

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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WHITE LOTUS DAY

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

THESE are great words, uttered by H.P.B. and recorded by W. Q. Judge in a memorable article, “Yours Till Death and After, H.P.B.,” reprinted in *Vernal Blooms*. They contain direction for the few earnest and reliable student-servers who labour in the U.L.T. To help the Cause of the Holy Ones we need certain qualifications mentioned in the words quoted above: Earnestness; disinterestedness in not seeking human reward or earthly recognition; the power to labour steadily, faithfully, understandingly; the love for promulgating the doctrines of life and duty which are immemorial.

We are now preparing to celebrate White Lotus Day on the 8th of May. On this date in 1891 H. P. Blavatsky put aside her body, having completed her task, having fulfilled her mission. She came with a Heavenly Message.

What shall we concentrate on among her many priceless teachings? The centre from which issue hundreds of teachings like radii is the grand truth about the existence of those Adept-Teachers who enable the earnest devotee to walk the Path of Discipleship. Below we print ten important statements made by H.P.B., the teacher of pure and divine Occultism. These are culled from her articles and arranged to bring out the value of this particular teaching:

It is hard to check one's natural impatience to tear aside the veil of the Temple. To gain the divine knowledge, like the prize in a classical tripos, by a system of coaching and cramming, is the ideal of the average beginner in occult study. . . . the originators of the Theosophical Society [refuse] to encourage such false hopes.

Occult truth cannot be absorbed by a mind that is filled with preconception, prejudice or suspicion.

Emotionalism is *not* philosophy; and Buddha devoted his long self-sacrificing life to tear people away precisely from that *evil breeding* superstition.

The chief and the only indispensable condition required in the candidate or chela on probation, is simply unswerving fidelity to the chosen Master and his purposes.

A "Chela" is one who has offered himself or herself as a pupil to learn practically the "hidden mysteries of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man."

The real Guru is always an Adept in the Occult Science. A man of profound knowledge, exoteric and esoteric, especially the latter; and one who has brought his carnal nature under subjection of the WILL; who has developed in himself both the power (*Siddhi*) to control the forces of nature, and the capacity to probe her secrets by the help of the formerly latent but now active powers of his being: — this is the real Guru.

The *Mahatmas are the servants, not the arbiters of the law of Karma*. LAY-CHELASHIP CONFERS NO PRIVILEGE UPON ANY ONE EXCEPT THAT OF WORKING FOR MERIT UNDER THE OBSERVATION OF A MASTER. And whether that Master be or be not seen by the Chela makes no difference whatever as to the result: his good thoughts, words and deeds will bear their fruits, his evil ones, theirs. To boast of Lay Chelaship or make a parade of it, is the surest way to reduce the relationship with the Guru to a mere empty name, for it would be a *prima facie* evidence of vanity and unfitness for further progress. And for years we have been teaching everywhere the maxim "First deserve, then desire" intimacy with the Mahatmas.

[Do not] begin wrong by selfishly looking to the future and losing sight of the past.

Recognize in *Atma* the highest ruler in the world of perceptions, and in the will, the highest executive energy.

The strife is between the Chela's Will and his carnal nature, and Karma forbids that any angel or Guru should interfere until the result is known.

The above form a piece of instruction. What about H.P.B.'s *Vibhuti*s, her Excellences?

She was like the Sun, the giver of life spiritual to thousands, and like the Sun radiated her brightness on all other planets. She was like the Moon, emitting the warmth of Love Impersonal on all, some of whom used the gift while so many abused it. She was a veritable Hermes-Mercury, a Messenger and an Interpreter of the Gods. Like Venus she carried within her bosom both types of knowledge — terrestrial and celestial. Like Jupiter or Brihaspati she interceded with the gods on behalf of men and protected the innocent against the wicked. Like Saturn she loved mankind and she knew that "man could not rule man, without injustice," and so taught that humanity should be ruled by "Spirits and genii of a divine nature more excellent than that of man." And like Mars her "Eye" was over the slumbering earth — in its death in war or in its peaceful sleep of love.

The worldly will scoff at such comparisons; the wiseacre will whisper to himself, "Sentimental hyperboles!"; the pseudo-theosophist will exclaim, "Unbalanced exaggeration!"; many a Theosophical student will say, "Unwise speech, even if true." But has not the time come for the aspirant-devotee to reflect calmly upon the mind which could give the knowledge contained in *The Secret Doctrine*; and upon the Heart which could utter *The Voice of the Silence*? Should not they who have learnt the priceless truths of the Esoteric Philosophy, their great value to our civilization, and the power they enshrine to elevate the individual and the mass mind — should they not make clean and clear their own perceptions and utilize such apparent "hyperboles" and "exaggerations" and "unwisdom" to enlighten their own convictions and deepen their own faith?

Our earnestness must increase, our detachment should widen, so that we know how to value man's praise or blame; our power to labour steadfastly with faith and knowledge must grow; our influence over the minds and hearts of our fellow men must spread in an ever-

increasing measure. All this can and should be done by a study of and reflection upon Theosophical precepts. But in addition we need the force of example. H.P.B.'s example is there; from her emanate the Lights of the Sevenfold Wisdom of the Great Fraternity, the Great School. She embodied within herself the Love and the Learning of the Great Blessed Ones; she laboured for Their Cause, making It her own Cause. How she did all this can be learnt from her words and works. The former convey the power of her precepts; the latter, the force of her example.

Let us then meditate upon the nature and power of the Soul who masqueraded in the personality of H. P. Blavatsky, but who was known "otherwise" to her Guides and Gurus, her Friends and Protectors. Thus we can emerge from the muddy pond like a White Lotus, the sacred flower after which her Death Anniversary Day is named.

TRY to realize that progress is made step by step, and each step gained by *heroic* effort. Withdrawal means despair or timidity. . . . Conquered passions, like slain tigers, can no longer turn and rend you. Be hopeful then, not despairing. With *each* morning's awakening try to live through the day in harmony with the Higher Self. "Try" is the battle-cry taught by the teacher to each pupil. Naught else is *expected* of you. One who does his best does all that can be asked. There is a moment when even a Buddha ceases to be a sinning mortal and takes his first step towards Buddhahood. The sixteen Paramitas (virtues) are not for priests and yogis alone, as said, but stand for models for us all to strive after — and neither priest nor yogi, Chela nor Mahatma, ever attained all at once. . . . The idea that sinners and not saints are expected to enter the Path is emphatically stated in the *Voice of the Silence*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHY HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED AS UNDERLYING ALL RELIGIONS AND SACRED SCRIPTURES

[This address by Dr. J. D. Buck, one of Mr. Judge's close colleagues, was delivered at the Theosophical Congress, Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago in 1893.—Eds.]

No history of either philosophies or religions would be complete or intelligent that lost sight of the mystic element, that super-sensuous realm from which all unseen causes emanate; that ideal world, the existence of which the thinking, reasoning mind perceives, but which man has never yet realized in the outer life of the world. Neither do we find such histories as exist ignoring this mystic realm. On the contrary, they all treat of it, and either, like Enfield, frankly confess their inability to understand the subject, or, entirely misapprehending the doctrines, represent them as foolish or fraudulent. In *The Gnostics and their Remains*, the learned author makes the following remark:

The Christian writers who have treated upon the origin and nature of these doctrines were (Origen excepted) ignorant ecclesiastics, who could discern nothing in any religion beyond its outside forms, which they construed in the worst possible sense, even seeking for the most unfavourable interpretation of which such outward appearance was susceptible.

If this shall seem a severe criticism of these critics, a very little examination of the works under question will convince any candid reader that it is but the simple truth. It follows, therefore, that these doctrines have very rarely had a fair hearing and that to the present day they are entirely misunderstood because so continually misrepresented. The real doctrines have seldom been heard of in modern times. Beliefs that are as old as human thought, and which number among their adherents more than half the human race, possess a novelty to the average reader that is strange indeed, and for the reason above stated.

They have been distorted out of all resemblance to their true intent and meaning. The time has come in the progress of modern thought when these old truths are being restated, and they will have a candid hearing. To accomplish this result constitutes one object of the Theosophical Society.

There is a certain body of doctrines designated as Theosophy, and while they embody many truths, are designated by many names known to all history, and underlie all great religions and philosophies, they concern also the very foundations of all real science and all true knowledge, no less than the basis of ethics.

It would be difficult to trace these doctrines in detail through the religious and philosophical history of man since the beginning of the Christian era, for two reasons, *First*, on account of the misapprehension and consequent misrepresentation already referred to; and *Second*, for the reason that they have been held sacred and secret, requiring a key for their interpretation. The reasons for this secrecy need not here be entered into, for no one at all conversant with the subject will deny the fact. The author of the *Gnostics*, to whom I am indebted for many valuable suggestions, says:

Secret Societies, especially that one of which the maxim was, as Clemens tells us, the truly wise one, "Learn to know all, but keep thyself unknown," erect no monuments to attract the public attention; they deal in symbols to be privately circulated; or else they embody their tenets in mystic drawings like the Ophite Diagramma, and in papyri, long since committed to the flames.

Now in view of these facts, *viz.*, the misrepresentations derived by the ignorant from the outer form and symbols on the one hand, and concealment by the initiated on the other, it may very naturally be asked: How can anyone in modern times, or since the decline of the Mysteries in Greece and elsewhere, determine what these doctrines really are? Certain it is that mere curiosity or idle and ignorant speculation can never discern them. To such as these they are forever a sealed book. But just as all great religions have had their inspired teachers, their seers and prophets, so has the Secret Doctrine had its wise interpreters in all ages. What music was to the intuitive genius of a Beethoven or a Mozart, and what it became under their interpretation — a revelation of beauty and harmony — such has the Secret Science ever been to those who know, and such their revelations to "the listening ear and the faithful breast."

