

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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EDUCATE AND STRENGTHEN THE SOUL

WHITE LOTUS DAY—1977

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ERE the next number of this magazine is published, the entire Theosophical world will have celebrated the 8th of May, known as White Lotus Day—the Anniversary of the passing of H. P. Blavatsky in 1891.

As years roll by, two facts stand out more and more: that the profound knowledge and the deep insight of H.P.B. prove in an increasing measure their golden worth with the passing of time; secondly, that the salvation of our humanity lies in and through the teachings which she recorded. The Message of her Masters came both as a warning and as a guide to our era; but the warning was not heeded, the guidance was not availed of, and now it seems almost too late for the masses of humanity to take the right direction. This is not due to the weakness of her philosophy or to any lack of sacrifice on her part. As long as she led the Movement, it continued to vitalize the thought of the world and freed the cerebrating mind of the race from its limitations, aberrations, inconsistencies and compromises.

With world conditions as they are, it seems almost impossible to affect any large numbers of the populace, and only individuals, one by one, a man here, a woman there, are inspired sufficiently so that they take themselves seriously in hand and endeavour to purify their morals and to enlighten their minds. The snares of Kali Yuga are many, the evil influence of the Astral Light is very powerful. But individuals can and do free themselves from their passion-self.

What is most needed today are nuclei of earnest students of the Teachings of H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge; their earnestness is

to be measured by their sincerity in practising the virtues, the Paramitas, which implies the observance of a standard of morals that strikes the real imagination and awakens the heart aspiration towards the soul-growth of other people. Ethics without philosophical knowledge lose their sustaining power; it is knowledge which freshens the mind and gives to ethics a dynamic energization to continuous elevation. On the other hand, knowledge without the practice of ethics invariably proves dangerous, degrading the animal man to the state of a cunning beast which uses its intelligence but to satisfy gross and sensual appetites. H.P.B.'s message combines in the most accurate proportion ethics and philosophy, or morality and metaphysics. The nuclei of student-practitioners who make adequate use of this dual and well-proportioned Message are the saviours of mankind in this day and generation.

These are the thoughts that arise most naturally as we think about White Lotus Day and contemplate on the conditions of the world and the influence that the Theosophical students can exert upon it. "Each Member a Centre," said Mr. Judge once, and each Associate of the U.L.T. has the privilege and the responsibility of becoming a Living Centre of Beneficence, radiating the purity and intelligence gathered by the exercise of right morality and the acquirement of correct knowledge. H.P.B. also wrote that "each man should strive to be a centre of work in himself." This implies that by precept as well as by example each student should show forth the power of Theosophy which he must learn to embody within himself.

A Living Centre of Work! Each student must become a vibrant nucleolus of Theosophy. This condition cannot be attained either by the pursuit of the desire for soul-growth, or by outer acts of charity and service. The desire for growth and the desire to be helpful are both good desires in themselves, but they do not create the living Theosophist. It is by the discharge of our own duties from day to day, according to the ethics and the metaphysics of the Message of the Masters, that we free ourselves from the fetters of personality. "The duty of another is full of danger," and many a student fails by not heeding the warning which the *Gita*, in more than one place, gives. In his zeal to be of service to others, to accumulate merit, to draw the attention of the Masters to himself, etc., he forgets to mind his own business. Thus he hinders the task of the spiritual alchemy which would make him a vibrant centre of life and work.

What better preparation for next White Lotus Day can there be

than to make the resolve that in the coming year each will learn to use the talisman named Duty! Let hopes for progress, desire for service, and all else be made subservient to the performance of duties — the small plain duties of life — but duties performed with the knowledge of Theosophical principles, applying that very high standard of morality to each act. Thus will the soul be educated and strengthened. The student has to perceive the real inwardness of the saying that “the Chohan in his place, and the atom in its place, do what they can — no more.” This perception results from the discharge of one’s own duties by the light of the Message of the Masters of H.P.B.

As, in the Theosophical Society, there are Active fellows and Corresponding fellows, the latter defined in the Rules to be “persons of learning and distinction who are willing to furnish information of interest to the Society,” while the former are actively occupied with its work, so there is a distinction between the chelas learning under our Masters. There are Regular Chelas — those who have “taken the vows,” who are withdrawn from the world and are personally in the company of the Mahatmas; and “Lay” and even “semi-lay” Chelas, who are wholly or partially in the world, perhaps men of family, who have a sympathy for the adepts and their science, but who are unable or not yet willing to take up the recluse life. The “Knowers” are always *cautious* as to what they say, and when, and to whom. Their habitual reticence gradually lessens only towards the active, or regular Chelas, as they develop their higher selves and become fit to be instructed. No one could reasonably expect that they should be unreserved with those who are tied by no vow or promise, and are free not only to break connection at any moment with their teachers, but even to traduce and charge them with every iniquity before the world. With such, their relationship becomes more and more confidential *only* as time proves the correspondent’s sincerity and loyal good faith; it may grow into close confidence or into estrangement, according to deserts.

—TSONG-KA UN-GHIEN (*The Theosophist*, January 1883)

RANDOM NOTES FROM "THE THEOSOPHIST"

THE THEOSOPHICAL ADEPTS

[Under the title "The 'Blessing' of the Brothers," H.P.B. published the following as an introductory to a letter from Prince Wittgenstein. The Prince related in detail the remarkable manner in which he was protected from injuries during the Turko-Russian War by "one of the leading Brethren of the [Theosophical] Society," and concluded: "I cannot believe all this to have been the sole result of chance. It was too regular, too positive to be explained thus..."]

A CORRESPONDENT calls our attention to the paragraph on p. 66 of the pamphlet, *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy*, in which a person not mentioned by name is made to say that he came out to India with us, but "never heard a hint of the Brothers," until afterwards, and asks us to explain. We cannot identify the person meant by the author of the pamphlet, and hence conclude that he is purely imaginary — an effigy set up to hang an explanation upon. For nothing is more certain than that we spoke — too freely as they think — of the "BROTHERS" and their powers long before leaving America. In fact, Col. Olcott mentioned both, in public lectures at New York and Boston in the hearing of large audiences. However, let us set the question at rest once for all by republishing from a London journal (*The Spiritualist*, for June 28, 1878) a most convincing testimony by an unimpeachable witness. The writer of the letter below was His Serene Highness the late Prince Emil von Sayn-Wittgenstein, A.D.C. of His Majesty the late Czar of Russia, and one of the earliest (and most earnestly interested) members of the Theosophical Society. That a nobleman of such exalted rank should have so openly acknowledged the protecting guardianship of our BROTHERS, was certainly a proof of great moral courage, while his known character for personal devotion to the truth lends an especial weight to his testimony. It is the most usual of things for our Asiatic friends in writing to us to bespeak the "blessing" of the Mahatmas. This results from the surviving tradition of such personal interpositions, handed down from a hoary antiquity. This letter of Prince Wittgenstein ought to strike Europeans as a fact going to show that this inherited belief is not altogether baseless. We shall be more than satisfied if at the same time it does not prompt many of them — and many others who are not Europeans — to demand that the "blessing" may also be extended to

them. It is only too common for persons who have never done one thing to entitle them to the slightest consideration by an adept, to put in a claim that their diseases shall be miraculously cured, their fortunes bettered, or their idle curiosity satisfied, as the price of their allegiance to the cause of Theosophy. Such persons were never taught, or at least never heeded, the time-honoured maxim of Occult Science, "First *Deserve*, *then* Desire."

(March 1883)

[Replying to a correspondent's questions, H.P.B. wrote:]

Our correspondent need not trouble himself as to what *might* be the consequences, if all the world should turn ascetics and *chelas* and train for adeptship. There are enough realities in this life for us to look into, without concocting such wild contingencies to vex ourselves withal. There was never a time yet, nor ever will be, while this human race lasts, when anything more than a small minority would devote themselves to the mighty task of self-conquest and spiritual evolution. The adept is as rare as the flower of the Vogay tree, which, the Tamil proverb says, is most difficult to see. So what our friend read in *Hints on Esoteric Theosophy* referred to the ideal man, the living — and most necessary — type of human perfectibility. The mere certainty that such rare powers — psychical and intellectual — and such moral grandeur, as he exemplifies, are within human reach, gives dignity to our common nature and a worthy model to look up to, and, in some degree, pattern after. . . . "What man's mission upon earth would be if all were good," is more than we can say. To merely imagine such a state of things is beyond the limited range of our mental powers. But if they were not *too* good they might, perhaps, try to become better.

(August 1882)

[Referring to the British Theosophical Society, H.P.B. said:]

Its esteemed President, Dr. G. Wyld, informs us of an extraordinary opinion held by one of its Members — one who lived in India, and is personally acquainted, as it seems, with a Society of Initiates in Tibet — that "*those who live there in the snow (?)* are not adepts but under training, and that a true adept can defy all magnetisms and live in society if he chooses." Most undoubtedly he can. So can a man, gradually having accustomed himself to an ever-increasing heat, pass days — if not altogether live — in a furnace without dying, as recent

scientific experiments have proved. So can also a person pass years in the utter darkness of a subterranean cavern and thereby so weaken his sight as to lose it entirely when suddenly emerging into light again. The question is not "could the Eastern initiates" so live or not, but will they, and why should they consent to do so, having no better reason for it than the satisfaction of the curiosity of — to them — an alien race, five-sixths of which would regard them as clever impostors and charlatans, and the other sixth — the best disposed to believe in their psychological powers, regard them as wonderful physical *mediums* controlled by "spirits."

