

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## PREPARE FOR WHITE LOTUS DAY

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When I speak of knowledge, I mean intuitive knowledge. This certain information can never be obtained by hard work, or by experiment; for these methods are only applicable to matter, and matter is in itself a perfectly uncertain substance, continually affected by change. The most absolute and universal laws of natural and physical life, as understood by the scientist, will pass away when the life of this universe has passed away, and only its soul is left in the silence. What then will be the value of the knowledge of its laws acquired by industry and observation?

—*Light on the Path*

THE STEADFAST MOTION of Time brings us again to White Lotus Day, the 8th of May, the day H.P.B. cast off the mortal body which she burdened herself with for 60 years to serve the mind of the race. On that day she completed her mission. That the great Ego is labouring even now in the service of Humanity there can be no doubt; but we of the present cyclic movement of Theosophy are mainly concerned with the mission of that Adept during her embodied existence from the 11th of August 1831 to the 8th of May 1891.

H.P.B. was a misunderstood being: scorned by the dogmatic religionist, laughed at by the materialistic scientist, pitied by the “all-knowing” wiseacre, ignored by the foolish self-righteous, hated by the ignorant spiritist and condemned by the misguided Psychical Researcher, she was not even fully accepted by many colleagues and followers. They spined freely how she was unreliable, lost her temper and mental equilibrium, ate grossly and smoked incessantly, was at once a medium and a

chela. From the blunders and folly of all such we should learn with humility and calmness.

We of the present generation of students should consider ourselves favoured inasmuch as we have better opportunities to evaluate the meaning and purpose of her mission. In no other way than by a proper consideration of the Message she recorded can we evaluate the worth of her labour of love. Her recorded Message is the mirror in which alone her strange and weird personality can be adequately understood. The great Masters, no doubt, had Their own good reasons for writing of her as They wrote. For the purposes of this article, however, we need quote but two passages.

First, to begin with, one of Them wrote to H. S. Olcott:

One of the most valuable effects of Upasika's mission is that it drives men to self-study and destroys in them blind servility for persons. Observe your own case, for example. But your revolt, good friend, against her infallibility — as you once thought it — has gone too far and you have been unjust to her, for which I am sorry to say, you will have to suffer hereafter along with others.

To “drive men to self-study — study of their own lower animal self as well as of their higher divine Self. Study implies knowledge and self-study implies application. The “blind servility” of the poor unconscious tools of the popes and the *mathadhipatis* in the religious sphere was the result of lack of right knowledge. To deliver blind followers from the folly of blind belief was one of the tasks of H.P.B. In this, modern science and its principles of the search for truth and the existence of the realm of Law were H.P.B.'s allies. But the methods of investigation of the modern scientist suffered from a crass bias in favour of materialism. Nothing which could not be sensed by the bodily organs and cognized by the brain was of any value or use, and the scientist rejected offhand any idea related to the worlds invisible or matter imponderable.

To destroy “blind servility for persons” and to recognize the powers and potentialities of their own souls men and women needed discerning faith founded upon spiritual knowledge. Millions of humanity have innate faith in the existence of the soul in them and believe with the Roman who said: “Not all of me shall die.” Priestcraft exploited this belief, and in that, once again, organized religions were inimical to Theosophy.

In the middle of the last century Spiritism (misnamed “Spiritualism”) became prominent and its doctrines gained great popularity, *viz.*, that

the soul of man survived bodily death, and the surviving soul could be contacted and known with the help of a medium or by one himself becoming a medium. In this again H.P.B. had an ally, if she could help the Spiritist shed false knowledge and acquire right philosophy about the "spirits of the dead" and of the "dear departed"!

Her mission was to awaken the slumbering faith of man in his own divinity and in the power of the Supreme Spirit. Knowledge of supernature, of the laws which worked in nature, visible and invisible, was what she advocated as the object of quiet study. Like every other great Teacher, she strove to change the mind of the race, to deepen the discerning power of humanity. She once said to Mr. Judge:

We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists*, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in that Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time. Falter not, so long as a few devoted ones will work to keep the nucleus existing. You were not directed to found and realize a Universal Brotherhood, but to form the nucleus for one; for it is only when the nucleus is formed that the accumulations can begin that will end in future years, however far, in the formation of that body which we have in view.

How is the leavening of "the whole mind of this century" to take place? By the correct preparation of a band of learners who make themselves ready to become the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood.

W. Q. Judge, and following him faithfully, Robert Crosbie, attempted to aid the fulfilment of the mission of H.P.B. — to destroy "blind servility for persons" and to awaken faith in one's own soul potencies and potentialities, for which the triad was proclaimed — "Study, Apply, Promulgate." Only those who faithfully made the effort implied in the triad became and become fit to radiate the Light of Universal Brotherhood.

Study of what? Of the recorded Message. In the two volumes of *Isis Unveiled* are offered "Teachings," and H.P.B. inaugurated her Movement so that all who belonged to it might "study the subjects on which

they treat." Again, in *The Secret Doctrine* she "recorded" (her word) her Message:

The outline of a few fundamental truths from the Secret Doctrine of the Archaic ages is now permitted to see the light, after long millenniums of the most profound silence and secrecy. I say "a few truths," advisedly, because that which must remain unsaid could not be contained in a hundred such volumes, nor could it be imparted to the present generation of Sadducees. But, even the little that is now given is better than complete silence upon those vital truths. The world of today, in its mad career towards the unknown — which it is too ready to confound with the unknowable, whenever the problem eludes the grasp of the physicist — is rapidly progressing on the reverse, material plane of spirituality. It has now become a vast arena — a true valley of discord and of eternal strife — a necropolis, wherein lie buried the highest and the most holy aspirations of our Spirit-Soul. That soul becomes with every new generation more paralysed and atrophied.

Faith in one's soul depends on an adequate knowledge of the higher nature of man and its powers, and the learning of the right technique of subduing and conquering the lower nature is seen to be inevitable. Theology and religions offer false knowledge about the former; modern psychology, psychiatry and psychoanalysis offer wrong and dangerous methods of adjusting the animal nature. Man's psychic nature stamps upon him his personal morality and it is the handling of the psychic nature which is primarily and fundamentally involved in study, application and promulgation.

Right knowledge, which awakens right faith, activates Buddhi — "the faculty of cognizing the channel through which divine knowledge reaches the 'Ego,' the discernment of good and evil" (*S.D.*, I. xix) — and moulds man for right Theosophical living, is enshrined in the Esoteric Philosophy. The source and root of that Wisdom-Religion forms a vital, basic and fundamental study. Theologies and sciences explain the mysteries of God, Law and Being in their own diverse ways. It is necessary for the Theosophical student to study, apply and promulgate the contents of the First Item of the six in which H.P.B. "recapitulates" a highly important and significant teaching. The logic of that Item may not leap to the eye, may even seem unconvincing to the logical mind versed in modern knowledge; all the same it *is* logical, reasonable and convincing to the earnest and painstaking student.

We said we would give two quotations from the letters of the Masters

Themselves. One of them is given above. The second deals with the mental and moral nature of H.P.B.:

You can never know her as we do, therefore — none of you will ever be able to judge her impartially or correctly. You see the surface of things; and what you would term “virtue,” holding but to appearances, we judge but after having fathomed the object to its profoundest depth, and generally leave the appearances to take care of themselves. In your opinion H.P.B. is, at best, for those who like her despite herself — a quaint, strange woman, a psychological riddle: impulsive and kindhearted, yet not free from the vice of untruth. We, on the other hand, under the garb of eccentricity and folly — we find a profounder wisdom in her *inner* Self than you will ever find yourselves able to perceive. In the superficial details of her homely, hard-working, common-place daily life and affairs, you discern but unpracticality, womanly impulses, often absurdity and folly; we, on the contrary, light daily upon traits of her inner nature the most delicate and refined, and which would cost an uninitiated psychologist years of constant and keen observation, and many an hour of close analysis and efforts to draw out of the depth of that most subtle of mysteries — human mind — and one of her most complicated machines — H.P.B.’s mind — and thus learn to know her true *inner* Self.

In the next 21 days it will do us good to reflect upon what is written above on a very vital subject.

In the Word-Verbum of H.P.B. is the Light which purifies the student’s vision and brings to birth Love which understands. That Word strengthens the Heart by opening its Single Eye of Compassion. Above all, that Word reveals the student’s true place in human evolution and the step which is his to take, and which when taken will separate him from the cycles of the lower mind’s evolution and usher him to find a place in the Deathless Race of the Immortal Servers of Humanity, present and future. The privileges and responsibilities of the earnest student and aspirant are great. May the preparation for White Lotus Day charge him with the Power of Enlightened Faith in his own Soul and in the Great Masters who sent H.P.B. to this world at a crucial time of the conjunction of some important cycles in human history!

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## THE SAYINGS OF THE ANCIENT ONE

[Reprinted here is another fragment from an ancient volume of mystic writings, translated by Captain P. G. B. Bowen. For introductory notes, readers are referred to our March issue.—EDS.]

*The Ancient One said:*

The PATH OF LIFE is narrow and steep and perilous. He who would tread it must unto MANHOOD be grown. Its Gate is guarded by a TERRIBLE ONE, to conquer whom the courage of a Warrior is required.

