification and sacrifice—that is what theosophical work means—in spite of the demands of their family and professional engagements, which they carry out diligently. Where there is a will, there is a way.

DOGMA? Faith? These are the right and left pillars of every soul-crushing Theology. Theosophists have no dogmas, exact no blind faith. Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions....

Realizing as they do, the boundlessness of the absolute truth, Theosophists repudiate all claim to infallibility. The most cherished preconceptions, the most “pious hope,” the strongest “master passion,” they sweep aside like dust from their path, when their error is pointed out. Their highest hope is to approximate to the truth. That they have succeeded in going a few steps beyond the Spiritualists, they think proved in their conviction that they know nothing in comparison with what is to be learned; in their sacrifice of every pet theory and prompting of emotionalism at the shrine of fact; and in their absolute and unqualified repudiation of everything that smacks of “dogma.”

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It is a common belief that every seven years the human body completely renews itself. However, science has not been able to say with certainty how often different cell types—cells belonging to skin, blood, tissues and other organs—are replaced, if they are replaced at all, writes Gaia Vince (*New Scientist*, June 17, 2006). Our body’s front-line cells that are constantly replaced include the epithelial cells lining the gut (five days), the epidermal cells covering the skin’s surface (two weeks) and red blood cells (120 days). Studies conducted mainly with animals have shown that once the brain is formed no new neurons are generated except in two areas: the hippocampus and a region around the ventricles. There is then the paradox: If our skin is so young, why do we not retain a smooth complexion even into old age? It is because the DNA in the mitochondria mutates faster than the DNA in the cell nucleus, and this mitochondrial mutation brings about gradual loss of collagen leading to wrinkles in the skin, explains science.

Neurologist Jonas Frisén of the Karolinska Institute in Sweden with others seeks to answer certain intriguing questions: Do we eventually renew our entire body? If so, how many bodies do we go through in a lifetime? The rate of cell turnover is important to neuroscience and regenerative medicine, as it is likely to provide the key to treating numerous diseases, brain disorders, and managing the effects of ageing. Alzheimer’s is associated with lack of neurogenesis in the hippocampus, while other brain disorders along with Parkinson’s are considered to be due to death of brain cells not being balanced by adequate creation of cells.

The body is considered to be the most transitory and illusionary aspect of man. Although the body undergoes complete alteration and renovation every seven years, it presents the same human appearance from maturity until death. This is a mystery science does not explain, writes Mr. Judge. Moreover, the “cell” is an illusion. It is the ideal form, within which actual physical atoms,

made up of “lives,” arrange themselves. Thus, the *ultimate* constituents of our cells are “lives,” the sensitive points and units of life energy. These atoms leave the cells and are continually replaced by other atoms, and the same process is going on with all the material objects, though in slower measure. Our physical body is built on a design body called astral body that is made of matter of very fine texture and changes very little during a lifetime, allowing us to keep our general appearance till old age.

Every particle is a life, and hence every atom and molecule is *life-giving* and *death-giving*, says the Occult philosophy. “It creates and kills...it brings into being, and annihilates, that mystery of mysteries—the living body of man, animal, plant, every second in time and space” (*S.D.*, I, 261). The process of building up of the physical body and its decay is explained thus:

The physical body of man undergoes a complete change of structure every seven years, and its destruction and preservation are due to the alternate function of the fiery lives as “destroyers” and “builders.” They are “builders” by sacrificing themselves in the form of vitality to restrain the destructive influence of the microbes, and, by supplying the microbes with what is necessary, they compel them under that restraint to build up the material body and its cells. They are “destroyers” also when that restraint is removed and the microbes, unsupplied with vital constructive energy, are left to run riot as destructive *agents*. Thus, during the first half of a man’s life (the first *five* periods of seven years each) the “fiery lives” are indirectly engaged in the process of building up man’s material body; life is on the ascending scale, and the force is used in construction and increase. After this period is passed the age of retrogression commences, and, the work of the “fiery lives” exhausting their strength, the work of destruction and decrease also commences. (*S.D.*, I, 262-63 fn.)

