

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. XXXVI. No. 10

17th August 1966

### THE LURE OF THE INVISIBLE

If you cannot be happy without phenomena you will never learn our philosophy. If you want healthy, philosophic thought, and can be satisfied with such — let us correspond. I tell you a profound truth in saying that if you (like your fabled Shaloma) but choose wisdom all other things will be added unto it — in time. It adds no force to our metaphysical truths that our letters are dropped from space on to your lap or come under your pillow. If our philosophy is wrong a *wonder* will not set it right. Put that conviction into your consciousness and let us talk like sensible men.

—MAHATMA M.

It is not *physical* phenomena that will ever bring conviction to the hearts of the unbelievers in the “Brotherhood” but rather phenomena of *intellectuality, philosophy* and logic, if I may so express it.

—MAHATMA K.H.

The lure of the invisible, the sense of the marvellous, are romantic and attract not a few natures — among them students of Theosophy, who ask: “What is wrong with observing in a practical way the Third Object of the Theosophical Movement? Why should we not experience and experiment with the invisible and develop our own hidden powers?”

The actual words of the Third Object must be examined: “The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.” What it advocates, therefore, is not the development of hidden powers, but the investigation of the *laws* of Nature which are not explained by modern science, thus helping to further the very cause of that science along right lines; similarly, the student is called upon, not to develop his latent psychical powers, but to investigate the laws governing them. The safe way pointed out by Theosophy

is the way which is used by us in acquiring ordinary knowledge: theory before practice. Theoretical knowledge is followed by the knowledge of how to make an experiment, and then only is the actual experiment made.

Those who would pursue the Third Object have many opportunities and ample scope to satisfy themselves in a healthy and legitimate way. Today, even scientists are attracted towards the invisible and are engaged in investigating abnormal happenings, or what are called psychical, parapsychological and paranormal phenomena. But their investigation consists mainly in recording a number of dream experiences, visions, apparitions, ESP phenomena and so forth, and no satisfactory explanations are yet forthcoming. The Theosophist, unlike the psychical researcher, deals with laws and not with phenomena; thus he goes straight to the heart of truth, while the psychical researcher goes round and round. Study of ancient philosophies reveals that they have thought out all the psychic and psychological laws of Nature, and have given a system which is scientific and explains them all with minuteness. It is the investigation of this system of philosophy that Theosophy recommends, so that when we come to look at the things about us we may be able to understand and explain them.

Explaining the Third Object, H.P.B. wrote in *The Key to Theosophy*:

What we have to do is to seek to obtain *knowledge* of all the laws of nature, and to diffuse it. To encourage the study of those laws least understood by modern people, the so-called Occult Sciences, *based on the true knowledge of nature*, instead of, as at present, on *superstitious beliefs based on blind faith and authority*.

So, the "investigation" that we are called upon to make does not mean "experimentation." Investigation implies *study* of known laws and powers; for it is only when the student has thoroughly mastered the theory or science as given, that he can wisely or safely begin to experiment. True knowledge of Nature and of Man, therefore, is necessary before any right effort can be made in the direction of the Third Object. Theosophy, which embodies a record of the laws that govern the evolution of Man and Nature, has to be studied, assimilated and applied to daily life, before the student is in a position to understand and apply the more recondite laws of the Science. A theoretical grasp of the Philosophy is wise and necessary, but practice should begin in our everyday relations, considered in the light of our real nature, and as this course is followed, the inner nature and perceptions are afforded fuller and freer range of action.

With these considerations in mind, what is to be said of the psychic characteristics that are showing themselves in our age? Men and women are striving to exercise powers and faculties which are as yet not understood and are, therefore, but too often ignorantly misused. It is a dangerous thing to go into phenomena such as telepathy, hypnotism, etc., unless the ground has first been prepared by showing men why they should be moral, why they should not practise these things for selfish purposes. For, those who practise telepathy, hypnotism and the like for their own selfish ends are just as immoral as the burglar or the thief. No man has the right to break into the mind of another to discover secrets for his own profit.

The function of Theosophists is to open men's understandings to the dangers of a conscious or unconscious exercise of powers which pertain to the *lower* planes of nature. Those who are seeking for powers should know that within themselves lies the key to unlock the door; that the very first step toward the finding of that key is the acquirement, in truth, of the feeling of universal brotherhood, and that the selfish desire to obtain psychic powers is a bar to such attainment. Therefore it is that Theosophists, unlike the "occultist"-boasters, do not strive to become sky-walkers, clairvoyants, telepaths or the like, but labour for the Souls of men in secrecy and silence, and help by Wisdom and purity. They are those who seek after divine Wisdom, the method of solving all life's riddles. They aim to place before the thinking public a logical, coherent and philosophic scheme of man's origin, destiny and evolution — a scheme pre-eminent above all for its rigorous adherence to justice. And, that they may broaden their criterion of truth, their research extends to an inquiry into the nature of the less known forces, cosmic and psychical.

Writing of the Third Object, under the sub-heading "Occultism," H.P.B. wrote in 1889:

Though but a minority of our members are mystically inclined, yet, in point of fact, the key to all our successes is in our recognition of the fact of the Higher Self — colourless, cosmopolitan, unsectarian, sexless, unworldly, altruistic — and the doing of our work on that basis. . . . We know that a comprehensive term for the Eternal Verity is the "Secret Doctrine"; we have preached it, have won a hearing, have, to some extent, swept away the old barriers, formed our fraternal nucleus, and, by reviving the Aryan Literature, caused its precious religious, philosophical and scientific teachings to spread among the most

distant nations.

If we have not opened regular schools of adeptship in the Society, we have at least brought forward a certain body of proof that adepts exist and that adeptship is a logical necessity in the natural order of human development. We have thus helped the West to a worthier ideal of man's potentialities than it before possessed. The study of Eastern psychology has given the West a clue to certain mysteries previously baffling as, for example, in the department of mesmerism and hypnotism, and in that of the supposed posthumous relations of the disincarnate entity with the living. It has also furnished a theory of the nature and relations of Force and Matter capable of practical verification by whomsoever may learn and follow out the experimental methods of the Oriental schools of Occult science. Our own experience leads us to say that this science and its complementary philosophy throw light upon some of the deepest problems of man and nature; in science, bridging the "Impassable Chasm," in philosophy making it possible to formulate a consistent theory of the origin and destiny of the heavenly orbs and their progeny of kingdoms and various planes. Where Mr. Crookes stops in his quest after the meta-elements, and finds himself at a loss to trace the missing atoms in his hypothetical series of seven, Adwaita Philosophy steps in with its perfected theory of the evolution of differentiated out of undifferentiated matter, Prakriti out of Mulaprakriti—the "rootless root." ("Our Three Objects": *Lucifer*, September 1889)

In brief, the aim and desire of Theosophists are to help, in at least some degree, toward arriving at correct scientific views upon the nature of man, which carry with them the means of reconstructing, for the present generation, the deductive metaphysical or transcendental philosophy which alone is the firm, unshakable foundation of every religious philosophy. Slowly but surely Theosophy is fulfilling its mission and helping men towards the attainment of true wisdom, which is not by means of phenomena, but through the development which begins within.

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A knowledge of the law when added to faith gives power over matter, mind, space, and time.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## ZARATHUSHTRA'S GATHAS IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In the long line of teachers and helpers that humanity has had down the ages, stands the name of Zarathushtra as the one who shed the threefold lustre of pure thought, soft speech and kindly deed on our path, not only for the good of the humanity of his time, but that of all mankind since.

Zarathushtra Spitama, the last of the many teachers of that name, was a great lawgiver, the founder of the religion variously called Mazdaism, Magism, Parseeism, Fire-Worship and Zoroastrianism, and the reputed author of the great ethical teachings known as the *Gathas* or holy hymns, and other works on the primeval sacred Magian religion destroyed by Alexander. His date, according to Western scholars, may be anything between 600 B.C. and 6000 B.C., but Occult records have the correct dates of all Zoroasters, supposed to be 13 in number. Madame Blavatsky states:

Their doctrines, and especially those of the last (*divine*) Zoroaster, spread from Bactria to the Medes; thence, under the name of Magism, incorporated by the Adept-Astronomers in Chaldea, they greatly influenced the mystic teachings of the Mosaic doctrines, even before, perhaps, they had culminated into what is now known as the modern religion of the Parsis.

We are further told that, like Manu and Vyasa in India, Zarathushtra is a generic name for great reformers and lawgivers who started their labour of love in the Atlantean Race, somewhere to the north of modern Persia, in the land known as Airyana Vaego — the cradle of the Aryans — which in Puranic literature is called "Shweta-Dwipa," "Mount Meru," the abode of Vishnu, etc., and in the Secret Doctrine is simply named the land of the "Gods," under their chiefs, the "Spirits of this Planet."

To trace the origin of the first Zarathushtra we may turn to the *Vendidad*, an ancient Zoroastrian scripture, which, Madame Blavatsky states, is pre-eminently an occult treatise on the "anti-demoniac law" and on how to avoid sin and defilement by purification, moral and physical. This book escaped the vandal ravages of the Greek conqueror Alexander, but has reached us in only a fragmentary form. *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 609-10) gives the *Vendidad's* version of the origin of our humanity:

Yima, the so-called "First man" in the *Vendidad*, as much as his twin-brother Yama, the son of Vaivasvata Manu, belongs to two epochs of the Universal History. He is the "Progenitor" of

the Second human Race, hence the personification of the shadows of the Pitris, and the father of the *postdiluvian* Humanity. The Magi said "Yima," as we say "man" when speaking of mankind. The "Fair Yima," the first mortal who converses with Ahura-Mazda, is the first "man" who dies or disappears, not the first who is born. The "Son of Vixanghat" was, like the Son of Vaivasvata, the symbolical man, who stood in esotericism as the representative of the *first three races* and the collective Progenitor thereof. . . . Yima refuses to become the bearer of the Law of Ahura Mazda, saying "I was not born, I was not taught to be the preacher and the bearer of thy law." And then Ahura Mazda asks him to make his men increase and "watch over his world."