*The Learner said:*

Tell me, O Ancient One, what are the signs which mark the MAN, and of what nature is the courage of the Warrior?

*The Ancient One said:*

The marks of the Man and the Warrior are four —

1. His eyes are more keen than those of the Bald Vulture though blind with tears because of Man's cruelty to Man.
2. His ear is more sensitive than that of the Brown Sandhawk though deaf to the World's myriad-voiced roar.
3. His voice rings in the Council of the Ancients clear as the note of a Golden Trumpet, but it whispers no reply to the war-cry of his foes.
4. He fords the stream of his own Lifeblood and stands on the further shore naked and clean and fearless in the assembled Council of the Ancients.

*The Learner said:*

Tell me, O Ancient One, may I who am weak and fearful hope ever to attain to MANHOOD?

*The Ancient One said:*

My Son, you may hope. Do that which feeds your growth and cease to do that which makes you a Child, and Manhood will soon be yours.

*The Learner said:*

Tell me quickly, O my Father, what I must do and what I must leave undone, for Childhood is a weary burden and I long to be a Man.

*The Ancient One said:*

Hearken then to my words and forget them not, for in the way of which I shall tell and in no other will you find the Path to Manhood.

1. Labour for ever like one who toils for a Royal Reward; but seek not to end your labour, for your Reward dwells in the task and not in its completion.

2. Love Life, for Life is your Great Teacher: but love Death also, for he is Life's other self, and without the one the other can teach you nothing.

3. Rejoice if your lot be pleasant, but if it be miserable rejoice also: Joy and Sadness are your twin slaves joined from birth and neither can serve you apart from his brother.

Thus will you take the first steps on the Path to Manhood.

*The Learner said:*

O Ancient One, I long to grow, but my Heart bids me turn from the Path towards which you point and flee to the ends of the earth.

*The Ancient One said:*

The Heart of Man is the wellspring of a fountain whose waters poison growth, which blinds the eyes to the Straight Way and turns the feet into the waste places of life. It brims up in the Patient Learner's heart as well as in the heart of the Heedless Child: while it flows it bars the way to the State of Manhood. If you would attain to that State, O Learner, you must drain this poison from your heart: you must see the heart wither, and your life become less than a handful of sand blown by the desert wind. This torment all must endure who would tread the Path to Manhood: therefore brace your courage to meet and overcome it.

*The Learner said:*

O my Father, when may I look to meet this fearful trial? If it be near me will it not destroy me in my weakness? If it be distant will not its shadow darken my days with terror and fill my nights with evil dreams?

*The Ancient One said:*

None can tell when the Trial may come. It may meet you at your first step, or it may lie in wait for you on the very Threshold of Manhood. Watch, therefore, and be ever prepared, fixing your whole mind upon strengthening your courage, but giving no thought at all to the Battle in which your own courage alone can bring you victory.

*The Learner said:*

I understand indeed that Growth is attained through Suffering, but is Suffering never to have an end?

*The Ancient One said:*

Suffering is a road which has extension behind you and also before you, but has no length at all at the spot whereon you stand. The Past lies behind you and the Future stretches before you; blot out the first and look not forward upon the second and Suffering exists no more for you.

*The Learner said:*

That is a fearful saying, for without Past to remember and Future to look forward to it seems that my life must cease to be.

*The Ancient One said:*

Most true, O Learner: by blotting out the Past and by shutting out the vision of the Future you lose the Life of the World of Men; but when the Life of the World fades away the Light of Eternity will dawn upon your eyes. O my Son, Now *is the* ETERNAL. Fear and Suffering exist not in that State, nor can the miasma of the Fount of Poison pollute the air of Eternal Thought.

*The Learner said:*

Wondrous is your wisdom, my Father; let it continue to enlighten me I pray you.

*The Ancient One said:*

1. Look out upon the World of Men: in everything that exists you see as in a mirror some aspect of your own self, known or unknown, yet more your kin than any brother of the flesh; therefore you can never be alone. But also look inward upon *yourself* and know that in it and not outside it exist all things that are mirrored outwardly; therefore you are forever alone, without friend or foe, helper or teacher in all the worlds. Look upon Life and live it in those two ways and your feet will be upon the Path of Growth.

2. Consider the lessons placed before you by eyes, nostrils, ears, mouth and hands, but learn from the falsehoods which you find in them to despise and distrust those teachers.

3. Rejoice that you are the Seed from which the Man will grow, but think not at all of the Tree which the Seed may become. Consider the seed which gives birth to the sky-towering palm: it does not, before it is yet a lusty plant, struggle to the surface of the ground where the desert sun will scorch it and the desert wind suck out its life-sap. It does not seek the upper air before its roots are bedded deep and firm. It hastens not and struggles not, but awaits the call of the circling seasons

to grow, or to rest from growing in accordance with the Law of Nature. Learn from the Palm and be glad to grow. Think not at all concerning the measure of your stature. Fix no limits to your growth. It has no limits except those within which you confine it by your own willing and thinking; therefore think ever of growing, but never of being full grown.

*The Learner said:*

Longing seems to be part of my life, O my Father. If I put it aside will I not in so doing put aside my life also, or is there no one thing for which I may long and so preserve my life?

*The Ancient One said:*

One thing there is, and one only, which the Learner may seek with longing. It appears in six different forms, and in a seventh which combines in itself the other six:

The first is that LIGHT which lies hidden in the Caverns of the Mind, which is darkness to the eyes of men, but without which heart could not beat, nor men live, nor the eyes of the Learner behold the Path.

The second is that SELF which is not self and which is found only when self is slain.

The third is THAT which is buried in Self, which is approached in that Self which is not self, which can never be touched by self, but without which self could not exist.

The fourth is that STRENGTH which slays strength and leaves the Learner a Newborn Babe.

The fifth is that PEACE which is found in the thick of battle, but never in avoidance of strife.

The sixth is that WEALTH which covets nothing great or small in all the worlds. He who possesses it possesses all Life and enriches it, for he and Life are One.

The seventh which is also the six and the ONE is —

### THE PATH TO MANHOOD

Mark my words and observe them, O Learner, so will you find Wisdom. That which you must seek with longing is not Manhood, but is the WAY which leads towards that state. Search for this WAY both within and without. It lies within you, for within yourself dwell all men and all things. It lies without you, for the Life which is YOURSELF dwells in all men and all things. It is in all things, but it is not to be found in

any one thing. You will seek it through many things and in many ways, but you will find it only when you have united all things and ways in your own self. Despise not your vain quests, because not until you have learned to know all that is false and imperfect can you come to know that which is true and perfect. Despise not your imperfections and grieve not for your failings. By recognition of their nature you make them steps taking you forward into more perfect states. Yet beware of these: if you rest in them, calling them good, they cease to be steps and become snares holding you back. Not until you come to know them as imperfections do they in their turn become steps helping you onward. Learn, my Son, that in your nature nothing is good and nothing is evil, except as it stands beyond you, or you stand beyond it. When you stand neither beyond anything, nor yet behind anything in all your nature, but unite all things in your own self, there will be for you neither good nor evil, happiness nor misery, gain nor loss, nor any one thing which stands opposed to any other, but only PERFECTION. When you have thus united your whole nature in your TRUE SELF you will have found the Way to Manhood; and the Way will be neither within you, nor without you, but will be YOURSELF, FOR YOU AND THE PATH ARE ONE.

*The Learner said:*

Is there a sign I may watch for that will assure me my feet are upon the Way of Growth?

*The Ancient One said:*

Look, O my Son, for THE STAR. The STAR, O Child who would be a Man, will gleam upon you when the night wanes and midnight's storm sinks into silence in the peace which presages the distant dawn. That STAR neither rises nor sets: it is ever there shining above the storm clouds in the speckless depths of heaven; but not until the thunders are hushed and the cloud wreaths thin and part will its wondrous light break through and illumine the darkness of your night.

This Nature in which you live and move and labour is, as is the air which surrounds the mid-regions of the Mighty Mountains, the Playground and Battleground of the Gods of Storm. Not until you have conquered those Angels of Strife, not until you hold them bound, still and obedient to your will, will the clouds which are their Breath of Fury break apart letting the rays of THE STAR stream through upon the Lower Earth. When you have thus conquered there will come unto you a PEACE, and in a deep SILENCE will happen that glorious thing which tells that

the WAY has been found. Ask me not what its nature is, for I cannot tell it. Words cannot describe it, nor mind of man conceive it. It is not seen by the eye, nor heard by the ear, nor felt by the heart, nor yet perceived by the mind: it is KNOWN with a KNOWING which knows not doubt.

*The Learner said:*

Tell me, O Ancient One, will the shining of The Star bring me peace forevermore?

*The Ancient One said:*

Not so, O my Son. Peace lasts while the STAR shines, but its shining may be but for a moment of time. Even though it shine through a period of many lives, yet at last its light must fade. Again will your slaves break their bonds. Again will they surround you with the clouds of their Breath of Wrath. Again, and yet again must you fight and conquer them, but while they live The Storm Gods cannot rest. But the memory of THE STAR will go with you into the battles which lie before you, and you will know that it is there ever shining beyond the storm clouds. Strong in this knowledge you will face the fight, and no matter how terrible the conflict will doubt your strength no more.

*Ngiti kuwe salake kahleke.*

(I say unto you be thou at peace.)