In order to be able to trace these doctrines, in outline at least, through the ages, one must first know what they are.

"The Secret Doctrine establishes three fundamental propositions" (p. 14, Proem):

(a) "An Omnipresent, Eternal, Boundless, and Immutable PRINCIPLE on which all speculation is impossible, since it transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude." This fundamental idea must be grasped and followed through varied forms of expression and under many names, and no other proposition can be entertained that is inconsistent with it. The second postulate is:

(b) "The Eternity of the Universe *in toto* as a boundless plane; periodically the 'playground of numberless Universes incessantly manifesting and disappearing,' called 'the manifesting stars,' and the 'sparks of Eternity.'" "The appearance and disappearance of Worlds is like a regular tidal ebb of flux and reflux." Herein is postulated the Law of Cycles, alike applicable to atoms or suns, to individual man as to solar systems. The third postulate is:

(c) "The fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul — a spark of the former — through the Cycle of Incarnation (or 'Necessity') in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term."

From these three fundamental propositions the entire philosophy unfolds or emanates, just as Cosmos issues from the One Eternal Principle. I am not aware that the doctrines thus clearly formulated can anywhere be found outside the writings of H. P. Blavatsky. The philosophy of evolution thus set forth furnishes a key by which the mysterious chambers and secret crypts of antiquity may be opened and explored. "The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit, throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations." Bearing these fundamental ideas in mind, we may briefly consider a few among the almost innumerable number of their representatives and embodiments during the past twenty-six centuries.

It is a familiar saying that all our great religions and philosophies have come from the far East. If this be true in a general sense it is true in a special sense regarding the Secret Wisdom. King says that "so long as philosophy was cultivated in Greece, India was ever regarded as the ultimate and pure source of true wisdom."

Pherecydes, the first preceptor of Pythagoras, is said by Josephus to have derived his doctrines from the Egyptians, and his illustrious pupil and founder of the Italic School of Philosophy went also to Egypt to

complete his studies. Neither of these philosophers is known to have committed his doctrines to writing. Egypt was at that time the seat of learning, with colleges at Heliopolis, Thebes, Memphis, etc.

After spending twenty-two years in the schools of Egypt, Iamblichus relates that Pythagoras went to the Far East to converse with the Persian and Chaldean Magi and with the Indian Gymnosophists. The real source of the learning of Pythagoras being thus clearly defined, the doctrines he taught but confirm their source. In a form more or less veiled by symbol and allegory, he taught the Secret Doctrine. Following Pythagoras came Buddha, the great Indian Reformer of Brahmanism, whose entire life and doctrines were but an expression of the traditions and philosophy of the old Wisdom-Religion. The Socratic doctrines as expounded by Plato constituted the very soul of the Greek philosophy, and the influence of the Porch and the Academy not only constituted the glory of Greece and later of Alexandria, and largely influenced the early Christian philosophy, but influence the world today, as they have entered into the thought of all great thinkers and writers for the past twenty-five hundred years. Plato was an Initiate, and the core of his philosophy is the three postulates already quoted.

The Essenes, whom Philo Judaeus and Josephus describe as existing in Palestine at the time of Christ, King declares to have been "Buddhist monks in every particular," as proved by the Edicts of Asoka. The word Essenes or Hessesenes is derived from the Arabic *hessan* — pure. One has only to read the accounts given by Philo and Josephus to learn the identity of the doctrine of the Essenes with those of Jesus, bearing in mind that both the Essenes and Christ speak of a Secret Doctrine not to be revealed to the multitude.

Some twenty years ago De Quincey took the position in a popular essay that "unless it can be shown that the Essenes were the early Christians, it must be conceded that there was no need of a revelation through Christ, as his teachings were all anticipated by the Essenes." The Essenes were sworn not to speak of their doctrine except among themselves, and they were sworn also not to write of it, except in allegory and symbolism. This is expressly stated by Philo; and upon this and other statements, Eusebius, as late as the fourth century, gives the opinion that the Gospels and Epistles of the New Testament were the secret books of the Essenes. In proof of this Eusebius cites the exercises, festivals, and rules in vogue among the Essenes as recorded by Philo, and declares them to be the same as practised by the Christians of his own day. Eusebius was anxious

to show that the Essenes were the early Christians, when the fact is that the Christians were the later Essenes, added to their number "from without," in other words, the "uninitiated," who possessed a portion of the Secret Wisdom, or Gnosis, revealed to them by Jesus, preserved by the sages of the Jewish people before the time of Christ, and derived originally from the *hessan* or pure Buddhist monks. Buddha originated these doctrines no more than did Jesus, for we find them taught by Plato, Pythagoras, and Zoroaster, if we but follow the key for their interpretation.

Of the many schools that flourished during the first three centuries of the Christian Era, there were two of paramount importance to our present study. These were the school of the Gnostics, and that of the Theosophists founded by Ammonius Saccas. "It is a noticeable fact that neither Zoroaster, Buddha, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Confucius, Socrates, nor Ammonius Saccas, committed anything to writing." Whatever we now possess of their teachings has been derived from their disciples or from their contemporaries. For the best record of the Gnostic teachings we are indebted to the church Fathers, through their attempts to refute and destroy them. King declares himself most indebted to *The Refutation of all Heresies*, a work composed by Hippolytus, Bishop of Ostia, who was himself put to death A.D. 222. Irenaeus and Origen, with the same purpose in view, contributed largely to the same result. The Gnostic teachings seem first to have been promulgated by Simon Magus, then by Menander and by Basilides at Alexandria, who died about A.D. 138, and was followed by Valentinus, who was born of Jewish parents at Alexandria, and who was styled "the profoundest doctor" of them all. "The fundamental doctrine held in common by all the chiefs of the Gnosis was that the visible creation was not the work of the Supreme Deity, but of the Demiurgos, a simple emanation and several degrees removed from the Godhead."

This doctrine of emanations may be traced in the earlier teachings to which we have referred. It was derived jointly from the Zendavesta and the Kabala, and was thus of Chaldeo-Persian and Indo-Egyptian origin. It was taught in the mysteries of Initiation, and was then, as it is now, a Theosophical Doctrine. The Magi and the Kabalists were Initiates and Theosophists, and the Gnostics taught the same philosophy. The sevenfold form in which all emanations proceed, the seven planes in nature and the seven principles in man, were more immediately derived from the Kabala, of Chaldeo-Persian origin, under the form of Angels,

Principalities, and Powers, the same as the Gods of the earlier Greek writers, the "Creators" and "Builders" of the Secret Doctrine. This septenary teaching was especially pronounced with the Ophite sect, a branch of the Gnostic School. Against this doctrine of emanations the church Fathers waged a continual warfare, and the so-called heresies of the early church arose through these discussions and the attempt to establish the doctrine of a personal God and the bitter disputes concerning the nature of Christ; and though many a church Father was tinctured with Gnosticism, they were overruled or destroyed by the more ignorant priests with the rabble at their backs, resulting in giving to the Christian world a personal, male Deity and vicarious atonement in place of the more beneficent and philosophical doctrine. Antiquity shows no worse type than the Jewish Jehovah, and no worse confusion than the theological disputes regarding the Docetic Gnosis.

The school of Theosophists founded by Ammonius Saccas arose about the middle of the third century. His followers, Porphyry, Plotinus, Proclus, Iamblichus, and many others, were styled Neo-Platonists.

Their motive aimed, it is true, at a revival of the philosophy of Plato, but Ammonius undertook to bring order out of chaos, agreement out of fierce controversy, and so to bring about the reign of Universal Brotherhood among all classes. He undertook to show that the fundamental doctrines were the same among many sects. Among the Gnostics the severest penalty for those who refused to listen or to believe was want of knowledge and subjugation to Matter; and with Ammonius and his followers, ignorance was considered a misfortune, and disbelief no crime. Both Gnostics and Theosophists taught Reincarnation and Karma, as did, in one form or another, nearly all philosophies and religions of antiquity. Indeed, even a superficial examination of the history of Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism will show, provided it be intelligently made and without prejudice, that the movement inaugurated in 1875 by H. P. Blavatsky was almost identical with that undertaken more than fifteen centuries ago by Ammonius Saccas. The teachings are substantially the same, and the motives identical. Here, then, is a direct line of descent. From Pythagoras to Plato, with the teachings of Buddha laying more stress on ethics than on philosophy, and so as a reformer founding a new religion on that already growing corrupt; thence through the Essenes and the Alexandrian Therapeutae, in the time of Christ. Jesus taught the same doctrine and instituted the same reform in Judaism as had Buddha in Brahmanism. The Gnostics and Theosophists kept alive the old philosophy of the Vedas, the Zend-

avesta, the Kabala, and the Egyptian Secret Wisdom — always Theosophy — the Secret Doctrine — till the sublime philosophy received a check under Constantine, and with the Mohammedan conquest and the burning of the Alexandrian Library the dark ages began.

