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THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

**A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life**

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सत्यत् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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H.P.B.—THE PERSON

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MAN is a soul plus a personality. Generally when thinking of H.P.B. we think of her as soul, that great soul who worked in and through the Theosophical Movement of our age. But we often forget that she worked through a personality, or if we remember it we think of the difficulties that personality seemed to make among those who worked with her.

Suppose we look at this personality and try to find out what and who it was.

How the personality obscures the real man is brought out in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Arjuna did not realize at first that Krishna was anything other than his friend, the prince, the charioteer, and therefore when he was given the divine eye and saw who Krishna really was, he realized the enormity of his behaviour and confessed:

Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee "O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend," and blinded by my affection and presumption, I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this I beseech thee, O inconceivable Being, to forgive (*Bhagavad-Gita*, XI, 42)

Have we erred in the past in our estimate of H.P.B.? The Mahatmas have said:

After nearly a century of fruitless search, our Chiefs had to avail themselves of the only opportunity to send out a European *body* upon European soil to serve as a connecting link between that country and our own.

So we learn one fact: the body of H.P.B. was the best available for the purpose of the Theosophical Movement, the *only* one which could form a link between Masters' world and the Western world.

All of us know of her birth in Russia and all of us are familiar with her photographs in the years when she was acting as a link between the two worlds, and we see her sad face, her inconveniently bulky proportions, the mark left on her body by her illnesses, but few of us are as familiar with the photographs of her early life when as "the lovely young girl" she first went to the Masters. All we see and remember is the body engraved with the suffering caused by the very people she had loved and helped. Yet, in 1874, soon after her arrival in New York, the newspaper, *The Daily Graphic*, described her as "a remarkably good-natured and sprightly woman. She is handsome...dresses with remarkable elegance, is *bien gantee* and her clothing is redolent of some subtle and delicious perfume which she has gathered in her wanderings in the Far East."

We hear a lot of her "temper" and her "outspokenness," but as we become more familiar with all that the Masters have written about her we get a different picture. Thus, for instance:

...her strange ways make her in your opinion a very undesirable transmitter of our messages. Nevertheless.. once that you have learned the truth; once told, that this unbalanced mind, the seeming incongruity of her speeches and ideas, her nervous excitement...nothing of it is due to any fault of hers, you may, perchance, be led to regard her in quite a different light.

What is the truth? The Master continues:

This state of hers is intimately connected with her occult training in Tibet, and due to her being sent out alone into the world to gradually prepare the way for others....No manor

woman, unless he be an initiate of the "fifth circle," can leave the precincts of *Bod-Las* and return back into the world in his integral whole—if I may use the expression.

All that was visible on the surface was her personality. Some may have glimpsed her real inner nature, but only if they were her peers. The Masters have said that the personality known to the world as H.P.B. was known to them "otherwise." Thus in one place Master K.H. says:

In the superficial details of her homely, hard-working, commonplace daily life and affairs, you discern but unpracticality, womanly impulses, often absurdity and folly; we, on the contrary, light daily upon traits of her inner nature the most delicate and refined.

We get an interesting sidelight on her character—and one of great value to her students and to all those who seek to live the inner life in the outer world, sacrificing their personal feelings. Said the Master:

She never stops one moment to consider the propriety of things when concerned in carrying out [Master's] orders. In the eyes of you.. it is the one unpardonable sin; in our sight.. it is the greatest virtue; for before it became with her a habit, she used to suffer in *her* Western nature and perform it as a self-sacrifice of her personal reputation.

We are told also that "there never was a woman more unjustly abused than H.B." Countess Wachtmeister wrote to Mr. Sinnett on February 17, 1886:

Do you know that ever since the 1st January, my first thought on waking in the morning has been "what impertinence or annoyance will the post bring today," and a feeling of thankfulness on going to bed if there has been nothing, which is *very rare*.

Just imagine what a life to lead, particularly for one who is in bad health, constantly suffering and has to write the "Secret

Doctrine." ...Just try for one moment and place yourself in her position; after so many years' labour for the Society which she created to find all the Theosophists either tearing herself or themselves to pieces—then wanting to write this book, which is to benefit the world by giving out truths hitherto unknown—and to find herself literally unable to do it through all the wounds and contusions she receives from all these stones so liberally shied at her from all sides, but the hardest from those whom she has loved so dearly.

What did she say of herself? She said that she was but the window through which the Light comes. She did not even admit her own great part in the Work but gave all the credit to her Master. She wrote:

...for so many years I stand set in the pillory, a target for my enemies and some friends also. Yet I accept the *trial* cheerfully, Why? Because I know that I have, all my faults notwithstanding, Master's protection extended over me. And if I have it, the reason for it is simply this: for thirty-five years and more, ever since 1851 that I saw any Master *bodily* and personally for the first time, / *have never once denied or even doubted Him*, not even in thought. Never a reproach or murmur against Him has escaped my lips, or entered even my brain for one instant under the heaviest trials....Unswerving devotion to Him who embodies the duty traced for me, and belief in the Wisdom—collectively, of that grand, mysterious, yet actual Brotherhood of holy men—is my only merit, and the cause of my success in Occult philosophy. (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, pp. 14-15)

The following tribute to her by Charles Johnston was reprinted in the April 1964 issue of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT:

There was something in her personality, her bearing, the light and power of her eyes, which spoke of a wider and deeper life.... That was the greatest thing about her, and it was always there; this sense of a bigger world, of deeper powers, of unseen might; to those in harmony with her potent genius, this came as a revelation and incentive to follow the path she pointed out. To those who could not see with her eyes, who could not raise themselves in some measure to her vision, this quality came as

a challenge, an irritant, a discordant and subversive force, leading them at last to an attitude of fierce hostility and denunciation.

When the last word is said, she was greater than any of her works, more full of living power than even her marvellous writings. It was the intimate and direct sense of her genius, the strong ray and vibration of that genius itself, which worked her greatest achievements and won her greatest triumphs. Most perfect work of all, her will carried with it a sense and conviction of immortality. Her mere presence testified to the vigour of the soul.

How explain H.P.B.? It has been said: "Those who cannot understand her had best not try to explain her." All we can do is to remember the mysteries of the human soul and its vehicles and be increasingly grateful to that Great Soul and to the personality through which it worked and suffered for our benefit.

How can we repay our debt? The advice given by the Mahatma should point to us the way in which we should think of her:

Do not forget that all the good results that are in store for our India...are all due to her individual efforts. You can hardly show her enough respect and gratitude, or more than she is entitled to...You will have to carefully impress [her friends] with the sense of the exalted position she ought to—if she does not—hold among those Hindus who have remained true to the Past, care not for the Present, and work but for the Future, which will be great and glorious if she is only supported and helped by them....

THE fountain of content must spring up in the mind; and he who has so little knowledge of human nature as to see happiness by changing anything but his own disposition, will waste his life in fruitless efforts, and multiply the griefs which he proposes to remove.