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THE ANCIENT SAGES, ascending to the UNKNOWABLE, made their starting-point from the first manifestation of the unseen, the unavoidable, and from a strict logical reasoning, the absolutely necessary creative Being, the Demiurgos of the universe. Evolution began with them from pure spirit, which descending lower and lower down, assumed at last a visible and comprehensible form, and became matter. Arrived at this point, they speculated in the Darwinian method, but on a far more large and comprehensive basis.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE SEARCH FOR HAPPINESS

A SOMEWHAT INTIMATE CONTACT with life will convince anyone that happiness and sorrow are inseparable. They are a pair; one of several such which the *Bhagavad-Gita* designates as "pairs of opposites." So long as a man is caught in the snares of these pairs, they will continue to manifest in alternate succession, throwing the man into oscillations of joy and sorrow, of tears and laughter. When a man says that he wants to be happy, he really means that he desires that for himself all sorrows should cease, at least for the remaining years of his life. He wants to arrest the swing of the pendulum at the point where it reaches the zenith of happiness and to fix it there by some process which can counter and neutralize the karmic pull of Law. As long as there are pendulums in a man's life that swing under outside stimuli, so long must pain and pleasure, success and failure, fame and ignominy dog his footsteps. Each pair mirrors the life of vibratory existence and the man who lives in an atmosphere where such oscillations prevail must continue to be tossed hither and thither, a helpless flotsam on an ocean where calms are but the harbingers of storms. It is by emotion, by unsatiable desire and by thirst for sensation that the man violently pushes the pendulum into oscillations which must then run their course.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Chapter III, verse 34) Sri Krishna says that attachments and aversions of the senses are natural and that therefore no one should fall under their sway. He calls these the enemies of man. Attachments to things and persons which by their nature are perishable can bring pain and anguish at the moment of parting. Death, decay, estrangement, disillusionment may in such cases bring "happiness" to an abrupt and oftentimes painful end. But if attachments have the power to bind the man and swing him now here, now there so that no light comes, aversions too have an equally strong power to shake him from his moorings. For instance, there are many otherwise intelligent and kindly persons who get attracted to works which it is not their duty to perform. This covetousness brings into action the opposite constituent of the pair, namely, abhorrence. Brooding over the misfortune of not getting a duty to his liking, the man begins to dislike and then abhor his own. The more powerful his aversion, the greater the force that he exerts on the pendulum. Even when the coveted thing is obtained, the oscillations make a mockery of the possession and all too often where happiness was expected, there misery sets in. If, as the *Gita* has it, affection and dislike are fixed in every purpose of the senses, then it

needs must follow that any possession pleasing to the senses and therefore conducive to happiness will in time yield to a condition of worry and sadness. Therefore, such experience may become pleasingly painful or painfully pleasant — to put it in a crude manner of speaking. Tears will never be too far away from laughter.

The mortal can devise no engine which can secure for it the immortal. Possessions that corrode and dwindle under the action of time and circumstance are ephemeral and the happiness they can give is ephemeral also. Further, the ephemeral possession that may give intense happiness during a particular state of consciousness may become revolting when a higher state supervenes. No sustained happiness can therefore result either through possessions or lack of them. They are redundant to the Soul and must therefore be used only as avenues to live a soul-life upon earth. If in his blindness the man uses force to gain the object of his desires, or uses occult forces for selfish ends, then the force so expended may have the tendency to arouse the psychic and undesirable part of his nature and ultimately erupt in the body, mind, or psychic part of his make-up. The seeds of true happiness, contentment and joy are not to be found on the material plane and if brought from above and sown on earth lose their intrinsic qualities in the stifling atmosphere. Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "Heaven's dew-drop glittering in the morn's first sunbeam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire."

The archetype of happiness is found in Kama, not as now materialized into a power that gratifies desire, but as originally described in the Vedas. It is the first conscious, all-embracing desire for universal good, a love for all that lives and feels and needs help and kindness. It is 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. Kama is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love. Where spirit and matter meet and where the electric fire which is Force impresses matter with the ideation that resides in Spirit — there are laid the foundations of true happiness. Where matter loses the stamp and impress of spirit, or where the mind loses its hold upon the starry soul within — there the rhythm of evolution is destroyed. Thus, losing his hold on the True, man tries to snatch his semblance of happiness in the relation that waxes, wanes and dies in acts of indulgence of sense-life. True happiness can be found only in the bond that connects Entity with non-Entity or Manas with pure Atma-Buddhi. From this confluence of

the streams of life, happiness descends at each succeeding stage on the descending stairways of life. Where the reasoning mind becomes intoxicated in its love and union with the higher mind, where intellect pays its homage to intuition, there a calmness settles upon the harassed soul and a peace prevails that cannot be shattered even though storms rage round the hallowed spot.

In the quest for happiness, many lose sight of the fact that happiness is not an end by itself. It is an effect, an atmosphere rather, that follows upon each progressive awakening of the soul. The processes of its fruition cannot be rushed, nor can its bloom be duplicated by dubious means. There have been and there will continue to be those who not seeing beyond their broken lamps have tried to seek happiness by torturing and mutilating their senses and organs and by the development of the tremendous force of the Will. *The Voice of the Silence* cautions against such practices:

Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range — believe thou not, O devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation. Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle, unites thee to thy “silent Self” [the “Higher Self,” the “seventh” principle].

In the ultimate analysis, it will be found that happiness sprouts and fructifies on the side-lines and borders of the Path which the questing Soul must tread. How is this Path, this Way, to be found? *Light on the Path* gives the answer:

Seek it not by any one road. To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. . . . The whole nature of man must be used wisely by the one who desires to enter the way. . . . Seek it [the Way] by plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of your own inmost being. . . . Seek it by study of the laws of being, the laws of nature, the laws of the supernatural; and seek it by making the profound obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within. Steadily, as you watch and worship, its light will grow stronger. Then you may know you have found the beginning of the way. And when you have found the end its light will suddenly become the infinite light.

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## STEPS ON THE PATH

THE TITLE of one of the devotional books the student of Theosophy prizes, the *Dhammapada* — the Footfalls of the Law — suggests some significant ideas. There are many kinds of movements in the body: every muscle has its own movement, but when the feet move, the whole body finds itself in a new environment. With every step we take we come into a new environment, a new world. Our feet symbolize the urge to go forward, to move on — the great March of Evolution.

We speak of the Lotus Feet of the Great Gurus. The feet of the Guru are worshipped by the *Bhaktas*, the Devotees, because they are symbols of the Great March of Life that the Guru has finished. Those Feet have become purified. From those Feet flows the strength of long marches of experience.

We are all children, learning to walk. The Path of Life stretches all around us, in all directions. Shall we walk the pleasure path of sensuous life and find our garden path turning into a dry, sandy desert, trackless, waterless, where we shall famish and die? Or shall we walk the routine path of waking and sleeping, now well, now ill, till birth leads to death, and death to new birth and another routine of life? Or shall we walk the lonely path of the creative intellect, of poet, philosopher, artist, who seeks beauty of form and allows the beauty of life and spirit to elude him; who, even when he serves his fellows, serves gropingly because his is but a partial, a shadowy vision? Or shall we take the narrow and difficult path of the Sage, of the Buddha, the Path of Wisdom and of Compassion?

There is a fundamental distinction between the first three paths mentioned above and the last one, the Path of Enlightenment and of Service. The path of sensuous life, the path of routine, the path of the intellectual, or that of the creative artist, are not single paths. There are millions of ways in which the senses move. Every home and every member in every family has a different routine. The painters and poets, the critics and philosophers, all differ from one another; for unless they differ they are called imitators, plagiarists, and rejected by the world. But the "strait gate" and the "narrow way" of which the Sermon on the Mount speaks, the Path of the *Gita* and of the Upanishads, the Noble Path of the Arhats, is to be walked in single file. On that Path we but follow faithfully in the footsteps of our Illustrious Predecessors. On that Path the senses are to be controlled in one way and one way

only; the routine of life for each and all is one and the same routine; the philosophy which teaches Truth, the art which reveals Beauty, the religion which enhances the Good in each of us is a single philosophy, is an art that repeats itself, is the good that makes us like unto the Predecessors who have walked the selfsame Path. It is ever the same old Path, the Ancient Way, the Grand Trunk Road on which all souls progress, the Highway of the Spirit which leads to Nirvana.

Thus, on this Path of the Soul the virtues to be practised, the powers to be unfolded, the mortifications to be performed, are the same for all. This conception of the Path compels one to break the fetters of castes and creeds, to do away with religious partisanship, social distinctions, racial differences. He who says, "I am a Brahmana superior to the Mlechha," he is an untouchable, unworthy to walk this Path. He who says, "I am a Muslim, the only true and faithful one," he is an infidel as far as this Path is concerned. He who says, "I am a follower of Jesus Christ, the only son of God, superior to the heathen and the pagan," he cannot walk this Path.

For the man or woman who is willing to reform himself or herself, however poor he or she may be in worldly possessions, the sayings of the Master Gautama which make up the *Dhammapada* are a guide which illumine the Path, like an electric torch on a dark, unlit road. By that light we can walk this wilderness, named the civilized world.