He refuses to become the priest of Ahura Mazda, because he is *his own priest and sacrificer*, but he accepts the second proposal. He is made to answer: "Yes! . . . yes, I will rule and watch over thy world. There shall be, while I am King, neither cold wind nor hot wind, *neither disease nor death.*"

Under the sway of Yima the earth was extended and replenished three times "with flocks and herds, with men, and dogs, and birds, and with red blazing fires." The threefold extension and replenishment of the earth allegorically refers to the three successive Continents and Races issuing one after and from the other.

After the *third* time, Ahura Mazda warns Yima in an assembly of "celestial gods and excellent mortals" that upon the material world the fatal winters are going to fall, and all *life* will perish. This is the old Mazdean symbolism for the "flood," and the coming cataclysm to Atlantis, which sweeps away every race in its turn. Like Vaivasvata Manu and Noah, Yima makes a *vara* (an enclosure, an ark) under the God's direction, and brings thither the seed of every living creature, animals and "fires."

It is of this "earth" or new continent that [the first] Zarathushtra became the lawgiver and ruler. This was the Fourth Race in its beginning, after the men of the Third began to die out.

The appearance of a great one is always determined by the need of the people of that time. Insurrection of vice and injustice made possible the advent of Sri Krishna with his "Song Celestial." Zarathushtra, likewise, listened to the agonizing cry of the "Soul of the Earth," tormented by false worship, sorcery and violence, and with the holy hymns of the *Gathas* directed men's minds to the devotion of the One in all and all in One. The Esoteric doctrine says that each world reformer

had first appeared on earth as one of the seven powers of the

Logos, individualized as a God or "Angel" (messenger); then, mixed with matter, they had reappeared in turn as great sages and instructors who "taught the Fifth Race," after having instructed the two preceding races, had ruled during the Divine Dynasties, and had finally sacrificed themselves, to be reborn under various circumstances for the good of mankind, and for its salvation at certain critical periods; until in their last incarnations they had become truly only "the parts of a part" on earth, though *de facto* the One Supreme in Nature. (*S.D.*, II. 359)

The people to whom Zarathushtra came deified Nature as a token of thanksgiving to the hidden powers for the benefits derived from the elements below, as also from the sun and the moon and the firmament above. But when plague and pestilence came and they suffered from the rigours of the climate or the failure of their crops, they felt that the hidden powers did not always bring them good, and concluded that the good and the evil forces were constantly fighting for supremacy over man. Zarathushtra noticed early in life that the people worshipped not only the good powers but also the evil powers, out of fear, and sacrifices were offered to appease them. He further noted that, while some suffered with the pain and sorrow of others, there were many who, unmindful of the common suffering, were actually engaged in feathering their own nests. The future prophet yearned for divine wisdom to unravel the mystery of life, particularly its dark side. In quiet contemplation he studied his people and watched the vicissitudes through which they were passing. He wondered if there be no law to explain the periodic frowns and favours of Nature, the knowledge of which might save the people from all avoidable misery, sorrow and pain. The *Gathas* record the doubts, fears and difficulties of these his pre-prophetic days, and also his intense desire for knowledge and wisdom for the service of mankind.

Ultimately, after passing through many tests, trials and tribulations, abandoned by friends and persecuted by spiteful enemies who saw in his mission a threat to their own nefarious activities, he discovered the great Theosophical truth that man was the maker of his destiny in terms of his own exertions, on the basis of the use he made of his mind; and, further, that the interludes of weal and woe in the life of one and all were the direct result of the strength and support that each gave to the forces of Nature, according to the quality of his thoughts, speech and acts. The so-called vagaries of Nature were not the cause of man's happiness and unhappiness, but rather the reverse was the truth — that

man's own thoughts, words and deeds made Nature either his ally, pupil and servant or his implacable enemy. Thus, the whole philosophy of the *Gathas*, tersely put, is the living of the life of righteousness in thought, word and deed, through the instrumentality of the higher Mind. This is not some outside imposition, but is the Law Divine which Ahura-Mazda communicated to Zarathushtra.

The Ahura-Mazda of the *Gathas* is not Ormazd, the God of the later Zoroastrian Theology, to be sought for in a Fire-Temple or elsewhere outside of us. Ahura means Lord and Mazda means wise. Ahura-Mazda, the Wise Lord, is the inner guide, friend and philosopher of Zarathushtra, and illuminated the consciousness of his devotee after the latter had passed through the prescribed discipline of righteousness in thought, word and deed, practised with his higher Mind. Ahura-Mazda is the Ego seated in the hearts of all, but in all it does not shine forth fully as it does in great ones like Zarathushtra and Krishna. Both the *Gita* and the *Gathas* teach that the goal of evolution is the merging of the personal consciousness in the all-pervasive divine consciousness. The synthesis of Doctrine, Devotion and Deed — *Jnyana*, *Bhakti* and *Karma* — is the message of both.

When the hour struck, Zarathushtra began his holy mission by chanting the "Word." This Word is "Ahuna," the Iranian counterpart of the Indian "Aum." It is said that, with its first chanting, manifested universe, presided over by Ahura-Mazda, was breathed out of the bosom of Zervane-Akarne, boundless or limitless Time. "Ahuna-Vairya" is the name given to the oldest and most sacred verse of 21 words in the Zoroastrian Scriptures. It was in existence long before the time of Zarathushtra. This hymn forms the basis for the first and the most important of the five *Gathas*, called the *Ahunavaiti Gatha* — that is, the *Gatha* which expounds the "Sacred Word." This verse may be rendered thus:

As a king exercises power on Earth, so does a wise teacher by virtue of his righteousness. Those who work out of love for Mazda (Wisdom) are rewarded with the gifts of the good mind. Those who serve their fellow men with zeal are engaged in the true service of Ahura (the Lord).

Note well the emphasis the *Ahuna-Vairya* lays on the necessity of power for a wise spiritual teacher, no less than for a worldly king. Such a teacher has rectitude and uses his higher mind. He is engaged in the selfless service of mankind because he realizes that it is only thus

that Ahura-Mazda can be served. Those who are knowers and followers of the Law of Ahura-Mazda are best fitted to exercise power on his behalf in this world. This teaching of this Sacred Verse or *Mantra* is explained at length in the *Ahunavaiti Gatha*, to which we now turn.

Ahura-Mazda is the ruler of this world and of the world beyond the gate of death. He is the cause of the differentiation of Spirit and Matter. Spenta-Mainyu, the bountiful, benevolent Spirit, and Angra-Mainyu, the spirit of littleness and materiality, working at the core of our worldly existence, emanate from Ahura-Mazda as his agents for generation and periodic destruction, for the purpose of regeneration. Spenta-Mainyu watches over the Spirit-side of life which is immortal, and Angra-Mainyu (or Ahriman) looks after the matter-side which is subject to death and decay. In the beginning these two are neither good nor evil. Later, when self-conscious man appears on the scene, they function as good and evil in the dual nature of man. They are mentioned in the *Ahunavaiti Gatha* as working within man, in antagonism to each other. Thus Spenta-Mainyu stands for the Higher Mind, originates unselfish thoughts, words and deeds, is the preserver of life, elevates it, and advances the spiritual progress of man. In contrast, Angra-Mainyu is concerned with the form side, stands for the lower mind, creates selfish thoughts, words and deeds, is the destroyer of life, debases it, and compasses the spiritual degradation of man. Zarathushtra draws our attention to these two contrary forces working within us and advises us to watch their activities and devise ways and means to increase the influence of Spenta-Mainyu and curtail the aggressiveness of Angra-Mainyu.

With that end in view, we have to invoke the help of what are mentioned in the *Gathas* as the six Amesha-Spenta or Amshaspends, the Holy Immortals, individually and collectively, with Ahura-Mazda himself at their head as the seventh. They are the seven "Archangels" of the Zoroastrian Pantheon. *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 358) quotes another Zoroastrian scripture, *Zamyad Yasht*, as under: "The Amesha-Spenta, the shining, having efficacious eyes, great, helpful . . . imperishable and pure . . . which are all seven of like mind, like speech, all seven doing alike . . . which are *the creators and destroyers of the creatures* of Ahura-Mazda, their creators and overseers, their protectors and rulers." *The Secret Doctrine* further states that they are the Dhyani-Chohans or the "Serpents of Wisdom." On the physical and sidereal planes they are the seven planets (including the Sun) of every religion. On the spiritual plane they are the divine powers of Ahura-

Mazda. On the astral or psychic plane they are the "Builders," the "Watchers," the *Pitar* (fathers) and the first Preceptors of mankind. Great world reformers, one and all, have incarnated from them.

In the *Gathas*, the six Amshaspends are referred to as personifications of the divine virtues which were considered necessary for all who wished to solve the mystery of life. In the later *Avesta* they are shown as the guiding spirits of the elements and of the lower kingdoms of Nature. They are as follows, in the order in which they demand our attention for an integrated spiritual life: (1) Vohu-Mano (Good Mind); (2) Asha (Righteousness); (3) Xshathra (Service); (4) Armaiti (Devotion); (5) Haurvatat (Perfection); (6) Ameretatat (Immortality). Ahura-Mazda, the Lord of Wisdom, is the synthesis of all six.

These names imply also certain virtues needed for spiritual living. We shall consider these *Paramitas* of the Zoroastrian faith in the light of Theosophy.

(1) Vohu-Mano, the Good Mind, is the Buddhi-Manas of Theosophical terminology. All the troubles and tribulations of physical existence are the result of the debasing use we make of our mind. The Theosophical Movement was started to change the mind of the race, which runs after selfish, unworthy desires. The same problem faced Zarathushtra thousands of years ago. He was fully alive to the pranks of Ako-Mano, the lower mind, Kama-Manas, which had reduced his people to the sorrowful plight in which he found them. Acquisition of true knowledge would show that rigid justice rules the world. Lack of knowledge and failure to recognize the Law in Nature — its unity, harmony and brotherhood — have brought us untold suffering in the past. If we persist in ignorance, and are indifferent to the higher voice within, we shall have to reap in the future the fruits of our negligence. Vohu-Mano demands that our choice always be in favour of that which is right and not merely in favour of that which we like. Our earth is spoken of as a great school. The schooling that we need is to check all our thoughts and activities of earthly life in the light of the Higher Mind.