—SAMUEL JOHNSON

IT is a popular belief that everything that happens comes to pass according to a predetermined pattern and that we have little scope to change the course of events. This is the philosophy of fatalism. Stoics were confirmed fatalists among whom Epicurus and Zeno are still remembered. Among Christians, St. Augustine and Calvin were of the view that God determined in advance the destiny of each soul and that no mortal had the right or the power to question the divine will which is inscrutable. Shakespeare gives expression to the fatalistic philosophy of his times in his play, *Hamlet*: "There is a divinity that shapes our ends, rough-hew them how we will." In *Julius Caesar*, however, he conveys a seemingly opposite view, when he makes Cassius say : "Men at some time are masters of their fates: The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves, that we are underlings." The famous Kannada poet, Dr. D. V. Gundappa, in his epic poem, *Manku Thimmana Kagga*, portrays the fatalistic philosophy when he compares man to a horse yoked to a cart, obliged to go wherever directed by the driver of the cart. This describes the condition of the people who prefer to surrender their "will to act" and assume a passive fatalistic outlook.

The fatalistic philosophy may be found soothing to some natures when up against problems or when faced with making difficult choices. Instead of acting in all situations with courage and responsibility, they derive comfort in the thought that there is an unseen power that determines the course of events and that they have no choice but to resign to the inevitable. However comforting it may appear to some, the fatalistic philosophy does not square with truth and reality. We can never get round the basic truth that the universe is governed by an impersonal Law which is universal and inexorable, and that every action of every being on all planes brings its appropriate reaction. There is no Deity other than the Universal Law of Harmony, called Karma. It is the ultimate Law of the Universe. As every action brings its appropriate reaction, none can escape the consequences of his actions. At the same time, none can fail to rise above apparently adverse circumstances fashioned by ourselves that hem us in— through right attitude and right effort.

Of all beings in the universe man occupies a unique position and the uniqueness of man consists in his mind principle or Manas, which makes him morally responsible for his every thought, word and deed. Unlike the lower kingdoms of Nature, he has to make moral choices each instant, exercise his power of discernment—*Buddhi*—to discriminate and choose between good and evil, right and wrong. Once we make the choice, the result of that action is past recall. Nor can we escape from the consequences, whatever they may be, happiness or sorrow—they have to be met and experienced. Karmic balance struck and lessons implicit in the experiences have to be learnt. It is thus that the Ego tastes of the fruit of good and evil from the Tree of Life, learns and makes progress.

Yes, there is destiny in our life. But *we* have made that destiny, and not any outside agency—in this or in a previous life. But we have the freedom to choose one way or the other every moment. When the inevitable reactions flowing from our own choices and actions meet us to produce pain or happiness, there are lessons implicit in them. They are lessons of the School of Life, from which we ought to learn—learn to act more harmoniously, more responsibly, unselfishly, for weal and progress of all. As the whole of mankind is all tied up together in a bond of Brotherhood which cannot be wished away, individual Karma is inextricably bound up with collective Karma.

Karma predestines nothing and no one. We, by our actions, create causes and feel the effects of those causes which are our teachers. Our spiritual progress is possible only by self-effort. We must assume responsibility for our actions and not try to evade it by religious sacrifices and ceremonies. When King Bimbisara was about to sacrifice a goat in a religious ceremony, with the priests invoking the gods to transfer all the sins of the king on to the poor, innocent, helpless animal, the Buddha intervened and counseled the king to stop the inhuman, superstitious practice. He spoke to the congregation about

The fixed arithmetic of the universe,
Which meteth good for good and ill for ill,

Measure for measure, unto deeds, words, thoughts;
 Watchful, aware, implacable, unmoved;
 Making all futures fruits of all the pasts.

Help, assistance and enlightenment will come to us in this Great Journey only if we strive towards the enlightenment and emancipation of *all*, and when we deserve and merit such help by our actions. Far from being fatalism, Karma places in our hands our own evolution. By knowledge of this Law of our being and of the essential and real oneness of all beings, we have to learn to act in harmony with Nature for the general weal and progress of all. It is only through knowledge of the Karmic Law in all its ramifications that man may fulfil his Karmic destiny.

EACH man is *responsible* for his own external affairs, conditions, and circumstances, for his character, qualities and tendencies, for his mental, moral, psychic and spiritual nature, upon every plane of consciousness. He is likewise responsible for the effects of his thought and action on his fellow-men, and on the kingdoms below man; he cannot save himself at the expense of any other being, nor can he have true happiness so long as any of his fellow-men suffer. As he is a self-conscious being with the power of acquiring qualities, and of manipulating the lower natures, it devolves upon him to *understand* the nature of all things that he may use them beneficently. Only when the feeling of responsibility which is the beginning of selflessness moves men to clarification of their minds, and to conformity of feeling, thought, and act with the true rationale of life, can this understanding be had.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

Difficulties and friction are the accompaniments of existence, and if everything was smooth and all right all the time we would have nothing to do....Did you ever reflect on the question: "What would you do if all our ideals for man were accomplished, if altruism were universal?" We would have to emigrate to some worse planet to have scope for our feelings. Hence we should accept all the difficulties as part of the day's work, and try to get as many people, including ourselves, arranged for help as we can.

—W. Q. JUDGE

LIFE is full of difficulties and obstacles, from birth to death. At times, Life seems like a hurdle race. We are sure of encountering hurdles, but almost always we are taken by surprise. It is necessary to accept that life in general is full of difficulties and adversities. This recognition is the first step.

When faced with problems, we often feel, "I am the only one having such problems." Or, we tend to exaggerate our problems and regard them as most complex, most painful, and as an extreme case. But if we look around us, we find people in much worse conditions. As St. Augustine said, "I cried for boots, till I saw a man who had no legs."

When faced with adversities, we either grumble or seek to dodge them. We behave like an ostrich in the desert. It is said that when there is a storm in the desert, the ostrich buries his head in the sand—hoping that the storm will go away if he ignores it—and finally gets buried under a heap of sand and dies. Some of us choose to pretend that the problems do not exist. We fail to realize that confronting and solving the problem—no matter how painful the process—makes us grow.

'Accept the woes of birth,' says *The Voice of the Silence*. It has many implications. First, it means "accepting,"-*i.e.*, being able to say that it is "my" problem and it is up to me to solve it. Many times we find ourselves putting the blame on others—parents, society or the circumstances of life. Nothing happens by chance, but all is the result of our past Karma. There is also the belief that having made all efforts to

get out of adversity, we must resign. As a prayer puts it: "God, grant me the serenity to take the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference." There are times when what is needed is patient resignation. As *The Dhammapada* teaches: "Enduring patience is the highest *Tapas*" We seek to come out of an unpleasant situation *quickly*. We must understand that if the cause had been operating for a long time, the effect also would last long—as even when the gas has been turned off, the burner remains hot for a long time. Similarly, we expect quick results; having put in the effort, we must be willing to wait.