As for the process of aging, Mr. Judge observes that “growing old” only implies ossification of tissue, the wearing out of the

physical *cohesive force*. When the inner forces reach their limit the body can work no longer, and hence we invented the expression “old.” (*“Forum” Answers*, p. 55)

The year 2006 may well be described as India’s year of child prodigies, as over 15 children have been paraded this year as prodigies by the Indian media and seven have grabbed world headlines. Unlike in the past, these prodigies are not confined to the fields of math or music. “From medicine to marathon, film-making to oratory—pint-sized geniuses are gate-crashing into every adult sphere more than ever,” writes Damayanti Datta (*India Today*, August 28, 2006). For instance, Budhia Singh, aged four, from Orissa, can run for seven hours at a stretch, faster than runners twice his height and many times his age. K. Sathyanarayanan, is the musical prodigy having passed the prestigious piano exam of Trinity College, London, at four, and today at the age of 10 he has four albums to his credit, while Akrit Pran Jaswal performed surgery on the fused fingers of a girl at the age of seven; and so on. The questions arise: Can you create child prodigies, or are they simply miracles of nature? Why is there a surfeit of child prodigies in the country all of a sudden?

Social scientists define prodigy as unusually strong intelligence in a particular field combined with focused energy and self-confidence. Prodigies are half-born and half-made. It has also been observed that pushed by the parents and the press and with expectations of greatness and lure of the limelight, these prodigies live abnormal childhoods. The surfeit of prodigies and parading of talents are the hallmarks of a competitive society that worships achievement and instant fame. Science seeks to explain the phenomenon on the basis of genes and peculiarities of brain, such as long term memory, more metabolic activity in the right and front brain lobes, etc.

There is a great difference, however, between such child prodigies and what Theosophy would call real genius. Real genius is not an overdevelopment in one direction, but the expression of the Divine which everyone is at the centre of his being, an expression which depends upon the purification and disciplining of the outer personality. H.P.B. says in her article, “Genius” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*), that great genius is not merely an abnormal expansion of our human intellect; it is creative and original. In most cases, the child has not created anything. Several seem merely to have had exceptional memories and intellectual precocity.

When a person keeps up the pursuit of only one field for many lives, such as music, literature, or computer science, then we have a computer or mathematical wizard, or a great musician. Bach, Beethoven, Mozart were all child prodigies. Can heredity explain? Mr. Judge cites the example of the great musician Bach, “whose direct descendants showed a decrease in musical ability, leading to its final disappearance from the family stock.” Blind Tom, a negro, displayed great musical ability and skill in playing the piano, although his parents had no knowledge of piano. This bringing back of knowledge is recollection, divisible into physical and mental memory. Rebirth and Karma explain the coming of idiots or vicious children to parents who are good, pure or highly intellectual.

Statesman-philosopher and scientist, the President of India, A. P. J. Abdul Kalam, in his recent address on the eve of India’s 60th Independence Day, celebrated on August 15, referred to “Jeevan Vidya” or Education for Life, practised by a group of professors and their teams, to be an effective tool to combat violence, corruption, exploitation, terrorism and war, writes Manini Chatterjee (*The Indian Express*, August 15, 2006). Kalam said: “*Jeevan Vidya* develops tolerance to ambiguity and uncertainty in

human conduct by enabling self-knowledge that understands harmony in the self and in the entire existence. This whole movement of inquiry into knowledge, into oneself, into the possibility of something beyond knowledge would naturally bring about a psychological revolution” that would not only transform human relationships and society but also bring about “profound change in the consciousness of mankind.”

In the same speech he referred to another mega-concern voiced by the renowned physicist Stephen Hawking, *viz.*, with so many natural and man-made disasters facing planet Earth, how can the human race survive the next hundred years? According to Hawking, the survival of the human race depends on its ability to find habitable places in the outer space. Dr. Kalam in his address to the nation observed that with the strength of our youth and our civilizational heritage we can together find an answer. India’s civilizational heritage is a combination of her spiritual, cultural, intellectual and material heritage, writes Sudheendra Kulkarni (*The Indian Express*, August 27, 2006). Further:

At the root of this affirmation is the belief that man is not the master of this planet but a child of the Master Creator.... Man’s knowledge of, and mastery over, his outer reality has grown enormously. However, this progress has happened along with regression in his knowledge of, and mastery over, his inner reality—his desires, emotions, aspirations, his relationship with fellow humans, and his knowledge of the purpose of his existence which can only come with inward-pointed contemplation....Indian civilization...has more such remedial resources to offer to our troubled world—and to itself—than perhaps any other.

There are times in the affairs of men when great men of energy and principles come to the fore to offer their inspired guidance. They feel that primarily, a country needs a great moral force of some kind that would awaken its national conscience. Such a leader has the feel of the nation’s pulse in his hand to become its educator

and a social reformer. In 1958, the then President, Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, while addressing the inaugural meeting of the National Committee of Women's Education, had said that if we only concentrate on remaking of the commercial and industrial environment, we overlook one essential task, *i.e.*, *the remaking of human beings*. More important than national power is national behaviour.