(2) Asha, Righteousness, is eternal harmony, Alaya's Self. By the improper use of his freedom, man breaks Nature's harmony and gives rise to the pairs of opposites — good and evil, right and wrong, light and darkness, etc. Every act of disharmony in thought, word and deed will recoil on us. The rod of Karma strikes silently but it strikes surely. Our task here is to fulfil the plan of Ahura-Mazda, not to disrupt it. Angra-Mainyu, the spirit of evil within us, has been pampered more

than is good for us. We have failed to look beyond the boundary of physical life. Zarathushtra advises us to control the promptings of selfish desires, which delude us into making wrong choices, and he inspires us to invoke Asha, the Lord of Righteousness, with the help of our altruistic Higher Mind.

(3) The Prophet consistently and constantly sought the company of Asha and Vohu-Mano, the Amshaspends presiding over the virtues of Righteousness and Higher Mind. The attainment of these virtues filled his heart with love for the service of mankind. Xshathra, the Lord of Service, helps those who live the life of rectitude and wise discrimination. "To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second." We are here to love and serve our weak brethren. The practice of virtues gives us the necessary ability to serve with unflagging zeal. Zarathushtra teaches that the best service is to elevate the mind of the race. Man is man because of his discerning mind which recognizes the divine Law and takes refuge under it. Without the operation of his good mind man is but an animal, or worse.

(4) Zarathushtra further teaches that we need to invoke Armaiti — Devotion — to make us steadfast in our aspiration for the higher life of rectitude, good mind and service. It is not enough only to admit intellectually that rectitude and service are the essentials of a good life; we must also have faith to hold on to them firmly. The light of the Higher Mind must be persistently focused on our daily activities, and efforts should be made to correct all imperfections with enduring faith in the law of Ahura-Mazda. Habit is second nature. Wrong habits formed under the influence of the selfish lower mind have given a crooked twist to our nature. Patient devotion will establish us in desirable habits. The intellectual perception of that which is good will but remain in our brain consciousness and be effaced with the death of the body, if exertion is not made to make it part and parcel of the memory of the soul-mind by living the life necessary.

(5) Haurvatat, which stands for Perfection, supplies the pattern for a model life that we have to strive to live. A single sun illuminates the whole world through its numerous rays. The light emanating from a perfected Master is likewise for the illumination of our hearts and minds made dark by the cunning contrivance of Ahriman, whose dazzling glamour has blinded us and made us the deaf and dumb followers of sensuous perceptions. We recognize to some extent the importance of a life of virtue, but in a sentimental, lukewarm way. The importance

of a scientific and rhythmic cultivation of virtues for our well-being is not recognized. Zarathushtra and other Masters are exemplars of the heights which anyone can attain if he tries with his Higher Mind, with faith and rectitude. What man has done, man can do. If perfection is possible for Zarathushtra, it is also possible for all of us. The ray of Ahura-Mazda is within us. If it is dim it is up to us to fan it into brilliance with the help of the great Immortals who protect and guide all who seek them. Silence the voice of the flesh which noisily babbles within, and dig deep into your heart to hearken the call of the still, small voice.

(6) Ameretatat awaits patiently with the prize of Immortality for all who listen to the words of Wisdom uttered by the Messenger of Ahura-Mazda and who live their life as he lived. The law of Karma is frequently referred to in the *Gathas*, and reincarnation of the soul may be inferred, for unless we accept these two doctrines, all talk about perfection and immortality becomes useless. A life of noble thoughts, soft words and pure deeds is the result of strenuous exertion continued through æons of time.

*Gatha Ushtavaiti*—the *Gatha* of Illumination—is the name given to the second *Gatha*. Fire is the sacred symbol of the Zoroastrians, through which to meditate upon the excellences of Ahura-Mazda. Amshaspand Asha, who stands for rectitude in the *Gathas*, is looked upon as the guardian angel of Fire in the later Avesta. The true worship of Fire, then, would mean inner illumination, which a life of truth and righteousness can bring about. The following quotation from the injunctions of Zoroaster given in *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 331) explains Zarathushtra's position in relation to the worship of Fire: "Consult it only when it is without form or figure. . . . When it has a form—*heed it not*, but when it is formless, obey it, for it is then sacred fire, and all it will reveal thee shall be true." In the *Ushtavaiti Gatha* Zarathushtra renders homage to the inner flame in these words:

Thou art Divine, I know, O Lord Supreme,  
 Since Good found entrance to my heart through Love;  
 I asked: "What is Thy Holy Will? To whom  
     Daily my utmost homage shall I pay?"  
 Since then unto Thine INNER FLAME I pay  
 My homage, and to Thine ETERNAL LAW.

The third *Gatha* is dedicated to the "Divine Spirit" and is called *Gatha Spenta-Mainyu*. As said before, the holy spirit Spenta-Mainyu is opposed by the evil spirit Angra-Mainyu, both being emanations of

Ahura-Mazda. The *Ahunavaiti Gatha* states:

The first created were the Spirits Twain,  
 As Twin Co-workers they reveal themselves;  
 Yet in each thought and word and deed these Two  
 Are n'er agreed; — one's Good, the other Bad;  
 And of these Two the Wise do choose aright,  
 The unwise choose not thus — and go astray.

And when together did these Spirits Twain  
 Foregather at Creation's early dawn,  
 LIFE did One make, the Other made NOT-LIFE;  
 And thus Creation's purpose is achieved;  
 Dark is the mind of those that cling to False,  
 But brightly shines the Mind that holds to Truth.

Angra-Mainyu, it is said, is the "black shadow of Ahura-Mazda." He has his own place in the scheme of things, but man should know better than seek his company. We are advised to invoke the holy spirit of Ahura-Mazda constantly in these words of the *Vendidad*: "Invoke, O Zarathushtra! my Farvarshi, who am Ahura-Mazda, the greatest, the best, the fairest of all beings." *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 480) explains that Farvarshi or Farohar is

the *inner*, immortal man (or that *Ego* which reincarnates); that it existed before its physical body and survives all such it happens to be clothed in. "Not only man was endowed with the Farvarshi *but gods too*, and the sky, fire, waters, and plants." (Introduction to the *Vendidad*, by J. Darmsteter). This shows as plainly as can be shown that the *ferouer* is the "spiritual counterpart" of whether god, animal, plant, or even element, *i.e.*, the refined and the *puruer* part of the grosser creation, the soul of the body, whatever the body may happen to be. Therefore does Ahura Mazda recommend Zarathushtra to invoke his *Farvarshi* and not himself (Ahura Mazda), that is to say, the impersonal and *true* Essence of Deity, *one with Zoroaster's own Atman* (or Christos), not the *false* and personal appearance.

The fourth *Gatha* is the *Gatha* of Loving Service and is called *Gatha Vohu-Xshathra*. The study of the Philosophy of Life illumines our minds, and the way is found to contact the Divine Spirit within, which leads us to perceive all in one and one in all. "If you wish to serve us, serve our Humanity," say the Masters down the ages. Zarathushtra gave the same advice. He called upon all who were ready, through a life of rectitude and inner illumination, to shoulder the burden of guid-

ing mankind towards the path of obedience to the Law of Ahura-Mazda.

*Gatha Vahishta-Ishti* is the last and the shortest of the series. It is the *Gatha* of the highest wish that "each one choose all deeds of goodness as Ahura's worship true." For householders and all worldly men and women there is a special message in this *Gatha*:

Even in life on Earth these Truths hold good,  
O men and maids; attracted by Untruth,  
You find it pleasanter to go astray;  
But this drags you away from your true Self;  
The Light in earth-bound hearts shines dim and dark,  
Where Rays of Truth can scarcely penetrate,  
And this prevents all growth to Higher Life.

... Bring down Vohu Man' in your lives on Earth,  
Let each one strive the other to surpass  
In Asha's Truth, in Vohu-Mano's Love;  
Thus each one surely shall reap rich rewards.

Thousands of years have passed since Zarathushtra delivered his message, but the beneficial influence and inspiration of his teachings are as necessary today as they were in his time. The war between Spenta-Mainyu, the spirit of good, and Angra-Mainyu, the spirit of evil, is still raging in our hearts and minds. Angra-Mainyu is now cloaked in perfidious beauty, which entrances all of us, and many are so deluded that they even take him for Spenta-Mainyu. Modern civilization, with its promise of gain and glory for the material man, has ignored the needs of the immortal soul. The voice of the lower mind — Ako-Mano — has, for the time being, drowned the voice of Vohu-Mano.

Discerning individuals everywhere, armed with the way of life taught by the great Masters, can contrive to keep themselves above the common rut and be the torch-bearers for all struggling souls in whom the flame of Vohu-Mano is not wholly extinguished. The dim flicker of divinity in the heart of man needs to be fanned with true Knowledge and Wisdom. The resounding voice of Zarathushtra speaks through his millennia-old *Gathas*. It says, "Mind your own mind, O man! Mend it, and end your travail." As *The Voice of the Silence* puts it: "The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer. . . . Forsake the region of Asat, the false, to come unto the realm of Sat, the true." Have we the ears to listen, the head to think and the heart to act? Let each one answer for himself.

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## SELF-EDUCATION AND SELF-GROWTH

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 of

the divine aspirations of mystic Humanity toward deliverance from the webs of Maya, and final bliss in consequence. . . . Such aspirations 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 abun-

dance 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 which are *universally* helpful, and those which 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 despondency arose from wrong thinking and wrong feeling. It was not that Arjuna was too weak to fight; the trouble with him was his wrong visualization of the results 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 effect 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 two 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 or energy of *Virya* in us, and that conquers all, because it is the energy of the ALL.

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## THE PILGRIM

I stood and sighed. I was alone, and I had to go far. I was young like the golden sun rising on the eastern horizon. I was afraid.