One of the duties of a Theosophist is "to drink without a murmur to the last drop, whatever contents the cup of life may have in store for us..." All the affairs of life must be regarded as a kind of passing phase. "This too shall pass away," is a good maxim to remember—both when we are elated as well as disappointed. Mr. Crosbie writes in *The Friendly Philosopher*:

When we come to consider that the purpose of life is to learn and that it is all made up of learning, the circumstances by means of which we learn become of minor importance. As Mr. Judge once wrote to me: "The ocean of life washes to our feet and away again, things that are both hard to lose and unpleasant to welcome, yet they all belong to life; all come from the Great Self that is never moved. So lean back on the Self—be like the great bed of the ocean that is never moved though storms may ruffle its surf ace.... It does not mean that we should cease to do the best we can at all times, but we know that whatever comes, all is well. (pp. 40-41)

Patient acceptance of what is due to us makes us take a step further in our development. It is opportunity at two levels: (1) On the lower level, it is an opportunity to pay off the Karmic debt. (2) On the higher level, it is an opportunity for the ego to learn to deal with such a situation. For instance, one person interested in classical music will rebel against being transferred to a place where he cannot go to the concerts. Another

with similar interest may accept it as good discipline and look upon it as an opportunity to cultivate some other interests. When we complain instead of accepting, we do not exhaust the Karma but sow seeds for further unpleasant Karma. There must be such firm faith in the working of the law of Karma that one will not resort to ceremonies to deviate the law from its course.

Once we have learnt to deal with a difficulty, the next time we encounter it, it ceases to be a difficulty. When the lesson is learnt the necessity ceases. The force of the situation weakens. But, more often than not, the cause of the problem is internal, *i.e.*, within us, and often, it calls for a change. Often the difficulty is solved when we are willing to change—our way of thinking, our feelings, our likes and dislikes—and ready to adapt or adjust ourselves to a problematic situation or a person in life.

We must realize that change is inevitable, and always be mentally prepared for it. We cling on to people, things, places, and we are stuck—not being able to move on in life. In fact, as we proceed in living the spiritual life we are required to give up or change a lot of undesirable things in our nature. This brings about a feeling of utter emptiness and sadness. Mr. Crosbie describes this stage in the aspirant's life, thus:

There may, and there often does come a time when one feels, as you say, like "standing on nothing, in nothing and about to topple over." The centre of consciousness has been changed; old landmarks are slipping away, and sometimes black doubt ensues. Doubt and fear belong only to the personal consciousness; the real Perceiver, the Higher Ego has neither.... You may remember what Judge says in one of the "Letters," likening such condition to the case of one on a strange path and suddenly surrounded by a fog; the way is obscured, danger may lie in any direction; the thing to do is to stand still and wait, for it is only a fog—and *fogs always lift*. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 8)

Change involves destruction and regeneration. There is an aspect in us, which drives us to achieve hundred per cent perfection. If we

are trying to conquer anger or greed or attachment, this inner taskmaster places us again and again in such situations till we have mastered these completely. As a person advances on the spiritual path, he encounters more and more complex and trying life situations. Karma precipitates not as pebbles, but as boulders, and in that the help comes from within. For our own difficulties, we have to learn to be self-dependent. But when we see others in difficulty we have to lend a helping hand.

Our Karma is inextricably interwoven with the Karma of humanity. As *Light on the Path* says, "the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow." It is said that each one has to pass through what are called the basic types of experiences, like the experience of poverty, loneliness, parenthood, etc. Hence, when we find someone in difficulty, or deeply embedded in vice, we cannot walk away saying, "It is his Karma." Consider him as a brother-pilgrim whose boots have become heavy with mud, and give him a helping hand to come out of it. Of course it is not easy to help others. Sometimes in the process of helping we make others dependent on us, instead of making them self-dependent. It is not always easy to know "where the shoe pinches." For instance, we are all anxious to help the crying child. We pat him, feed him, and give medicine if he has a stomachache. And yet, it may be that all he wanted was his shirt to be taken off because it had a red ant which was troubling him. We are better able to help when we have kindly concern and genuine desire to help.

In fact, the difficulties of humanity, in general, must be viewed in the light of Karma and Universal Brotherhood. In *The Key to Theosophy* H.P.B. points out that the disparity between the poor and the rich, is not by chance. The rich have been leading the life of careless indifference, material luxury and selfish indulgence. In other words they have ignored the fact that we are all united. "If the action of one reacts on the lives of all, and this is the true scientific idea, then it is only by all men becoming brothers and all women sisters....that real human solidarity, which lies at the root of the elevation of the race, can ever be attained."

Not all life's problems are such that they need to be dealt with all at once. Sometimes it is possible to take a step and wait for a long time. For instance, if the tap is leaking then we need to call a plumber as soon as we can. But having called him and having found that he can come only the following morning, we should wait patiently for the next 24 hours. In this period, people can get very anxious and go on talking about it to others. There are many such problems in life. In case our workplace atmosphere is not congenial, then we may openly discuss the problem with concerned people, *or*, we may get ourselves transferred to another department, but having done that, accept the situation.

We have to create an atmosphere for eternal thought. When we get completely involved with the problem and treat it as if it were the whole of life, we could get into a terrible psychic condition. It is true that when we identify ourselves with the problem, we are unable to solve it. We must take the position of an observer. We are able to acquire detachment with discipline. A time then comes when we are able to look upon the experience with detachment, reflect upon it, even while we are passing through it. We must take time off to cultivate impersonal interests such as gardening, stamp collection, music, painting, etc. A disciple, says *Light on the Path*, feels both pain and pleasure more keenly, yet he has taken upon himself the duty of not allowing these to shake him from his fixed purpose. Let us always remember the sage advice given by Mr. Crosbie:

Are you thinking too much about yourself, your present conditions and your prospects? This is not a firm reliance on the Law of your own being which brings to you the very opportunities that your soul progress needs....Your studies and your efforts are futile if you are disturbed inwardly. The first thing then is to get calmness, and that can be reached by taking the firm position that nothing can really injure you, and that you are brave enough and strong enough to endure anything; also that all is a necessary part of your training. Mr. Judge once said, "It may be a child's school, but it takes a man to go through it." Then why not make up your mind to go through it, no matter what the circumstance or condition?

Others have; you can. Are you of a weaker caliber than they? (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 10-11)

CIRCUMSTANCES do not rise to meet our expectations. Events happen as they do. People behave as they are. Embrace what you actually get.

Open your eyes: See things for what they really are, thereby sparing yourself the pain of false attachments and avoidable devastation.

Think about what delights you—the tools on which you depend, the people whom you cherish. But remember that they have their own distinct character, which is quite a separate matter from how we happen to regard them.