Divine philosophy was compelled to yield to brute force and ecclesiastical supremacy. These same Theosophical doctrines found a home in Arabia with the Alchemists of the Middle Ages, and for centuries were known to the Western world through the alchemical nomenclature. They may also be traced in the songs of the Troubadors and Minnesingers, as these wandering minstrels roamed over Europe in the Middle Ages. Like the Beatrice of Dante, the "Lady-Love" of the troubador was often the "Divine Sophia," while many a legend and fairy-tale, like "Collin Clout" and the "Redbook of Appin," was the same secret disguised.

Roger Bacon in the thirteenth century, and Paracelsus in the fourteenth, stand as Theosophists and Initiates in the Secret Doctrine. Time will not permit points in comparison, nor even the naming of all authors or writings that bear direct testimony to the Theosophical doctrines. The Society of Rosicrucians, originating, it is supposed, in the fourteenth century, might be classed as Platonic, Gnostic, Theosophic, Kabalistic, Masonic, or Alchemic, for the simple reason that it embodied, philosophized upon, and yet concealed, the Secret Doctrine.

The philosophical systems of Newton, Descartes, Leibnitz, and Spinoza all embody postulates and principles found in the Secret Doctrine, and can on this basis be reconciled with each other. There would be little difficulty in establishing Sir Isaac Newton's indebtedness to the writings of the "Teutonic Theosopher," Jacob Behmen, by both historical and philosophical evidence, as Andreas Freher and William Law were contemporaries of Newton; and for the further reason, that copious translations from the writings of Behmen were found among Newton's posthumous papers. No principle embodied in the philosophy of Newton is absent from the writings of Behmen. What Newton did was to give to these philosophical principles a scientific expression and a mathematical formulary, so as to fit in with the advancing scientific thought of the age. Newton's first law, that attraction and repulsion are equal and opposite, is but a mathematical formulation of the old Hindu doctrine of the "Pairs of Opposites," or the dualism of nature as taught in the Kabala and in all Mysteries.

Tracing these doctrines in the oldest religions, whether in the Vedas, the Egyptian, Chaldean, or earlier Greek Mysteries, or in the Kabala,

and comparing them with the secret teachings of the Essenes, the Gnostics, the Alexandrian Theosophists, the Rosicrucians, and the mediaeval Alchemists, we find not only general agreement and substantial harmony, but far more consistency than among scientists from the days of Newton in regard to the estimated heat of the sun; or between theories of the present day regarding the constitution of matter or the nature of the atom. If modern science can be called exact, these older doctrines cannot be called fanciful. There is contained in these old teachings a science more exact and profound than is yet known to modern times, for the ancient Initiated were not only the most subtle metaphysicians and the most correct reasoners, they were in the truest sense Philosophers.

The three postulates of the Secret Doctrine are to be found in all these old philosophies. They have been compared and annotated through H. P. Blavatsky and the authors of her *Secret Doctrine*. Such comparison will show that revelation and inspiration are not the exclusive possession of any one religion, least of all do they belong exclusively to the youngest of these religions, the Christian. It can be demonstrated that every religion has an underlying esoteric basis, and that basis is the Secret Doctrine.

If the history, rituals, and glyphics of Free Masonry be examined with such knowledge of the Kabala as is furnished by Mr. J. Ralston Skinner, not a shadow of doubt can remain as to its origin and significance. Its Ancient Landmarks are but the outer form, the dead letter, of the most ancient initiation into the Mysteries of Occult Theosophy. More than one Masonic writer, like Dr. Oliver and Dr. Mackey, trace Masonry to the Secret Society of the Essenes, and the most common traditions of Masonry claim Zoroaster and Pythagoras as ancient Masters in Masonry.

The entire philosophy and Rituals of Masonry cluster around the Legend of Hiram Abiff, the "Widow's Son," who lost his life in the defense of his integrity. The Mystery of Christ, who, like Christna before him, was the "son of a Virgin," deals with the same Secret Wisdom. The "son of the widow," and the "son of the Virgin," are alike fatherless. This is the Great Secret; The Mystery of the Ages; one and all, from beginning to end, these mysteries — old and forever new — conceal the knowledge of the nature of the Soul and its journey through matter. The Essenes held this secret under oath of perpetual concealment, as did every ancient Mystery. Jesus partially revealed it to the Gentiles, and therefore the Jews, who knew the secret, conspired

with the rabble to put him to death, in conformity with the prescribed penalty. Socrates before the time of Jesus, and Paul afterward, suffered the same penalty. All three may have been rather self-taught than formally initiated. Those who possessed the secret through the process of initiation had in each case abused their power and prostituted their knowledge, and yet they refused either to reform or to permit any outer revelation. Neither Ancient nor Modern Mysteries or Secret Societies have, or ever had, anything to conceal from "him who knows" the mystery of the human Soul, its origin, nature, journey through matter, and return to Paradise or absorption in Nirvana.

The self-taught mystic, who derives his knowledge through his own spiritual intuitions or by subjective illumination, without a knowledge of the philosophy of the Secret Doctrine, is usually a religious enthusiast or a Mystic. He may even found a religion or a school, but he can never become a hierophant of Initiations. He may possess the "Doctrine of the Heart," and perform apparent miracles, but is not likely to become an Adept in all the Occult forces of nature. The perfection of man requires the complete at-one-ment of body, soul, and spirit; or universal consciousness with perfect knowledge; and hence the power to use for the highest good.

John Reuchlin, the head of the "Humanists," the preceptor of Luther, and called also "The Father of the Reformation," was a profound Kabalist, and undertook to reform the abuses of his times on Theosophical lines. He resisted successfully the raid of the Dominican Monks and other bitter assailants, but failed to engraft the wise and pure Theosophical doctrines on the gross ignorance of his times. A glimpse of these doctrines under theological dress may be found in a little anonymous volume called *Theologia Germanica*, supposed to have been written by a member of a sect called "The Friends of God." This book was a great favourite with Luther, as was Reuchlin himself, as shown in Luther's letters. The abuses of superstition gave place to the dogma of Faith, and knowledge and light derived through Theosophy fell to the rear. The age was too materialistic, the ignorance too gross and dense. The Protestant Reformation might otherwise have been a very different affair indeed.

A single conclusion remains to be drawn. So far as outer records go or inner meaning has been revealed, this old philosophy, this ancient science, this Wisdom-Religion, was as perfect and as well known in the days of Pythagoras as at any later period. Plato added nothing to it. He but transmitted, or concealed, that which he had been taught in the

mysteries of Initiation.

The conclusion is obvious. This Secret Wisdom dates back to the building of the Pyramids and is embodied in the Vedanta of old India; and not only were the most ancient sages and Rishis Initiates but the true wisdom has been preserved and transmitted from age to age, and the Masters spoken of by H. P. Blavatsky, the real authors and inspirers of her *Secret Doctrine*, exist today as the Theosophical Mahatmas. The evidence may be found along the lines I have so imperfectly sketched, and is confirmed for all but the ignorant and the scornful in H. P. Blavatsky's great work. To the student who is really in search of the truth, the evidence is convincing and overwhelming in favour of the existence of a core of truth, represented in numberless forms and running through the countless ages, preserved and transmitted by genuine Initiates, and this core of truth is THEOSOPHY.

Theosophy has, therefore, a history and a literature but little known and seldom even suspected in these later times. No discovery of modern science, no well-defined and well-authenticated principle of modern philosophy, exists today that was unknown to the genuine Initiate of old. The "great secret" was never fully revealed except as a matter of experience of the Soul. One must understand this fact, and its bearing upon the process of obtaining real knowledge, in order to be able to follow understandingly even the outer text, or those general principles embodied in the language of Symbolism. The deeper mysteries are incapable of other expression, as they pertain to the soul's experience. Initiation is, therefore, in the truest sense an evolution. The great secret is taught theoretically and philosophically, and put in practice by the neophyte under guidance of his instructors. This is the meaning of the travesty among Masons on "Practical" and "Symbolical" or "Theoretical Masonry."

Language is therefore inadequate to convey these deeper secrets to the ignorant. Symbolism conceals them from the profane and records them for the knowing. Concealment may be considered necessary where revelation is impossible except through long training and experience. To "conceal" and "record in symbols" are therefore synonymous. Herein lies the key of the Secret Doctrine, and the Esoteric basis of all true Religions. To experience is to know, the foundation of all Wisdom. The Secret Doctrine and the Wisdom-Religion are therefore the same, *vis.*: THEOSOPHY.

BEYOND EARTHLY HORIZONS

Have mastery o'er thy thoughts, O striver for perfection, if thou would'st cross the threshold.

Have mastery o'er thy Soul, O seeker after truths undying, if thou would'st reach the goal.

Thy Soul-gaze centre on the One Pure Light, the Light that is free from affection, and use thy golden Key.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THE HORIZON of a man's thought must, sooner or later, be made to open on to the Infinite. Unless he succeeds in achieving this in the long time allotted for this evolutionary process, he will be accounted a failure and will have to wait for countless ages before another opportunity comes his way.

Unfortunately, the man of our day is moving in a direction which is opposite to that of the evolutionary effort. He does so because it is easier for him to shrink his horizon in ever-narrowing circles. The selfish man and the man of evil desires do it constantly. It thus comes about that, in trying to solve his various problems, man fails to put them in their larger perspective and comes up with solutions which, though they appear to be correct to his limited vision, are found in the long run to be either inappropriate or productive of harm even in the areas covered by his myopic vision. The prevailing attitude among the researchers, in science and ethics, in art forms and religious speculations, is to isolate the problem. They look at it not in the milieu in which it grew and developed (from the ethical and mental to the objective and material), but only as a phenomenon shorn of its roots and isolated from its environment.