And what a wilderness it is! Hardly do people know that there is a sure Path leading out of this maze and jungle of life. Some are sticking to their own old ways, while others are attempting to construct new bridges; but few there be who see the ancient Noble Way of the Great Arhats. The Buddha named it the Noble Eightfold Path. In the Yogacharya School of Mahayana Buddhism there exists a tradition that the Illustrious Predecessors of Gautama taught the Sevenfold Path, which the Buddha himself walked; but, seeing to what extent blind belief flourished, one more step was added — what is now the first of the eight steps — Right Belief or Right Seeing.

Study and examination of the Eightfold Path with the aid of the *Dhammapada* would prove most rewarding for the student-practitioner. The eight steps are: (1) Right Seeing (*Samma-ditthi*); (2) Right Resolve (*Samma-Sankappa*); (3) Right Speech (*Samma-vacha*); (4) Right Action (*Samma-kammanta*); (5) Right Means of Livelihood (*Samma-ajiva*); (6) Right Striving (*Samma-vayama*); (7) Right Mindfulness (*Samma-sati*); (8) Right Meditation (*Samma-samadhi*).

The Pali word "*samma*" (the Sanskrit "*samyak*") is not at all easy to translate. It is rendered into English by "right," "correct," "perfect," and so forth; but "*samma*" in the original carries its own atmosphere. Perhaps if we keep in mind the trinity of the good, the true and the beautiful we may be able to enter into the very soul of these steps. That speech or that action which contains within it truth, goodness and beauty, all three, is alone worthy of the prefix "*samma*." Our words may be true, but if they are not also good and beautiful they are not *samma-vacha*; our deeds may be beautiful, but if they are devoid of truth and of goodness they are not *samma-kammanta*; and so on for each of the noble steps.

The Buddha, speaking of the Noble Eightfold Path, described how the knowledge of the steps was acquired by him in three stages; and it continues to be in three stages for any and every one of us. First, in him arose the insight as to the Path and its Goal, and he perceived clearly the steps necessary to walk that Path. Then in him arose the understanding that he must walk that Path, he must go through the eight steps, he must apply what his insight had revealed. And lastly, in him arose the light which comes through application. Thus, having actually seen and resolved, he applied, thereby assimilating his vision and proving to himself by repetition of the Teaching that he was master of it. We may see a truth, but unless we practise and live the truth it is of little use to us. We may see and even practise the truth, but unless we teach what we have learnt we are of little service to our fellows; we have neither seen that truth in reality nor lived it fully and correctly. And so the Buddha says:

Brothers, as long as my knowledge and insight were not quite clear about this truth in these three degrees, so long was I uncertain that I had gained mastery of this wisdom which is unexcelled in heaven or earth, among ascetics or priests, among gods or men.

So, we must first hear and learn; next, we must practise and apply; and thirdly, we must live and teach. That is the real treading of the Noble Eightfold Path.

The Buddha began his exposition of the Teachings by stating that the Path he taught was the Path of Moderation, the Middle Path. Even before he detailed his teaching of the Four Noble Truths, the last of which is about the Eightfold Path, he referred to the necessity of avoiding the two extremes. The outward manifestation of the inner struggles.

hopes and aspirations of every human being often ends in two extremes. Ordinary people desiring joys, thrills, excitements of sense life follow one extreme; this is the path of the profane. Then a reaction sets in and people go to the other extreme of rigid asceticism, torture of flesh, which deforms the inner senses. The rich man, learning that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for him to enter the Kingdom of Righteousness, might fancy that poverty is the way, and proceed to get rid of all his money. Neither gold nor its absence, however, takes us to Nirvana, but our *attitude* to the presence or absence of gold might, and, if it is the correct attitude, *will!* So, extremes in all things, even in our discipline, have to be avoided.

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THE FOUR CASTES are equal. He is a Chandala who cherishes hatred; who torments and kills living beings; who steals, or commits adultery; who does not pay his debts; who maltreats aged parents, or fails to support them; who gives evil counsel and hides the truth; who does not return hospitality nor render it; who exalts himself and debases others; who ignores the virtues of others and is jealous of their success. Not by birth, but by conduct, is one a Chandala. He is a Brahmana who is free from sin. He is an outcast, who is angry and bears hatred; who is wicked and hypocritical; he who embraces error and is full of deceit. Whosoever is a provoker and is avaricious, has sinful desires, is envious, wicked, shameless, and without fear to commit sins, he is an outcast. Not by birth does one become an outcast, not by birth does one become a Brahmana; by deeds one becomes an outcast, by deeds one becomes a Brahmana.

—SAYINGS OF THE BUDDHA

## LITANY FOR MODERN MAN

"I am a single cell in a body of two billion cells. The body is mankind.

"I glory in the individuality of self, but my individuality does not separate me from my universal self — the oneness of man.

"My memory is personal and finite, but my substance is boundless and infinite.

"The portion of that substance that is mine was not devised; it was renewed. So long as the human blood-stream lives I have life.

"I do not believe that humankind is an excrescence or a machine, or that the myriads of solar systems and galaxies in the universe lack order or sanction.

"I may not embrace or command this universal order, but I can be at one with it, for I am of it.

"I believe that the expansion of knowledge makes for an expansion of faith, and the widening of the horizons of mind for a widening of belief. My reason nourishes my faith and my faith my reason.

"I am not diminished by the growth of knowledge but by the denial of it.

"I am not oppressed by, nor do I shrink before, the apparent boundaries in life or the lack of boundaries in cosmos.

"I see no separation between the universal order and the moral order.

"I cannot affirm God if I fail to affirm man. If I deny the oneness of man, I deny the oneness of God. Therefore I affirm both. Without a belief in human unity I am hungry and incomplete.

"Human unity is the fulfilment of diversity. It is the harmony of opposites. It is a many-stranded texture, with colour and depth.

"The sense of human unity makes possible a reverence for life.

"Reverence for life is more than solicitude or sensitivity for life. It is a sense of the whole, a capacity for wonder, a respect for the intricate universe of individual life. It is the supreme awareness of awareness itself. It is pride in being.

"I am a single cell. My needs are individual but they are not unique.

When I enter my home I enter with the awareness that my roof can

only be half built and my table only half set, for half the men on this earth know the emptiness of want.

“When I walk through the streets of my city I walk with the awareness of the shattered cities beyond number that comprise the dominant reality.

“When I think of peace I can know no peace until the peace is real.

“My dedication, therefore, is to the cause of man in the attainment of that which is within the reach of man.

“I will work for human unity under a purposeful peace. I will work for the growth of a moral order that is in keeping with the universal order.

“In this way do I affirm faith in life and life in faith.

“I am a single cell in a body of two billion cells. The body is mankind.”

—NORMAN COUSINS

(*Saturday Review*, August 8, 1953)

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### TESTS

ALL submit to them where they sit, inner, secure, unapproachable  
to analysis in the soul,

Not traditions, not the outer authorities are the judges,

They are the judges of outer authorities and of all traditions,

They corroborate as they go only whatever corroborates themselves,  
and touches themselves;

For all that, they have it forever in themselves to corroborate  
far and near without one exception.

—WALT WHITMAN

## SOUL-HUNGER — BODY-HUNGER

OUR worldly education, social welfare systems, medical practice, philanthropic institutions — all, all deal with *effects*, now made manifest as seemingly disadvantageous conditions and situations.

Theosophical philosophy, which is a study of Nature's Laws, directs us to *causes*. Causes being made now by us will mould our future, as also that of the world. This is why H.P.B. in her *Key to Theosophy* says that Theosophy directs us to remove soul-hunger, and not only body-hunger. We must sow the right causes if we desire the right effects. Present generosity and help will mitigate those past causes that have created starvation of soul and of body. This generosity should be based on recognition of the fact of reincarnation, that the "stranger" of today, who is brought to us by our joint Karma, may in a past life have been closely associated with us, and, in a future life together, may enjoy a similar close relationship.

For those who are keenly aware of suffering, who have a large-hearted urge to mitigate others' woes, this may seem vague, utopian, out of reach. The practical philanthropist, surrounded on every side with the cries and claims of the needy, is at last compelled, when his time, energy and stamina give out, to say to himself: "Why are things like this? Who brought it on? Can I help these people more effectively — perhaps to help themselves? Can I share with them my abilities? While giving bread, sympathy and assistance, can I find some true consoling ideas, some energizing ideal, that I may pass on?"

Those who work to help and teach others know that the best they can do is to show another, *personally*, how he can "stand aside" from his condition, review it, and look it in the face, with detachment. He can show some of the general laws of life, of *common-sense*: how thought regulates one's emotional state as also physical action; how motive regulates and directs thought; how natural law works everywhere and is impartially just. All this, while ministering personally to the immediate physical needs of those who come into contact with him under Karma. In other words, such help cannot be given effectively through someone else, through "organized charity," through donations to "worthy causes." Each act of benevolence receives tenfold increased power when it is performed *person-to-person*. The true philanthropist effaces his personality, while doing *personal* deeds for others.

There is a philosophy of poverty which depends on an understanding

of Karma. "We get what we deserve." Righteousness follows righteous acts; oppression follows oppressive acts. Oppression is a condition of acceptance of others' domination. It is a more or less passive agreement to continue in a condition of subservience to others. But, let us ask: "Do we own anything?" Time has been called the "Great Destroyer." Things disintegrate, are used up and are discarded. The laws of destruction, of devaluation and of depreciation start acting the moment a "new" thing is produced or acquired. It is called "usage." In effect it is the inevitable accompaniment to accumulation. It is a redistribution, the return of atoms to their natural places. It is elemental and *skandhaic* action.