As an exercise, consider the smallest things to which you are attached. For instance, suppose you have a favourite cup. It is, after all, merely a cup; so if it should break, you could cope. Next build up to things—or people—toward which your clinging feelings and thoughts intensify.

Remember, for example, when you embrace your child, your husband, your wife, you are embracing a mortal. Thus, if one of them should die, you could bear it with tranquillity.

When something happens, the only thing in your power is your attitude toward it; you can either accept it or resent it.

What really frightens and dismays us is not external events themselves, but the way in which we think about them. It is not things that disturb us, but our interpretation of their significance.

Stop scaring yourself with impetuous notions, with your reactive impressions of the way things are!

Things and people are not what we wish them to be nor what they seem to be. They are what they are.

—EPICTETUS

OUR WORK ON OURSELVES

WE hear it said very often that the spiritual life consists of paradoxes. For instance, on the one hand we are taught to "grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air," and, on the other hand, that the kingdom of heaven is to be taken by violence. Most of us fail to comprehend that only by an understanding of what constitutes the spiritual life can we put into practical use the conception of growth along the two lines of evolution—of personality and of individuality.

One fact becomes obvious to us when we think about these things, and that is that within the mind and heart of all is a constant, or a periodic, urge to do better, to be better, to know better the difference between right and wrong.

Another fact is that our present knowledge of right and wrong, or our conscience, militates against our will to do as we wish. Fate, or circumstances, also prevent us at times from doing what we like. And yet the urge for self-determination is there. Youth today fights for the right of self-determination, and gets into trouble; but there is a good side to this demand for freedom. The difficulty lies in determining what is right and what is wrong, and it arises because we do not understand or take into account the dual aspect of ourselves as personalities and as individualities. The need to understand this is all the greater today when, with the decay of religion and philosophy, youth is left without a rudder, and uses its freedom wrongly, for self-indulgence and anti-social acts.

H.P.B. wrote:

.. the divine aspirations of mystic Humanity toward deliverance from the webs of Maya, and final bliss in consequence...are no more general but have become abnormal through a general spread of *Ahamkara* (the feeling of Egotism, *Self*, or I-AM-NESS) and ignorance. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 614)

Part of our work on ourselves and for humanity is to bring back this aspiration by dispelling ignorance by the light of knowledge.

In thinking about this subject we should remember that Theosophy tells us to go to the *core* of any problem and not to confine ourselves to its outer manifestations. Therefore, in dealing with this study we must start with the fundamental principle involved. This fundamental has been given to us, for we are taught that the man who wishes to fulfil the urge to reach the condition of bliss must start with the idea that "to live to benefit mankind is the first step." This has to become the firm basis for all action, thought, feeling and desire, from the day we start on the path of self-growth till the final goal is reached. It is the only basis which is broad enough and deep enough not to let us down when we are tired of the struggle. Without this basic desire why should we bother to improve? Is it all worth the effort?

If we have but a vague idea of what perfection or the bliss of *Nirvana* means, we shall find, when despondency overtakes us, as sooner or later it will, that even bliss seems no better than oblivion, and therefore not worth the effort to attain to. But if, on the other hand, we forget our own bliss and in its place hold before us the idea of the benefit or help we can render others, then perfection means to us an infinitude of helpfulness—not cessation, but continuity. This is real immortality.

To wish to help is one thing; to know how to help is quite another thing. Therefore, after forming the desire to help, the next task is to set about learning how to do so, and here we have the advantage of being shown the way which has proved to be the right one through the ages. It is the Paramita Path which we have to learn to walk. Here again we have to learn to go to the core of the Paramitas. We have learnt, for instance, that to control anger is good. Hundreds of people can control their anger, either through force of circumstances, or because they just do not care enough about anything to be angry over it! Control in both these ways is no good for the spiritual life. We have to learn why we should control anger, what anger does to our inner nature, to others around us, and so on. Only when we have sought and thought over the deeper, positive reasons why it must be controlled, will our efforts bear fruit for

lives. Otherwise, we shall have to leave behind the results of our efforts at death.

We need, therefore, to analyse ourselves thoroughly in order to find flowing in us the two great currents—the personal identity, coloured by thoughts, feelings, desires, and shown outwardly by actions; and the inner urge or will to avoid the wrong and do the right, or the voice of conscience. The inner urge for improvement, or for a better instrument through which the Ego may work, will show us that we have to change the colour of our thoughts, feelings, desires. To know what these are we need to watch our actions, including speech, for the latter are the outward manifestations of the former. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," we read in the Bible. Our actions mirror our character and affect others. Hence the first step for us, and the last, is to learn how to act so as to benefit mankind.

What is of benefit to mankind? Here we need to look deep into our conscience, and, by the development of the power of reason, learn to discriminate and discern, and separate our own and others' actions into two compartments—those that are *universally* helpful, and those that help only ourselves, or a group of people. Going still deeper, there are those acts that help on the evolution of Nature, and those that use Nature and destroy her, through not understanding her. In this way we can apply the knowledge that has come down the ages as to the laws which operate in and through all manifestation. We must learn, gradually, through expanding knowledge, not to be affected by illusions which are only of a day, and to look at life itself, never-ending, progressively purposeful.

As we go on struggling, we find ourselves often in the slough of despondency, and we seem to be losing our *Virya-energy*, or the urge to go forward. The fog of despair, because of our feeling of the worthlessness of everything we have striven for, envelops us. We need to remember the fact that despondency is a good sign of growth, if taken rightly. We have to see how Krishna dealt with Arjuna. He showed him that his that Arjuna was too weak to fight; the trouble with him was his wrong -

- visualization of the results despondency arose from wrong thinking and wrong feeling. It was not that would ensue if he won the war. It is good to note that he never really thought he would lose the battle! Therefore Krishna first pointed out to him where his ideas were wrong; then he pointed out the effects on others of his refusal to fight, that it would be detrimental and not helpful to mankind. Lastly, he drew Arjuna's attention to his duty, his *dharma*, something much more abstract than his love or reasoned illusions.

To take this advice to heart we need constantly to analyse ourselves, not our successes or failures, but the workings of law in us—the kind of thoughts, feelings, desires, actions which produce certain effects on us and on others.

We must not think that all this will not bring us sorrow and suffering, because it will. In spring, the trees and flowers grow and bloom in all their majesty, and our hearts are filled with joy and uplifted by the sight. We forget that this beauty has been brought about by the sowing of a seed and by the hard process of growth and flowering—and then there is death in order to produce the seeds for future plants. Because we see before and after, this seems hard and cruel, but not so to the plant or tree. It acts in the present and does not "pine for what is not." Hence we should grow as the flower grows, with the same eagerness to open the soul to the sun and the air.

When our despondency has gone, how shall we begin to train ourselves to keep constantly in mind, in all that we do, the motive of benefiting mankind—of making our thoughts, feelings, desires and actions of benefit to *all*?