For instance, there are problems which we carry over from other and distant lives. Then, there is the debris from a past incarnation projected into the present life for which no research into the events of this life can give any convincing solution. Then again, there are effects brought about by the thoughts and desires of others — effects which in certain circumstances may change the tempo of a man's life. A war just anywhere in the world in which we may not even be interested will still affect us because of the vast mass of feelings of hatred and vengeance let loose into the psychic atmosphere of the world. That distant war limited by boundaries of location and time causes disturbances and imbalances in the inner realms which know no such boundaries. That war may therefore generate a turbulence which will in a

real sense produce disastrous effects on the weak and immature minds of individuals who may not even have heard of the war. A household that tolerates lies and prevarications goes on merrily adding to the sum total of human aberrations. This mass of error which gathers momentum through the accumulated force emanating from millions of such households may in time have the potency to destroy a whole nation.

Thus, a Soul struggling against the violated ethics of its times may find its cross hard to bear because of the effects of a psychic turbulence generated on a far-away continent by a large-scale tolerance of permissive sensuality. The horizons of the Soul are further narrowed by the acts of power-intoxicated nations that sweep aside all norms of justice and moral behaviour in their mad rush for personal stature. The atrocities of nations added to the little vices of simple men have the power to create tidal waves of such ferocious intensity as can sweep into oblivion men and nations alike. Narrow horizons, like all centripetal forces, have always the tendency to gorge the heart.

Our horizons are narrowed for us by science and religion, by superstitions and fanatic beliefs and by the irrational customs, habits and rites of race and family. The man who musters up enough courage to brush aside these limitations is the exception rather than the rule. Ignorant of the consequences that he is inviting on himself, the average man chooses to remain as a unit of that vast multitude which, drifting through life, awaits being caught up in the next great vortex. For, though Nature is kind and offers all inducements for achieving progress, it periodically undertakes the task of sweeping away the dead-wood so that the forest may thrive. No laborious processes of reasoning are required to demonstrate the justice of this. So, when the individual realizes the responsibility that he owes to himself and to his fellow-men, he ventures upon the effort to save as many men as he can from the great holocaust by offering to them the little wisdom that he has acquired. He knows that a little leaven has still the power to leaven the whole lump.

The initial steps at widening one's horizons are fraught with great difficulties. The effort requires a strong will to conquer vast areas of knowledge together with a dogged persistence to make that knowledge a living power in one's life. Modern knowledge, such as it is, has too great a tilt towards materiality to be of any use to the aspiring heart. The media of both instruction and entertainment no longer reflect high thought and noble purpose. Anger and violence, bestial sexuality and

torture are being fed to the masses until a surfeit of it leads to an acceptance of vice under the false label of virtue.

There are quite a few modern practices that have been foisted on humanity by the "learned" ignoramuses of our day. The student cannot expect to indulge in or support these practices and then hope for an onward march from out of the darkness. Vivisection is one such abomination; invention and manufacture of weapons of war is another; subjugation of other nations and bludgenoning them to accept one's ideology is a third. The advice of St. Paul to the Corinthians: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate," has more validity today than it had in the early days of Christendom. Is the aspirant ready to sever his connections with those whose thoughts and influence warp and distort his perspective? The effort will tax his strength to the utmost. Vice has a tendency to become personalized and then it starts to resist with force and cunning all efforts to drive it from out its stronghold.

When a man sets out to widen his horizons, the first concept he has to understand and live up to is that his physical body is meant to serve the purpose of contacting matter and material things only. It cannot become a direct aid to spirituality. The body may through the instrumentality of the physical brain make available to him the sensual side of knowledge; it is powerless to give him Wisdom. Our earthly existence is compared by some to a hell on earth and the *Bhagavad-Gita* has said that entrance to that hell is through the gateways of Passion, Anger and Greed. Whereas many readily accept the truth of this statement, several of them hardly perceive that the converse is also true and that wherever there exists a close alliance or identification with materiality there surely exist the evils, singly or in combination, of Passion, Anger and Greed. Why are these three singled out for us as destructive of the nobler sentiments and as the doorways which give ingress to hell? There can be no satisfactory answer that the physical brain of man can provide. It has to be searched for elsewhere.

Theosophy asserts that there are other planes of being besides the physical and that for each such plane man has an appropriate body or vehicle which he can use on that plane. Thus, on earth man has his physical body and a set of senses. On other planes, he has other ves-tures through which he can function on that plane. Hypnotism, telepathy, clairvoyance, etc., prove to us that, under certain conditions, man's inner nature uses instruments which transcend the powers and

possibilities of his normal organs of sense and of action. Next to the sphere of the earth but interpenetrating it is what is known as the astral sphere. Man can, if he so will, explore this astral region to search for his knowledge. For this purpose he has to separate his astral body from the physical and acquire the facility to use it. The word "astral" used here does not imply the *mayavic* regions referred to in *The Voice of the Silence*. It is used in the broader sense of "the real man" mentioned in the third of the Propositions of Psychology set out in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 587 *et seq.*). For the purpose of exploring the astral or starry regions, the physical body with its senses and organs of action is not only useless but in most cases becomes a hindrance. It is a fact stressed in Theosophical writings that until the first step is taken in the cultivation and development of the astral life, "the swift knowledge, which is called intuition with certainty, is impossible to man."¹ Unmindful of this, for long ages mankind has allowed the astral life to pass them by, and the real senses which are in the astral have become practically lost through disuse. In consequence, man has become today "an astral animal that has eyes, and ears, and speech, and power, yet will use none of these gifts."²

Man lost this priceless boon of learning truth because, when he came to the cross-roads, he chose the bitter fruit and not the sweet. He forgot that the conditions under which the astral can grow and flourish require a total abnegation of all that he values today. All passions have to be put aside, all false knowledge sought out and abandoned. All causes that militate against the Brotherhood of man and man, and man and Nature, have to be eschewed because the poison that is spewed out by separatist tendencies becomes destructive of spiritual growth. The man who thinks he is superior to others as well as the man who in his heart rejoices at another's downfall lose their hold upon the astral life, and though they may protest to high heaven that they acted on intuition, they will have barred and bolted the door to that divine faculty.

Hypocrisy poisons the astral life, anger blasts it, envy erodes it, the passions putrefy and debilitate it. Unbrotherliness denudes it of all power, raises a cloud upon the mental horizon and creates such an illusion as to make the individual convinced that no such thing as an astral body exists.

In the average man, this astral body is interwoven with the physical and is always influenced by it. It now becomes the man's responsibility to extract it with great care from the surrounding parts of his physical

¹ *Light on the Path*, p. 34.

² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

nature. This calls for years of training and a constant vigilance. This development and coherence of the astral body can be achieved by one way only and that is by the acquisition of the power of concentration. Ordinarily there is no observable demarcation between the inner and the outer organs, but when concentration is practised, the inner organs begin to awake and assume a separate identity and function. The bodily organs will continue to do their respective tasks while the new ones become usable on the plane of nature which is peculiarly theirs.³

As the astral body begins to acquire coherence and stability, there emerge certain remarkable effects which were not previously felt in the physical body. For instance, it may sometimes be experienced that the astral gets violently shaken and either pulled apart or fragmented and then pushed back into the same entanglement with the physical as it had before the start of the new discipline of concentration. Anger, passion and greed with all their motley brood of envies, hatreds and lusts produce this tendency. All this is described towards the end of the second chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* where the declivity starting with involvement in sense inclinations is described. It is in this context also that has to be taken to heart the other injunction in *Matthew* (V. 23-24):

Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

The world's great scriptures are written in an astral cipher that yields a deeper meaning than that which the ordinary words convey. Thus, the advice of the Christian scripture, "Ask, and it shall be given you," conveys a meaning that in actual life is negated every hour of the day. Yet, the scripture cannot have propounded a blatant error. The statement frustrates all ordinary mental efforts at a solution until one comes to understand that it expresses a truism of the inner life. When the voice in which the request is made has become a divine voice and is uttered on the inner planes of being, it has the power to evoke a response which also is heard on that plane of the inner life. Thus with all instructions in the True.

The Rules of that discipline which will make the astral life a reality will be found in *Light on the Path*, *The Voice of the Silence* and

³ U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18, p. 9 et seq.

the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Four of these Rules as given in *The Voice of the Silence* are:

Thou shalt not let thy senses make a playground of thy mind.

Thou shalt not separate thy being from BEING and the rest, but merge the Ocean in the drop, the drop within the Ocean.

So shalt thou be in full accord with all that lives; bear love to men as though they were thy brother-pupils, disciples of one Teacher, the sons of one sweet mother.

Of teachers there are many; the MASTER-SOUL is one, Alaya, the Universal Soul. Live in that MASTER as ITS ray in thee. Live in thy fellows as they live in IT.

FIRST, then, it shall be stated what correspondence is. The whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, not only in general but also in particular. Whatever, therefore, in the natural world derives its existence from the spiritual, is said to be its correspondent. The reason for correspondences is that the natural world with all that it contains exists and subsists from the spiritual world, and both worlds from the Divine Being. We say subsists as well as exists because everything subsists from that which gave it existence, subsistence being perpetual existence; and because nothing can subsist from itself but only from something prior to itself, and thus originally from the First Cause; if it were separated from this, it would utterly perish or disappear.