(*Supplement*, August 1881)

[A series of extracts on Rahatship, gleaned from various Buddhist Scriptures, was introduced by H.P.B. with the following remarks:]

It highly gratified our Delegates to Ceylon to find that not only every educated priest and layman, but the uneducated people of that Island also, knew the possibility of man's acquiring the exalted psychical powers of adeptship, and the fact that they had often been acquired. At Bentota we were taken to a temple where a community of 500 of these *Rahats*, or adepts, had formerly resided. Nay, we even met those who had quite recently encountered such holy men; and a certain eminent priest who joined our Society was shortly after permitted to see and exchange some of our signs of recognition with one. It is true that, as in India and Egypt, there is a prevalent idea that the term for the manifestation of the highest grades of *rahatship* (*Rahat* or *Arhat* is the Pali equivalent for the Sanskrit *Rishi* — one who has developed his psychical powers to their fullest extent) has expired, but this comes from a mistaken notion that Buddha himself had limited the period of such development to one millennium after his death.

(August 1880)

[Replying to critics of the above remarks, H.P.B. said in a subsequent issue:]

A sentence in the article on "Rahatship" in the August number has been caught up by the adversaries of our cause and made much sport of. We wish them joy of their mare's nest. The expression was this: "We even met [in Ceylon] those who had quite recently encountered such holy men [that is, men who had acquired 'the exalted psychical powers of adeptship']; and a certain eminent priest who joined our Society,

was shortly after permitted to see and exchange some of our signs of recognition with one." We expressly explained in the article in question that by the term *Rahat* we meant an adept, or one who "has developed his psychical powers to their fullest extent." Such a person is known in India as a *Rishi* or a *Yogi*, and there are many stages and degrees of development before the pinnacle of spiritual perfectibility is reached. Thus a *Rahat* may be of a lower or higher degree of development. The four degrees or stages are *Sukha-Vipassaka* (lowest), *Tevijja* (third), *Shad Abhigna* (second), and *Siwupilidimbiapat* (first) the highest. We affirmed and repeat that neither in India, Egypt, nor Ceylon, has this ancient wisdom died out, and if we believe that there still survive its adepts and initiates, it is because we speak from personal knowledge and not by hearsay. A Ceylon Christian journal charges us with "childish credulity in believing in the so-called eminent priest, and giving publicity to an imposition and a myth." The less our adversary says about impositions and myths the better: his house is of glass, and he had better not throw stones in our garden. Whether the priest did or did not see and exchange signs with a stranger who is acquainted with the occult sciences, and hence what the Buddhists call a *rahat* of some one of the degrees, is immaterial: we believe he did, inasmuch as two of our party of Delegates also had a similar experience at two different places on the Island — to say nothing of the experience of the Editor of this magazine, or that of a certain other person, not of our Society, who both saw and conversed with such an individual. If the priest did see him, he saw a living man, not a ghost, or a god, or a spirit. A few weeks after landing in India, and when none but half a dozen of Bombay gentlemen knew our Society signals, Colonel Olcott, being at the Karli Caves, in the Mofussil, was accosted by a Hindu *Sannyasi* who first gave him the most important of our signs and then all the rest. When asked where he had learnt them, he answered that his *guru* (teacher) had sent him from — to Karli, ordering him to arrive there at precisely that hour and meet a white man to whom he should give these signs and a message which he then delivered. The point for both enemies and friends to realize is that Buddha declares that the state of *Rahat*, or adept, may always be attained by those who will follow his precepts.

(October 1880)

[The following is extracted from a tribute to Pandit Dayanand Saraswati on his passing away:]

The greatest adepts living are but mortal men, after all, and sooner or later have to die. No adept is proof against accident, unless he uses selfishly his acquired powers. For, unless he is constantly watching over his own personality, and cares little for the rest of mankind, he is as liable to fall a victim to disease and death as any other man. The childish, not to say absurd, ideas about Yogis, and their *supernatural* powers — whereas they are at best but *superhuman* — that we often find current among our own Theosophists, and the superstitious and grotesque tales narrated of these holy personages among that class of Hindus, which being more orthodox than educated, derives all its ideas from the dead-letter traditions of the *Puranas* and *Shastras*, have very little to do with sober truth. An adept, or Raj Yogi (we now speak of the real, not the fictitious ones of idle rumour) is simply the custodian of the secrets of the hidden possibilities of nature; the master and guide of her undiscovered potentialities, one who awakens and arouses them into activity by abnormal yet natural powers, and by furnishing them with the requisite group of conditions which lie dormant and can rarely, if ever, be brought together if left alone.

(December 1883)

["A Hindu Theosophist" wrote saying: "I am induced to inquire if there are Hindu Mahatmas among the Himalayan BROTHERS. By the term Hindu, I mean a believer in Vedas and the Gods they describe. If there are none, will any Brother of the 1st Section (no chela need answer this, except the editor) be so kind as to enlighten the Hindu Community in general and the Hindu Theosophists in particular whether any Hindu Rishis of old still exist in flesh and blood? The adept Himalayan BROTHERS having explored the unseen universe must necessarily know the Rishis if they exist now. Tradition says that particularly the following seven are immortal, at least for the present kalpa: Ashvatthama, Bali, Vyasa, Hanuman, Vibhishana, Kripa, Parasurama." To this, the following editorial note was appended:]

In reply to the first question we are happy to inform our correspondent that there are Mahatmas among the Himalayan Brothers who are Hindus — *i.e.*, born of Hindu and Brahmin parents and who recognize the *esoteric* meaning of the Vedas and the Upanishads. They agree with Krishna, Buddha, Vyasa, Suka, Gaudapada and Sankaracharya in considering that the *Karma-kanda* of the Vedas is of no importance whatsoever so far as man's spiritual progress is concerned. Our questioner

will do well to remember in this connection Krishna's celebrated advice to Arjuna. "The subject-matter of the Vedas is related to the three Gunas; oh Arjuna, divest thyself of these Gunas." Sankaracharya's uncompromising attitude towards Purvamimansa is too well known to require any special mention here.

Although the Himalayan Brothers admit the esoteric meaning of the Vedas and the Upanishads, they refuse to recognize as Gods the powers and other spiritual entities mentioned in the Vedas. The language used in the Vedas is allegorical and this fact has been fully recognized by some of the greatest Indian Philosophers. Our correspondent will have to prove that the Vedas really "describe *Gods*" as they exist, before he can fairly ask us to declare whether our Masters believe in such gods. We very much doubt if our correspondent is really prepared to contend seriously, that *Agni* has four horns, three legs, two heads, five hands and seven tongues as he is stated to possess in the Vedas; or that Indra committed adultery with Gautama's wife. We beg to refer our learned correspondent to Kulluka Bhatta's explanation of the latter myth (and it is a mere myth in his opinion) and Patanjali's remarks on the profound esoteric significance of the four horns of *Agni*, in support of our assertion that the Vedas do not in reality describe any gods as our questioner has supposed.

In reply to the second question we are not prepared to say that "any Hindu Rishis of old still exist in flesh and blood" although we have our own reasons to believe that some of the great Hindu Adepts of ancient times have been and are reincarnating themselves occasionally in Tibet and Tartray; nor is it at all easy for us to understand how it can ever reasonably be expected that our Himalayan Brothers should discover Hindu Rishis "in flesh and blood" in their explorations in the "Unseen Universe," since astral bodies are not usually made up of those earthly materials.

The tradition alluded to by our correspondent is not literally true; then, what connection is there between the seven personages named and the Hindu Rishis? Though we are not called upon to give an explanation of the tradition in question from our own standpoint, we shall give a few hints which may enable our readers to ascertain its real significance from what is contained in *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.

Ashvatthama has gained an *immortality of infamy*.

Parasurama's cruelty made him immortal but he is not supposed to live in flesh and blood now; he is generally stated to have some sort

of existence in fire though not necessarily in what a Christian would call "hell."

Bali is not an individual properly speaking. The principle denoted by the name will be known when the esoteric meaning of *Trivikrama Avatara* is better comprehended.

Vyasa is *immortal in his incarnations*. Let our respected Brother count how many Vyasas there have been from first to last.

Hanuman was neither a human being nor a monkey: it is one of the powers of the 7th principle of man (Rama).

Vibhishana. Not a Rakshasa really but the personification of *Sattva-guna* which is immortal.

Kripa's association with Ashvatthama will explain the nature of his immortality.

(March 1883)

[A correspondent who signed himself "Another Hindu Theosophist" referred to the above note on whether Hindu *rishis* of old did exist in flesh and blood, and asked what H.P.B. had to say on the Madras Yogi Sabhapati Swami's statement that "The founder of our Ashram, *viz.*, His Holiness the Agastya Mooni, who died, according to the common chronology, many thousand years ago, *is still living*, with many other *rishis* of his time." H.P.B. replied:]

... Sabhapati Swami is welcome to imagine and may believe that the moon is made of green cheese and prove himself very sincere in his belief. But what has that to do with the Editor's belief upon the subject? All the Hindus, past, present and future, to the contrary, could not make us *believe* that a man of our present fifth race, and of the fourth cycle Round, can or ever could live more than from 300 to 400 years *in one body*. We believe in the latter, *i.e.*, we know it to be *possible*, though highly improbable in the present stage of evolution, and so rare a case as to be nigh unknown. If science in the face of Dr. Van Oven gives 17 examples of age exceeding 150, and Dr. Bailey in his "Records of Longevity" a few as high as 170 — then it does not require a great stretch of "credulity" in admitting the possibility of reaching through *adept* powers the double of that age. Therefore, if we claim to *know* that such a thing is possible, Sabhapati Swami has perhaps an equal right to claim that he also *knows* that some exceptional men (*Rishis*) live "several thousand years." It is a matter of personal opinion — and it remains with the public jury to decide who of us is

nearer the truth.