Instead of sowing the seeds of future despondency by visualizing rapid progress in special ways, we should start with our ideas of truthfulness, purity, self-denial, charity, etc. These "virtues" are simple, we think, but on analysis we find that they are difficult to practise. What is truthfulness, for instance? Does it mean we should always say what we ourselves know, or have seen, or have heard, or have been told? If so, are we sure that we have developed the "correct cognition" of which Patanjali

speaks? Does Truthfulness mean that we should "speak the truth at all costs"? This is simple, but if it is not *necessary* to speak, why speak at all? If it is not our duty to speak, we err if we do speak. What about our habit of being inaccurate, or untrue with ourselves? Indeed, there are many problems connected with even apparently simple virtues. Therefore it is true that there are as many ways to reach the goal as there are individuals on earth. And progress is by self-induced and self-devised ways and means. "The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims."

We have learnt about self-dependence, self-growth, self-analysis, self-examination. If we *examine* ourselves to find out how much we have learnt, we shall be helped. There are no degrees given in this examination, but we do learn what we *know* and *are* in fact. We are our own monitors. But before we examine ourselves we need to learn to discriminate between our selves, the personal and the impersonal, or the individual. When the latter functions in the former, we are on the way to becoming a Buddha of Perfection. The way is slow but sure. Conquering ignorance by knowledge, applying that knowledge bit by bit, seeing our wrong ideas and delusions behind our despondency, we free the spiritual power of energy or *Virya* in us, and that conquers all, because it is the energy of the ALL.

CHARITY is in the heart of man, and righteousness is the path for men. Pity the man who has lost his path and does not follow it and who has lost his heart and does not know how to recover it. When people's dogs and chicks are lost, they go out and look for them, and yet the people who have lost their hearts (or original nature) do not go out and look for them. The principle of self-cultivation consists in trying to look for the lost heart....

—MENCIOUS

IN every country in the world, in every nation and race in the human family, we see today lack of integrity and of true morals in daily life. Every human heart is in conflict with the head; thought and speech are hardly in harmony; and this inner disintegration manifests itself in wrong types of outward actions, in low standards of morality and selfish interests on the physical plane. Theosophy stresses the importance of a change in the inner life and being, in the causal aspect of all our activities, so that the effects produced may be harmonious and beneficial to all. *The Voice of the Silence* instructs: "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." The effect will turn out right only if right causes are set in motion. The divine virtue of *Shila*, harmony in word and act, can restore the needed equilibrium only if it is practised daily, and then, instead of being disintegrated, the character will become integrated.

Humata-Hukhta-Huvarshata, the trinity of good thoughts, good words and good deeds, is the basic principle behind Lord Zoroaster's teachings, which, if applied in daily life, would keep one free from all antagonism and conflicts, individually and collectively. Thoughts are the seeds of all actions, and if the right beginning is made on the plane of the mind, the first step is taken towards self-purification. So what the world needs today for its moral order is not abundance of wealth and material possessions for which there is so much craving, not even scientific knowledge which has advanced out of proportion to the practice of ethical precepts, but a right basis for living the life. Theosophy, the ancient Wisdom-Religion, was re-proclaimed to awaken the Buddhic faculty in man. The Divine Parent, Atma-Buddhi, is immortal on its own plane, but it is the self-conscious thinker, the reincarnating ego, who has to acquire immortality by becoming a pure channel of the divine Avalokiteshwara. In this important task, moral disintegration is a very great obstruction.

Sri Krishna says in the Ninth Discourse of the *Gita*: "I am the cause unseen and the visible effect." Herein lies the clue to understanding all the chaos and confusion in the world. The majority of human beings entirely disregard the *cause* and form their opinions, utter words or

perform deeds on the basis of effects and from a personal point of view. So there is greater need to begin to think rightly on the basis of truth and the right principles given to us by all the great teachers. This would enable us to make beneficent use of our power of speech, and then our deeds would be performed in a disinterested manner, for the good of all. Again in the Ninth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Sri Krishna states: "I am the origin and the dissolution, the receptacle, the storehouse, and the eternal seed." A quiet reflection on this would help us to understand the correct concept of the source of all life and the unity of life. Then it would not be possible to think of injuring a brother, killing an animal or bird, destroying a shrub, lest we prevent the tiniest creature from moving onward and forward in its evolutionary march. It is because the unity of the One Life is not understood that the harmony of the One Divine Law cannot be preserved. Once the harmony is disturbed, the price needs must be paid through suffering and sorrow, and thus disintegration on all planes follows. If the seeds of pure thoughts are sown in the well-prepared, clean and clear soil of the mind, if they are sown with a pure and unselfish motive, for the good of all, and nourished with the life-giving waters of wisdom, then the impetus is given in the right direction in terms of the Law, and all works naturally end in harmony and integration. The objective, physical aspect, whether of the universe or of man, is considered so important that most people are not even aware of the invisible aspects. An individual may not really care about smoking or drinking alcohol, but to conform to the social habits of the day he indulges in one or another or both. He has not the moral power of remaining true to his own convictions, but succumbs to the temptations thoughtlessly, without realizing the consequences.

It is only the second divine *Paramita*—*Shila*, the key of Harmony in word and act—that, when practised, would restore peace and contentment in the world. Integrated character is only the result of right thinking. It is this key which counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action. The law which is just brings about the necessary adjustment, and slowly, as right causes are generated and altruism is practised to greater and greater extent, one

wins one's freedom from the bondage of life and death.

The method of becoming integrated is also prescribed in *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 39):

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

The last, the gaining of Siddhis, is the natural outcome of the daily practice of the first four steps. What is meant by following the wheel of life? The life and the law move in a rotatory motion, in a circular motion; therefore we are asked to work in harmony with the law of cycles. Just as it is wrong to swim against the tide, so also it is necessary to watch the movement of the wheel of life. Human beings must learn to give up their wrong habits and inclinations, and to understand the stage of life they have reached. Vice and wickedness are abnormal at this stage of our evolution. We are on the upward arc of the circle, and must act in a manner befitting our manasic condition—in communion with our Divine Parent. If the wheel of life is moving upward and human beings choose to take a downward course, then naturally disintegration is the result. In the scheme of evolution we must take the right course.

The next step is to follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe. How are we going to do this? By purifying ourselves of the race tendencies and elevating ourselves to a higher level. Though haste and hurry and restlessness are among the common race tendencies, we can try to be calm and mentally balanced. Though ceaseless chase after evanescent and perishable things is another wrong trait, such passions can be subdued. We have inherited the wrong traits belonging to our particular family, community, nation and race. Once we begin to get rid of them, begin to think and live on a higher level, we shall be following the wheel of duty to our fellow beings. By conquering our hatred and following the path of love we shall have no foes, but all alike will be our fellow pilgrims. This wheel of duty is to be followed without any self-interest.