Then suddenly I heard a sweet voice, like that of a nightingale, close beside me. A beautiful maiden was standing near me, laughing. Her laughter held me spellbound. As I gazed upon her beauty, memories slipped through my mind, and I wanted never to leave her, and to be content to be led, where she willed.

Enraptured, I asked, "Who are you?"

She replied, "I am your Companion on the highways of Life. I am your shadow."

I took her hand and walked. After a while I spoke again: "I think I have forgotten something. I have become so enchanted by your smile that I remember not where I have to go."

She laughed and said, "I will show you that which men covet."

Then she led me through soft, velvet paths to a golden palace. Pillars of gold and rubies, piles of shining silks, sparkling fountains that carried the fragrance of roses at dawn, fans of peacock plumes — all these adorned the palace halls. A throne of gold glistened; basketfuls of beautiful gems were set on stools, and a hundred servants brought in delicious foods and drinks. "These are all yours for the asking, and a hundred other things which add to the enjoyment of life," they said. I looked and was amazed. The glitter of Wealth and Power awaited, to be taken, and be enslaved. But just when I lifted my foot to step into this realm of dazzle, I thought I heard from somewhere a subdued groan. I cried, "Not this, not this."

Then the maiden led me to a garden where lilacs bloomed and lotuses in crystalline ponds opened their petals to the skies; where creepers burdened with blossoms climbed upwards, and sweet maidens reclined, singing songs that mixed with the silent beauty of sunsets; where twilights were gay and dawns paid homage to the heavens with garlands of dew, and wood nymphs danced, and sweet cherubs played about. In this garden of Life and sweet Domestic Felicity, I hesitated. Then I saw on the golden sand a strange teardrop. "Not this, not this," I cried, and turned.

She took me then to the Hall of Fame, where on a pedestal of gold and rubies I saw my own self, my own image. Garlands of fragrant flowers hung round my neck, and lamps holding a hundred flames lit up

my face. Worshippers of all ages knelt at my feet, singing ballads in praise of me and soliciting blessings. One and all, they cried, "Worthy and great art thou!" Then the maiden by my side smiled. "Reign here in supreme joy," she said. And I was confused and knew not what to do. Then suddenly I heard a sneer — from beyond this Hall, beyond life itself. "Not this, not this," I cried.

Then the maiden beside me frowned and stamped her feet. "You behave strangely," said she. Then she took me where I heard no human voice. Nature in all its glory smiled, tempting the human soul. The clouds cleared in the skies, and the sun shone forth in divine radiance. At night, the moon showered cool nectar and the stars sprayed their gentle showers of light. Waterfalls murmured their delight and birds of radiant plumage sang on boughs bent down with delicious fruits. Nature seemed ready to unfold its hidden mysteries. In this Land of Learning where Knowledge was free and yielded its secrets, I greatly rejoiced and was about to step in, when a tiny thorn lifted up its head from its soft cushions of green velvet. "Not this, not this," I cried, and stepped back.

"Well," said the maiden, "there is only one place for you and that you shall see."

Then she took me to a place where nothing was; where creation lay dead as also all the activities of life; where Silence was the spoken word; where ashes lay scattered — the ashes of strangled sins; where were to be seen the crucified selves of men; where big things looked small, and small things big; where Life looked like Death and Death took the form of Life; where Renunciation danced its mighty dance, crushing Illusions under its feet.

Here as I gazed, the maiden freed her hand from mine. "From hence I depart," said she. "The smiling Maya cannot be your companion any more. For these are the forbidden grounds."

And as I gazed and wondered immensely, she fled — fled from my grasp, fled from the portals of my life's open gates.

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## TREADING THE MIDDLE PATH

The need for happiness is very strongly felt by all human hearts. Is it not true that such a thirst is never assuaged until an ethical pattern of living has been accepted by the mind, thus enabling man as a whole to fulfil, to his entire satisfaction, his *dharma*?

Nowadays, the art of living is very much neglected. To master this art one needs a comprehensive view of life and a conscious acceptance of good and evil as part of it, because it is only through an integrated view of the universe, of all that is conscious and self-conscious in it, that self-realization can be achieved. Man's isolation leads to self-destruction. Man's integration into the great pattern of life means self-conscious immortality. Hence the necessity to view any problem from the standpoint of universal principles. Thus only can we see the purpose behind all units of life, for they are all governed by the same great laws.

This gives, furthermore, a well-balanced view of any problem which arises, more often than not, from a limited and conditioned environment. All barriers that divide and isolate become meaningless. Intellectual honesty forces us out of the selfish groove of separateness. The lower kingdoms sustain us, and we could hardly survive but for the sacrifice of many, many creatures. Failure in attempting to live the higher life is sure to come to all those who, through pride, conceit, or selfishness, separate themselves from even the meanest of creatures. This does not mean that we have to make that which is ugly or evil a part of ourselves. Something might be learnt here from the great artists of the world. To them, everything is animated by the one universal life; there is no good or evil as such. They mingle beauty and ugliness into one. They re-create life for us, and this is the task in which the man of good will is engaged — to re-create every day his own environment and make of his life a beautiful work of art.

Between the divine and the gross material world does man stand, as it is only in him that the three streams of evolution — spiritual, mental and physical — mingle and come to an equilibrium. His very nature and *dharma* compel him to walk the Middle Path, as he is, in fact, that Way itself. In other words, this is not decreed by some overlord or god; it is man who decrees it to himself, for thus alone can he experience that joy which fulfilment of one's appointed work in life may give, and impart it to others. For, as Shelley wrote:

... when the power of imparting joy

Is equal to the will, the human soul  
Requires no other heaven.

The first point to keep firmly in mind is that no one compels; it is our very nature which ultimately forces us to adopt the Middle Path, because that way alone can the divine and human become harmonized and universal brotherhood be realized in a practical way. Perfect equipoise and harmonious living result from such an attitude. Let us now consider what virtues and qualities are needed and what defects have to be eliminated in order to walk the Middle Path.

The predominant characteristic that is needed is self-awareness or mindfulness — that is to say, the ability to be alive, alert, and to adapt oneself quickly to life's changes. Upon reflection it becomes apparent that this is only achieved when mental equanimity is maintained. If a person is too much wrapped in himself, either in joy or in grief, he cannot assume that position of full awareness which enables him to perceive at once all aspects of a problem. But neither joy nor suffering can be overcome unless its nature is fully understood.

This is one of the reasons, perhaps, why the Buddha gave out as the First Truth the existence of suffering, and subsequently taught what causes suffering and how it can be mastered. In his teachings the nature of suffering is dispassionately analysed, so that a rational and compassionate attitude may be adopted towards it. On the positive side, the Buddha advocated the cultivation of love towards all living creatures, not merely as a duty but as a spontaneous outpouring of the heart, having realized that the suffering of all is the suffering of each. Here is one of the greatest paradoxes of life: the more evolved a being, the greater his capacity for seeing and experiencing pain; and yet, as stated in the *Dhammapada*, these great ones are "nourished on joy." Only the treading of the Middle Path can reconcile these two opposite states. What is needed is the capacity to perceive not only the true cause of human woe but also its remedy, which consists in the power all human beings have to tap that fountain of joy and light which is to be found in the noumenal world of Spirit. It is absolute reliance upon the law of Karma and an ever unquenchable faith in the human heart to perform right actions that enables the great ones to bear the sight of the whole world's misery and pain.

The suffering that has to be uprooted is that personal pain which the human heart experiences through indulging in greed, anger, and their offshoots. The root of sensual living has to be destroyed. On this point

the Buddha is most emphatic. Once this is done, a new type of perception can be evolved in the true heart of compassion. The disciple who lives in the world while treading the Middle Path treasures the beauties of the world and encourages and appreciates all the arts and sciences; only, in doing so, he "replaces the fleeting by the everlasting." He can watch dispassionately the evanescent blooming of all the seeds of the earth, seeing in them an expression of the eternal law of life which creates things of beauty only to destroy them later.

What help does the doctrine of the Middle Path offer in the building of true character? The problem of good and evil must be re-thought in the light of this doctrine which teaches a comprehensive view of life. A sharp dividing line between good and evil is a figment of the imagination. Each action, either good or bad, is in fact performed by the whole human being. It is naïve to think that the "devil" in us alone sins while the higher nature remains unmoved and is concerned only with the good we may do! This misconception must be corrected. This naturally implies an intelligent adjustment of our views with regard to our vices. Yet basically the problem is quite simple and must be seen against the background of man's triple nature; and evil must be understood against the background of man's evolutionary progress.

We cannot fully assess our own assets, for we do not know our karmic past. Hence the need to be ready and alert for any emergency, trial or test. In order to bring some harmony into the inner chaotic world of desires and emotions it is necessary to know of and rely upon the eternal Man in us. We can rejoice at changes and at our own mortality if we realize that we have always been and will never cease to be. Defects and shortcomings are necessary limitations which enable us to build up understanding and fortitude. Though our past lives are unknown to us, nevertheless we know enough in any particular life to carry on the task. The line of continuity is preserved from life to life. This leaves us with definite material to work upon, and the plan is perceived at birth and impressed upon the plastic form of the new personality. Thus, we *do* know. The right attitude is not an inflexible and rigid opposition to the undesirable elements in our lower nature, but a cheerful handling of them to transmute the base metal into pure gold. Thus taught the Buddha.

The treading of the Middle Path helps us to keep a perfect balance between the various principles of our nature. It is the way of the contemplative mind and the way of works. The heart learns to become intelligent and the head compassionate. One's duty towards all creatures can then be fulfilled. Life is no longer cheerless, but illumined with the sun

of understanding. The pattern of one's own life is apprehended as each part is naturally seen within the whole and the difficult problem of human relationships is solved. As we read in the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*: "Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link. Break a single link and all passes into annihilation."

The Middle Path is the Path trodden by all the Buddhas of Compassion. It is the path of love and understanding of all that lives and suffers. It is the path of the Gods, of the reincarnating Manasaputras at the dawn of every new awakening of life. It is, and remains throughout, the path of the Heart Doctrine.