(May 1883)

["I am sanguine that you will not disregard my humble solicitations, but will count me as one of 'your own,' and that, with your aid, I shall one day be brought face to face with the Mahatmas themselves," wrote a Sastri, to which the following note was appended by the Editor:]

This does not depend on us, but on the writer himself. We can help him in the esoteric interpretation of that which he seems to understand quite *exoterically* as far as we ourselves know. But we can give no promise on behalf of our Mahatmas.

(December 1883)

[Speaking of sacred places in India, such as Badrinath, and of the holy men who are said to inhabit them, a writer said that "none but those who are Dhyanis succeed in having their company." To this the following footnote was appended:]

One who has succeeded in obtaining "Dhyana" is called "Dhyani." By the word "Dhyana" is not here meant any knowledge but the knowledge of the mysterious laws of nature and consequently what is obtained by Yoga training. Until therefore a person reaches a certain degree of the knowledge of Yoga philosophy, he cannot see these Mahatmas.

(January 1880)

[The following appeared in reply to a correspondent:]

When Col. Olcott speaks of the possibility of "earning the right to *command* the presence of a Mahatma," he does not use the word "command" in the sense of the pupil being able to order about his Master. All he implies, evidently, is that the MAHATMA being but an humble servant of Nature, anyone who follows the natural law "commands" its servants, just as we speak in ordinary language of being able to "command" Nature, although we well know that all we command is the *knowledge* which we utilize for the purpose of producing the desired effect, having first learnt the operations of the Law of Cause and Effect.

A person may by certain practices gain what are vulgarly called "powers" without acting up to the "seven precepts" enjoined on the *Chelas*, although these "powers" are of a very low nature compared to the high possibilities of the Esoteric Science. These low "powers," being of a psycho-materialistic nature, are very dangerous in the hands of

the wicked and the ignorant, although with our present march of progress these may become commonly known in time. A sensible man, one who has the real good of humanity at heart, will always try to keep dynamite out of the vulgar reach, although he may try to gradually educate people to a correct apprehension of its functions and properties. But until he is *satisfied* that they will never misuse it, either through ignorance or wickedness, for any purpose resulting in public harm, he will never teach them its *modus operandi*. And the purpose of the observance of the said "seven precepts" by the *Chelas* is to dispel their ignorance and eradicate their lower animal nature, which alone can abuse those "powers" for base purposes. But when the pupils have proved themselves out of that danger, they are taught the *modus operandi* of what they knew before, only theoretically. Of course, the higher powers, which are of a *purely* psychological nature, are beyond the reach of ordinary men until they evolve their higher psychological faculties.

(July 1884)

[A correspondent having referred to "the sect" of the Masters, the following remark was made in a footnote:]

The "Masters" in question belong to no sect; and even a regular Chela has to rise above every sectarian prejudice before he can become one.

(April 1884)

[In an article on "The Three Grades of Ancient Theosophists," the writer speaks of occultists of a higher grade as being a law unto themselves and says that they should not be criticized or imitated by the ignorant and impatient Chela. He instances the case of Sri Sankaracharya who is alleged to have lived with a widow princess; he also mentions Arjuna who is said to have married a widow, and Krishna who had a "thousand wives." H.P.B. remarks in a footnote:]

These examples are "unsuited" because these are not *historical facts*, but allegorical fictions that are accepted *literally* but by the ignorant. No *adept* — while one at any rate — has ever "lived with a *widow* (or no widow) princess"; nor has he married anyone; least of all, no adept had, since the world's evolution, even one, let alone a "thousand wives."

(November 1882)

MARKING TIME

Ever learning, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.

—II. *Timothy*, III. 7

STUDENTS who have devoted years to the study of Theosophy often wonder whether they have made any progress. Even those who have given themselves over entirely to service sometimes feel despondent at the paucity of results. They feel as though they were striking the same musical note *ad infinitum*, and they do not like the experience. Doubt has insidious ways of creeping in. This is one of its numerous ways.

The true aspirant does not study and apply knowledge for personal advancement. His need of knowledge — of course beyond the rudiments of Theosophy — can arise only as demands for his services grow. He exists primarily to serve Master's Cause and therefore Master's bidding. All else is subsidiary. Where, then, can there be cause for lament? Disciples can be used in numerous ways — to rediscover the philosophy; to promulgate it by missionary effort; and to obey Master's behests. They have to set an example of devotion and of a genuine willingness to do that which goes against one's grain if Master wants it done. They are expected to consider no work too low, nor any effort too high, and to go on serving humanity whether orders are received or not, and though they be denied the privilege of seeing their Guru for an entire incarnation.

All too often, the earnest and otherwise sincere worker ploughs himself into a rut. His actions become mechanistic and bereft of psychic vigour. Being thus shorn of inner power, they bring indifferent results. After the first flush of enthusiasm has reached its ebb, the student forgets to invoke the power of Theosophy. When engaged in the routine of daily life, he forgets that even at the low level at which he stands he can represent Master. The problem is not that of an ability to show a steady progress of power. The problem is hardly ever of capacities. When these are necessary, they will be added unto him. What the aspirant is expected to develop is a willingness to accept tasks — even menial and distasteful ones — and to take a delight in their performance. It is this delight and enthusiasm that get eroded by lassitude and the passage of time. Vows thus dwindle into promises, promises into assurances, assurances into pious resolutions (like those that people make at each year's beginning), and resolutions are forgotten and erased, so

that after a while the man does not even know what solemn commitments he had made to himself and others. This attitude to the living of a Theosophic life takes its own toll; and instead of acknowledging his limitations, the student starts complaining that he is marking time. As in other spheres of life, Theosophy has its own dilettanti.

The chief cause of forgetfulness of the high purpose visioned in the first moments of the soul's awakening is a tendency bordering on laziness and, later, on indifference in the carrying out of the duty to make Theosophy a living power in one's life. Discontent can only come when the aspirant either desires a reward for his services or fails to recognize that in his routine duties he is doing Master's work. Arjuna had a similar difficulty in the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The application in life of such aspects of Theosophy as have been acquired, yields a twofold result. It makes available to the student that knowledge which will help him to reveal himself to Himself. More important still, it leads him to a study of the human heart in general. Unless this dual study is diligently undertaken, a meaningful brotherhood becomes impossible of establishment between the disciple and the souls that wait hungrily for his ministrations. Without this, study becomes a mere shibboleth — a refuge of the learned-ignorant, a word used to bolster up one's own image to oneself.

Self-introspection is a great step, an important one which cannot be missed or overstepped. But, by itself, it leaves the discipline incomplete. It limits the area of research to one little self with its limited body and as limited an environment. For his study, the aspirant has to reach out to other human hearts — their efforts, their failures and their successes. Can he lend a helping hand through the light which Theosophy provides? Can he soothe a fevered brow, a heart burdened with sorrow, a mind so clogged that it sees no hope and is closed to all consolation? A sinning student, a faltering student, even a handicapped student may derive strength from the philosophy and offer his mite of force to alleviate suffering. If he does this as opportunity upon opportunity arises, can he ever feel that he is marking time? Never.

As the disciple applies himself to this task of studying humanity in particular and in the mass, he finds that a meaningful brotherhood becomes possible of establishment between himself and humanity — not only between him and individual units, but between himself and the suffering conglomerate whole. The great orphaned heart of which the disciple is a part cannot, nay, dare not, be forgotten, lest the student abandon the

paths of Theosophy and seek through other masters a selfish liberation that separates him from the world and men for ever. Master's philosophy and Master's help is not for such. They may attain certain heights, but they reach them with aims and purposes which the Masters do not have and cannot recommend.

There is a tendency among students to hope that, since they study Theosophy and proclaim Brotherhood, they may by some miraculous dispensation escape the ups and downs of life. In other words, these future saviours of humanity expect right from the initial stages to be saved themselves. A little thought will convince them that this cannot be so. To be at one with humanity requires the sharing with it of its great pain. The child cannot overnight imbibe even the worldly knowledge that is taught in college and university. For several years it does mark time — at least apparently so. But, as everyone knows, its growth is not arrested by that experience. Further, the student who thus complains loses sight of the fact that by his ennui and discontent he is losing a wonderful power which gets developed under those very circumstances. If he is convinced that the Guru's eye is on him, then any complaint made is an indication of a loss of faith in that Teacher. It is under adverse circumstances and darkening skies that the true student finds his incentives for growth.

Says *Light on the Path*:

Kill out all sense of separateness.

Kill out desire for sensation.

Kill out the hunger for growth.

THE essence of knowledge is, having it, to apply it.