Next, we are asked to close our mind to pleasures as to pain. That, in other words, implies equal-mindedness. The mind should be equipoised at all times, and not swayed by the pairs of opposites—pleasure and pain, success and failure, fame and ignominy, etc. Under the influence of any of them, the mind cannot be steady, but fluctuates one way or another. An unsteady mind cannot bring about integration of character; it cannot help us. It is this lower mind that is the slayer of the Real, and so we are asked to slay the slayer. This can only be done by keeping the mind busy at a higher level. It must begin to think less and less of the self of matter and more and more of the life of the Spirit, of the Self of the Spirit. Once that firm position is assumed, the direction being changed, integration of character will be the result. It is attachment to pleasure or pain that is the obstructive factor. When that attachment is removed and detachment is practised in daily life, one becomes indifferent to one's own pleasure or pain, and begins to conquer one's own illusions. Thus, the disintegrating factor being removed, peace and contentment and inner joy can be established within oneself. Each individual, as he becomes integrated, expresses truth and non-violence, unity and harmony and self-reliance, all of which are needed so much in the world today. Pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds have no barriers. Anyone, at any time, in any place, under any circumstance, can practise this divine trinity, leading to integration of character. Falsehood, dishonesty, selfishness, will all disappear as the light of truth shines forth through every thought, word and deed.

THE VALUE OF SILENCE

The tongue is a little member and boasteth great things.
Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

—James, in, 5

THE aspirant to spiritual progress needs to see the value of silence as soul-exercise. Theosophy warns, however, against the hypocrisy of observing silence outwardly and allowing the mind to be noisy and turbulent. So mind must be silent also—not in the sense of making it blank, empty and passive, open to any influence; but by bringing it to dwell on some great and noble idea. Concentration means coming together to a centre. The mishandling of the mind is one of the reasons why our civilization suffers from the misuse of speech. A petty or mean or rambling mind is bound to produce petty, mean and rambling words. Therefore silence in speech must be accompanied by rhythm in thinking.

The power of speech is creative and therefore holy. While it is true that in one sense "speech is a gift which comes only to the disciple of power and knowledge," speech of another type comes but too easily to the lips of all of us. One of the Mahatmas whose message H.P.B. brought to the world wrote that "each man is personally responsible to the Law of Compensation for every word of his voluntary production."

The abuse of speech manifests as: (1) cruel gossip; (2) obscene jest; (3) personal and curious prying; (4) idle talk.

It is a helpful and uplifting exercise to begin the keeping of silence by avoiding these evils. It does no good to an aspirant if after observing a regular period of silence he indulges in any of these sins against speech. Therefore to curb and control the tongue against cruel, obscene, curious or idle talk is the first step. Unless we recognize these as spiritual sins, hours of silence will neither help us nor benefit others. Secondly, regularity in the observance of silence is a great aid. A few minutes every day at the same time are better than an hour every day at different times. Memory and attention thus get their training.

We will take it for granted that among students of Theosophy cruel gossip and obscene jest are impossible. Those who fall prey to them with

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Theosophical knowledge in their possession are facing greater spiritual catastrophes than they conceive.

But even students of Theosophy are known not to be altogether free from the third and the fourth classes of misuse of speech. Under the guise of interest in the welfare of another or of helping the cause and its workers, many slip into the sin of prying into other people's affairs. Personality has many avenues for expressing its separative and ahankaric tendencies, and prying into the personal affairs of others by enquiring, etc., is one of them. Talk about personalities, our own or other people's, is a serious danger, for there are few things which strengthen egotism as much as such talk does. To this the only exception of course is the genuine soul-helper who makes personal enquiries to energize friends, and makes such enquiries by mutual consent; in doing so, rules of Impersonality are invariably observed. In this as in all things the motive and the knowledge count. Do we ask personal questions for our own sake, or for the sake of others? The right to help and serve others comes with the growth of impersonality in us, and impersonality is born in us as personality is curbed and finally crushed.

Many are also apt to indulge in idle talk. For the best way to determine what talk is idle, the simple question should be put—"Is it necessary?" If that which is not necessary to say is said, it comes in the category of idle talk. When a thing is necessary to say, then further questions as to how to say it, when to say it, etc., arise. But how many times an answer in the negative to the simple question "Is it necessary?" saves us from pitfalls! Our better nature protects us against wicked speech; we must train ourselves further and obtain protection against useless speech.

To begin the fight against these four sins of speech is to prepare for real silence—for the self-imposition of periodic silence to give Mother Nature an opportunity to speak to us. At the present time, there is a general desire to sit for "meditation" and to practise "yoga," but the primary exercise to control the wagging tongue is found irksome and its

desirability questioned. Without such control, however, soul-progress is well-nigh impossible.

You have, or it's as though you have, *two selves*: the lower self that usually governs you selfishly, and the higher self which stands ready to use you gloriously. You must subordinate the lower self by refraining from doing the not-good things you are motivated toward, not suppressing them but transforming them so that the higher self can take over your life.

All of us, all over the world, are cells in the body of humanity. You are not separate from your fellow humans, and you cannot find harmony for yourself alone. You can only find harmony when you realize the oneness of all and work for the good of all.

Only when you have relinquished all attachments can you be really free. Material things are here for use, and anything you cannot relinquish when it has outlived its usefulness possesses you. You can only live in harmony with your fellow humans if you have no feeling that you possess them, and therefore do not try to run their lives.

Work on relinquishing negative feelings. If you live in the present moment, which is really the only moment you have to live, you will be less apt to worry. If you realize that those who do mean things are psychologically ill, your feelings of anger will turn to feelings of pity. If you recognize that all of your inner hurts are caused by your own wrong actions or your own wrong reactions or your own wrong inactions, then you will stop hurting yourself.

—PEACE PILGRIM

BETWEEN TWO EARTH-LIVES

THE causes which send us to *Devachan*, an intermediate state between two earth-lives, into which the Ego enters after death, are, it would appear, four in number: (1) recompense for "undeserved" suffering; (2) assimilation of the spiritual experiences gained but not made part and parcel of oneself during life; (3) fulfilment of our longings; and (4) rest for the soul.

If, therefore, we wish to shorten or "escape" this period so that we may continue to work for humanity, four things are necessary: (1) we must not have any feeling that we suffer undeservedly; (2) we must assimilate life's experiences during incarnated existence; (3) we must not have longings of a personal nature; (4) we must perform such actions in our daily life as are pleasing to the soul and not merely to the personality.

We speak of *Devachan* as being a state of illusion. It would appear that it is really only the third of the above factors that causes this illusion. There can be nothing illusionary about the happiness experienced in *Devachan* to make up for the "undeserved" suffering in earth life, or about the rest needed by the soul, or about the assimilation by the soul of those experiences gained during life which were of its own nature. But if our longings during life have been day-dreams of a personal nature, then in *Devachan* we see ourselves, as also others, acting in terms of our wishful thinking and not in terms of reality.