An example of correspondence: When the union of good and truth is effected in a man, which occurs especially after temptations, he enters into a state of delight from heavenly peace. This peace may be compared to morning or dawn in spring, when, the night being past, at the rising of the sun everything on earth begins to live anew, the dew which falls from heaven causes plants to diffuse their scent, while the mild vernal temperature imparts fertility to the soil and gladdens the heart of man; and this takes place because morning or dawn, in the time of spring, corresponds to the state of peace of the angels in Heaven.

—SWEDENBORG

H.P.B. ON THE ORIGIN OF EVIL

How MUCH, how very much, today's students of Theosophy owe to that wondrous woman, H. P. Blavatsky! Ever and anon from her writings comes a clear ray of light to illumine something that baffles and perplexes us.

In her article originally published in *Lucifer* for October 1887 and reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 26*, her theme is that darkest of mysteries, the origin of evil, and for such a seeming negation in a world supposedly created by a good and all-wise God she gives a sound and convincing reason. Since Theosophists conceive of God rather as a Universal Principle or the One Life, they have the advantage of approaching H.P.B.'s article with a degree of understanding which believers in a personal deity needs must lack.

Her opening words seem to acknowledge this advantage. "The problem of the origin of evil can be philosophically approached only if the ancient Indian formula is taken as the basis of the argument. Ancient wisdom alone solves the presence of the universal fiend in a satisfactory way. It attributes the birth of Kosmos and the evolution of life to the breaking asunder of primordial, manifested UNITY into plurality, or the great illusion of form. HOMOGENEITY having transformed itself into Heterogeneity, contrasts have naturally been created; hence sprang what we call EVIL, which thenceforward reigned supreme in this 'Vale of Tears.'"

H.P.B. revered deeply the teachings of Gautama Buddha and her article was in fact prompted by the need to correct the distortion of these in a then current philosophy emanating mainly from Germany, which, when carried to extremes, endorsed suicide as the only escape from life's ills. This line of thought she exposed and countered in her powerful article, vigorously refuting the suggestion that it derived from Buddhism. No parallel, she wrote, could "ever be attempted between the two systems of thought." But she spoke of pessimism, none the less, as "a curse only to the ignorant. It is a boon to the spiritual; inasmuch as it makes the latter turn into the right path, and brings him to the discovery of another as fundamental a truth; namely, that all in this world is only *preparatory* because transitory."

H.P.B. fails not to perform her "duty, to examine and combat the new pernicious theory," and her analysis is as penetrating, interesting, and valuable as we would expect from her illumined mind and powerful

pen. She does not lay down the latter until she has proved that such a theory "is the result of an utter ignorance of the operations of Karma and the nature of Soul-evolution. It is from a mistaken allegiance to the dogmas of a mechanical and largely spurious theory of Evolution that Pessimism has risen to such undue importance."

She wholly dissociates such pessimism from the teachings of the great Indian Reformer. "The Sage and Philosopher, who sacrificed himself for Humanity by *living for it, in order to save it*, by teaching men to see in the sensuous existence of matter misery alone, had never in his deep philosophical mind any idea of offering a premium for suicide; his efforts were to release mankind from too strong an attachment to life, which is the chief cause of Selfishness — hence the creator of mutual pain and suffering."

That evil, a comprehensive but vague word, should exist at all, is, however, a problem to many, and of that many only a proportion can accept the Biblical teaching of the Fall. In actual fact it does *not* exist, and on this fact the mind should linger till the sheer logic of it sinks deeply in, as it must assuredly do, sooner or later. For if creation produces the positive, does not every positive inevitably have its negative? So obvious a statement can of course be dismissed as a truism, but give it a moment's thought and it is found to be impregnably undeniable.

Certainly H.P.B. does not disdain this simple fact. She does not deal with positive/negative merely in theory, but takes into account embodied entities, which, on the human level, entails a certain point of view, and this, if based wholly on the negative, causes suffering. "If we would discern good from evil," she writes, "light from darkness, and appreciate the former, we can do so only through the contrasts between the two." Given the viewpoint that comes through enlightenment, evil can be seen as non-real, merely the negation of the positive. If good prevailed, evil would not originate. Evil exists simply through the absence of the good.

It is therefore with the eye of a seer that H.P.B. looks at the "heterogeneity of the manifested universe," finds in that "the seeds of evil and sorrow," and refers us to "the law of contrasts, (that) fundamental law in Nature" which entails that "neither good nor evil would exist were it not for the light they mutually throw on each other."

Dealing with "the idea that matter and its Protean manifestations are the source and origin of universal evil and sorrow," she quotes the doctrine (the *true* doctrine) of the Buddha, as showing "evil immanent,

not in matter which is eternal, but in the illusions created by it: through the changes and transformations of matter generating life — because these changes are conditioned and such life is ephemeral. At the same time those evils are shown to be not only unavoidable, but necessary. For — ” as already quoted — “if we would discern good from evil, light from darkness, and appreciate the former, we can do so only through the contrasts between the two.”

Pause for a moment and consider. Could we indeed know “good” if we had never experienced its opposite? We could in a sense, of course, but not as something to cultivate and value, just as we could not know fresh air if we had never breathed an impure atmosphere, or the glory of sunlight if all our days had been passed in darkness. The law of opposites needs must hold. So what is called for is a right sense of values. This the pessimistic Germanic theory of the last century was out to destroy. “German ingenuity,” says H.P.B., writing as a contemporary of these dismal materialists, “has contrived, by means of scientific paradoxes and much sophistry, to give a semblance of philosophical truth,” and to see suicide as the only escape from it. “In sober truth,” she adds bluntly, “it is no philosophy, but simply a systematic slander of life and being,” and with all the power of her gifted pen she countered it, showing how the negative itself could not exist if it were not for the positive.

The European pessimist of that day might take the evils of life as realities, but a very different teaching was already available for open-minded seekers after truth through the development of the Theosophical Movement. Ample teaching “to help and purify” was already being given out through its magazines and from its public platforms. Conferences were being held. Its voice was to be heard in the World Parliament of Religions.

The particular issue which prompted H.P.B. to write her article is past and gone these ninety years, but the teaching it conveys has timeless value and never was it more needed than today, when evil is rampant the world over, possibly in more numerous and more sinister forms than at any previous time in world history. Would that world leaders, as they are called, were disciples of H.P.B.! Then the human race could look forward to a future (whose security at present is far from sure) in which it would cease to bring misery upon itself, and upon Nature and her creatures, as has been the case throughout almost two thousand years of Christianity.

Whence evil? is a natural, an unavoidable, question as we look

around us and see its effects. But answers from the clergy and their theologians are in the main unsatisfactory. They must at all costs preserve their doctrines intact, and the basic one entails a duality. God and Satan must be seen as co-existent, and that "Man is totally depraved" was a theorem recently included in a syllabus of Bible study for young people in a church of the Baptist denomination. A small instance, a local one, but does not such a view run counter to the teaching of Jesus, who said of the children brought to Him for blessing, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven"?

Theosophy speaks more logically, more truthfully, through the lips, or rather through the pen, of H.P.B., whence came this article in the past to enlighten us in the present. More than ninety years have elapsed since she wrote it, but it is as apposite to the fundamental human problem as on the day when it first saw print. Truly, a diamond does not lose its lustre with the passing of time, and a pearl of great price will remain such enduringly.

KAO TZU said, "Human nature is like rushing water, which flows east or west according as an outlet is made for it. For human nature makes indifferently for good or for evil, precisely as water makes indifferently for the east or for the west."

Mencius replied, "Water will indeed flow indifferently towards the east or west; but will it flow indifferently up or down? It will not; and the tendency of human nature towards good is like the tendency of water to flow down. Every man has this bias towards good, just as all water flows naturally downwards. By splashing water, you may indeed cause it to fly over your head; and by turning its course you may keep it for use on the hillside; but you would hardly speak of such results as the nature of water. They are the results, of course, of a *force majeure*. And so it is when the nature of man is diverted towards evil."

—MENCIUS

THE LION IN THE PATH

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At a certain era of theosophical study and practice, we reach a point of pause, of silence. The mind appears saturated with the new and wonderful teaching; insensible to fresh impressions, it can take in no more. The heart that once bounded so elatedly in all the vigour of renewed life and stimulus has resumed its normal beat under the pressure of daily trial, to be met, as it was not heretofore met, with self-forgetfulness and altruistic endeavour. Slowly we seem to fall into a deadness, a lethargy of all the nature. We act, we plan, we fill the groove of circumstance, but we do it as though we walked in sleep. A blank wall rises before us seeming to bar further progress, and a pall falls over the inner life.

When this point of pause is reached, students say in their hearts that their progress is stopped, that they can advance no more. They have met a lion in the path, and fall back before the grim aspect. What causes this stop, this silence? First; we have learned more, intellectually, than we can use up in practical daily life. Head and heart have not kept pace. We know, in large part, what we should be in all relations of life, and why we should be it, but we have not attained the power of acting always and at once upon the lines of altruistic endeavour. And by a law of nature the brain cannot assimilate and digest the mass of knowledge received until it has been used up, to some extent at least, in the experience, any more than the stomach can receive and digest fresh food before the assimilative processes have been undergone with respect to food previously taken in. All the teachings we receive on the line of natural law (or spiritual law; the terms are one) are based upon the fact that motive determines energy and the value of energy, in a way touched upon by an adept in *The Occult World*.¹ There is "good and evil in every point of the universe," and the motive for which force is evolved, and in which it is used, must then qualify it. "Kundalini" may make or may kill.