—CONFUCIUS

LOOKING BACK ON "THE PATH"

II.—THE SCREEN OF TIME

"To us it appears that there is a field and a need for it," wrote Mr. Judge in his first editorial in the first number of *The Path*, the magazine he founded and launched in April 1886. Its purpose was service of the cause of Theosophy. This he thought rightly a magazine could give, for as he says later (in March 1890), "the *life* of a movement is largely in its literature, and its literature is epitomized in its magazines."¹

For ten years *The Path* retained the title chosen for it, till from April 1896 it was, by Mr. Judge's direction, named *Theosophy*. And though ten years on the Screen of Time may seem short or long according to circumstances, certain it is that *The Path*, during the decade in which it bore that name, exerted an influence which has affected the whole Theosophical Movement.

For this Mr. Judge was solely responsible. As editor he had but one object — to disseminate throughout the materialistic West the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion as brought to it by H.P.B. from her Eastern Masters. His devotion to her was absolute; his zeal was unflagging. And that much of his noble work was done in face of increasing ill health is sadly proven by the fact that the first issue of *The Path* under its new name contained the intimation of his death on March 21, 1896.

To change the name of a magazine after ten years may be considered unusual, but it was done "for many reasons," writes Mr. Judge in his editorial for March 1896, whose heading, "The Screen of Time," has been borrowed as seeming suitable for this article. *The Path* thenceforth would appear as *Theosophy*, and "one of the chief results of the change," continues Mr. Judge, "will be an increased familiarity on the part of the public with the word; and it is a word that has power in it, sufficient in itself to change the tenor of a man's life, as experience has shown in more than one instance."

Ever practical, he expresses the hope that "a very considerable increase in the circulation will be effected. Each reader will doubtless help to bring this about by reading *Theosophy* on the street-cars, in the trains, and in other public places where many eyes will be caught by the well-known name on the cover of a magazine." He concludes with memorable words: "As this is a Theosophical venture I invite the co-

¹ Except where otherwise stated, all quotations are from the *Path* editorials reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for October 1941 and November 1965.—Eds.

operation of Theosophists the world over in making it a success. Nothing can be accomplished without you; everything with you; and the last and apparently least of you is not always the most helpless."

The Path's beginning was modest. As Mr. Judge recalled in the seventh year of publication: "We began without an office or capital; it might be said that the business was carried on in a hat at first." Yet as early as the beginning of the second year he could report *The Path* as having reached a turning-point "in its upward spiral from the regions of experiment to the plane of assured and growing success," not, however, taking personal credit for this, for he continues: "While the Editor tenders his hearty thanks to the friends who have loyally served it with pen and purse, he deems it proper to express his conviction that a mighty, if unseen, power has been behind it from the first, and will continue to aid it. In no other way can its phenomenal success be accounted for."

Pen and purse are two basic essentials in the running of any publication. Mr. Judge could, and did, provide the former, as his many books and pamphlets alone can testify, their subject-matter having first seen print in *The Path*. But in addition a vast amount of his writing is to be found in the bound volumes, much of it under various pseudonyms. At the outset, however, there was no "staff of writers employed or promised. No articles were on hand waiting for insertion." Yet, from the start, what was needed must have come in, for at the end of the third year he thanks "those who have helped us with thoughts, with means, and with pen," and in March 1890 reports that "We can now point to four volumes in which will be found consistent Theosophical articles, well written, by students who all have devoted years to the subject."

The other need was also met (largely, again, by Mr. Judge himself). "Starting without money," he writes at the beginning of the second year, "and appealing, as was feared, to a comparatively small class, it [*The Path*] has steadily grown in favour from the very first number; none of the ordinary means of pushing it into notice have been resorted to, and not ten dollars spent in advertising; yet new names are added to the list almost daily, and of the hundreds of its old subscribers only three have withdrawn."

None the less, it struck him as odd — as well it might! — that the likeliest people to support the magazine were not doing so. He writes in March 1889: "It is with a trace of sorrow that we record the fact that *The Path* has not been supported by subscribing Theosophists, but

mainly by those who are not members of the Society. This is strange but true." He recurs to the point in March 1890. "All Theosophists who can afford \$2.00 per year are asked if they should not support *The Path*. The magazine is not carried on for profit, and is solely devoted to the interests of the Theosophical Society, and yet it is a fact that its subscribers are nearly all non-theosophists. Its editor and its writers all work for nothing, but for four years it has been published at a loss which is always met out of private means. Members of the Society who all know that *The Path* maintains an independent attitude, supporting no clique and pandering to no self-interest, should not keep back their support from a journal that does much to keep alive and make respected the Society and its literature."

This odd fact notwithstanding, Mr. Judge can record, a month later: "The year just closed has been a pleasant one, revealing new earnest hearts and willing hands." His only other regret is voiced in the issue that sees *The Path* entering its seventh year: "Were subscribers more numerous it might enlarge the number of its pages." It did at least, however, with this issue, "put on a new cover," and for cheer Mr. Judge could always turn back to his editorial for April 1890 and read how "in the third month of the first year of *The Path* its death within the year was predicted, but fate has ruled otherwise, and we have been accorded the opportunity of attempting to erect the four pillars of Sincerity, Devotion, Determination of Purpose, and Integrity."

That many must have honoured these noble aims and desired to support the journal was manifest as early as its second year of publication, when Mr. Judge was able to state that in America "its regular circulation extends from Sandy Hook to the Golden Gate, and from the Green Mountains to the Crescent City; it reaches through England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia; it is read alike beneath the North Star in Sweden and under the Southern Cross in New Zealand; it is a welcome guest on the immemorial shores of India. . . . It would be impossible not to feel gratification at such results, even were it an ordinary money-making enterprise; how much more when it is remembered that it is devoted, not to any selfish end, but to the spread of that idea of Universal Brotherhood which aims to benefit all, from highest to lowest!"

How had such readership been achieved? Not through any worldly advantages. "When *The Path* was launched," says Mr. Judge, writing after twenty-four months of publication, "we knew not — nor asked how long it would float, nor to whom it would reach. No capitalists

or companies offered their assistance, and none could then say how it was to obtain a circulation."

The journal drew its own to it none the less. Mr. Judge had indicated who these might be at the outset — "all who wish to raise themselves and their fellow creatures — man and beast — out of the thoughtless jogtrot of selfish everyday life." Two years later we find him writing: "Our readers are nearly all students. Some are disciples. But few are not in earnest. All are sympathetic. They have helped us with appreciation, and assisted the progress of all by striving for the calmness which comes from trying to exemplify Brotherhood."

In the same editorial he reports that *The Path's* course "during these two years has been for its conductors full of encouragement and instruction; letters from numerous subscribers testify that its readers have had some benefit also; none have written a word of disapproval."

Again, in March 1892, *The Path's* readers appear in a good light. "Comrades," is the editor's word for them. "Thanks, then, comrades, for your help, your appreciation, your judgment and suggestions." Even when, in the previous year, he noted dryly, "This journal has had the usual complainers, but" — the sentence was completed with characteristic kindness — "can best and most easily remember that its friends are numerous."

Mr. Judge invited such co-operation. *The Path* was only entering its second year when, in a particularly noteworthy editorial, he informed readers that "its columns are open to all Theosophists who may desire to express their views on matters of real importance to the cause in which all should be interested. New features will be added as the need seems to arise; the first will probably be a department devoted to answers to correspondents. A large and constantly increasing number of letters of inquiry are received, and the present editorial staff finds it impossible to answer each separately; besides which, many of them naturally relate to the same or similar matters. By thus printing general replies, not only will the inquirers be answered, but others may have their unspoken questions replied to, or a similar line of thought will be suggested, or other views be elicited, to the mutual advantage of writers and readers."

The above should be of particular interest to present-day readers of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, which from time to time reprints some of these former letters and the replies made to them. True enough, the same questions arise in many minds today; the old answers hold

good; out of the past Mr. Judge still ministers to the present. Another reason why this editorial is noteworthy is that it contains three sentences which now form part of the U.L.T. Declaration.

Yet another editorial should be singled out for mention, that for March 1892, which records the passing of H.P.B. and Mr. Judge's reaction to it. "A catastrophe," he calls it. "It was as if a mighty tower had fallen, causing the whole theosophic body corporate to quiver for a space. That was but momentary, for the great forces that had held the tower in place at once transferred themselves throughout the whole range of the Society, informing it with added energy, new zeal, and greater strength."

But five more years and Mr. Judge himself cast off the body, and how terrible the loss must have seemed at the time to his fellow workers! Yet, to quote the Editors of the Semicentennial Edition of *Letters That Have Helped Me*, as regards the successive generations of students of Theosophy who have drawn upon his wisdom ever since, "to them Mr. Judge declares himself, more truly and intimately, it sometimes seems, than might be the case if they had contacted anything other than the essence, or the *presence*, of Mr. Judge, as it inheres in his written word. W.Q.J. the Teacher is a vivid figure, W.Q.J. the Friend, a most sympathetic companion, and W.Q.J. the Great Soul — an Ideal and a Fact." (p. 135)

Once, when asked by a *Path* associate what the students would do without him — how could they manage if he died? — Mr. Judge said, "Go to the pages of the *Path* Magazine. Study what I have written there, and you will know what I would do" (*Ibid.*, p. 140). We of today can endorse that, thankful for the permanency of the printed word.