People change their feelings, their views and attitudes. One thing does continue as a bright and indestructible thread of being: our consciousness, our sense of egoity, of being *now* the same entity we were long ago. This alone is our sense of permanency; and while we may think of the sleep of the body, or its unconsciousness or even its ultimate "death" our consciousness is not capable of being thought of as having either a beginning or an end. It cannot be taken from us. We *are* IT. So, then, we can never truly *own* anything. On the contrary, we are temporarily *owned* by our ideas, by our feelings about things, people or events! So, we come back to the centre of man's *embodied consciousness*: his feeling and thinking nature. The immaterial Self, the superior man, thinks about and holds conversation with the embodied self — the feeling, thinking personality, which we like to call "me, myself." This type of introspection develops the ability to be involved practically, and at the same time to be observing from a detached, a more continuous point of view — the point of view of the immortal, permanent Man. Time as the "Great Healer" permits regrouping, rebuilding, reformation on sound principles.

Physical man may die from hunger, slowly and painfully, and this may take weeks. Lack of water kills the body more swiftly, in a few days. Suffocation, extreme heat or cold, destroy the body in minutes. An ill-regulated moral life may bring death of the *conscience*, slowly or swiftly; and, in that process, we may see at work emotional as well as mental and physical torture — self-inflicted, because the person seems at the moment unable to control and balance his lower self. This process is one which may eventually totally unbalance the psyche, and produce psychotic and insane conditions, either temporarily or permanently. Such states are classifiable generally as states of *intense selfishness*, states where the embodied consciousness has no regard for others, for the real-

ities of conjoint existence, for toleration, generosity, friendliness or brotherhood. An excess of self-regard produces viciousness in regard to others. The ability to balance the two extremes marks the progress of the evolving Man, the man of mental quality, the man of increasing *universal* vision.

A regard, a fellow-feeling, moves most of us almost instinctively to help others. We respond in imagination to others' circumstances, to the extent that we may visualize ourselves in similar conditions. Sometimes our dramatic powers make us feel far more vividly another's pain than we might our own. The problem now is to choose the right kind of response. While there are ways to alleviate physical suffering, is it not more valuable and longer lasting to try to assist the mind-being and the psycho-emotional being who is in that body? If food for the starving body brings a release of pressure on the emotional being, would not food for the consciousness — *i.e.*, universal ideas, seeds of self-reformative concepts, methods of practically dealing with one's psycho-mental problems — be equally needed? Of course giving these is not easy. Food on the physical plane is relatively easier to get and its effects quickly visible. Nutrition is a science, and to assist the starving body in a real way, some practical knowledge is to be applied on that plane. How much more difficult is it to do this in the realm of practical psychology — the alleviation of mental, moral and emotional starvation!

The man who is physically starving still has to chew, swallow, digest and assimilate. He has to do something *for himself*. Irregulated stuffing of food into the starving can kill him or add to his physical suffering. Irregulated emotional and mental food can do the same for an inquiring or starving mind. It is one of the peculiar missions of the Theosophical Philosophy to show man how to nourish himself. Since it deals with Nature and Natural Law, it does not seem glamorous; it does not promise special powers, secret knowledge, abilities to dominate or control others. It does speak of knowing one's self. It says that "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." Loving deeds are the intelligent practice of brotherhood. Brotherhood cannot be practised without some knowledge of principles, situations, and the beings involved. So, the road to being able to feed the soul-hungry may be found in this verse from the Great Buddha's *Dhammapada*: "He who conquers himself is greater than the conqueror of worlds." Self-conquest is the understanding of one's nature, physical, moral, psychic, mental and spiritual. Thus self-learning leads to self-victory, and places the true man, the consciousness, in control of

his elephant-nature, the body; of his monkey-nature, the emotions; and of his human-nature, the lower (or embodied) mind. The key is diligent search, study of the records of earlier researchers, the proving of the validity of their work to oneself, and finally, patience and absence of desire. It is a practical and wise unselfishness that we have to develop in ourselves to become truly the feeders of the soul-hungry.

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*Socrates.* I have heard from certain wise men and women who spoke of things divine that —

*Meno.* What did they say?

*Socrates.* They spoke of a glorious truth, as I conceive.

*Meno.* What was it? and who were they?

*Socrates.* Some of them were priests and priestesses, who had studied how they might be able to give a reason of their profession; there have been poets also, who spoke of these things by inspiration, like Pindar, and many others who were inspired. And they say — mark, now, and see whether their words are true — they say that the soul of man is immortal, and at one time has an end, which is termed dying, and at another time is born again, but is never destroyed. And the moral is, that a man ought to live always in perfect holiness. . . . The soul, then, as being immortal, and having been born again many times, and having seen all things that exist, whether in this world or in the world below, has knowledge of them all: and it is no wonder that she should be able to call to remembrance all that she ever knew about virtue, and about everything; for as all nature is akin, and the soul has learned all things, there is no difficulty in her eliciting (or as men say learning) out of a single recollection all the rest, if a man is strenuous and does not faint; for all enquiry and all learning is but recollection.

—PLATO

## EASTER IN NATURE

[This article by C. H. A. Bjerregaard — “a learned and thoughtful theosophist,” H.P.B. called him — is reprinted in somewhat condensed form from *The Word* for July 1909.—EDS.]

THIS PHRASE “Easter in Nature” sounds offensive, perhaps blasphemous, to church people, and to the common understanding the phrase might appear absurd, because the common mind associates Easter with something Christian and not with nature. Nevertheless, the phrase “Easter in Nature” is quite correct and neither blasphemous nor absurd. The thing is this: the word “Easter” ought never to have been used by the Christian church in Germany or England as it has been, because it is a pagan word and a name for a pagan, Saxon goddess. Instead of Easter, we ought to say the paschal feast, or the resurrection memorial. We, in America, got the word Easter from England and England got it from Germany, where, among the Saxons at the time of the introduction of Christianity, they worshipped a goddess, Eastera, Eostra, and worshipped her annually with a great feast at the same time of the year as the Christian Easter is celebrated. It is well known that the early missionaries adapted the Church’s feasts, fasts and doctrines to the feasts, fasts and doctrines of the people among whom they sought converts.

It was not very difficult to get the Eastera feast turned into something like Easter in a Christian sense, nor was there any real fraud in the matter. The goddess Eostra’s, or Eastera’s, name connects, as it is supposed, with *austra*, an old Germanic word for East, Easterly. The goddess, accordingly, was a symbol of the East or of sunrise, and such a conception lies also in the Christian idea of Easter. The word *austra* is equal to the Sanscrit *ushas*, and the Roman *aurora*, all of which mean daybreak, the red of the early morning, day-spring — all Easter ideas. All these words also carried an occult sense, now lost. To the ancient peoples, the East meant also the opener and opening of the year, of the day, in general the genetrix in all the senses that connect with that word. All the missionaries had to do was to fill in the pagan, Saxon feast in honour of Eastera with their own special conceptions of resurrection relating to Christ, and such imaginative people as the Germanic races easily accepted the additions. It was only necessary to point out to them that light from the East in the spring resurrects all dead or apparently dead organic forms, and the blending of the two systems, the pagan and the Christian, was accomplished. Germanic Christianity is full of such

additions and idealizations on many other points besides Easter.

Now, this goddess Eastera or Eostra, being the symbol of the East, has remained to this day, in Germany called Ostern, and in England called Easter, the natural symbol of light and of the resurrection or rejuvenescence which takes place in spring. She represents two conceptions. The first is: she is a goddess of light, and, next, she is a goddess of revivification or rejuvenescence, the two main characteristics of spring-time, and, also of the church-feast Easter. With all this in mind, I have a right to speak of "Easter in Nature."

Easter being a goddess of light, makes the Easter feast a feast of light. I shall show that first, and next show the Easter feast as a feast of life or rejuvenescence, because Eastera is such a goddess, too. Common observation shows the increase of light with the increase of day in springtime or at the time of Easter. It is simply an astronomical phenomenon due to the return of the sun to the northern hemisphere, a return that begins at Christmas time and which reaches its climax the 21st of June, at the summer solstice. In northern latitudes this question of light is of the uttermost importance for the welfare of man, for agriculture and all the crafts connected with agriculture. Naturally and rightly would people in olden time as well as in our own day make this a religious affair, because it is a cosmic affair, something of divine nature. The immediate effect of a religious consideration of this truly wonderful and important event would naturally call forth much rejoicing and congratulations among friends, that light, warmth and prosperity was returning, and darkness, cold and death disappearing. All this is most natural and we find all people, affected by this change in nature, rejoicing at this season, and also that they all have religious ceremonies and thanksgiving at this time. And why should they not be religious? Many of them in olden time believed the sun to be god; hence when their god came nearer and nearer to them, which he did daily in spring, they would naturally pay respect to and revere him! To enumerate the ancient customs — the number of them is large, and they still remain in many parts of the world — would take hours. I must therefore forgo the subject. But let me not be understood to undervalue these customs! I assure you that any of you who can realize what David sang, "The Lord is my light and my salvation," shall be filled with great joy and deep understanding at Easter time, and I do not mean this poetically only.