Apply the same rule to concentration. The *passive* fixation of the empty mind produces a passive magnetic condition of the physical body, well indicated by the sign —, and facilitates the entrance

¹*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 29.*—EDS., THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT.

of adverse lower astral influences and entities; these are helped also by the quickened activity of the inner body under the said concentration. The *positive* fixation of the mind upon some worthy object, such as a high Ideal, the Higher Self, the image of an Elder Brother if one is known, renders the outer body positive, or magnetically +, and reduces the activity of the inner body by casting it into the mould of the mind occupied with this image. The doors are barred to all lower influences; a vibration far above their own effectually excludes them. In the one case we have lowered our spiritual vitality; in the other, we have raised it. To the aphorism, "A medium is an open door," might be added this — "The positive idealist is a closed temple." "The image of the Master is the best protection against lower influences; think of the Master as a living man within you," says a MS. This refers to the mental image of that master, who may be either an adept or the Higher Self. Patanjali says that the mind flows out and moulds itself upon the object seen; mind makes form.

In these brief hints may be found some explanation of our clogged mental processes. Those who participate so actively in theosophical work as to have little, if any, time for study, do, to my personal knowledge, make greater progress than other more learned F.T.S. Unconsciously (sub-consciously is a better term) they draw upon the Source for whose greater diffusion they work; they empty themselves and are filled, through the unfailing regularity of natural processes. Their motive predetermines the quality of the fresh energetic supply received. I do not pretend to constitute myself a judge of progress, but that must be advance which sweetens, regulates, and clarifies the nature; absence of these and presence of harshness and disturbance must imply some degree of retardation.

Even such workers do not escape the point of pause. The Lion confronts them; upon his forehead is branded the grim name of Doubt. Despair is the lair to which he conveys his victim.

In using the word Doubt, I do not restrict it to its conventional meaning, but apply it to all phases of mind that are in opposition to a wholesome and calm confidence in the reign of Law, to a full assurance that all is as well, with us and with the world, as it can possibly be at this moment. The evolutionary wheels never stop; we all progress as particles of air are said to do, through advance and recoil; and as sound is propagated along their line by just that motion, so the life wave, with its currents of progress, runs through individuals

and through worlds in the same rise and fall. Progress is *always* being made at some point of our greater and of our individual being, so long as we try at all, so long as we do not deliberately retard the methods of nature.

Why then, should we yield to this despondency? If I have anything to say upon the subject at all, it is because I have passed along that road; I have reached the point of pause and confronted the Lion. At first there seems no escape. We can only close the mind, throw ourselves into a vortex of practical altruistic work, and hold on, with stern determination, to the ideal now behind the clouds. We cannot lift our hearts to it; we are too dead-tired for that; but we can insist that it still shines behind the darkness and will reappear. Habit is the parent of Doubt. We have some special failing, some specific trial, some rock closing our path. That is what we think, labouring desperately to remove it, squandering all our strength upon the one obstacle. We mistake. No one thing has power to bar advance in all our being, on all its many planes. There are other causes, operative as obstacles, of which we are unconscious. Let us, then, accept ourselves as we are, and work on, trusting to work for others and to the influx of light which that brings for better comprehension of the lower self. To use up all our thoughts and most of our strength upon some personal failing is a fatal mistake. We do not kill our faults. We outgrow them. This growth can only be had by a study of spiritual law through the inner nature of things, and by its application to all the issues of life; above all, to the tendencies of the lower self. A clearer idea of philosophy and more theosophical work are what we most need.

It is not to be supposed that our faults are to be wholly ignored. But they are to be viewed without emotion, calmly, as an excrescence upon a tree, a blight in the midst of nature. No student should ever forget to look at things in that aspect which they wear on the plane of force. Anxiety, there, is an explosive; fear contracts, hope expands. The affection which trembles for its object, however legitimately to the outward sense, acts there as a disintegrating force. The thinker may increase the list for himself. Consequently, the agonizing repentance of the sinner is a deterrent if it continues longer than is necessary to the first stirring up of the inner nature. What we should do is more scientific. We should practise the substitution of mental images. Make deliberately in the mind an image opposed to the habit, or the desire, or the too influential person, whenever the idea which you desire to expel shall

arise. You do not even need to *feel* this new form at first; just bring it up and consider it; hold it as long as you can. You will come to feel it. You will react to it.

In the very hour of defeat is the germ of victory. All things go on to a climax; then reaction sets in. We are generally exhausted when this natural impulse arises; we fail to grasp it, to encourage and increase it. We can bring it about more speedily by increasing the momentum of any given feeling or course, so that the climax shall be more speedily reached, but such is not often the action of the wise. They await the proper hour. He who waits quietly, patiently, studiously, working for others where he can and substituting higher mental images for low ones in every idle hour, consciously making these etheric forms and clothing them with ever-increasing energy; he who calmly waits the crisis and then vigorously, promptly takes the reactionary current — he will know what is meant when *The Voice of the Silence* enjoins us: “Chase all your foes away . . . when even you have failed.”

Create your own reactions. It is done by thought. “If thou would’st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round humankind, the progeny and heirs to man and his terrestrial spoils.” You have stamped those thoughts upon energetic centres in the astral light until they have become your habits; they inform, propel, and nourish the Lion in the path. Efface the old impressions; bathe the sensitized centres in the biting acid of Will; create new thoughts daily, automatically if you cannot do it with love at first; love will follow; all things follow Will. Ruskin says: “Do justice to your brother — you can do that whether you love him or not — and you will come to love him. But do injustice to him — because you don’t love him, and you will come to hate him.” Justice primarily demands that we cease to poison the *milieu* in which men live, which souls exhale and respire, with our personal fears, desires, and all the haunting shapes of self. Man legislates against poisoning of the air, but nature prohibits the infection of the soul atmosphere, the ether. “Doubt is Self,” she cries. “Thou art the Lion in thy brother’s path; destroy it, and it will not bar thine own.”

— JASPER NIEMAND

LAW AND PROGRESS

KARMA is a Sanskrit word meaning action — to do, to move. It has been adopted in Theosophy to designate the English word “Law” in a universal as well as a particular sense. It implies “movement by design,” and posits that this is guided by an *intelligence*. Every being in the universe, whether visible or invisible, large or small, atom or galaxy, is intelligent and is necessary in its own place. Every part reacts on every other part and on the whole, and *vice versa*.

Karma is a law so comprehensive in its sweep that nothing in the universe is exempt from its operation. It is not man-made law, but rather the response of any individual intelligence — which each being is in its essence — to every other intelligence.

Every being or entity is alive, aware in some degree. Its life and its relations with other beings constitute its experience, its memory, and its evolution. Its form is its body; its intelligence is at the core of its being, in its subtle, causal and essential nature; and it is this which assembles a body for it to live and act in on this plane.

Every atom is immortal and has the potentiality of becoming one day a man of mind complete, an independent chooser. So, in one sense, the atom, though with its limited experience, is a “younger brother” to us Manasic beings. Theosophy views the Universe as a vast brotherhood, and asserts the fact of universal unity and causation.

The experience garnered by the immortal being, whether atom, man, or galaxy, constitutes its knowledge, its memory, its consciousness, ever expanding to universal consciousness. This experience is stored and carried by it in its imperishable nature, and goes to build its talents, abilities, character, properties, and largely determines its automatic responses to its surroundings.

We are led to see that there must be levels of consciousness: between man and atom there is a gap as wide as between man and, let us say, the intelligence that governs a planet, a star, or a galaxy. But Theosophy states that a link exists, and in time, through evolutionary experience, the lowest develops by self-effort into the highest. Life is a process of conscious and self-determined experience which is ever widening, ever deepening.

To say that the highest goal is evolution of perceptive intelligence (mind) through the interaction of all beings, is another way of saying that Karma is universal, as also impartial, just and merciful, since each

intelligence has, under Law, an equal opportunity with every other. There are no favoured few, no chance superiors, for the Law is just, universal, and harmonious in its response to every thought-feeling-action. Each being evolves at its own self-chosen pace.

Atomic evolution is by association with other atoms — the building of molecules, cells, structures — and these in turn are used by other intelligences which leave their impress through this usage. For instance, our bodies are made up of these structures and sub-structures, assembled by the law of consubstantiality through previous relation. Our mind-intelligence assembles under the law of attraction those materials needed to make a form through which it can function and that can live on this plane of matter in this condition of evolutionary experience and consciousness which we call our waking lives. So, we, using our atoms, become responsible for their evolution. This is because we have already progressed through their stage, and now are their guides and “elder brothers.” We help or hinder their progress, as we in the past were also helped or hindered. Each one makes his own destiny and affects the future of every other being. Those great of soul, who have through personal effort and merit risen to a higher rung on the ladder of evolution and become like unto “gods,” continue to help and instruct us in our progress. They are living exemplars of the goal of perfection that we too can reach by our own efforts; and they keep alive the knowledge of the Eternal Law in the universe. They are our Elder Brothers and the Great Teachers of the true Religion, the true Science, the true Philosophy.

When we speak of “man,” we are speaking of our stage in evolution as Manasic beings. As self-conscious beings we see past, present and future in idea-pictures (memory and anticipation). We visualize the small and the great, our duties and our responsibilities, our pleasures, our problems and dilemmas, and all the sensitivities of emotion, of mind and of bodily response impinge on our consciousness, on our awareness, on our perception. We know that all of these do not make the whole Man, but that they do influence us. We know that we can make ourselves “stand apart,” so to say, and choose what we will do.