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#### STRAY RUMBLINGS OF THE SOUL

Remember this stupendous fact in Nature, that every atom in the Universe has a lesson to teach us.

Unless the heart pinches, breaks, tears, bleeds and gnaws, alas! you will never know what life is. Suffering consecrates and elevates the soul.

It is from "torn shreds" and "shattered fragments" that Life regenerates.

When life falls like an axe on our frail shoulders, we feel crushed beneath its grinding force; bend, but do not break.

One thing is certain to be learnt from life: There is no limit either to the height of happiness or to the depth of despair.

There is a world within us, infinitely vaster and richer than the world around us. To traverse this inner world is terrifying indeed.

Happiness should not be sought for in the process of acquisition. The moment we try to acquire it, it recedes further. It is the natural fruit of a good life.

Happiness lies only in the service of the unhappy.

Life is empty, unless we absorb ourselves in a task which satisfies the soul. Soul-nourishment is an indispensable factor in life.

My thoughts and my aspirations far transcend my capacity for action. I wish I could translate them into life.

Self-complacency is a bar to the progress and growth of the Soul.

## A FEW POINTS ON THE STUDY OF "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

The Introductory to this work is a very important part of the whole, for certain principles are laid down there which show us what attitude we should adopt in the study of the book.

H.P.B. tells us (p. viii) that the writing of the book was necessitated "by the wild and fanciful speculations in which many Theosophists and students of mysticism have indulged, during the last few years, in their endeavour to, as they imagined, work out a complete system of thought from the few facts previously communicated to them." Also, on p. xviii she wrote that "... people are always in the habit of judging things by their appearance, rather than their meaning." And she added that "even most of the Fellows of the Theosophical Society have fallen victims to the same misconception." How true this has proved to be in the years since her death!

Speaking of the past cycles of spiritual outpouring, she wrote that "Time and human imagination made short work of the purity and philosophy of these teachings..." (pp. xx-xxi). Is it not true that, as then, so today, "Works, most remarkable for their ingenious deductions and speculations... foregone conclusions generally changing places with premises..." have appeared in what is known as "Theosophical" literature? Have we not here a hint that we should study the original teachings and not the deductions and speculations of others?

She gave another hint when she wrote: "Every scholar has an opportunity of verifying the statements herein made, and of checking most of the quotations." Should we not carefully check all subsequent teachings in the light of what H.P.B. taught us?

This is necessary if we would develop her own attitude towards the teachings. She wrote that she "believes in the ancients, and the modern heirs to their Wisdom." And believing in both, she "transmits that which she has received and learnt herself to all those who will accept it" (p. xxxvii). She received, she learnt, she passed on. She did not speculate; she just *transmitted*.

Her personal contribution, she says, was to provide the "string" which tied together the facts she gave out. Have we by our efforts, experience and understanding made the string which will tie the facts together for us? That, in fact, should be the basis of our study if we would get full value from it.

Study of the book does not mean complete understanding of every metaphysical statement at once. We learn that there are seven great keys to the unlocking of the Mysteries. Any one of these will open the doors of the Mystery. Some students will gain understanding by the study of geometrical signs — Plato's fundamental method; some by the study of numbers — Pythagoras's fundamental approach. Others will gain it by the study, illuminated by present knowledge, of the *Kabala*, some by the study of astrology, and so on. Each student "will inevitably judge the statements made from the standpoint of his own knowledge, experience, and consciousness, based on what he has already learnt."

Hence each student has his own line of approach, and he has to find it out for himself and follow the thread through the book. It is unnecessary for each one to spend too much time in trying to understand every statement or idea from every possible angle, for the full study of one aspect, within the background of the whole, will bring him to the same goal. For example, whether he studies the seven principles of man in detail, recognizing that they exist throughout Nature and evolution, or whether he specializes in the sevenfold aspect of the planets, the seven groups of numbers or the mathematical seven, he will, by deep thought, come to understand that they all lead to the same knowledge. By following the law of analogy, as H.P.B. pointed out, the unity of all is seen.

This unification is necessary if the study is to produce real fruit through the expansion of the brain-mind, the synthesizing of the Manas-Buddhi in each student. And this alone brings true knowledge in contradistinction to mere information and intellectual learning.

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My chief and only object [in writing *The Secret Doctrine*] was to bring into prominence that the basic and fundamental principles of every exoteric religion and philosophy, old or new, were from first to last but the echoes of the primeval "Wisdom-Religion." I sought to show that the TREE OF KNOWLEDGE, like Truth itself, was *One*; and that, however differing in form and colour, the foliage of the twigs, the trunk and its main branches were still those of the same old Tree, in the shadow of which had developed and grown the (now) esoteric religious philosophy of the races that preceded our present mankind on earth.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

# THE "ELIXIR OF LIFE"

(From a Chela's Diary)

By G——M——, F.T.S.

## II

[The first part of this article, originally published in *The Theosophist* for March and April 1882, was reprinted in our July issue. We print here the second and concluding portion.—Eds.]

History and Science teach us plainly that certain physical habits conduce to certain moral and intellectual results. There never yet was a conquering nation of vegetarians. Even in the old Aryan times, we do not learn that the very Rishees, from whose lore and practice we gain the knowledge of Occultism, ever interdicted the *Kshatriyas* (military caste) from hunting or a carnivorous diet. Filling, as they did, a certain place in the body politic in the actual condition of the world, the Rishees would have as little thought of preventing them, as of restraining the tigers of the jungle from their habits. That did not affect what the Rishees themselves did.

The aspirant to longevity, then, must be on his guard against *two dangers*. He must beware especially of impure and animal<sup>1</sup> thoughts. For Science shows that thought is dynamic, and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The inner men,<sup>2</sup> however sublimated their organism may be, are still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles, and are still subject to the law that an "action" has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser "shell" they are in contact with, and concealed within.

And, on the other hand, certain actions have a tendency to produce actual physical conditions unfavourable to pure thoughts, hence to the state required for developing the supremacy of the inner man.

To return to the practical process. A normally healthy mind, in a normally healthy body, is a good starting-point. Though exceptionally powerful and self-devoted natures may sometimes recover the ground lost by mental degradation or physical misuse, by employing proper means, under the direction of unswerving resolution, yet often things may have gone so far that there is no longer stamina enough to sustain

<sup>1</sup> In other words, the thought tends to provoke the deed.—G.M.

<sup>2</sup> We use the word in the plural, reminding the reader that, according to our doctrine, man is septenary.—G.M.

the conflict sufficiently long to perpetuate this life; though what in Eastern parlance is called the "merit" of the effort will help to ameliorate conditions and improve matters in another.

However this may be, the prescribed course of self-discipline commences here. It may be stated briefly that its essence is a course of moral, mental, and physical development, carried on in parallel lines — one being useless without the other. The physical man must be rendered more ethereal and sensitive; the mental man more penetrating and profound; the moral man more self-denying and philosophical. And it may be mentioned that all sense of restraint — even if self-imposed — is useless. Not only is all "goodness" that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats, or bribes (whether of a physical or so-called "spiritual" nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison the moral atmosphere of the world — but the desire to be "good" or "pure," to be efficacious must be spontaneous. It must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher, not an abstention from vice because of fear of the law; not a chastity enforced by the dread of Public Opinion; not a benevolence exercised through love of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical Future Life.<sup>3</sup>

It will be seen now in connection with the doctrine of the tendency to the renewal of action before discussed, that the course of self-discipline recommended as the only road to Longevity by Occultism is *not* a "visionary" theory dealing with vague "ideas," but actually a scientifically devised system of drill. It is a system by which each particle of the several men composing the septenary individual receives an impulse, and a habit of doing what is necessary for certain purposes of its own free-will and with "pleasure." Everyone must be practised and perfect in a thing to do it with pleasure. This rule especially applies to the case of the development of Man. "Virtue" may be very good in its way — it may lead to the grandest results. But to become efficacious it has to be practised cheerfully, not with reluctance or pain. As a consequence of the above consideration the candidate for Longevity at the commencement of his career must begin to eschew his physical desires, not from any sentimental theory of right or wrong, but for the following good reason.

As, according to a well-known and now established scientific theory,

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<sup>3</sup> Col. Olcott clearly and succinctly explains the Buddhistic doctrine of Merit, or *Karma*, in his *Buddhist Catechism* (Question 83).—G.M.

his visible, material frame is always renewing its particles, he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain *period* during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad predisposition, will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having a tendency to repeat the said acts. And, while this is the *particular* result as regards certain "vices," the general result of an abstention from "gross" acts will be (by a modification of the well-known Darwinian law of Atrophy by non-usage) to diminish what we may call the "relative" density and coherence of the outer shell (as a result of its less-used molecules); while the diminution in the quantity of its actual constituents will be "made up" (if tried by scales and weights) by the increased admission of more ethereal particles.

What physical desires are to be abandoned and in what order? First and foremost, he must give up alcohol in all forms; for, while it supplies no nourishment, nor even any direct pleasure (beyond such sweetness or fragrance as may be gained in the taste of wine, etc., to which alcohol, in itself, is non-essential) to even the grossest elements of the "physical" frame, it induces a violence of action, a rush, so to speak, of life, the stress of which can only be sustained by very dull, gross and dense elements, and which, by the operation of the well-known law of Re-action (in commercial phrase, "supply and demand") tends to summon them from the surrounding universe, and, therefore, directly counteracts the object we have in view.

Next comes meat-eating, and for the very same reason, in a minor degree. It increases the rapidity of life, the energy of action, the violence of passions. It may be good for a hero who has to fight and die, but not for a would-be sage who has to exist. . . .

Next in order come the sexual desires; for these, in addition to the great diversion of energy (vital force) into other channels, in many different ways, beyond the primary one (as, for instance, the waste of energy in expectation, jealousy, etc.), are direct attractions to a certain gross quality of the original matter of the Universe, simply because the most pleasurable physical sensations are only possible at that stage of density. Alongside with and extending beyond all these and other gratifications of the senses (which include not only those things usually known as "vicious," but all those which, though ordinarily regarded as "innocent," have yet the disqualification of ministering to the pleasures of the

body — the most harmless to others and the least “gross” being the criterion for those to be last abandoned in each case) must be carried on the moral purification.