Here, it is not the place to enter upon the science of light, however interesting it might be. There are, however, a few elements of that science

which are of vital interest. I will therefore bring them forth. In the Gospel of Matthew it is reported that Jesus said to his disciples: "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works." What can be the meaning of this admonition? Are any of you lights that shine? Who are lights that shine? Is anybody a light, or is there no sense in this direction given by Jesus? Someone will tell me that the word light here stands figuratively and means intelligence, and that the interpretation of the Lord's words is very simple and easy; that they simply mean that we ought to speak with intelligence about the divine mysteries, and that we should act rationally and with understanding. Others will tell me that the light spoken of is the divine light within, given to believers, and so forth; I will accept these as part explanations of the Lord's admonition, but I am by far not satisfied that they cover the intention of the sentence. At any rate, I answer with another question, a question perfectly legitimate; it is this: what do you mean by intelligence and by the divine light?

I think some of the difficulties with the Lord's mystic saying can be explained when I give you certain facts, such as the following. Numerous animals give out light from their bodies. You have seen the phosphorescence of lakes. That luminosity comes from minute organisms. Glow-worms shed a mild greenish light. Fireflies in the Orient give a wonderful splendour to the night landscape. There are plants in the Himalayas that illuminate mountain sides. Common marigold in dry seasons throws out a golden light from petal to petal. The evening primrose, the scarlet poppy and the sunflower all flash light, and many mosses and mushrooms do the same. In fact, nature's cathedral is lit by many and varied lights, more than I can or need enumerate at present.

Now, what is the meaning of all this? It is this: that light is the manifestation of life. The life of these organisms is light. And by their light they are known. This kind of light is not wave motion, but animal life shown as light. And this light shines brightly at Easter. If we search the annals of men and women who have lived the mystic life, who have concentrated their vital forces and lived in sublime intensity, we find these annals full of records telling about light flashing forth from these people; of light surrounding them; of transfigurations. Here, then, are living lights in many forms, and now comes the interesting point. When we inquire of biology if any season of the year is richer than another in such phenomena, then we are told that spring is their time for excellence. What more need I say? The character of our life is seen by

the light we throw off. And spring, especially, is the time when the flame of life glows with the strongest light. Undoubtedly, I say, Jesus took his illustration from the surrounding nature, as was his custom. And he referred to a light, which is life, something other and different from the sun's light spoken of before; and it was that light Jesus told his disciples to let shine. Have I not the right, then, to speak of Easter as the presence with us of a living light? And can I not now turn upon this present generation and ask: "Is your life a light?" "Where is your power?" "Can your life be seen in the light you give forth?" "Has your Easter this year such luminosity about it?" "Or does the stone still cover the sepulchre waiting for the angel to remove it?"

I have now shown Easter as nature's symbol of light: sunlight and life-light. These two aspects of light are interesting in themselves. The first aspect, light in the heavens, was a wonder to the ancient, and their gods and goddesses representing light ranked the highest. But we of today, to our shame, look upon light as a commonplace affair and have ceased to wonder, with possibly short periods of exception, such as at Easter. The second aspect of light, that which comes out of life and out of the body of organic creatures, has also been a wonder in all ages, but is now no more than a curiosity.

There is a third aspect of light. I will admit that nobody knows the essential nature of light, and we cannot tell what it is. But if we translate the term light by another term, then we can gain an insight into its nature and its operative force in life. If we translate the word light and say it is fire, we gain such an insight and an additional or third aspect of light valuable especially at Easter time. Let me therefore say that there is fire in the air at Easter time. A sacred flame flits from hill to dale, from branch to branch, from man to man. It is so swift that many never see it, though they feel the burn. In honour of this flame, it was once customary to light lamps in the spring and to put on clean clothes (not new clothes, as some think). If you wish to see this flame, you must open all windows in your house and body and go out into the open to see the coming and going, the advancing and the receding waves of life as they sweep up through the valleys. When you come home again you shall find the flame. It has come in through the open windows and is now burning with full force within you.

As said before, Eastera was not only a goddess of light, but also a goddess of rejuvenescence; hence the Easter feast is not only a feast of light, but also a feast in celebration of nature's resurrection or revivi-

fication in spring. Eastera was and is that power which trembles through the earth and through the blood courses of every one of us. Called forth by the touch of the spring sun, this power flashes now at this time through our nerves and arteries and veins, and by and by we shall see it leap as lightning from cloud to cloud. We saw it recently in the winter auroras, but were not thrilled by it because it was cold; but now at this time it is warm and it moulds us and builds us into forms suitable for its own purposes, and these purposes go to the filling up of the earth with more and new creatures, both in the hill of the ants and the palaces of men; and where poverty stalks among the miserable, and where music fills the air that glad lovers breathe; everywhere, it surges in flood-tides. Waves of life rise higher than ever at this time.

But it is not only the flowers and the coming blossoms that call to their roots to hasten. Everywhere, where protoplasm or "the physical basis of life," as Huxley called it, stirs, as far as science at present knows the fact, there we find an extra movement going on in spring. Fish life is spermatic; the crustaceans are brimful of activity and insect transformation from egg to final form is fast beginning its vast complex variety. Many birds are already filling their nests with eggs. In short, the universal rhythm of nature's periodic activity is heard everywhere and seen everywhere in new growths and brilliant colours and reproductive centres. Waves of life hasten to cover up all traces of destruction left from last autumn and winter. A song of life is heard from the world's cradle wherever it stands, in high places or low, hidden or open. Streams of living waters flow from every hill, for spring is the period of rain.

I know poets sing of joy in nature at the time of Easter, and I perceive the joy myself. But I know also of no season more melancholy than Eastertime in Nature. And the reason is Love. A great love is melancholic and full of sorrows because all things are fleeting. Overabundance and pressure of life make us melancholic. Spring at Eastertime is not all rapture. Mater Genetrix weaves life for awhile, but soon she feels the burden. The looms of nature weave not only beauty and form, but also pain and sorrow. Spring winds are often stormy and rude; they break many a young sprout which cannot dance fast enough to the music, and, they crush our boats on rocks as easily as we break an Easter egg. But all this has become symbolism for us. We learn from it that the new birth is painful, dangerous and sometimes disastrous. And all this adversity strengthens the New Life.

Many mystic orders at this time practise the severest asceticism,

fearing the flame that burns within them and which is nature's resurrection life; the soul's yearnings and longings. And strange as it must seem to the common mind, nature at this very season of abundance also reminds us that she is the self-consuming life, the power, that for a short moment strains herself, and expands in bright colours, only to give way quickly. At no season does nature teach mystic and painful lessons any clearer than at spring. Nature speaks exactly in the same language as, for instance, Tauler, and says: The soul must sink into the divine darkness, into the secret place of the divine abyss. There is no safety save in the abyss." Do you not know it is so? Do you not cast the seed into the soil at this season? All this means pain. But no crop without it!

Spring and Easter do not preach a new gospel, but they preach the gospel anew. They point to the oldest old, and, that is always the youngest young, and both are way-stations in our life. The opposite way-station is autumn and winter, of course. At this opposite station nature also preaches that she is the self-consuming life. In autumn she takes down the glorious draperies she has hung up all through the summer, that the children of men could see how she cuts her garments. In winter she lays herself down all naked and invites us to study the meaning of her forms. And that, too, is a mystic lesson; and is also expressed in the language of mystics. Suso, for instance, tells us that he who seeks to know the abyss must "be as one dead; he must see neither distinction nor difference," but only the abyss, or, in other words, space without dimension, absolute nakedness. Spring and Easter preach the same "Eternal Gospel," as Joachim of Floris, the mystic (1202); namely, that the spirit works inwardly and that neither sacraments nor external actions are needed. What is it that takes place? It is nature's everlasting play! The birds' migration is but the same as what takes place when the rocks smoulder under the grip of snow and ice, and thus make soil for the plants. Plants again make soil, perhaps for another of their own species, perhaps for one of a higher order, perhaps they make a habitation for a human being or food for it. Everywhere the "Eternal Gospel!" Again, the same Easter play we see when the egg bursts, that the nightingale may sing, and when a worm turns itself into a butterfly; when passion becomes poetry; when the play of the senses transmutes into philosophy and vice regenerates into virtue. What is it all, but miracle! The "Eternal Gospel"! At Eastertime, nature demonstrates the principle she acts upon: she uses death as a means for the production of more life.

No matter how we may look upon Christmas and Easter, whether

they have any religious signification for us or not, this is a fact, that the buds of Christmas spring at Eastertime, when darkness gives way to light, when the short days are forgotten and a renewed and overflowing energy rejoices in its own strength. At Eastertime, winter transforms itself into spring and spring is New Life. And for those of us who are seriously minded that transformation sounds like a call in conscience to put on a new life spiritually. To be sure, nature is silent as far as voice goes, and in our sense of preaching she has no voice; but nobody, not even old people, can deny that she presses on, even forces attention and is full of encouraging spirit. How can people understand and follow the spiritual if they ignore the natural? I, for one, can only lament that people ordinarily have become so emancipated from nature's order that nobody lives his life in the beauty of the seasons. If we followed nature, we ought to rest or cease from productive work in winter, and in that time recuperate interior strength by turning from outward nature — which clearly advises us to do so — to inward nature, and build up the spiritual man. In spring our new year should begin, and find its fruits in summer and autumn. This is nature's method. If people lived that way it would be better for them and human society. Sin, sorrow and sickness would cease.