India is the cradle of civilization, but India has also been going down for thousands of years and she must take equally long for her regeneration, says a Master of Wisdom. The article entitled "Morality and Pantheism" in *The Theosophist* (November 1883), expressed the Theosophical views regarding man-nature relationship thus:

If an individual attempts to move in a direction other than that in which Nature is moving, that individual is sure to be crushed, sooner or later, by the enormous pressure of the opposing force....The only way therefore, in which happiness might be attained, is by merging one's nature in great Mother Nature, and following the direction in which she herself is moving: this again, can only be accomplished by assimilating man's individual conduct with the triumphant force of Nature, the other force being always overcome with terrific catastrophe. The effort to assimilate the individual with the universal law is popularly known as the practice of morality.

HOPE is not the same as joy when things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success. Hope is the ability to work for something to succeed...Hope gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem...hopeless.

—VACLAV HAVEL

INTUITION

INTELLECT. Intelligence. Inspiration. Ideation. Idealism. Intuition. Strange, or perhaps *not* strange, that so many of the words associated with inner being should begin with the significant letter “I.” Most of them appear frequently in the writings of Mr. Judge, but the one we are concerned with at the moment is Intuition. Aided by his deep knowledge and understanding of the component parts of our mysterious psyche, let us try to learn more about his faculty, which some are notable endowed with, while others wholly lack it, though there are probably few who have not found it active in them at some time or another, however slightly.

As always with Mr. Judge, the more we ponder what he writes, the more its meaning seems to grow. One’s first reading of his books and articles may be rapid through sheer eagerness to know what he says, but ever after one returns to them for slow re-readings and careful study, these “permitting,” as he says himself, “the brilliant lamp of spiritual knowledge to illuminate our inner nature,” thanks to one who was himself a lifelong “holder of the flame.” (*The Heart Doctrine*, p. 82; *Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 108)

What *is* Intuition? “An instinctive inner knowing” seems a fair enough answer. A knowing which sometimes operates very simply in the realm of everyday matters, telling us, say, that the friend who has called unexpectedly has come because of something weighing on his or her mind, or that the unlooked-for letter just delivered to us contains a piece of good or, as the case may be, bad news. Sometimes we know what someone is about an apparently quiet new fact and suddenly realize that we knew it “intuitively” all along. These are only very simple examples of Intuition operating; everyone will remember others of his own. So obviously, Intuition is not necessarily confined to the loftier spiritual levels, but can at times be little more than an instinct or an involuntary leap to a conclusion which is later proved right. If one person is peculiarly understanding of another without much exchange of

words, that other will probably think of him as intuitive.

Mr. Judge, naturally, is far better able to explain this thing in us which so often seems to behave so erratically. “There is scarcely anyone,” he says, “who has not got an internal voice—a silent monitor—who, so to say, strikes within us the bell that corresponds to truth, just as a piano’s wires each report the vibrations peculiar to it, but not due to striking the wire itself. It is just as if we had within us a series of wires whose vibrations are all true, but which will not be vibrated except by those words and propositions which are in themselves true.... Many persons are inclined to doubt the existence in themselves of this intuition, who in fact possess it. It is a common heritage of man, and only needs unselfish effort to develop it.” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 45)

You see how he instantly lifts Intuition from the level of the trivial examples given above, showing it to be *in esse* a spiritual faculty. “One of the inner powers,” he calls it (*Ibid.*, p. 89), pertaining to the soul, in fact bearing witness to the soul, for, speaking of “the natural man, the lower principles and mind, presided over by the false consciousness,” he says, in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (p. 29), “Of the soul we have but brief and partial glimpses—in conscience or intuition—in our ordinary state.”

At first we may only be aware of our Intuition in embryo. But we must not permit ourselves to leave it at that. In those “Conversations on Occultism” between a Student and a Sage, included in *Vernal Blooms*, clear instructions are given as to what to do with the tiny spark of Intuition that is our heritage. (p. 172)

“Tell me,” says the Student, “some ways by which Intuition is to be developed.”

Here is the Sage’s reply:

First of all by giving it exercise, and second by not using it for purely personal ends. Exercise means that it must be followed through mistakes and bruises until from sincere attempts at use it comes to its own strength. This does not mean that we can do wrong and leave the results, but that after

establishing conscience on a right basis by following the golden rule, we give play to the intuition and add to its strength. Inevitably in this at first we will make errors, but soon if we are sincere it will grow brighter and make no mistake. We should add the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not.... We must not only be unselfish, but must do all the duties that Karma has given us, and thus Intuition will point out the road of duty and the true path of life.