Nor must it be imagined that “austerities” as commonly understood can, in the majority of cases, avail much to hasten the “etherealizing” process. That is the rock on which many of the Eastern esoteric sects have foundered, and the reason why they have degenerated into degrading superstitions. The Western monks and the Eastern Yogees, who think they will reach the apex of powers by concentrating their thought on their navel, or by standing on one leg, are practising exercises which serve no other purpose than to strengthen the will-power, which is sometimes applied to the basest purposes. These are examples of this one-sided and dwarfed development. It is no use to fast *as long as you require food*. The ceasing of desire for food without impairment of health is the sign which indicates that it should be taken in lesser and ever decreasing quantities until the extreme limit compatible with life is reached. A stage will be finally attained where only water will be required.

Nor is it of any use for this particular purpose of longevity to abstain from immorality so long as you are craving for it in your heart; and so on with all other unsatisfied inward cravings. To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing, and to mimic the real thing without it is barefaced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

So it must be with the moral purification of the heart. The “basest” inclinations must go first — then the others. First avarice, then fear, then envy, worldly pride, uncharitableness, hatred; last of all ambition and curiosity must be abandoned successively. The strengthening of the more ethereal and so-called “spiritual” parts of the man must go on, at the same time. Reasoning from the known to the unknown, meditation must be practised and encouraged. Meditation is the inexpressible yearning of the inner Man to “go out towards the infinite,” which in the olden time was the real meaning of adoration, but which has now no synonym in the European languages, because the thing no longer exists in the West and its name has been vulgarized to the make-believe shams known as prayer, glorification, and repentance. Through all stages of training the equilibrium of the consciousness — the assurance that all *must* be right in the Kosmos, and, therefore, with *you* a portion of it — must be retained. The process of life must not be hurried but retarded, if possible; to do otherwise may do good to others — perhaps even to yourself in other spheres — but it will hasten your dissolution in this.

Nor must the externals be neglected in this first stage. Remember that an adept, though "existing" so as to convey to ordinary minds the idea of his being immortal, is not also invulnerable to agencies from without. The training to prolong life does not, in itself, secure one from accidents. As far as any physical preparation goes, the sword may still cut, the disease enter, the poison disarrange. This case is very clearly and beautifully put in *Zanoni*; and it is correctly put and must be so, unless all "adeptism" is a baseless lie. The adept may be more secure from ordinary dangers than the common mortal, but he is so by virtue of the superior knowledge, calmness, coolness, and penetration which his lengthened existence and its necessary concomitants have enabled him to acquire; not by virtue of any preservative power in the process itself. He is secure as a man armed with a rifle is more secure than a naked baboon; not secure in the sense in which the *deva* (god) was supposed to be securer than a man.

If this is so in the case of the high adept, how much more necessary is it that the neophyte should be not only protected but that he himself should use all possible means to ensure for himself the necessary duration of life to complete the process of mastering the phenomena we call death! It may be said, why do not the higher adepts protect him? Perhaps they *do* to some extent, but the child must learn to walk alone; to make him independent of his own efforts in respect to safety, would be destroying one element necessary to his development—the sense of responsibility. What courage or conduct would be called for in a man sent to fight when armed with irresistible weapons and clothed in impenetrable armour? Hence the neophyte should endeavour, as far as possible, to fulfil every true canon of sanitary law as laid down by modern scientists. Pure air, pure water, pure food, gentle exercise, regular hours, pleasant occupations and surroundings, are all, if not indispensable, at least serviceable to his progress. It is to secure these, at least as much as silence and solitude, that the Gods, Sages, Occultists of all ages have retired as much as possible to the quiet of the country, the cool cave, the depth of the forest, the expanse of the desert, or the heights of the mountains. Is it not suggestive that the Gods have always loved the "high places"; and that in the present day the highest section of Occult Brotherhood on earth inhabit the highest mountain plateau on the earth?<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> The stern prohibition to the Jews to serve "their gods upon the high mountains and upon the hills" is traced back to the unwillingness of their ancient elders to allow

Nor must the beginner disdain the assistance of medicine and good medical regimen. He is still an ordinary mortal, and he requires the aid of an ordinary mortal.

“Suppose, however, all the conditions required, or which will be understood as required (for the details and varieties of treatment requisite, are too numerous to be detailed here), are fulfilled, what is the next step?” — the reader will ask. Well, if there have been no back-slidings or remissness in the procedure indicated, the following physical results will follow:

First, the neophyte will take more pleasure in things spiritual and pure. Gradually gross and material occupations will become not only uncraved for or forbidden, but simply and literally repulsive to him. He will take more pleasure in the simple sensations of nature — the sort of feeling one can remember to have experienced as a child. He will feel more light-hearted, confident, happy. Let him take care the sensation of renewed youth does not mislead, or he will yet risk a fall into his old baser life and even lower depths. “Action and Re-action are equal.”

Now the desire for food will begin to cease. Let it be left off gradually — no fasting is required. Take what you feel you require. The food craved for will be the most innocent and simple. Fruit and milk will usually be the best. Then, as till now, you have been simplifying the quality of your food, gradually — very gradually — as you feel capable of it, diminish the quantity. You will ask — “Can a man exist without food?” No, but before you mock, consider the character of the process alluded to. It is a notorious fact that many of the lowest and simplest organisms have no excretions. The common guinea-worm is a very good instance. It has rather a complicated organism, but it has no ejaculatory duct. All it consumes — the poorest essences of the human body — is applied to its growth and propagation. Living as it does in human tissue, it passes no digested food away. The human neophyte, at a certain stage of his development, is in a somewhat analogous condition, with this difference or differences, that he *does* excrete, but it is through the pores of his skin, and by those too enter other etherealized particles of matter to contribute towards his support.<sup>5</sup> Otherwise, all the food and drink is

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people in most cases unfit for adeptship to choose a life of celibacy and asceticism, or in other words—to pursue adeptship. This prohibition had an esoteric meaning before it became the prohibition, incomprehensible in its dead-letter sense; for it is not India alone whose sons accorded divine honours to the WISE ONES, but all nations regarded their adepts and initiates in a supernal light.—G.M.

<sup>5</sup> He is in a state similar to the physical state of a foetus before birth into the world.—G.M.

sufficient only to keep in equilibrium those "gross" parts of his physical body which still remain — to repair their cuticle-waste through the medium of the blood. Later on, the process of cell-development in his frame will undergo a change; a change for the better, the opposite of that in disease for the worse — he will become *all* living and sensitive, and will derive nourishment from the Ether (Akas). But that epoch for our neophyte is yet far distant.

Probably, long before that period has arrived, other results, no less surprising than incredible to the uninitiated, will have ensued to give our neophyte courage and consolation in his difficult task. It would be but a truism to repeat what has been again alleged (in ignorance of its real *rationale*) by hundreds and hundreds of writers as to the happiness and content conferred by a life of innocence and purity. But often at the very commencement of the process some real physical result, unexpected and unthought of by the neophyte, occurs. Some lingering disease, hitherto deemed hopeless, may take a favourable turn; or he may develop healing mesmeric powers himself; or some hitherto unknown sharpening of his senses may delight him. The *rationale* of these things is, as we have said, neither miraculous nor difficult of comprehension. In the first place, the sudden change in the direction of the vital energy (which, whatever view we take of it and its origin, is acknowledged by all schools of philosophy as most recondite, and as the motive power) must produce results of some kind. In the second, Theosophy shows, as we said before, that a man consists of several men pervading each other, and on this view (although it is very difficult to express the idea in language) it is but natural that the progressive etherealization of the densest and most gross of all should leave the others literally more at liberty. A troop of horses may be blocked by a mob and have much difficulty in fighting its way through; but if every one of the mob could be changed suddenly into a ghost there would be little to retard it. And as each interior entity is more rare, active and volatile than the outer, and as each has relation with certain different elements, spaces, and properties of the kosmos which are treated of in other articles on Occultism, the mind of the reader may conceive — though the pen of the writer could not express it in a dozen volumes — the magnificent possibilities gradually unfolded to the neophyte.

Many of the opportunities thus suggested may be taken advantage of by the neophyte for his own safety, amusement, and the good of those around him; *but the way in which* he does this is one adapted to his fit-

ness — a part of the ordeal he has to pass through, and misuse of these powers will certainly entail the loss of them as a natural result — the *Itchcha* (or desire) evoked anew by the vistas they open up will retard or throw back his progress.

But there is another portion of the Great Secret to which we must allude, and which is *now*, for the first, in a long series of ages, allowed to be given out to the world, as the hour for it is now come.

The educated reader need not be reminded again that one of the great discoveries which has immortalized the name of Darwin is the law that an organism has always a tendency to repeat, at an analogous period in its life, the action of its progenitors, the more surely and completely in proportion to their proximity in the scale of life. One result of this is that, in general, organized beings usually die at a period (on an average) the same as that of their progenitors. It is true that there is a great difference between the *actual* ages at which individuals of any species die. Disease, accidents and famine are the main agents in causing this. But there is, in each species, a well-known limit within which the Race-life lies, and none are known to survive beyond it. This applies to the human species as well as any other. Now, supposing that every possible sanitary condition had been complied with, and every accident and disease avoided by a man of ordinary frame, in some particular case there would still, as is known to medical men, come a time when the particles of the body would feel the hereditary tendency to do that which leads inevitably to dissolution, *and would obey it*. It must be obvious to any reflecting man that, if by *any procedure*, this critical climacteric could be once thoroughly passed over, the subsequent danger of "Death" would be proportionally less as the years progressed. Now this, which no ordinary and unprepared mind and body can do, is possible sometimes for the will and the frame of one who has been specially prepared. There are fewer of the grosser particles present to feel the hereditary bias — there is the assistance of the reinforced "interior men" (whose normal duration is always greater even in natural death) to the visible outer shell, and there is the drilled and indomitable Will to direct and wield the whole.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> In this connection we may as well show what modern science, and especially *physiology*, has to say as to the power of the human will. "The force of will is a potent element in determining longevity. This single point must be granted without argument, that of two men every way alike and similarly circumstanced, the one who has the greater courage and grit will be longer lived. One does not need to practise medicine long to learn that men die who might just as well live if they resolved to live, and that myriads who are invalids could become strong if they had the native or acquired will to vow they would do so. Those who have no other quality favourable to life, whose bodily organs are nearly all diseased, to whom each day is a day of pain, who are beset by life-shortening influences, yet do live by will alone."—*Dr. George M. Beard*

From that time forward, the course of the aspirant is clearer. He has conquered "the Dweller of the Threshold," the hereditary enemy of his race, and, though still exposed to ever-new dangers in his progress towards Nirvana, he is flushed with victory, and with new confidence and new powers to second it, can press onwards to perfection.