Often there is confusion as to what to do. A single life seems too short for us to learn to handle our complex nature and situations with competence. We can see that we do not always have the knowledge to make discriminative judgments that will affect our future for the better; and we do know innately that what we decide to do, or not to do, will affect not only *our* future, but also that of others.

An atom does not make choices like we do. We would call it non-self-conscious; its development to self-awareness is potential in its future; ours is proceeding *now*. We seem to have to deal with a lot more — our bodies (which need feeding, rest and exercise); our feelings and emotions (which need balancing and guidance); and our minds (which need stimulus, creativity and periods of quiet rest when we can meditate on and assimilate the experiences we have passed through). In the case of man, his evolution is through reincarnation, or the use of many bodies by the Spirit-mind which is the *real* man.

Reincarnation simply means that, once our bodies get tired and worn out, after a period of rest-assimilation the Spirit-mind resumes its evolutionary pilgrimage in a fresh body that it has assembled out of the materials it had used in its previous lives. These materials, in a way, are also the carriers of its Karma. It should be clear that after many, many years, these materials which had dispersed and which are now being drawn back together to form a new body, brain and personality, have lost the cohesive memory of the details of the last life. The Spirit-mind always has this “memory” available to it, but our brain-mind in the new body is freshly moulded from materials that may have been used over many past lives, and they bring the karmic character, talents, abilities, and problems of attitude that we imposed on them in the past. Children sometimes claim to remember their past lives, but it is often difficult to verify their genuineness.

The process of reincarnation is very similar in terms of consciousness to what happens when we go to sleep. When the body dies, the Spirit-mind carries all its memories on to the emotional-feeling plane, which is like a dream experience. Here these memories get divided into two groups: (1) those that make up the grand, the noble and the “good” things we have done or experienced in our last life; and (2) those that are petty, selfish, mean and, in general, what we call “bad.”

The Spirit-mind now takes a long time to review, to meditate on, and to incorporate into its character those experiences that are noble, constructive and harmonious with the real man and with Nature’s evolutionary plan — those that add to the wisdom of the permanent Man, which we are in our real essence. It is like a restful, health-giving, deep-sleep period. Theosophy states that for the average individual this period lasts for around ten to fifteen centuries. But it varies from person to person. A baby might come back within a few short months, while one who has lived a rich, full life and performed good deeds has much

to meditate on, and might take an immensity of years to be reborn.

The second group of experiences pertains to our perishable nature, and the Spirit-mind allows the memory of these to dissipate quickly. They are not "lost," however, but when the time comes for the Spirit-mind to resume its pilgrimage in a new body, those attributes which are to be dealt with in the new life are drawn back to the incarnating entity, so that it starts its life on earth again with a mixture of both "good and "bad" Karma. Needless to say, "Once a man, always a man." There is no retrogression into an animal or any other body of lower consciousness and responsibility than the human.

There are a few important points to be kept in mind to understand Reincarnation and Karma:

(1) The whole Universe, ourselves included, is intelligent, alive. It is a conscious, co-operative whole and nothing is ever wasted. Every being is an evolving immortal.

(2) Karma is a universally operative LAW. Its operations restore disturbed harmony to equilibrium. It is impartial, unerring, merciful and just.

(3) Reincarnation (or re-embodiment) is the process by which the non-self-conscious becomes the self-conscious, and the self-conscious (man) becomes universally conscious, or divine. This is the supreme Goal for all.

MAKE peace with yourself, and heaven and earth will make peace with you. Endeavour to enter your own inner cell, and you will see the heavens; because the one and the other are one and the same, and when you enter one you see the two.

—ST. ISAAC OF SYRIA

DANGERS OF HATHA-YOGA

[This answer by W. Q. Judge to the question asked appeared originally in *The Vahan* for January 1892.—Eds.]

B.M.—“*In both Europe and America, I have met a good many Theosophists who enquire into and appear to dabble in practical applications of the directions found in some of our literature, in the ‘Upanishads,’ and in a little book by one Sabapathi Swamy, respecting psychic development, by means of postures, regulating the breath and the like. What can be said upon this?*”

W. Q. JUDGE — These attempts at practical Yoga — as it is called — are most dangerous, and in addition presumptuous and foolish. It is well understood in the right circles in India, that the directions found in many of the *Upanishads* should never be practised, except under the following conditions: (*a*) a complete knowledge of all, and of the consequences, with a knowledge of correctives to be applied when changes take place; and (*b*) the possession of a thoroughly competent guide to point out errors, to restrain endeavour and to indicate danger, as well as to cure troubles that ensue. Yet in the face of all this, and of repeated warnings, there are those who will foolhardily begin the practices in complete ignorance. They do not even pursue the ethical regulations that accompany all the others, such as the doing away with all vices, bad habits, uncharitable thoughts and so on; but go in for the practices, merely in the hope of procuring psychic powers. It is time it were stopped, and time that those who give out this literature looked into what they give out to a grasping and stiff-necked generation. That damage has been wrought both to the Society and some of its members cannot be contested, in face of actual experience in all parts of both countries. It is well known that these postures, even when ignorantly used, bring on physiological changes in the body, with great nervous derangements. Further than that, the enquiring public is frightened off from our movement by the ill-balanced view of Theosophy and of the Society which these dabblers promulgate. Let us halt before it is too late. Let us give out the ethical and philosophical doctrines for the promulgation of which the Theosophical Society was founded. Thus alone can we accomplish our mission, which is to the world at large and not for the benefit of a few cranky investigators in a field that can only be safely trodden by the thoroughly prepared, the fully armed and the deeply experienced man who has a sound mind and high pure aspirations, joined to a sound body.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Guy Murchie, in his book *The Seven Mysteries of Life*, writes of our kinship with the world and with the boundless universe, and urges a regard for our "fellow passengers":

From the virus to the universe — or possibly from below the virus, perhaps even from below subatomic particles, which, some physicists have hinted, seem to be "indeterminate" to the point of willfulness — are signs of life and the omnipresence of life, all of it interrelated and all made of the same elemental stuff.

In a real sense, therefore, you are made of stars, of star dust, and most surely of atoms given off by stars. Most of the matter in the universe in fact is now known to pass at some time through the caldron of the stars. . . .

Besides, the phenomenon we call life is, in large perspective, just part of the quality of stars and therefore must exist potentially everywhere. Certainly it has no proven limits in size in either direction, large or small. It is omnipresent and universal and its progressive dimensions overlap in a continuous telescoping hierarchy of magnitudes. . . .

When you can really grasp the universality of such relationships you have gained a new insight into the ancient Serbian proverb: "Be humble for you are made of dung. Be noble for you are made of stars." Because you will have come aware by then that a cross-section of the world sits on your table in the sense that every slice of bread and butter you eat brings you all three of the common kingdoms through vegetable grain, animal fat, and mineral salt, while the mere fact that you are alive ensures you Earth's three states of matter, since you breathe the gaseous sky, drink the liquid rain, and your flesh and bones share molecules with the solid soil and rock of your planet.

In a way of saying, then, no borderline exists between you and the world. You are of it and it is of you — a kinship that reaches both ways and everywhere, genetically, mentally, spiritually, chemically, even gastronomically. . . .

A different understanding of how the three kingdoms participate in us all can come from reflecting that the developing human embryo re-enacts the progressive dimensional phases of evolution: starting its unfolding like an inert mineral with the positional geometry of centro-symmetrical packing around one point, then furrowing into a vegetable with a symmetrical line or stalk

sprouting from roots buried in the "soil" of the uterus, and finally splitting into an animal with handed bilateral symmetry astride the plane that halves its mobile body.

Thus the point-line-plane progression of symmetries unites the kingdoms through the dimension of time. But their interactions in the mind and spirit are far more subtle. How does it happen, for example, that a rose is beautiful to a human? Could the answer perhaps ultimately be found somewhere in the flower's delicately sensuous balance between the soothing and the fascinating in this human-vegetable cousinhood that unites two so different creatures? . . .

Intuition somehow whispers to me that an attitude of total disregard for my less conspicuous fellow passengers on this sphere amounts to surrendering to a primitive provinciality that can be considered a sort of blindness that education or spiritual enlightenment should be able to overcome.

Should one not, moreover, be humbled rather than shocked to realize that more creatures live on a normal man than all the men living on Earth? And should one not be awed by the evidence that these creatures live in a more stable balance with nature than men do and more than likely with a better moral reason for what they are doing to man than man has for what he is doing to Earth?

What *The Secret Doctrine* asserted in the last century, modern thought is just beginning to admit:

From *Gods to men*, from Worlds to atoms, from a star to a rush-light, from the Sun to the vital heat of the meanest organic being — the world of Form and Existence is an immense chain, whose links are all connected. The law of Analogy is the first key to the world-problem, and these links have to be studied co-ordinately in their occult relations to each other. (*S.D.*, I. 604)

What is the true nature of genius? This is a question that is often asked, yet rarely does one come across a satisfactory definition. Dr. Stephen Rosen, writing in the January *Science Digest*, admits the elusive nature of genius:

Fascinated by geniuses I have known, enchanted by the qualities of genius, I find that its definition eludes me. Its nature is a puzzle, a wonderment, a terrifying gift. If possessed of genius, I would not understand its essence any more than those who are

themselves possessed by it. Yet the pursuit of genius has become a quest to understand whether genius is a fact of life or freak of nature — like a summer sunset, a mountain peak, a Bach fugue, a Mozart symphony.