Suppose, for example, a person has been "crossed in love," or a mother longs for the reformation of her son who is a drunkard; in *Devachan*, we are told, the former delights in the fulfilment of his love, and the mother in the belief that her son has become a sober and good man; yet both conditions are illusions. It has even been suggested that if we long to escape *Devachan* so that we may continue on earth with Masters' work, but have done nothing to create the causes that will produce the effect of cutting down our stay in that state, then we may spend ages there imagining all the time that we are working for the Masters in the world!

Therefore to be released from the illusion of *Devachan* we have to watch our personal longings. It should be remembered that the word "illusion" covers everything save the Spirit or *Reality*, but while on any plane everything on it is reality for us.

With regard to recompense for "undeserved" suffering, this is a harder matter to adjust, for it covers the whole field of one's Kama-Manasic attitude to life. We have so to understand Karma that even a fleeting thought of anything being unjust cannot be held. Automatically, our reaction to everything should be: "This is just what I in fact desired." All of us know how often we have to repeat things before they become automatic. We have to reach the attitude referred to in *Light on the Path*, where it is said that the eyes must be *incapable* of tears and the voice *incapable* of wounding. That is to say, everything has to be seen as just. If we pay more attention to the benefits we now enjoy as a result of the efforts we ourselves had made in prior lives, and less to the difficulties we are now encountering, we shall the more easily get the true balance, for both are but avenues of experience for the development of true virtue and capacities.

As for rest for the Ego after death, this would not be necessary if certain conditions were fulfilled now and here. If during life we do not cause "trouble" to the soul by wrong-doing, by refusing to act up to our conscience, thus crucifying the Christ within, then the soul will not need rest after death.

Assimilation of life's experiences can also be accomplished during life. If we look back, with the right attitude, at each day's activities—thoughts, feelings, words and deeds—and visualize the coming day, the soul will not only assimilate the good that has been experienced but will be in a condition where it is not crucified all the time.

Whether we spend long ages in *Devachan* or shorten our stay there or renounce it altogether, let us be content with trying to sow the right causes, for that is best for us.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

"Seek ye first the kingdom of heaven [which is within you] and all other things will be added unto you," teaches the Bible. "The real riches lie in the kingdom within, yet many people live their whole lives not knowing how to find them," writes psychotherapist Jasmin Lee Cori (*Sunday Times of India*, February 8). We should not seek this inner life superficially but try to penetrate to the core of our being. There are various paths open to us. "In a sense, there are two journeys: one to find ourselves and one to lose ourselves. Of course it is not that simple. At different levels, the truth looks different....Just as the view from the mountain looks different from different vantage points, so too the view of reality varies according to our level of consciousness." Many of the popular books on spiritual growth are concerned with the first journey and confuse self-actualization with self-realization. Self-actualization is fulfilling all of one's human potential, whereas self-realization consists in knowing one's identity as the universal self. When we undertake the journey of finding ourselves, we are conditioned by our past. The second journey consists in realizing that we are not what we think ourselves to be, but are part of the larger unity. Jasmin Cori writes:

It may be said that both journeys culminate in knowing who we really are....In the first journey, what we discover is the authentic person, without mask or self-limitation. In the second journey, we learn that any such identity is still only a part of the picture....we discover that we are something much more eternal and mysterious, something that can change into almost any form and still be true to itself....

Thus it is not about controlling, but about giving up control; not about knowing but about entering the way of unknowing; not about getting more, but about giving up everything that stands between you and the no-thing-ness of your true nature....The contemplative life is about...surrendering everything between you and God.

We are given hints regarding the inner spiritual journey in various verses of *The Voice of the Silence*, which advises us to sacrifice the personal self to the Impersonal Self. Thus:

The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims....Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost....Within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the "Eternal Man"; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

In a meditation recommended by Mr. Judge we seem to undertake a journey to find our true Self by losing some aspects of ourselves. Thus:

Every day and as often as you can, and on going to sleep and as you wake—think, think, think, on the truth that you are not body, brain, or astral man, but that you are THAT, and "THAT" is the Supreme Soul. For by this practice you will gradually kill the false notion which lurks inside that the false is the true, and the true, the false. By persistence in this, by submitting your daily thoughts each night to the judgment of your Higher Self, you will at last gain light. *{Letters That Have Helped Me}*

It seems that the paradoxical concept, we must "stoop to conquer," is being discussed and even practised by some in the business world. Robert Greenleaf, a retired AT&T executive, writes of *Servant Leadership* in his book under that title—a concept that springs from genuine concern for the people. A servant is able to become a leader because his motive is to "serve"—first, last and all the time. According to Greenleaf, a servant-leader is *servant* first and hence different from the person who is *leader* first, who is motivated by the desire for power or material possessions. We observe this slow transformation from servant to leader in the lives of great men, who had the compelling drive to be of use to the world and solve its problems, writes Suma Varughese (*Life Positive*, February 2004). "It is the service motive that makes servant leadership a spiritual idea, for all true service comes from an understanding of the unity of creation."

Stephen R. Covey, author of the pathfinding 7 Habits Series, speaks of a paradigm shift in the management role, "from one who drives results and motivation from the outside in, to one who is servant-leader—who seeks to draw out, inspire and develop the best and the highest within people from the inside out." Greenleaf advocates that the leadership concept must be based on openness, the ability to listen, humility, the cultivation of intuition as a means to insight, introspection, faith and so on.

Mahatmas—truly Great Souls—describe themselves as "servants of humanity." The moral principle underlying the concept of servant-leader is humility. *Tao Te King* teaches that qualities of lowliness and humility are necessary for all great leaders and rulers. Thus:

He who is great must make humility his base. He who is high must make lowliness his foundation....

Therefore the Sage, wishing to be above the people, must by his words put himself below them; wishing to be before the people, he must put himself behind them. In this way, though he has his place above them, the people do not feel his weight....Therefore, all mankind delight to exalt him, and weary of him not.

Theosophy teaches that true discipline cannot come about by imposing rules or through any other external control. Thus Mr. Crosbie advises:

The Authority which we recognize is not what men term authority, which comes from outside and which demands obedience, but an *internal recognition of the value* of that which flows through any given point, focus or individual. This is the authority of one's Self-discrimination, intuition, the highest intellection. If we follow what we recognize in that way, and still find it good, we naturally keep our faces in that direction. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 372)

What is Truth? It is not easy to define and is equally difficult to find in our world of illusions. We live in the world of relative realities and half-truths, says Z. Husain (*Dignity Dialogue*, February 2004). "Our moods, our happiness, our sadness are all relative." Are the table and chair in front of us really motionless, as we suppose? The moon appears motionless in the sky, but is that so? We say nothing moves against gravity, and yet water travels against gravity and feeds the highest leaf on the tree. Husain writes:

Most of the time we ourselves keep the truth hidden. Our judicial system proclaims, "Truth shall prevail." But each step of the judicial ladder defines truth in a different way. So where is the Truth?...