For, it must be remembered that nature everywhere acts by Law, and that the process of purification we have been describing in the visible material body also takes place in those which are interior, and not visible to the Scientist, by modifications of the same process. All is on the change, and the metamorphoses of the more ethereal bodies imitate, though in successively multiplied duration, the career of the grosser, gaining an increasing wider range of relations with the surrounding kosmos, till in Nirvana the most rarefied Individuality is merged at last into the INFINITE TOTALITY.

From the above description of the process, it will be inferred why it is that "Adepts" are so seldom seen in ordinary life; for, *pari passu* with the etherealization of their bodies and the development of their power grows an increasing distaste, and a, so-to-speak, "contempt" for the things of our ordinary mundane existence. Like the fugitive who successively casts away in his flight those articles which incommode his progress, beginning with the heaviest, so the aspirant eluding "Death" abandons all on which the latter can take hold. In the progress to Negation everything got rid of is a help. As we said before, the adept does not become "immortal," as the word is ordinarily understood. By or about the time when the death-limit of his race is passed, *he is actually dead*, in the ordinary sense, that is to say, he has relieved himself of all or nearly all such material particles as would have necessitated in disruption the agony of dying. He has been dying gradually during the whole period of his Initiation. The catastrophe cannot happen twice over. He has only spread over a number of years the mild process of dissolution which others endure from a brief moment to a few hours. The highest Adept is, in fact, dead to, and absolutely unconscious of, the World; he is oblivious of its pleasures, careless of its miseries, in so far as sentimentalism goes, for the stern sense of DUTY never leaves him blind to its very existence. For the new ethereal senses opening to wider spheres are to ours much in the relation of ours to the Infinitely Little. New desires and enjoyments, new dangers and new hindrances arise, with new sensations and new perceptions; and far away down in the mist — both literally and metaphorically — is our dirty little earth left below by those who have virtually

“gone to join the gods.”

And from this account, too, it will be perceptible how foolish it is for people to ask the Theosophists to “procure for them communication with the highest Adepts.” It is with the utmost difficulty that one or two can be induced, even by the throes of a world, to injure their own progress by meddling with mundane affairs. The ordinary reader will say — “This is not *god-like*. This is the acme of selfishness.” But let him realize that a very high Adept, undertaking to reform the world, would necessarily have to submit once more to Incarnation. And is the result of all that have gone before in that line sufficiently encouraging to prompt a renewal of the attempt?

A deep consideration of all that we have written will also give the Theosophists an idea of what they demand when they ask to be put in the way of gaining *practically* “higher powers.” Well, there, as plainly as words can put it, is the PATH. Can they tread it?

Nor must it be disguised that what to the ordinary mortal are unexpected dangers, temptations and enemies, also beset the way of the neophyte. And that for no fanciful cause, but the simple reason that he is, in fact, acquiring new senses, has yet no practice in their use, and has never before seen the things he sees. A man born blind and suddenly endowed with vision would not at once master the meaning of perspective, but would, like a baby, imagine, in one case, the moon to be within his reach and, in the other, grasp a live coal with the most reckless confidence.

And what, it may be asked, is to recompense this abnegation of all the pleasures of life, this cold surrender of all mundane interests, this stretching forward to an unknown goal which seems ever more unattainable? For, unlike some of the anthropomorphic creeds, Occultism offers to its votaries no eternally permanent heaven of material pleasure, to be gained at once, by one quick dash through the grave. As has, in fact, often been the case, many would be prepared willingly to die *now* for the sake of the paradise hereafter. But Occultism gives no such prospect of cheaply and immediately gained infinitude of pleasure, wisdom and existence. It only promises extensions of these, stretching in successive arches obscured by successive veils, in unimaginable succession up the long vista which leads to *Nirvana*. And this, too, qualified by the necessity that new powers entail new responsibilities, and that the capacity of increased pleasure entails the capacity of increased sensibility to pain. To this, the only answer that can be given is twofold: (1) the conscious-

ness of Power is itself the most exquisite of pleasures and is unceasingly gratified in the progress onwards with new means for its exercise; and (2) as has been already said — *this* is the only road by which there is the faintest scientific likelihood that "Death" can be avoided, perpetual memory secured, infinite wisdom attained, and hence an immense helping of mankind made possible, once that the adept has safely crossed the turning point. Physical and metaphysical logic requires and endorses the fact that only by gradual absorption into infinity can the Part become acquainted with the Whole, and that which is *now something* can only feel, know, and enjoy EVERYTHING when lost in Absolute Totality in the vortex of that *Unalterable Circle* wherein our Knowledge becomes Ignorance, and the Everything itself is identified with the NOTHING.

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The experiences which should be produced by that which is really beautiful are wonder, and sweet amazement, and desire, and a pleasant fluttering of the wings of the soul. . . . Let us now inquire of those who love beauties not perceptible to sense: In what manner are you affected by those pursuits which are called beautiful, by beautiful manners, self-controlled characters, and in fine by all virtuous works and dispositions, and the beauty of souls? What do you experience when you behold yourselves beautiful within, and by what are you aroused and inspired? Why do you desire to hold converse with your real selves, collecting yourselves together away from bodily distractions? For it is thus that true lovers are affected. What is it that affects them thus? Not some shape or colour or size, but the soul herself, colourless, and possessing a wise temperance equally uncoloured; it is, too, the light of the other virtues, either when you behold them in yourselves or contemplate greatness of soul and a just character, pure temperance, and the manly countenance of fortitude in another, modesty and reverence proceeding serene, intrepid, and unperturbed, and, crowning all these, the godlike splendour of intellect. If, then, we love and cherish these, why do we call them beautiful? Beautiful they are and appear, and there is none who has ever beheld them but will say that such things are among those that truly ARE. Why, then, can it be said that they truly ARE? Because they are beautiful.

# “LUCIFER” CORRESPONDENCE

## ON THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

[The “Editors’ Note” reprinted here was appended, in *Lucifer* for June 1888, to a letter entitled “A Protest.” The writer, signing himself “Discipula,” had called the Roman Catholic Church the “Mother and Mistress” of all Christian Churches, and had extolled the way of life the Church advocated. This evoked from H.P.B. the following forthright statement.—Eds.]

We denounce the claim, that the Roman Catholic Church is “the Mother and Mistress of all Christian Churches,” as one of the many arrogant assumptions made by Papism, and which are neither *warranted by history nor by fact*. For, while history shows it to be quite the reverse of truth, facts are there to *withstand* “Peter to the face” once more. If Greek Ecclesiastical History is to be set aside, there are Dean Stanley’s Lectures to prove the facts; and the Dean, as an *historian*, was surely an unprejudiced authority. Now what do both history and the Dean say? That the Christian Church began her existence as a colony of *Greek Christians*, and of Grecianized, Hellenic Jews. The first and earliest Church Fathers, such as Clement of Rome, Ireneus, Hippolytus, etc., etc., *wrote in the Greek language*. The first Popes *were Greeks*, not Italians, the very name “Pope” being a Greek, not a Latin, name, “*Papa*” meaning father. Every Greek priest is called to this day “*papa*,” and every Russian priest “Pope.” The first quarrels which led to the separation of the Church, into the Latin and the Greek or Eastern, did not take place earlier than the IXth century, namely, in 865, under the Patriarch Photius; while the final separation occurred only in the XIth century, when the Latin Church proclaimed herself with her usual arrogance the one universal Apostolic Church and all others Schismatics and Heretics! Let our esteemed correspondent read History, and see what happened at Constantinople, on May 16, 1054. She will then learn that on that day a crowd of Roman delegates, led by Humberto, broke into the cathedral of St. Sophia, and laid down upon the altar their *bull of ANATHEMA against those who would not follow them in their various innovations and schemes*. Thus it would seem that it was Latinism which broke off from the Greek Oriental Church and not the latter from Rome. *Ergo*, it is the Roman Church which has to be regarded not only as guilty of a schism but of *rank heresy* in the eyes of every *impartial* Christian acquainted with history. Hence, also, it is the Greek Oriental Church which is the “Mother and Mistress”

of all other Christian Churches — if any can claim the title. Assumption of authority is no proof of it.

As to the *rules of life* taught by Jesus, if the Roman Church had ever accepted them, surely she would never have invented the infamy called the Inquisition; nor would she have slaughtered, in her religious fury and in the name of her God, nearly 50,000,000 of human creatures ("heretics") since she came to power. As to her *rules* and ethics, she may *pretend* to teach people to "forgive their enemies from their hearts," but she takes good care never to do so herself. Nor can Christian endurance or "renunciation of self" ever reach the grandeur in practice of the Buddhist and Hindu devotee. This is matter of history too. Meanwhile, "God the Father," if this person could be conveniently consulted, would surely prefer a little less "lip-love" for himself, and a little more heartfelt sympathy for Humanity in general, and its suffering hosts in particular. "Little Sisters" and Big "Christian Brothers" do frequently more mischief than good, especially the "Nursing Sisters," as some recent cases can show.

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It is pride that causes error and discord among men. As with the sun so it is with God. Each man wants to have a special God of his own, or at least a special God for his native land. Each nation wishes to confine in its own temples what the world cannot contain. . . .