Now, I have said a great deal about Easter and nature's rejuvenescence, and it may have been entertainment for you, and yet you may fail to celebrate Easter as nature would have you do it, namely, by renewed work and a reawakened conscience, which should send you to correct your perspectives. Nature at this season also wants us to learn that she is no false similitude, nor is she crumbling and unstable, but the same now as when light first dawned upon organic creation, and, now as ever, she is self-unfolding and self-manifesting and in that asking us to fall in with her plans. When nature has completed one round of life, she leaps to another and she invites us to leap with her through life's endless transmutations. When she has finished one melody, she starts another, with the same ease as she changes the tides of the ocean, and she expects us to arise and dance to her rhythm.

Nature never forgets herself in the grave! That which runs away into the ocean from our sewers, gathers into new soil on the bottom of the ocean, and on that soil Mother Nature will, as she has done before, resurrect a life we have thrown away — ages hence! No need to doubt! Visit any husbandman and you shall learn how she resurrects the crops you eat from refuse and offal of all kinds. The farmer laughs at

the city man who has not discovered the miracle. He knows nature. Nature can show us what to do with our dead selves! Though she multiplies everywhere, she is not confusion nor repetition. Her movement is after a spiral. She passes yearly the same spot, but never in the same footsteps. She wants us to learn that the wind speaks the same language as the songster in the woods and as the grass on the hillside; that the melting snow in the dell hears the melody of the violets and that of the hawthorn and all the rest of the flowers. But her orchestra is not the same, nor is the tune. The rejuvenescence she shows us at Easter is the same for all her organic creatures, and man is no better than the mephitic skunk-cabbage in the nearest meadow. And nature is quite anxious in spring that we should study her "holy of holies." She hides nothing, but she varies her steps in the dance.

Nature, at Eastertime, is more of an open book than at any other season. At Easter she is more simple in her method; her colours are paler; her perfumes not so rich; her nights not intoxicating and her sun not enervating. We can, therefore, better study her at Easter than at any other time. Moreover, later on we cannot find her beginnings; and, of all life's miracles, nature while young is the greatest and most charming because her lines are the simplest.

Nature-worshippers celebrate Easter every day, not once a year. And so did the earliest Christians. Origen and Chrysostom witness to that as a fact, and the old church historian, Socrates, tells us that the Easter feast once a year is a custom derived from elsewhere, and, not warranted by the New Testament. For nature-worshippers there is Easter every morning. The sun passes every morning across their horizon, and they sing their songs of praise and call it the light of morning. Morning dew is their cup, and their table is set on every hill or mountain top. The Holy Grail is not lost and Titirel's temple is not secreted. Get up early, when the sun calls to prayer and the dews lave your footsteps. Find your way to the hilltop and your cry will be, "O grave, where is thy victory!" You shall feel yourself a master, full of inexhaustible vigour! And why? Because it will be an Easter morning to you, a morning of resurrection, a cup of immortality. A morning that

"Holds infinity in the palm of the hand  
And eternity in an hour."

Nature-worshipping women in ancient Greece "went out at sunrise, and singing to Apollo, the sun, prayed that their hearts might be satisfied and their homes secured; by the fountain they asked of the water that

the highest aspirations of their souls might be fulfilled; of the earth they asked an abundance for those whom they loved" (Richard Jefferies: *The Dewy Morn*). Who does that now? I believe nature is waiting for us to come back from the circus of vanities. We have stayed too long! The clock of nature is now striking the morning hours! Every spring morning is an evangel. To how many of us is Easter day a "glad tiding"?

I have already characterized spring in various ways and identified it with Easter, but I have thus far said nothing about the actual time, day, or hour for the beginning of spring, or Easter in nature. And the reason for the omission is this: that we really never know when spring is here and winter is ended. We know it astronomically, as already pointed out, but practically we do not know it, and the reason is this, that nature never draws such sharp and distinct lines as the human mind does; nor does she care for feasts, fasts or new-moons; or for wealth or rank or power or science. The naturalist will tell you, if you have not observed it yourself, that as soon as the leaves fall in the autumn, the new leaf is already there; in fact, in many cases it is the new life that pushes the old leaf off. The naturalist will also tell you how life is booming beneath the bark of many an old tree stump, where the insect's cocoon is growing most lively and getting ready to come out. He will also show new life in any handful of mud he takes from the ice-covered pond. Even while snow is on the ground and the soil is hard frozen, the snowdrop and crocus come out and greet the sun. In fact, the dance of life never ceases in the woods, and the brooks keep up the fiddling all winter. Christmas time is as much a resurrection time as Easter time. Hence the various signs already mentioned are not exactly the signs of spring; they are effects rather than causes.

And now a word from the mystic. To the mystic there is neither Easter nor no-Easter; neither a light-goddess nor a life-goddess; neither nature nor nature symbols. All these are illusions — happy illusions, however. Illusions which he freely and safely indulges under the present time and space conditions, because he lives in the Inner Life, in the causal world, where neither symbols nor talks about symbols have any reality. All the symbols mentioned are so many faces of the Deity, and each and all smile to the mystic with encouragement of still better things to come. All the symbols mentioned represent realities which are valuable for us; hence the mystic may celebrate Easter both in nature and in spirit, and, in any and all religious forms among his fellowmen.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Till lately, the constancy of the Earth's climates had been taken for granted. But now climatologists have begun to notice some alarming shifts in climate patterns around the world. Severe droughts have ravaged parts of Africa and India for several successive years. They have struck Central America, too. On the other hand, places as widely scattered as the Mid-western U.S.A., the Philippines, North Africa and Italy have been submerged in some of their severest floods in centuries. Temperatures fell steeply in Siberia, destroying the harvest, while European Russia and North-eastern U.S.A. enjoyed unprecedented warm winters. The very severe winter of 1963 over large parts of Europe, the excessive amounts of ice in the polar seas in 1968, the severe droughts in North Africa and India in 1973 — these are considered to be the most spectacular manifestations of a change in the global weather pattern.

Dr. V. P. Subrahmanyam, Professor and Acting Head of the Department of Meteorology and Oceanography, Andhra University, Waltair, writes in *Science Today* for October 1975 that some scientists put the blame for these recurring droughts and floods on a global cooling trend which causes an alteration of the circulation pattern of the winds that swing about in the Earth's atmosphere, shifting farther south the vital monsoon rain upon which large sections of Africa, Asia and Central America depend. Some leading meteorologists have even gone so far as to suggest that the world is returning to an extreme Ice Age, and that if such an event does occur, it could bring disasters of an unprecedented magnitude. Others, however, do not agree with these prophets of climatic doom and emphasize that climatological theories as a whole are still far too primitive to predict what the future holds.

What is the reason for the observed world-wide climatic change? What is the evidence from past Indian rainfall records? Can the changes be caused by increased human activity rather than by a change in the global atmospheric circulation? These are the points that Dr. Subrahmanyam examines in his article. All climatic changes, of whatever scale, are now considered to be the result of changes in the so-called general circulation of the atmosphere. The Sun, no doubt, plays the most important role. Climate primarily depends on the amount of solar radiation absorbed by the Earth and its atmosphere, and the amount that gets reflected. And it is solar radiation that sets the pattern of winds in the Earth's atmosphere. A link between weather and the 11-year periodic

solar activity (as revealed by the number and distribution of sunspots) has been demonstrated, but the correlation is not yet fully understood. Besides, the effect of solar activity is not the only cause of climatic changes.

There is a growing body of opinion that the recent evidences of global climatic changes are not so much a natural phenomenon as the result of man's increased activity on the Earth:

Population explosion, rapid urbanization and massive use of fossil fuels during the past 50 years have been leading to somewhat slow but certain imbalances in the meteorological processes of the atmosphere. Increased carbon dioxide in the atmosphere caused by the burning of oil, coal, etc., for example, increases the vertical temperature differences and decreases the stability of the atmosphere. . . .

Uncontrolled deforestation and denudation of soil may lead to fluctuation, and even a severe decrease, of normal rainfall. Archaeological excavations carried out in the Indian subcontinent have revealed that the Indus Valley was the seat of a highly evolved culture between 2000 and 1500 B.C. Extensive forests covered the Indo-Gangetic plain and rainfall was higher and more frequent than at present. Though some slight shift in climate might have taken place, the deleterious effects of aridity might have been reinforced by deforestation on a large scale, with the result that desert conditions had established there by the middle of the first millennium A.D. The evidence from Israel, Tunisia and the adjoining areas also suggests the primacy of human rather than natural climatic factors behind this aridity, but all this is believed to have happened not in one step but as the cumulative result of denudations over a long period of time. . . .

Another problem engaging the attention of scientists is the stability of the Arctic sea ice. Attempts by the U.S.S.R. and Canada to divert their major rivers into inland areas will reduce the inflow of fresh water into the Arctic Ocean. The resulting increased salinity of top layers of the Ocean may decrease ice growth, leading to big changes in the surface and upper air temperatures at and around the North Pole. These, in turn, will have their own effects on the global atmospheric circulation. Man-made hazards are thus adding to the several imponderable variations in the world climate.