All beliefs acquired inductively from experience can at best be probable, but not certain. Socrates, who was condemned to death, held the belief that all truth is innate in the human soul. A man has only to discover himself and gain the knowledge.

Where should a common man go to find the truth?

In the article "What is Truth?" reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 17*, H.P.B. differentiates between Absolute and Relative truths. She points out that even to acquire relative truth we must cultivate *love of truth for its own sake*. On the other hand, Absolute Truth can only be attained by paralyzing the lower personality. Thus:

In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For...every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in himself*. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. (p. 2)

Outside a certain highly spiritual and elevated state of mind, during which Man is at one with the Universal Mind—he can get nought on earth but relative truth, or truths, from whatsoever philosophy or religion, (p. 11)

To reach the Sun of Truth we must work in dead earnest for the development of our higher nature. We know that by paralyzing gradually within ourselves the appetites of the lower personality, and thereby deadening the voice of the purely physiological mind...the animal in us may make room for the spiritual....(pp. 2-3)

All forms of life—plants, birds and beasts—display an instinct for globalization, writes Bittu Sahgal, editor of *Sanctuary Asia* magazine, in his article appearing in *Afternoon Despatch & Courier* (February 4). It has been observed that when food was short in Siberia, the birds flew to India. Similarly turtles, whales and the vast schools of fish have been found to follow their globalization instincts in search for food and safety. Ultimately their instinct guides them back to the nesting beach or tree on which they were born. "But not a single species ever tried to overpower nature." Sahgal writes:

There is one overriding principle intrinsic to the survival of such pioneer globalisers—never do they destroy the resources upon which they depend. If they break this cardinal rule...they die....

Homo Sapiens of all descriptions—the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation varieties, plus the World Social Forum ones—would do well to look closer at the manner in which nature commands, marshals and protects its wards. Never has nature forgiven one species for exercising more power and influence than it deserved. Which is precisely what Homo Sapiens is busy doing right now, ignorant perhaps of the fact that the extinction files are full of those who tried to battle nature.

Theosophy teaches that the ancients have always revered Nature, appeared in the magazine *The Theosophist* (November 1883), expressed never seeking to conquer it. An article, "Morality and Pantheism" that the Theosophical views regarding man-nature relationship thus:

If an individual attempts to move in a direction other than that in which Nature is moving, that individual is sure to be crushed, sooner or later, by the enormous pressure of the opposing force. We need not say that such a result would be the very reverse of pleasurable. The only way therefore, in which happiness might be attained, is by merging one's nature in great Mother Nature, and following the direction in which she herself is moving: this again, can only be accomplished by assimilating man's individual conduct with the triumphant force of Nature, the other force being always overcome with terrific catastrophes. The effort to assimilate the individual with the universal law is popularly known as the practice of morality.

It seems twenty-first-century technologies pose a greater threat to humanity than did the twentieth-century technologies underlying weapons of mass destruction. Unlike twentieth-century technologies, the modern technologies—robotics, genetic engineering and nanotechnology—appear to be within reach of individuals, as they "do not require large facilities and rare materials. Knowledge alone will enable their use," writes Bill Joy, a co-founder and chief scientist of Sun Micro-Systems (*Wake Up India*, October-December, 2003). We seem to have overlooked the ensuing consequences, in our desire for new discoveries and innovations. We need to proceed with caution, seeing that benefits seem to far outweigh the dangers and

disadvantages. "Specifically, robots, engineered organisms and bomb is blown up only once, but one altered gene can become many, and nanobots share a dangerous amplifying factor: they can self-replicate. A quickly get out of control." There are ethical issues involved. For instance, it is possible to construct destructive nanotechnological devices that are selectively destructive, affecting a certain area and only a select group of people. Nanotechnology—which consists in manipulating matter at the atomic level—threatens to destroy the biosphere on which life depends. Thus:

The only realistic alternative is relinquishment: to limit development of the technologies that are too dangerous by limiting our pursuit of certain kinds of knowledge. Although humankind inherently "desires to know," if open access to, and unlimited development of, knowledge henceforth puts us all in clear danger of extinction, then common sense demands that we re-examine our reverence for knowledge....

The new Pandora's boxes of genetics, nanotechnology and robotics are almost open, yet we seem hardly to have noticed. Ideas cannot be put back in a box: unlike uranium or plutonium, they do not need to be mined or refined; they can be freely copied. Once they are out, they are out....

If we could agree, as a species, what we wanted, where we were headed and why, then we could make our future much less dangerous—then we might understand what we could and should relinquish. If the course of humanity could be determined by our collective values, ethics and morals, and if we had gained more collective wisdom over the past few thousand years, then a dialogue to this end would be practical....

It is also felt that scientists, technologists and engineers should adopt a strong code of ethical conduct that would ensure that they will desist from creating or developing any knowledge-enabled technologies of mass destruction. Material progress or scientific pursuits do not make for happiness. Individual and collective happiness rests on the realization of interdependence and a strong feeling of love and

compassion for humanity in the heart of every individual.

Theosophy teaches that certain kinds of knowledge are like two-edged weapons that can both kill and save and hence must be used with care. In an Editor's Note to the article, "From Theosophy to Shakespeare" (*The Theosophist*, July 1883), Mme. Blavatsky expresses the view—relevant even today—that certain scientific discoveries should never be made public. Thus:

Some of the discoveries of certain sciences—such as chemistry and physical science—ought to have been kept "occult" at any rate. It is very questionable whether the secrets of gunpowder, nitro-glycerine, dynamite and the like, have more benefited than wronged humanity; at least they ought to have been withheld from the knowledge of the ignorant and unprincipled portions of mankind. Such, at least, was the opinion of Faraday, and some other great men of science. And this may explain, perhaps, why the occultists *will not* give out their even more perilous secrets promiscuously

Light on the Path says that scientific quest for knowledge—obtained by work and experiment—is held in high esteem by the Adepts. "Every fresh discovery drives them a step forward." And yet, science needs to base its work on the foundation of morality and philanthropy, as expressed by a Master of Wisdom:

Now for us poor and unknown philanthropists, no fact of either of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of moral results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind....May I not ask then without being taxed with a vain "display of science," what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relation with humanity viewed as an integral whole? What care they for MAN as an isolated atom of this great and

harmonious Whole, even though they may sometimes be of practical use to him?

FOR countless generations hath the adept builded a fane of imperishable rocks, a giant's Tower of INFINITE THOUGHT, wherein the Titan dwelt, and will yet, if need be, dwell alone, emerging from it but at the end of every cycle, to invite the elect of mankind to co-operate with him and help in his turn enlighten superstitious man. And we will go on in that periodical work of ours; we will not allow ourselves to be baffled in our philanthropic attempts until that day when the foundations of a new continent of thought are so firmly built that no amount of opposition and ignorant malice guided by the Brethren of the Shadow will be found to prevail.

-MASTER K.H.