All human temples are built on the model of this temple, which is God's own world. Every temple has its fonts, its vaulted roof, its lamps, its pictures or sculptures, its inscriptions, its books of the law, its offerings, its altars, and its priests. But in what temple is there such a font as the ocean; such a vault as that of the heavens; such lamps as the sun, moon, and stars; or any figures to be compared with living, loving, mutually helpful men? Where are there any records of God's goodness so easy to understand as the blessings strewn abroad for man's happiness? Where is there any book of the law so clear to each man as that written in his heart? What sacrifices equal the self-denials which loving men and women make for one another? And what altar can be compared with the heart of a good man, on which God accepts the sacrifice?

—TOLSTOY

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In view of the concern shown in this country and elsewhere over the increase in the population figures, and the statement in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 411 fn.) that "diseases and over-population are facts that can never be denied," it might be well for us to understand the root cause of both these problems.

We learn that this root cause is the gift of "the fire" by Prometheus to man. This "has turned into the greatest curse; the animal element, and *consciousness* of its possession, has changed periodical instinct into chronic animalism and sensuality" (*S.D.*, II. 412). The animal world, H.P.B. added in a footnote, "having simple instinct to guide it, has its *seasons of procreation*, and the sexes become neutralized during the rest of the year. Therefore, the free animal knows sickness but once in its life — before it dies." This also contains a hint as to the relation of disease to the abuse of the sex function.

When we read what H.P.B. called the wise and grand, far-seeing and morally beneficent laws of connubial life, and compare them with "the licence tacitly allowed to man in civilized countries" (*S.D.*, II. 411 fn.), we cannot help but wonder what she would have written had she been living today, when medical science is busy preparing and perfecting artificial ways and means whereby the natural fruition of the sex function may be thwarted. But *can* Nature be thwarted? Can anyone foresee what diseases will be bred, what damage will be done to the brain, and to the *whole* man? Even physical damage *must* result, for man cannot go against Natural Law with impunity. Time will show — but then it might be too late to avoid the consequent suffering.

Quite apart from the "moral" aspect, *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of the physical outcome of "abusing the creative power, desecrating the divine gift, and wasting the life-essence for no purpose except bestial personal gratification":

In the beginning, conception was as easy for woman as it was for all animal creation. Nature had never intended that woman should bring forth her young ones "in sorrow." Since that period, however . . . the holy mystery of procreation [has been turned] into animal gratification; hence the law of Karma . . . gradually changed, physiologically, morally, physically, and mentally, the whole nature of the Fourth Race of mankind, until, from the healthy King of animal creation of the Third Race, man became in the Fifth, our race, a helpless, scrofulous being, and has now

become the wealthiest heir on the globe to constitutional and hereditary diseases, the most consciously and intelligently bestial of all animals! (II. 410-11)

We learn, further, that the greatest impediment in the way of man's spiritual development is the activity of his physiological senses. "Sexual action being closely connected, by interaction, with the spinal cord and the grey matter of the brain, it is useless to give any longer explanation" (S.D., II. 296).

We read that venereal diseases are flourishing among teen-agers today. This is but one of the consequences of sexual laxity. A terrible Karma awaits all those who help to bring to the unmarried young, as well as to the married, the knowledge of how to avoid the consequences of sexual action.

Can Nature's Laws be sidestepped with impunity? Does not Nature react on man when man goes against her? From Manu to Buddha, from Christ to Gandhi, all true reformers have advocated *restraint* in the use of our physiological senses and functions. But nowhere in the family-planning programmes of today do we find self-restraint advocated.

As for abortion, H.P.B. tells us that this is tantamount to murder. Knowledge of man as a spiritual being seeking rebirth will explain why.

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"There are occult properties in many . . . minerals, equally strange with that in the lodestone, which all practitioners of magic *must* know, and of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant," wrote Madame Blavatsky in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 589). But can objects carry a curse? The tragedy or great misfortune that befalls the possessors of certain objects is hard to ascribe wholly either to superstition or to that over-worked word, "coincidence."

Among the instances given by Geoffrey Grant in his article, "Do Some Objects Have a Built-in Curse?" (*The Sunday Standard*, June 12), is that of an ivory figure which a woman took to a London antique dealer. Explaining its history, she said that her father-in-law had bought it from China — and had been killed in an accident shortly afterwards. His only son — the woman's husband — had committed suicide, and she herself was recovering from a dangerous illness. The dealer, who was not superstitious, eagerly bought it at a bargain price. But when he climbed a ladder to place the ivory on a shelf, he fell and broke his leg. Later, he sold the ivory figure — and on the way home its purchaser was knocked down by a bus.

Another story that the article narrates is that of an Oriental pattern ring of beaten silver bought by Rudolph Valentino, of silent-screen fame. He wore it in the film "The Young Rajah," the first one he made after he had bought the ring, and the movie was such a flop that he did not return to the screen for two years. He was wearing the ring when he was struck by appendicitis, the illness that killed him. Later, the ring went to Russ Colombo, a rising star. A week after getting it, Colombo was killed in a car accident. It then passed to Colombo's best friend, singer Joe Casino. For some time he kept it in a glass case — and then decided to wear it. He was killed by a van a week later, wearing the ring. The ring was then lent to a collector of Valentino's relics. Nothing happened to him; but one night the Los Angeles police shot and killed a burglar named James Willis. The Valentino ring was found in his loot.

We are told by Madame Blavatsky that "by a determined concentration of the will an otherwise inert object may become imbued with protective or destructive power according to the purpose directing" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 463). Ample evidence has been put forward for the protective power of talismans "imbued by the influence of that greatest of all magnets, the human will, with a potency for good," but a potency for ill can also be communicated to an object by a malevolent will. And some elementals are described as being "of horrible malignity."

Even waiving the possibility that a curse might have been laid on a certain object, would not the association with it of so many disasters be cumulative in its influence? H.P.B. warned that a "vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be."

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David Sarnoff, writing on "Science Should Make Men More Reverent" (*The Times of India*, July 3), states:

There is a feeling of awe and humbleness, springing from a lifetime's association with science, at the awareness of powers beyond the capacities of mind and science even to comprehend. . . .

It was Hans Christian Oersted, the Danish scientist, who correctly said: "The universe is a manifestation of an infinite reason, and the laws of nature are the thoughts of God."

Thus, as the horizons of science advance, and as our knowledge expands, we become more and not less humble, more reverent,

not less. For science is presenting us with questions of ever-increasing profundity to which it does not possess the answers.

To provide fulfilment on this earth for humanity, science alone is not enough. Man's yearning reaches past mere comfort or knowledge or power to seek dignity, beauty, truth and purpose in life. If the role of science is to pave a path of progress for mankind, the role of religion is to guide it along true lines of morality and principle.

Today, science and religion meet on common ground, in a common effort to achieve a common need of world understanding, peace and harmony. Never were science and religion more compatible.

Can there be any real reconciliation or unity between science and religion short of both recognizing their respective failures and shortcomings, eliminating them, and thereupon discovering themselves no longer science or religion, but inseparable components of the Wisdom-Religion? Before the two can meet on common ground, religion needs to be in full accord with fact and reason, and science needs not only not to conflict with the highest spiritual ideals, but to produce, adduce and substantiate deep and powerful reasons why those ideals should be followed.

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"Slavery," said Burke almost 200 years ago, "is a weed that grows in every soil." His words appear to be valid even today, for, incredible though it may seem, slavery is apparently on the increase in various parts of the world. This is the finding of a three years' study and investigation by committees of 55 National Councils of Women in co-operation with a special representative from the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. There are at present an estimated 125,000 slaves and 1.5 million serfs in bondage. (*The Times of India*, June 21)

Some pilgrims to Mecca take servants with them who are sold as slaves to pay for the return fare. Another form of slavery was discovered in Kenya, near the border with Tanzania. Children were tempted by sweets, kidnapped, and then taken to Tanzania into slavery. But the largest group is the 1.5 million serfs who live under the "huasipungo" system in the Andean States of South America. Under this system they are given some land on an estate, in return for which they are compelled to work certain days in the week. When the estate is sold the

family goes with it. A very similar system of bonded labour also prevails in some parts of India, particularly Rajasthan.

There are many varieties of slavery, of which slave-purchasing and slave-owning is only one; that is its most concrete form—a crime against humanity. The key to the problem is to be found in the Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. It furnishes the clue to the source and the cause of slavery; also it enshrines the teaching which would cure humanity of this scourge. The slave-drivers of one age are driven as slaves in another, and the snowball work of Karma can be stopped only by an active contribution towards the spread of Pure Liberty and Freedom. Man is his brother's keeper.

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At the present time, when many police officials genuinely believe that hypnosis will bring the truth to light and, with it, the certain knowledge of whether or not the suspect is guilty, Dr. Harold Rosen's warning against such a practice is timely (*Science Digest*, May 1966).

Dr. Rosen, a Baltimore psychiatrist who is the chairman of the American Medical Association's Committee on Hypnosis, is of the opinion that "under hypnosis a suspect may confess to a crime he has committed only in fantasy, or he may confess because he is trying to please the hypnotist." Both eventualities make it impossible to be certain that the man who confesses is really guilty. "The hypnotized subject," Dr. Rosen adds, "doesn't always tell the truth. He may lie, or, in relating the truth as he sees it at this abnormal time, he may distort the truth. He also may describe what he thinks happened, but didn't."

As for substituting the use of hypnosis for the third degree—Dr. Rosen declares, "This can lead to the development of a mental third degree that, in its potentiality for extracting distorted confessions, is even worse."

Hypnosis used improperly crops up in many places in criminal work. Witnesses, too, are hypnotized to allay nervousness, thereby reducing their reliability as witnesses and leading to shocking injustices.

As the misuses of hypnosis multiply, it is seen to be the dangerous weapon that it is, especially in the hands of the ignorant and the unscrupulous. Even assuming that what a suspect says under hypnosis is the truth, this manner of extorting confessions is, in fact, nothing short of mental burglary!

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