Mr. Judge was a born writer. His style was simple and direct, his language always choice, illumined with telling imagery, often with a touch of true poetry. Yet literary art in itself meant nothing to him. His concern was solely to serve the cause of Theosophy. That, and only that, was the object of his writing. He laid his literary gift upon the altar and plied his tireless pen throughout the years in the service of H.P.B., the Masters, and — TRUTH. Here is but one golden grain from it, something to bear in mind in all circumstances. "We need no resolves for the future, for we never touch it; we need no regret for the past, for we have not lost anything, but have the gaining eternally of experience. . . . The path still stretches on and ever upward!"

THE POWER OF NON-VIOLENCE

IN 1931, Gandhiji told some war-resisters at a meeting in London that when India was free he would like to take part in a world-wide movement for non-violence. He did not live to fulfil that hope, but he left clear guidelines for his friends and followers to carry on his unfinished work. He is no longer with us to guide and advise in the carrying out of the cultural, educational, social and economic experiments which he and other friends of peace started in India. Union is strength, and if the cause of non-violence is to succeed, its adherents in the West should be united with those in the East.

Westerners who visit India are often sadly aware that although India produced Mahatma Gandhi and still calls him the "Father of the Nation," it is now mere lip homage, and although his spirit is not quite dead it seems today to be almost suffocated. Pacifists and advocates of non-violence all over the world, seeing that the world is steeped in violence in one form or another, and fearing the consequences, are trying desperately to turn people's minds to the way of peace and to banish fear and hate from their hearts. But they do not receive much help or hope from India, where they had reason to expect it. It is time that lovers of peace in both West and East sit down together and share their knowledge and hopes and plans, and thus strengthening one another and bearing witness to the truth and power of the spiritual law of non-violence, devise more effective ways and means to educate their fellow men and spread its beneficent principle and practice among all.

It is a distressing fact that while Gandhiji strove to convert all men and women to non-violence, he was successful in converting a mere handful. If he who was so zealous in his daily life to practise these principles and set the example achieved only partial success, how can we, who by comparison are so weak in our personal discipline, expect to succeed? Of this we cannot judge. Did Buddha succeed? Did Jesus succeed? They succeeded in planting in the hearts of men imperishable spiritual truths, and we know that Gandhiji again showed us the truth that men can live following exalted principles if they will.

What may we recognize as the greatest enemies of those who would practise non-violence? We may name fear, anger, greed, and the desire for revenge. These weaknesses of character can be recognized by anyone. And that they lead to violence we have had more than enough proof of in our world. No man need turn away simply because the

battle of life is seen to be not easy, or because he himself is weak. It is unrealistic in our world today to think that any country is safe from the ravages of war. The fiendish effects of modern warfare on the whole of man's life, his body, his possessions, his emotions, mind and soul, and on the whole structure of human society, defy description in language.

There is no time to wait. Even men who think they are educated have little idea as to how much their thoughts on world affairs are moulded by the daily dose from the newspapers. Most newspapers foster the disease of materialistic nationalism, from which disease most of the educated citizens of the world suffer. Loyalty to mankind as a whole is needed. Trust, compassion, forgiveness and pity in human hearts is the paramount need. Have we not suffered enough? Have we not caused enough suffering? Those deeper, more penetrating influences that touch the hearts of men must be stirred and aroused. It is a sphere in which all men of morals and of true religion, as also all men calling themselves pacifists and *satyagrahis*, must concern themselves. Here are the real roots of war, and from the depths of human character must spring the way of peace for mankind.

The true man of non-violence is one who has rooted out of his heart all fear, all greed, all desire for revenge, jealousy, bitterness and love of power. All those who are afraid of any nation or any bloc, all those who hate any ideology or party or class or religion, all those who fear that what they stand for may be destroyed by another, have the seeds of violence in their hearts.

Those who love *Ahimsa*, non-violence, are those who in their lives give love and understanding service not only to their fellow men, but even to their enemies. Such is the way of peace for mankind; such must be the way of life for those who believe in non-violence. As the seeds of war are in the minds and hearts of men, so also are the seeds of peace; and the development of this spirit of love will help those who are striving to create the superstructure of a beneficent world government and to make *Ahimsa* a living Force, an Ideal to live by and for, thus providing a longed-for security for all.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF REINCARNATION

ON THE ASSUMPTION that there are higher and nobler worlds and that beings from those worlds may and do come into this world, it is worth while to consider the enormous obstacles under which they labour in attempting to encourage us towards the assumption of that high state ourselves. Consider that, in the first instance, however familiar and known their own world is to them, it is absolutely unknown to us, so that they have always to speak to us of spiritual and metaphysical realities in physical terms, or else they have to take our physical terms and endeavour, by parable and symbology, by correspondence and analogy, to give them a transcendental meaning in our mind. We are familiar enough with the nomenclature of higher worlds — too familiar. Those words have assumed a corrupt, distorted or otherwise invalid meaning in our eyes. We are so familiar with the terms, so absolutely unfamiliar with the facts, that when a man endeavours to arrest the attention by speaking of immortal things *versus* mortal things, who cares to listen seriously?

Take words such as “mortal,” “immortal,” “reincarnation.” Add to them such terms as “transmigration,” “metempsychosis,” “permutation,” “transformation,” our familiar word “evolution” — and the fact is that although these words seem misty and vague, they all trace back to a few simple, clear, fundamental and universally applicable ideas rooted in reality. And it is to the real basis of every form of belief extant among men concerning other existences than this, that we shall turn.

Inherent in the mind of every man is the perception that, no matter how varied and heterogeneous the world in which we live, all that *is* must have proceeded from one source. Have we considered that neither of the two words — unity and differentiation — represents Reality, that they only represent states or conditions of the One Reality? A man may engage in a whole host of thoughts, he may change his mind, his opinion, his belief, his ethics, his conduct, his actions, any number of times a day, yet all the time the man remains one and the same being and all of his multitudinous expressions are nothing but projections from himself. The moment we cease to entertain an idea or a belief, where is that idea or belief? It has changed state. From what we call existence it has lapsed into non-existence. Has it been annihilated? No. What remains is, first, the being who originally put it forth; next, that eternal power in him to put it forth; thirdly, the memory, intense or weak, of

what he has before emitted; and fourthly, the power to make a further emission.

Now why can we not look at the beginning of all things in precisely those terms? In all this, where is the veritable reality? The man. Without the man, what do words such as "power," "memory," "imagination" mean? Nothing. Without his putting them forth or creating them, without his sustaining or preserving them, without his changing them by his own creative will, what do all these things mean? Absolutely nothing.

We have, then, to consider that there is but One Reality. The name we give to it matters little. The recognition of its eternal subsistence is the important point. Religion has personified it and called it God; science has made an abstraction of it and called it Law; but everywhere, at all times, amongst all people, the recognition of the One Reality has remained. No matter how, in their ignorance, they have warped and belittled their conception of that Reality — it remains.

That is the first thing for us to bear in mind in approaching the subject of Reincarnation, or for that matter, anything else — the One Reality. Secondly, we habitually think of our body as one thing and of matter elsewhere as totally distinct, whereas in fact our body is but a temporary and limited form in universal and eternal matter. Our body is a projection of matter in the same way as our speech is a projection of our thought, and our thought a projection of our creative power. If there is one Life, one Spirit, one Soul, one Intelligence, ancient, constant and eternal, uncreate but a creator, then there is no more difference between "my life" and "thy life" than there is between "my body" and matter; no more difference between "my life" and the One Life than there is between our several bodies and universal matter.

It is a ghastly commentary on the loss of spiritual discrimination in the human race today that men have utterly failed to use their divine power of self-introspection. There is no revelation required, no psychic thunders, no priests, no ministry, for a man to see that just as his body is a part of and one with universal matter, so the Life, the Soul, the Self, the Intelligence, the Consciousness, the Spiritual in him, is nothing but an indivisible part of the eternal One Life, an embodied and conditioned manifestation of the One Self of all that is. Any man can see this, and when he sees it, he has the sure and indestructible knowledge of his own immortality. In the words of the *Gita*, "I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. . . . There is no existence for that which does not exist, nor

is there any non-existence for what exists.”

That is the first step to a consideration of the subject of Reincarnation: the One Reality, the omnipresent, impartite, incorruptible, ancient, eternal and infinite Life, and the fundamental identity of every soul or individual life with that One Life.

So immortality is an incontestable fact, for everything in the Universe, visible and invisible, ever was and can never cease to be. In modern scientific terms this is nothing but a statement of the law of the conservation of energy, that we can forever accumulate, condense, transform energy, and that we have not created nor annihilated a bit of it. There is the same quantum of energy in space today as there eternally was and always will be.

Apply the same thing to matter. It is in a state of perpetual transformation, moving from form to form, from combination to combination, from change to change, but the sum total of matter is absolutely incapable of increase or diminution. Modern science has perceived that matter and energy are two states of one and the same thing; that matter is nothing but static energy; energy nothing but fluidic matter. Matter is a state transferable into force, force is a state transferable into matter. What is that reality of which force and matter are the two states or conditions? Theosophy says — Ideas. Just as we transform a solid into a liquid, a liquid into a gas by means of force, so we transform ideas into energy, energy into its multitudinous forms. According to the intelligence of the being to whom the energy is imparted does it move. Behind any and every intelligence there is the Knower of it, the Enjoyer of it, the Sufferer from it.

So we have matter, force, and mind or intelligence. How did we gain intelligence? We got it through three forms of contact with the life around us and the life in us, through spiritual, intellectual and physical experience. These three modes of gaining experience may be employed singly, two at a time, or three at a time, in different quarters of the same being. When there has been sufficient accumulation of spiritual experience, intellectual experience and physical experience through the three eyes — the eye of the Spirit, the eye of mind, the eye of sense — we have self-consciousness.