Genius, human creativity, deep insight, these are scarce human gifts — and not only to the possessors. Genius is a gift to all of us. But it is more. The work of genius in an earlier epoch often becomes the background music, a part of the social fabric, the passing scenery, of the present. So the work of genius today may become the commonplace of tomorrow. Genius is not only a gift to the future — it is a hint of the future, a glimpse, perhaps a forecast. . . .

A genius may differ as much from other people as men differ from apes. Perhaps genius is a separate psychobiological species, or a form of divine inspiration, or even divine madness. Yet genius is also the power to use the innate human faculties that we all share, but over a far wider range. The work of genius is a new creation, a synthesis, an original and penetrating idea, an “immense persuasiveness of a mind which has completely mastered its perspective,” as Virginia Woolf expressed it. . . .

We can come close to a full perception of the qualities of genius by examining individual members of the class. Yet a clear understanding of what genius is, or is not, would be unlikely to bring any of us closer to being one; perhaps the most we could hope for is to seek out that part of genius which is a paraphrase of our own highest thoughts, that part of genius which may, as John Keats suggested, “appear almost a remembrance.”

In a footnote in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 69), H.P.B. gives a hint: “Pre-existing or *innate* virtues, talents or gifts are regarded as having been acquired in a previous birth. Genius is without exception a talent or aptitude brought from another birth.” Great intellectual development is not necessarily a sign of true genius. It is therefore necessary to distinguish between what H.P.B. described as “the true and the artificial genius, one born from the light of the immortal Ego, the other from the evanescent will-o’-the-wisp of the terrestrial or purely human intellect and the animal soul” (“Genius”: *U.L.T. Pamphlet No.13*). Of those who hold that genius is simply a matter of cultivation of the intellect, H.P.B. wrote:

It is useless to argue with such, or tell them that original, and great genius puts out the most dazzling rays of human intellectuality, as the sun quenches the flame-light of a fire in an open

field; that it is never eccentric; though always *sui generis*; and that no man endowed with true genius can ever give way to his physical animal passions. In the view of an humble Occultist, only such a grand altruistic character as that of Buddha or Jesus, and of their few close imitators, can be regarded, in our historical cycle, as fully developed GENIUS. (Ibid.)

The weekly magazine, *Ms. London*, recently carried an article by Angela Patmore, entitled "It's All in the Stars." A Gallup poll, the author points out, revealed that 65-80 per cent of the population look at their "stars," and of those, 15-20 per cent take them seriously, and 2-4 per cent very seriously.

The author interviewed a selection of noted astrologers about their work. John Naylor, *Daily Mail* astrologer, noted:

We're living in a social climate in which religion, politics and politicians have largely lost their credibility, yet people still need a pattern for interpreting their experiences. A large proportion of what they read in newspapers and magazines is completely impersonal, but when they turn to their "stars" they find something that actually relates to them.

Roger Elliot, who writes the "Stars" column in the *TV Times*, complained:

Clients think I'm a magician — that I can wave my hat in the air and solve their problems. A lot of girls, in particular, have in their make-up a passive, even masochistic quality. They like to have decisions made for them.

Magazine and radio astrologer June Penn had this to say:

People used to have religion and go to church, and of course some of them still do. But the majority look elsewhere for hope. They turn to meditation, to spiritualism, and to people like me.

Still another astrologer, Peter West, asked whether the growing reliance on astrology was a good thing, replied:

Astrology guides; it doesn't rule. A lot of people tend to lift their feet off the ground, so to speak. I always advise them that astrology is just a series of cycles geared to their particular charts; it can only hint at what will happen; it can't make it happen.

In answer to the question, "If all our sufferings in this life are caused by the misdeeds of a former life, how can any combination of sidereal

influences at birth affect our fate?" Mr. Judge wrote in *The Theosophical Forum* for July 1890:

A thorough acquaintance with the doctrine of Karma and with what is actually claimed for Astrology by those qualified to speak, would result in an answer to this question. Astrology is not soothsaying nor card-reading; reading omens is soothsaying; reading cards is a form of divination: Astrology is neither of these. All that is claimed for it is that the whole assemblage of stars indicates, as being a vast machine or clockwork, just exactly what is the state or condition of any one spot in the whole mass. Is this any more absurd than to say that a watchmaker can tell from the movements of a watch just where the hands will be at any particular moment, and likewise from the hands alone where the different cogs and other parts are within? If common minds, and ignorant as well as venal practitioners of Astrology, make a stock of their imitations, wrong conceptions, and base uses of it, that is no reason why we should sweepingly denounce Astrology. As well denounce real Christianity because of the base coinage labelled with its name. Taking now the oft-made assertion that "Karma governs all worlds up to that of Brahma," we reply to the question that our Karma and the stars are inextricably linked together, for if we had no Karma there would for us be no stars. It is just because the Karma of any being at birth is fixed from his prior one that the great clockwork of the skies shows unerringly to the sage — but not to the dabbler nor to the modern abusers of Astrology — the Karma or present fate of the being. But if, as so often done by even the best of Theosophists, we separate any part of our universe from any other portion, putting one under influence of Karma and another not, then of course such questions as this one cannot be answered. The doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion are naught if not all-embracing, are useless and misleading if not applicable to the greatest as well as the very least of circumstances or worlds; and so we answer that not only do sidereal positions *indicate* our Karma, but even the very clouds, the wind, and the hour of the day or night in which we may be born, do the same. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, January 1943)

An Indian yogi — 104-year-old Swami Satyamurti — has survived being buried alive for eight days by reducing his heartbeats and body temperature to extraordinary levels. Doctors who monitored the experi-

ment reported that his pulse rate was undetectable on an electro-cardiogram and his body temperature sank to 80 degrees — the lowest ever reported in a normal human being. (*Prediction*, January 1980)

Dr. Yogesh Chandra Mathur, a New Delhi chest and allergy specialist, said: "Any doctor would have declared him dead. I'm convinced he either stopped his heart or slowed it down to where the instruments could not detect its beat."

Dr. Arun Bordia, a Fellow of the American College of Cardiology, commented: "It's an incredible feat. I had always believed it impossible. If mankind could learn to do this — increase or decrease the heart rate or blood pressure — it would mean they could overcome mental stress, the major factor in heart disease."

Swami Satyamurti claims to have carried out similar exploits on 278 other occasions — once for no less than 48 days.

"*Analogy*," we have been told, "is the guiding law in Nature" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 153). What is the analogy between animal hibernation and the method by which a yogi can remain alive while buried?

In *The Theosophist* for September 1880 (Vol I, p. 314), H.P.B. said that "human hibernation" belonged to the Yoga system and might be termed one of its many results. In the second issue of that journal, that for November 1879, there was an article on "Yoga Vidya" in which it was stated:

While average mortals maintain their perceptions only during the day, the initiated Yogi has an equally real, undimmed, and perfect appreciation of his individual existence at night, even while his body sleeps. He can go even further: he can voluntarily paralyse his vital functions so that his body shall lie like a corpse, the heart still, the lungs collapsed, animal heat transferred to the interior surfaces; the vital machine stopped, as it were, like a clock which waits only the key that rewinds it, to resume its beating. What nature does for the scores of hibernating quadrupeds, reptiles and insects, under the spontaneous action of her established laws, the Yogi effects for his physical body by long practice, and the intense concentration of an undaunted will.

There is more than one way in which a suspension of human bodily functions can be brought about. A "Comment" in the April 1881 *Theosophist* (Vol. II, p. 146), after referring to the proved ability of "some adepts in the secret science, which is generally known in India under the name of Yoga," to bring about this state, mentions that during it

neither the hair nor the nails grow, "though they do for a certain time in a body actually dead." This fact is cited in proof of the atoms and tissues of the physical body being "held under conditions quite different from those of the state called death."

Elsewhere H.P.B. stated:

If we die — save accident — of old age, it is because the tissues of the body are worn out by the wear and tear of life: the blood loses its power of free circulation; the bones get ossified, and men die. But if you have discovered the great physiological and psychological secrets of nature, and know why some animals in cold climates hibernate and sleep without awakening from four to six months in the year, without eating, drinking, or breathing either, and yet return to life full of vigour and rejuvenated; and if you learn from some fakirs the secret of being buried alive for six months and then taken out from their coffin as a corpse, which after a few manipulations comes back to life — this is historically and beyond doubt proved — then you may say that you have discovered or learnt one of the grandest mysteries of life and death. Learn to put yourself to sleep as a corpse, arrest the progress of life, of that wear and tear of the tissues; arrest, in short, the progress of all vital processes during your sleep, and then, if you sleep twelve hours every day, you may truly assert that in six years you have lived as three years, in twenty years ten, and so on. And that some of your fakirs have this secret, without being at all learned in physiology, is an indisputable fact.

Dr. Ian Stevenson, writing in the *Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases*, states that reincarnation may explain why twins often have different personalities. While genetics may help us understand why twins are alike, "reincarnation," says Dr. Stevenson, "may help us understand why they often differ from each other." He goes on.

Parents of identical twins sometimes report that they observed such marked differences in behaviour at such an early age that it does not seem like they themselves (the parents) could have brought it about. I am suggesting that some such differences may derive from the different experiences in previous incarnations.

Dr. Stevenson is currently studying a dozen pairs of twins in which one member of each pair — and in some cases both members — appears to have memories of a previous life.