Mr. Judge warns against using Intuition “for purely personal ends” just as he has told us previously that it “needs unselfish effort to develop it.” All our gains in the inner life are to be devoted to the good of all. “For when one lives thus to help others,” he writes in his first letter to Jasper Niemand, “he is thereby putting in practice the rule to try and ‘kill out all these sense of separateness,’ and thus gets little by little in possession of the true light.”

Can we have faith in what our Intuition tells us? Can we let it guide us in spiritual matters? For, if Mr. Judge asserts that “No one was ever converted into Theosophy; each one who *really* comes into it does so because it is only ‘an extension of previous beliefs’” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 23), surely Intuition, co-operating with these, must have played a considerable part in leading many to Theosophy.

Mr. Judge would have us rely on it. “What is Faith?” he asks. “It is the intuitional feeling—‘*that is true*’” (*Ibid.*, p. 9). And again writing to Jasper Niemand, he says, “As far as your private conclusions are concerned, use your discrimination always. Do not adopt any conclusions merely because they are uttered by one in whom you have confidence, but adopt them when they coincide with your Intuition” (*Ibid.*, p. 23). He goes so far, in fact, as to cite “the Great Workers who are behind us” as upholding Intuition as a safe guide to the student-neophyte: “I know that their desire is that each should listen to the voice of his inner self and not depend or

what not” (*Ibid.*, p. 121). And as for the fear of Intuition deceiving us, he dismisses it. “All doubts come from the lower nature, and *never* in any case from the higher nature. Therefore as [one] becomes more and more devoted he is able to know more and more clearly the knowledge residing in his *Satwa* part,” *Satwa* being the first or highest of the three qualities sprung from Nature which “exist potentially in *Purush* (Spirit)” as mentioned in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. (*Ibid.*, pp. 30 and 32)

Here a line of conduct is indicated: we must strengthen and clarify our Intuition through devotion. “In history and in our own experience there is abundant evidence that the *Bhagavad-Gita* is right in saying ‘spiritual knowledge includes every action without exception,’ and that it is to be attained by means of devotion,” writes Mr. Judge in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 75), and he instances “unlearned men,” such as Jacob Boehme, who “have attained to devotion, and thereby cleared away from before the eye of the soul the clouds of sense whose shadows obscure our view of truth.” “I do not decry or despise learning,” he adds. “It is a great possession; but if the learned man were also a devoted one in the sense of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, how much wider would be the sweep of his intellection no one could calculate.” Even Adeptship can only be obtained through “profound knowledge joined to devotion,” and, concludes, Mr. Judge, “this again proves that devotion is the first and best, for these extraordinary Masters would not appear unless devotion had been the aim of their existence.” (*Ibid.*, p. 76)

So here is the essential corollary of Intuition—Devotion. “Without it,” says Mr. Judge, “a vast confusion arises within us” (*Ibid.*), and then our Intuition will inevitably function less and less. He repeatedly urges devotion—to Theosophy, to the Masters, to Krishna. He says, “Devotion must be attained by that student who desires to reach enlightenment” (*Ibid.*, p. 69). Intuition, alone and unaided, is not enough. Also, as he reminds us, “We sometimes fail to live up to our own Intuitions.” (*Letters*, pp. 4-5)

Then, what *is* Intuition?

Mr. Judge never quite defines it in so many words. In “Conversations on Occultism,” “where,” asks the Student, “should I look for the help I need in the right life, the right study?” The Sage replies, “Within yourself is the light that lighteth every man who cometh here” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 171). And to each of us in our grade of studentship comes this bidding from the same wise Teacher: “Meditate on things you want to know....Seek all knowledge within yourself, do not go without. You understand what is meant by this; not that books should be neglected but that information obtained from them should be *drawn within*, sifted, tested there. Study all things in this light and the most physical will at the same time lead to the most spiritual knowledge.”

Now, what such emphasis on the “within” if there is not indeed a “silent monitor” there, our Intuition? Mr. Judge may have thought definition needless since we are all aware of it and its very presence is its proof. Moreover, he never encourages curiosity. Interest, yes, but curiosity, no. So much is wrought silently in that sphere of the “within.” Here are some pointed words of his anent this, again from one of his letters to Jasper Niemand. He has already referred to the outwardness which can cause a ferment in the nature and which “impedes the entrance of the clear rays of Truth,” and his conclusion is, “Even now, while we cannot master these high themes, we can have a patient trust in the processes of evolution and the Law...living up to our highest intuitions ourselves.” (p. 30)