One has but to dwell on these ideas to appreciate their force and significance and unshakable validity — that in man, in everything, is the One Life, and that because it is the One Life, there is in each being, however humble, in each form, however infinitesimal, the potentiality

of the whole universe. If we want to find out whether there is electricity in a wire a hundred miles long, we need not touch the whole wire; if we touch any part of it we shall know whether there is electricity there or not.

The same capacity that is in the universe is in every man, because the same Life is in every man as in all the Universe. The fundamental purpose, not only of H. P. Blavatsky who brought Theosophy to our world, but of every great Teacher who ever came among men, must be to tell us that man is identical with the absolute, unmanifested Principle as also with the Deity as we see it manifested in all nature, and to urge us to inquire, to study, to investigate, to explore in order to demonstrate to ourselves that there exists in every man the same infinite potential capacity that is everywhere in the creative forces of nature.

Is man a poor miserable sinner? No, though he has been taught that and believes that. Is man a mortal being who requires a miracle to render him immortal? No. Is man a mere brute mechanism? No. The woe of our religion, that makes it a curse to mankind, is that it is devoid of reason. The woe of our science, that makes it equally a curse to all mankind, is that it is devoid of ethics, yet there is that in every man that demands and must have knowledge, that demands and must have true science, that demands and must have a right perception to use ethics. Between science and religion a man is, as it were, between the upper and lower millstone that has ground out the corn of life and that has produced our immeasurable woes.

If we then speak of spirit or soul, matter or body, let us recognize that spirit and matter represent the opposite states of the One Life — spirit the highest state or condition possible for any being, matter the lowest state or condition of any part of life; and soul bears the same relation to spirit that body bears to matter. What, then, is the body? Form of matter. What, then, is the soul? Form of spirit. Myriads of men think they are their bodies, and so thinking, they act on that basis. When men think they are their appetites and sensations, their desires, likes and dislikes, they spend their divine energy accordingly.

Universally considered, the descent from spirit into matter, to lift the latter up, is metempsychosis. The transit from body to body while in matter is transmigration. Reincarnation is metempsychosis, looked at from below up. The descent of spirit into matter, from the standpoint of matter, is reincarnation. The upward progress of matter, from the standpoint of spirit, is metempsychosis. The incessant change of

forms of every kind is transmigration.

It is not possible for a self-conscious being to take birth below the human kingdom, as it cannot be self-conscious there. Beings in the lower kingdoms have only the two "eyes" — the eye of matter and the half-developed spiritual eye; the eye of mind has not developed yet. In the Orient, a totally false meaning has been given to transmigration and it is believed that a sinful man may be reborn as a tiger, a cow, or a mouse. This is a gross distortion of the true teaching.

The obstacle to the comprehension of true ideas is not in our spiritual nature; the obstacle is in our intellectual nature, in our moral nature and in our sense nature. Universally speaking, every stage of descent of Spirit into matter is the "divine incarnation"; and every change of form physically, from an atom into a molecule, from a molecule into a cell, from a cell into an organ, from an organ into a body, from body back to organ, organ back to cell, cell back to molecule, molecule back to atom, constitutes the whole round of transmigration — the atom as high as it can go and back again from where it started, but having gained what it could. The body, the organs, the cell, the molecules, are all perishable. But atoms were atoms before they started, they were atoms when they combined in a molecular structure; they were atoms when the cells combined to form the organs, and when the organs combined to create a body. It is the atom that passed through each one of those transformations.

Now consider the opposite pole — Spirit. No purely spiritual divine soul can have an independent self-conscious existence until it has passed from Spirit downward through every elemental form, then up through the visible kingdoms of Nature to the human form; and then through experience it gains the three bases of all perception — spiritual experience, intellectual experience, physical or sense experience — the three focused in self-consciousness. Then by self-induced and self-devised exertions there is the return once more to the pure spiritual state. From spirit downward through every complexity of form metaphysical and form physical there is a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations — until the individual has learned enough to get out of it through personal merit and exertion.

If we have eternally existed, why do we not know ourselves? Well, how long will it take a man to learn the multiplication table who wants to play cards? How long will it take a man to learn to be sober whose whole life-thought is to drink? It will take him an eternity and

more. Over and over again in past periods of evolution we have risen high and then, satisfied with what we have gained, we begin the downward cycle because the ethical principles have not been practised from the start. We sit down to enjoy instead of exerting ourselves to proceed further. From self-indulgence, satiety; from satiety, loss of the means of indulgence; from loss of means, poverty; from poverty, despair, from despair, death; from death, reincarnation; from reincarnation, a renewed opportunity to climb the ladder of life.

Why should we say "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome?" Why should a nation ever perish? And yet the history of civilization always shows a cyclic progress from barbarism to semi-civilization to the glorious flowering, and then — no fruitage, culminating in decay. What has become of the civilizations of old? We were there; we helped build them. Being immortal, we have our physical cycle, our intellectual cycle, our spiritual cycle. The spiritual is far, far longer in terms of our mortal years than the intellectual; the intellectual far longer than the physical. The physical is the plane of mutual antagonisms, mutual destructions, mutual hatreds, lack of ethics, lack of brotherhood, lack of any perception of duty, lack of discrimination — a terribly swift momentum within the short span of three score years and ten, followed by a thousand to fifteen hundred years' interregnum in a spiritual state, and then once more the resumption of earth-life to learn the neglected lessons of the past, to gain and reap experience once more in the only way that it can be gained — by contrast.

If we had just the courage to turn away from our religion, whatever it is, our ideas, whatever they be, and what the wise and learned have told us, and present to ourselves a few simple theoretical problems, we might traverse the dull, dark corridors of this infernal life we live, and become part of the spiritual life while living in this world. Let a man consider those two familiar words — selfishness and unselfishness. Can these two persistently endure in the same man? Will not the very flow of his own force, the very activity of his own energies, at last drive him in one of two directions? Let a man ask himself — which is better, that I should spend what power, what energies, what passions I now have in unselfish service of my fellow beings or in selfish exactions upon them? There is not a man living who would not say to others: "Give me unselfishness every time." What keeps us from practising it? Fear, the child of ignorance; prejudice, in the form of false religion, false ideas, false notions, and the worst of those notions is

that it does not profit a man to live an unselfish life.

“Who is going to protect the unselfish man?” it might be asked. The answer is — his own unselfishness will protect him. But, it might be argued further, everywhere we see the unselfish man getting the worst of it; people take advantage of his unselfishness. And the answer is — look a little closer, they take advantage of his ignorance, not of his unselfishness. He has wrong notions of brotherhood and generosity. What words are more often before the public than “brotherhood,” “charity,” “love”? And those who ask do not know what they ask; those who give do not know what they give. It is only by studying our own nature that we can tell our impulses from our intuitions, sophistry from sound reason, the true from the false in ourselves.

Great difficulties are presented to the Western man when the subject of Reincarnation is brought to his attention, because his mind being steeped in personal-god or miracle ideas, in brute materialism, law, fate, luck, chance, etc., he will look at the Truth with a mind loaded with false ideas as the criterion by which to judge. The world has no true criterion. The teachings that Theosophy offers are unassailable, indestructible, and they lead straight to the emancipation of the human soul from bondage of every kind — yea, even from the bondage of birth, death, decay, sickness and error.

FOR a man who understands life to be what it really is, to distress himself because of a diminution of his life from illness and old age is as if a man on approaching the light were to regret that his shadow diminishes proportionately as he walks up to the light.

To believe in the destruction of life because the body is destroyed, is the same as to believe that the disappearance of the shadow of an object, when the object merges into full light, is a proof of the destruction of the object itself.

Only a man who has looked at the shadow so long that at last he imagines it to be the object itself, could arrive at such a conclusion.

But to a man who knows himself not by his reflection (his existence in space and time) but by the growth of his loving relationship to the world, the disappearance of the shadow of spatial and temporal condition is only the indication of a greater degree of light.

—LEO TOLSTOY

ROBERT CROSBIE SPEAKS

VI.—ABOUT OBSTACLES

UNDER THE LAW no one can meet with an OBSTACLE which he is not able to overcome; the OBSTACLE is but an opportunity for him to get rid of some defect which he now possesses. Often the very things which seem the most difficult for us prove to be the most beneficent.

If it were not for the OBSTACLES in life — if life were one happy, placid dream — we never would make the motion or the effort that would arouse the highest characteristics of thought and action. It is by reason of the OBSTACLES we have to overcome that we become stronger and obtain nobler traits. There is no such thing as a divinely created being, for everything that exists becomes.

We, who know that the universe exists for the purposes of Soul, can be but momentarily disturbed by anything that may come to pass. You have that attitude, and the adjustment of the effects of events to it must become more and more easy and rapid as time goes on, and enough “monads” have been examined to get the general classification. Call it a study class doing examples in OBSTACLES.

I have found it helpful to go back to the time when full confidence abounded, if OBSTACLES pressed hard and insistently. It often appears that OBSTACLES that meet us need not be; that they have no relation to the great task we have set before ourselves; yet due consideration of what we have learned must show that nothing can possibly occur which is out of that relation. . . . The key to conduct, then, seems to be — taking things as they come, and dealing with them singly day to day.