There are numerous indications of the close relationship between changes in climate and human affairs. Significant also is the proposition

that weather responds to mass thought. In fact, it has been suggested that to predict successfully the state of the weather 12 months in advance, "we must penetrate into the recesses of the human mind."

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The market for drugs taken by patients who are anxious or depressed, or who are unable to get to sleep at night, is so enormous, rapidly growing and lucrative that almost every manufacturer of drugs the world over produces its share of these psychotropic drugs (drugs which have an effect on the mind). Under the title "Life in Tablet Form," Vernon Coleman, a practising physician, writes in *The Daily Telegraph Magazine* for February 6:

People who insist that they would not normally take tablets of any kind happily take psychotropics, and the world's biggest addiction problem is not teenagers taking hash, but middle-agers taking sedatives. People in responsible positions, outwardly well adjusted and in control — businessmen, bus conductors, housewives, school teachers — swallow their capsules three times a day without a qualm. The tranquillizer is replacing tobacco. It will give us, perhaps, an even bigger problem.

A few years ago neurotics were uncommon. Today there are neurotics in schools and colleges, offices and factories, housing estates and country mansions. People start to crumble these days as soon as they can spell "worry." When the habit starts, the patient may have a good excuse for taking a few tablets. A close friend or relative has died, or there is a rush on at work. At school it can begin when a child starts to study in earnest. The child worries because he or she feels that he or she ought to worry. The worry may be caught from parents and teachers obsessed with examinations.

The girls who escape the demoralization of schools and colleges to run their own homes as housewives find their lives too dull and boring when compared with the bright and exciting lives led by television characters. The girls who choose to follow a career have to cope with the same problems as those their lovers and husbands have to face. There are many pressures involved in keeping a job and earning a living wage (a living wage being one that enables the worker to keep above the average), varying from the pressures from employers to union pressures. . . .

In defence of his weakness the modern respectable addict will complain that the pressures of modern living are higher than they have ever been. What nonsense this is. A hundred years ago

the pressures, though different, were just as powerful. Then people were worried about finding food and keeping warm. Today they worry about the rate of inflation, the size of their car and the quality of their television set, and swallow their green and black capsules.

We can, I think, delegate some of the blame for this absurd state of affairs. There are, for example, some people who make money out of dissatisfaction and unhappiness. Many advertising campaigns have the effect of provoking man's tendency to feel insecure. . . . The family doctor must take some of the blame too. For when the unhappy consumer, no longer able to cope, goes to see his doctor, he sees a man who has been pressured into believing that anxiety and depression must always be treated and who consequently finds it difficult to turn a patient away without pharmacological help — even though in his heart he knows that all healthy human beings feel anxious from time to time and that without anxiety life would be tasteless.

But most of the people who are now dependent on psychotropic drugs have only themselves to blame. They have too readily sought help with problems they should have been able to handle. They have failed to realize the extent of their good fortune and instead they have chosen to drown in self-pity, clutching at the straws proffered by doctors because they do not have the mental strength to rescue themselves and drag themselves from the currently overpopulated Slough of Despond.

While many drugs have "side reactions," recognized and unrecognized, and stoically accepted by doctor and patient alike, those that have an effect on the mind should in particular be guarded against. The *normal* factors of psychological balance, moderation in all things and simple remedies tend to be minimized, if not overlooked, by the majority. The theosophical doctrines of karma and reincarnation evoke self-reliance and a sense of responsibility, which constitute a man's moral immunity against diseases of body as of mind.

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In an article in *The Times of India* for February 29, Usha Rai lists, on the basis of the findings of specialists, the causes of suicide and the measures to help those who are likely to take this extreme and irrevocable step.

Lack of identity is believed to be the main factor that prompts one

to take one's own life. The sad part of it is that 60 per cent of those who committed suicide in India in the last five years were below 30 years of age. More than 25 per cent were below 18. Suicides are an urban phenomenon, perhaps because in big cities there is no one to turn to when one is desperate and lonely. About 20 per cent of the total suicides are the result of illness and incurable disease. Other main causes of suicide in India are prolonged unemployment and poverty, domestic troubles, including disputes between a bride and her in-laws, husband-wife quarrels, frustration in one's job or in a love affair, and failure in examinations in the younger age-group.

A study by R. M. Varma, a teacher at the Delhi School of Social Work, of 849 cases registered by the police between 1959 and 1965, revealed that 447 of these were premeditated suicides where frustration and despair had steadily mounted to the bursting point. Only 139 cases were of "impulse suicide" or suicide committed on the spur of the moment because of an immediate provocation. No reasons could be traced in the remaining 263 cases.

According to WHO estimates, about 1,000 people commit suicide in the world every day. Of these, India accounts for 120, that is, one suicide every 12 minutes. A large number of suicides go unreported because friends and relatives wish to shield the dead man's family from malicious gossip. The number of attempted suicides is eight times the number of successful ones. One can well imagine the degree of frustration, loneliness and despair prevalent in our society.

Mr. Varma is convinced [says the *Times* article] that a large number of suicides can be prevented by proper medical facilities and counselling from psychiatric social workers. Suicide researchers have found that a person contemplating suicide does give an indication of his intentions. But people are not tuned to "his cry for help." Those on the suicide track may grumble that life is a burden not worth living. They may collect sleeping pills, buy poison, locate wells or frequent lonely railway tracks. If such behaviour is noticed by friends and relatives and the person taken for counselling, a life could be saved.

It is well known that severe depression is a prelude to suicide. Let not a family ignore depression in one of its members. Let us not treat threats of suicide lightly. The Karma of those who take their own life is heavy indeed.

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In this time of widespread public violence, concern over the effect of

he social climate on children is well founded. More specifically, the issue of what playthings to permit our children to have is a relevant one for all who are involved in the development of the young.

In *The Times of India* for February 22, Dada Shewak sets forth the two opposing views in this matter of "toys of violence." Those who would proscribe them argue that toy guns, bows and arrows, tanks, cannons, missile sets, atomic bomb kits and the like encourage the acting out of aggressive impulses and, thereby, entrench anti-social drives. They see a direct connection between the ways and thoughts of children and their actions when they grow up to be adults. War toys, in this view, lead to war. As against this, there is the opinion that war toys are not causal factors, but are merely expressions of the violence prevalent in society; that, further, such toys may provide children with an outlet for basic aggressive drives.

The role of the adult is that of a bridge between the growing child and the outer world. It is a role fraught with Karmic responsibility. The following from the editorial comment on a letter published in *Lucifer* for December 1888 is of practical value to parents and teachers alike:

The child is father to the man. It is the first impressions, visual or mental, which the young senses take in the quickest, to store them indelibly in the virgin memory. It is the imagery and scenes which happen to us during our childhood, and the spirit in which they are viewed by our elders and received by us, that determine the manner in which we accept such like scenes or look upon good or evil in subsequent years. For, it is most of that early intellectual capital so accumulated day by day during our boyhood and girlhood that we trade with and speculate upon throughout later life.

The capacity of children for the storing away of early impressions is great indeed. And, if an innocent child playing at "Jack Ripper," remarks that his *sport* produces merriment and amusement instead of horror in the lookers on, why should a child be expected to connect the same act with sin and crime later on? It is by riding wooden horses in childhood that a boy loses all fear of a living horse in subsequent years. Hence, the urchin who now *pretends* to murder will look on murder and kill *de facto*, with as much unconcern when he becomes a man as he does now. There is much sophistry in Mrs. Stowe's remark that "children will grow up substantially what they *are* by nature," for this can only apply to those exceptional children who are left to take care of themselves; and these do not buy toys at fashionable shops. A

child brought up by parents, and having a home instead of a gutter to live and sleep in, if left to *self*-education will draw from his own observations and conclusions for evil as for good, and these conclusions are sure to colour all his after life. Playing at "Jack Ripper," he will think unconsciously of Jack Ripper, and what he may have heard of that now fashionable Mr. Hyde, of Whitechapel. And—

“... he who but conceives a crime in thought  
Contacts the danger of an actual fault.”

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The lost continent of Atlantis is today very much in the news. Its existence in ages past, once derided alike by science, archaeology and religion, is no longer seriously questioned. It was submerged by a flood, Plato wrote, in 9,600 B.C.; and now Cesare Emiliani and his team at the University of Miami, Florida, U.S.A., have found evidence of a global rise in sea level caused by a glacial surge 11,600 years ago (*Science Today*, December 1975)

The evidence of the glacial surge was indicated by analysing isotope concentrations in fossil shells in deep-sea core samples taken from the Gulf of Mexico near the mouth of the Mississippi river. The date, established by radio-carbon dating, also coincides with the retreating Arctic ice cap suddenly spreading again to cover North America; climatic warming up at the end of the last Ice Age, it is believed, melted this ice sheet and caused the floods.

According to *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 124, 765), the submersion of the last island of Atlantis took place some 12,000 years ago. We are further told (*S.D.*, II. 360) that the poles shift at regular intervals, causing “the displacement of the Oceans, the submersion of the polar lands, and the consequent *upheaval* of new continents in the equatorial regions, and *vice versa*.” The fourth change of the poles destroyed Atlantis. Says an Occult Commentary:

When the Poles moved (for the fourth time) this did not affect those who were protected, and who had separated from the Fourth Race. Like the Lemurians — alone the ungodly Atlanteans perished, and “were seen no more.” (*S.D.*, II. 350)

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