The student should see clearly that his present existence is his opportunity to live and learn, as well as learn to live to the best advantage; it contains and presents the opportunities which, if rejected, will come before us in one form or another until we realize that a step forward can be taken in no other way than by overcoming OBSTACLES, and thus, defects.

We ourselves have to clear away the OBSTACLES that prevent us from knowing our inner selves.

The greater the OBSTACLE the greater the effort, so we will see to it that the good work goes on, with charity toward all and with malice toward none, and with all our power as the cycle permits.

We did not start out expecting a “train de luxe” to heaven. We knew it was to be a fight every step of the way; and not only do we have to

fight, but to meet and surmount all the OBSTACLES that the enemy — this civilization — places in our way. But in view of the great prize — the uplift of humanity — these OBSTACLES offer opportunity to get into fighting trim, and as such should be welcomed rather than decried or denied. We know all these things, yet we have to say them over and over again to ourselves and to each other for mutual encouragement.

The best method to follow in trying to help our friends is to aid them to see their OBSTACLES.

It is our very spiritual nature which makes our present unhappy condition possible, for from it flows the One power, either exercising itself through small ideas—its OBSTACLES — or acting fully and without constraint.

Are things going hard with you? If so, it is time to press harder along the way you know. That will inevitably destroy all OBSTACLES, and if persisted in *during stress* generates and maintains greater powers of resistance. Everybody on the Path goes through similar OBSTACLES; by having them and overcoming them, you become teachers with knowledge of how to help. If you had no OBSTACLES, you would not know how. Thank Karma for "OBSTACLES."

REFERENCES: *The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 232-33, 233, 232, 69, 85, 193, 213, 74, 70, 118, 213, 43.

LIFE is more than motion, it is Music; more than rest, it is Peace; more than work; it is Duty; more than labour, it is Love; more than enjoyment, it is Blessedness; more than acquiring money and position and reputation, it is Knowledge, Purpose, strong and high Resolve.

—JAMES ALLEN

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Of late, there is a welcome trend on the part of progressive thinkers to view illness and healing in a new light — “new” from the point of view of medical science as generally known and practised today. “Mind as Healer, Mind as Slayer” is the telling title of an article by Kenneth R. Pelletier in *Psychology Today* for February 1977. The author, who is Director of the Psychosomatic Medicine Center at Gladman Memorial Hospital, Oakland, California, U.S.A., makes a plea for bringing the healing arts together and treating body, mind and soul as a unit, as called for by the stress of modern living.

It is being increasingly recognized that “the afflictions of civilization” — among them, heart disease, cancer, arthritis and respiratory diseases — stem in the main from the increased stress of modern society. According to one estimate, 50 to 80 per cent of all diseases in the industrialized nations have their origins in stress. In Dr. Pelletier’s words:

No one can avoid stress; the wear and tear of stress is part of the cost of living. But for many of us, that cost has become too high. Modern man faces more daily pressures, such as the unrelenting demands of the clock, than have people at any other time in history, and the effect is often devastating. Our bodies start in late adolescence to accumulate the effects of stress that will surface as disorders when we are in our 40s and 50s. Such diseases come from the body’s cumulative responses to stress. . . .

Different types of people are predisposed to develop different medical problems when they are under stress. . . . While we know how excessive stress leads to illness in some of the most prevalent stress diseases, we have yet to discover the precise links between stress and the resulting symptoms in many others. Stress can alter a person’s brain-wave activity, endocrine and immunological balance, blood supply and pressure, respiration rate and pattern, and digestive processes. One or more of these bodily changes will develop into a symptom if the initial arousal is unduly prolonged. . . .

When a person translates stress from a psychological conflict into a physical symptom . . . the resulting disorder is classified as psychosomatic. Such disorders persist in the absence of any obvious organic cause. Many doctors assume that the patient’s complaints are imaginary, because they have no organic basis. In fact, such disorders may stem from psychological conflicts. The symptom often relieves the pressure from problems in other parts of the

person's life.

Dr. Pelletier explains how patients can be helped to learn better ways to handle the normal stresses of life and to utilize periods of illness, stress, or crisis as opportunities for major life changes and for personal growth. The view of disease and its prevention and cure that he presents, though known to and practised by the healers of old, may seem new to many medical men today, for this among other reasons:

Western philosophers have divided man into the separate aspects of body, mind, and spirit. We in the West think in terms of these parts of man rather than seeing him as an integrated whole. This split is evident in the present division of the healing professions. Physicians treat the body; psychologists and psychiatrists heal the mind; and yet a third group, the clergy, attends to the soul.

This split also shows up in our views of what disease is. On the one hand, there is the medical view which dismisses all psychological factors and considers disease to stem from purely physical factors. Those who hold this view see every illness, from polio to neurosis, as caused entirely by physical agents. In contrast to this is an equally extreme point of view that maintains that all physical illness is the result of some psychological shortcoming of the person. Advocates of this view see illnesses ranging from the common cold to terminal disease as, for example, a self-inflicted judgment by the person because of his misdeeds. The misconception in both of these orientations is their separation of mind and body.

Neither of these views alone is sufficient to explain the cause of disease. The best understanding of disease comes when we consider the whole person. We need to see a person physically, psychologically, and spiritually to gain as full an understanding of his life as we can. There is a new approach emerging in the healing professions today that takes such a holistic focus. Those who take this view see that a person's mind and body work as a single unit, and that health exists when they are in harmony, while illness results when stress and conflict disrupt them. They look at the patient as a person, rather than limiting themselves to his symptoms.

Some modern doctors view their patients almost as machines with changeable parts, and so develop sophisticated procedures for the repair, removal, or artificial construction of these parts. These are important achievements, but in the process the healing professions have lost sight of man as a dynamic, integrated, and complex being with the capacity for self-healing. Modern medicine

knows much more about disease than about health and its maintenance. Most research and treatment efforts seek to correct an existing disorder, rather than to prevent disease.

The author sees disease as the outcome not of a single cause but of the complex interaction of social factors, physical and psychological stress, and our inability to adapt to these pressures. Medical remedies may clear up a person's symptoms, but they leave untouched the strains that have made him susceptible to these symptoms. A total cure requires that we consider man as a complete being.

Dr. Pelletier mentions a number of new therapies that can help in reducing stress and giving relief from psychosomatic disease, among them biofeedback and what have come to be known as meditative techniques, which are in fact exercises in relaxation. Also the role played by will in helping a person to exercise better control over his mind and body cannot be overemphasized. It is his will that allows a patient to become an active and responsible participant in the healing process rather than a passive victim of the disease. The capacity of a person's mind as healer or slayer needs to be better understood.

The maintenance of health and the prevention of illness is much more important than the treatment of single disorders. The article lays stress on this and concludes with these words:

Staying healthy involves much more than simply seeing a doctor when we become ill. How we live — including what we eat, our family life, our working day, and many other large and small details of our routine — are critically important in keeping us healthy or making us ill. As we expand our attitudes about health to take these factors into account, and as people take responsibility for their health by reshaping their lives to handle stress better, or by playing a more active role in their own healing processes, preventive medicine can work. In a holistic approach that integrates techniques ranging from meditation to the most modern medical technology, lies a new medicine that seeks a balance within ourselves and a harmony with our environment.

Answering the charge of lack of enthusiasm and of action in the field of social service levelled against Theosophists, H.P.B. pointed out that mere longing to do good works is not enough and that schemes for the redemption of mankind, unless implemented with real knowledge, may in fact prove to be vitally injurious. In "Let Every Man

Prove His Own Work" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*) she explains:

... it takes a very wise man to do good works without danger of doing incalculable harm. A highly developed adept in life may grasp the nettle, and by his great intuitive powers, know whom to relieve from pain and whom to leave in the mire that is their best teacher. The poor and wretched themselves will tell anyone who is able to win their confidence what disastrous mistakes are made by those who come from a different class and endeavour to help them. Kindness and gentle treatment will sometimes bring out the worst qualities of a man or woman who has led a fairly presentable life when kept down by pain and despair. May the Master of Mercy forgive us for saying such words of any human creatures, all of whom are a part of ourselves, according to the law of human brotherhood which no disowning of it can destroy. But the words are true. None of us know the darkness which lurks in the depths of our own natures until some strange and unfamiliar experience rouses the whole being into action. So with these others who seem more miserable than ourselves.

Under the title "The Paradox of Doing Good" (*Reader's Digest*, February 1977, Indian ed.), Milton Friedman, a Nobel Prize-winning economist, says much the same thing and illustrates how varied are the results that can follow the attempt to do good:

Sometimes doing good succeeds magnificently, sometimes the results are positively evil. This uncertain outcome is worth stressing, particularly for young men and women today, because of their natural tendency to take the will for the deed, to ask what a man's motives and intentions are rather than whether the measures he proposes will in fact achieve the end he professes to seek.

This tendency has idealistic roots. But it leads to intolerance, smugness and arrogance, and to the tempting conclusion that evil men are responsible for what we see as evils. The view that evil motives explain social evils is simple-minded. Fortunately, it is also false. Few of the real evils in our society today are the product of evil men. Many evils simply reflect limited resources — not everybody's wants can be satisfied. And some evils are the result of good men trying to do good.

The Spanish Inquisition exemplifies one face of doing good. The men who tortured their fellows were not evil men. They were trying to do good — to save the souls of their victims. Heaven preserve us from the sincere fanatic who knows what is good for us better than we do, and who knows that it is his duty and his

obligation to make us do what is good for us — whether his name be Torquemada, Lenin or Hitler.

In our time the major flaw that has converted doing good into doing evil is very different: it is the temptation to solve every problem by spending somebody else's money. Only government can do that on a large scale.

“There is no odour so bad as that which arises from goodness tainted,” wrote Henry David Thoreau. And so, as advised by H.P.B., the double activity of learning and doing is most necessary, for “we have to do good, and we have to do it *rightly*, with knowledge.” She says, further:

As soon as he begins to understand what a friend and teacher pain can be, the Theosophist stands appalled before the mysterious problem of human life, and though he may long to do good works, equally dreads to do them wrongly until he has himself acquired greater power and knowledge. . . . Therefore it is that Theosophists cannot pose as a body of philanthropists, though secretly they may adventure on the path of good works. They profess to be a body of learners merely, pledged to help each other and all the rest of humanity, so far as in them lies, to a better understanding of the mystery of life and to a better knowledge of the peace which lies beyond it. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*, p. 11)

That we are surrounded by myriads of infinitesimal lives has always been known to Occult Science. Now, the electron microscope, a new-generation instrument that enlarges images with electrons instead of light rays, is providing a close-up look at the minuscule world of microorganisms. *National Geographic Magazine* for February 1977 illustrates how, with the new microscopes, some of which are capable of magnifications of 20 millionfold, scientists of many disciplines are becoming wonder-struck voyagers into the reaches of inner space. Kenneth F. Weaver writes:

With instruments of this type, scientists have opened up a whole new realm of atoms and molecules, a world man has never seen before. Just as today's largest telescopes take us into the bizarre universe of quasars and blackholes, so the electron microscope takes us into the Alice-in-Wonderland world of inner space. What we see there is sometimes hauntingly beautiful, sometimes awesome, and frequently of supreme significance. . . .

"Within this invisible world lie the keys to every life process and many diseases," writes the pioneering microscopist Humberto Fernández-Morán, inventor of the diamond knife. Indeed, the electron microscope has revolutionized research. . . .

Some day, scientists hope, these techniques will make possible a miniature computer rivalling the human brain with its billions of connections. Already, with grainless films, we can reduce printing until each letter is only 100 angstroms high. At that size, all the millions of books in the Library of Congress could be stored on a single sheet of paper.

Incredible? Yes, the electron microscope is taking us into an unbelievable realm, the domain of the atom, the invisible world.

"It is a strange world in which new laws apply," says California Institute of Technology's Nobel laureate Richard Feynman. "Up to now man has been blind."

If atoms and molecules and the *tutti quanti* of the infinitesimally small are invisible to us by virtue of their minuteness, "cannot there be, at the other pole of it, beings as invisible owing to the quality of their texture or matter — to its tenuity, in fact?" asks H.P.B. in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 608). By denying the existence of "worlds formed of even far more attenuated matter than the tail of a comet," she says, science has for long centuries of dreary ignorance "played into the hands of neither philosophy nor true religion, but simply into those of theology." And yet these lives have always surrounded us and have worked on, obedient to their own laws, and it is only as they are gradually being revealed that scientists have begun to take cognizance of them, as of the effects produced by them.

It is interesting to note what H.P.B. says in *Isis Unveiled* regarding the high degree of perfection that the nations and continents that have passed away had attained, among other things, in their magnifying instruments. She brings in the testimony of classical authors:

Cicero tells us that he had seen the entire *Iliad* written on skin of such a miniature size, that it could easily be rolled up inside a nut-shell, and Pliny asserts that Nero had a ring with a small glass in it, through which he watched the performance of the gladiators at a distance. . . . Truly, when we are told that Mauritius could see from the promontory of Sicily over the entire sea to the coast of Africa, with an instrument called *nauscopite*, we must either think that all these witnesses lied, or that the ancients were more than slightly acquainted with optics and magnify-

ing glasses. Wendell Phillips states that he has a friend who possesses an extraordinary ring "perhaps three-quarters of an inch in diameter, and on it is the naked figure of the god Hercules. By the aid of glasses, you can distinguish the interlacing muscles, and *count every separate hair on the eyebrows*. . . . Rawlinson brought home a stone about twenty inches long and ten wide, containing an entire treatise on mathematics. It would be perfectly illegible without glasses. . . . So the microscope," adds the learned lecturer, "instead of dating from our time, finds its brothers in the Books of Moses — and these are infant brothers." (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 240)

In *The Illustrated Weekly of India* for March 13, Shyamala Mahadevan discusses what has come to be medically known as "possession syndrome." A few genuine cases are mentioned where the person "possessed" undergoes a change of personality and "behaves as though some dominating spirit is controlling his actions." Dr. O. Somasundaram, an eminent psychiatrist of Madras who has done extensive research in this field, is quoted as saying:

Some of the beliefs and customs prevailing amongst modern men have their origins in prehistoric times. Diseases, both physical and mental, were not considered as arising from natural causes. These were invariably viewed as the result of a malevolent influence exercised by a god, supernatural being, *durdevatas* or by another human being alive or dead.

The popular belief goes that the possessing entities try to gratify their unfulfilled desires by entering into living human beings and expressing their wishes through them. They harass them to such an extent that the victims are sometimes driven to a tragic end.

Some of the characteristics of the "possession syndrome" are thus described by the author:

The state of possession occurs usually in individuals, particularly women, with unstable personalities and of the age group 20 to 40. . . . Women in general are said to be more impressionable. . . . Those women who are emotional and sentimental with few outlets seem to become media more easily. Imagination takes an upper hand and precedes such psychic occurrences. Religious practices bordering on fanaticism and obsession can also be conducive to possession.

The possession syndrome is prevalent in most parts of our country as well as abroad. It seems to be more common in villages among the illiterate and the poor....

Of late a fair amount of research is being done by psychiatrists and neurologists on selected possession cases. Medical science explains the possession syndrome as a state in which the organism appears to be invaded by a new personality. It is a momentary disassociation of personality, *i.e.*, a part of the personality is affected by being separated from the main part which is taken over completely for the time being. It can be termed as an altered state of consciousness. Such a condition is known as Disassociative Reaction which is a symbolic representation of subconscious conflict resulting in hysteria.

A leading psychiatrist opines: "It appears that all persons affected by a possession syndrome are basically maladjusted personalities and perhaps had some psychological problems and conflicts which they were not in a position to solve and this opportunity for religious fanaticism is perhaps an attempt to escape from their real-life situation."

So far no neurological affliction has been observed or found in such cases, says a leading neurologist of Bangalore. "However, the value of most of the therapeutic procedures for neurosis remains to be proved. Psycho-physiological therapy represents a new approach to the treatment of psychic disorders. Most of the current psycho-therapeutical methods aim at adjustment to society. The objective must be to remove preoccupation with self, since in unison with environmental frustration it can be the root cause for many psychiatric disturbances..."

Exorcism rites have been in vogue in many countries over the ages long before the advent of modern therapeutic measures. It is claimed that the spirits could be controlled by various processes and *mantras* or prayers. There are also certain temples like Gunasekharam, Cholingapuram, Anumanthapuram and Sotranikarai in the South where the possessed are taken for a religious cure.

In *The Theosophist* for May 1880, under the title "A Case of Obsession," H.P.B. explains:

The reader is referred to an interesting paper by Judge Gadgil of Baroda on "Hindu Ideas about Communion with the Dead," for a plain exposition of the question of earth-tied souls, or *Pisachas*. "It is considered," says that writer, "that in this state, the soul, being deprived of the means of enjoyment of sensual pleasures

through its own physical body, is perpetually tormented by hunger, appetite and other bodily desires, and can have only vicarious enjoyment by entering into the living physical bodies of others, or by absorbing the subtlest essences of libations and oblations offered for their own sake." What is there to surprise us in the fact that a negatively polarized man, a man of a susceptible temperament, being suddenly brought into a current of foul emanations from some vicious person, perhaps still living or perhaps dead, absorbs the insidious poison as rapidly as quicklime does moisture, until he is saturated with it? Thus, a susceptible body will absorb the virus of small-pox, or cholera, or typhus, and we need only recall this to draw the analogy which Occult Science affirms to be warranted.

Near the Earth's surface there hangs over us — to use a convenient simile — a steamy moral fog, composed of the undispersed exhalations of human vice and passion. This fog penetrates the sensitive to the very soul's core; his psychic self absorbs it as the sponge does water, or as fresh milk effluvia. It benumbs his moral sense, spurs his baser instincts into activity, overpowers his good resolutions. As the fumes of a wine-vault make the brain reel, or as the choke-damp stifles one's breath in a mine, so this heavy cloud of immoral influences carries away the sensitive beyond the limits of self-control, and he becomes "obsessed"...

What remedy is there to suggest? Does not our very diagnosis indicate that? The sensitive must have his sensitiveness destroyed; the negative polarity must be changed to a positive; he must become active instead of passive. He can be helped by a magnetizer who understands the nature of obsession, and who is morally pure and physically healthy; it must be a powerful magnetizer, a man of commanding will-force. But the fight for freedom will, after all, have to be fought by the patient himself. His will-power must be aroused. He must expel the poison from his system. Inch by inch he must win back the lost ground. He must realize that it is a question of life or death, salvation or ruin, and strive for victory, like one who makes a last and heroic effort to save his life....

(THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1960)
