

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## THE GRACIOUS GURU

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Every step made by one in our direction will force us to make one toward him.

—MAHATMA K.H.

The Masters do not have to hunt up recruits in special lodges, nor drill them through mystical non-commissioned officers: time and space are no barriers between them and the aspirant; where thought can pass they can come.

—H.P.B.

DURING the month of September [this year, on the 2nd] the Hindu festival of Gokul Ashtami or Janma Ashtami takes place. It is also known as Krishna Jayanti—the Natal Day of Sri Krishna, the Great Avatara. On the eighth day, in the second half of the month of Shravana, exactly at Midnight, in the city of Mathura, He entered the darkness of this world with His Light Supernal.

In many aspects, as Divine Babe, as the Shepherd Boy, as Sage-Warrior, as Peerless Teacher, Krishna is adored and worshipped by millions in India; and now in the Occident, thanks chiefly to the work of the Theosophical Movement, His words are read and His wisdom is practised by a growing number of people.

Krishna may be looked upon as the Ideal Guru or Master. His wisdom is as profound as His compassion is widespread. For every stage of evolution He has offered instruction. In the *Mahabharata* and other books of Hindu tradition, a thousand and one gems of precept are to be found; also example is set in almost every conceivable situation of human life. As son or playmate, as husband or adviser, as general or

diplomat, He acted with consummate skill, with a sense of humour and of proportion, with insight and discrimination which are not only to be admired but also to be imitated in practice.

On this occasion we shall take an incident from the *Mahabharata*, narrated in the *Rajadharmanushasana Parva* of the *Shanti Parva*. It has a highly important occult significance. It reveals how a devoted disciple could fulfil his pure heart's yearning to seek guidance from his Master. Between Guru and Chela there is not only a bond sanctified by a pledge, but also a bridge of constant communication, provided the disciple knows how to cross that bridge. All this comes out in the incident we narrate below and which is described at length in Sections 46 to 50 of the above-mentioned *Parva* of the great epic.

The Great War was over. Yudhishtira and his brothers were victorious. Order was restored by them in the kingdom and peace reigned supreme. Having gratified everybody, including the citizens, Yudhishtira found himself free and decided to pay a visit to Krishna, his benefactor and his friend.

Meanwhile, on the field of Kurukshetra, surrounded by many, stretched on his bed of arrows, Bhishma with pure heart and joined palms was concentrating on Krishna. With a strong and joyous voice he was hymning the praise of the Slayer of Madhu, the Master of Yoga, the Lord of Lords.

Aware by his yoga-power of the devotion of Bhishma, Krishna Himself plunged in responsive meditation. Through this response the Master poured into his devotee Bhishma heavenly Knowledge, compassing the past, the present, the future.

When Yudhishtira approached the Great Presence he found Krishna rapt in this responsive meditation. What did he see?

Krishna of the hue of a dark blue cloud was seated on a sofa adorned with gold and gems. Attired in yellow robes of silk, decked with many celestial ornaments, his person blazed with splendour. His bosom adorned with the Kaustubha gem, he looked like the Udaya Mountain bathed by the rising sun. Beauty incarnate for which there is no simile in the three worlds.

Bewildered, Yudhishtira after a while addressed Krishna.

“We have won back our kingdom, O divine Lord, through your grace, and have not fallen away from the duties of our order. Is all well with you, O refuge of the three worlds?”

But Krishna said not a word, for he was rapt in meditation.

After a while, once again the king said: "How wonderful that you, the Lord of the Universe, are plunged in such meditation. Is all well with the three worlds, O Lord? O Illustrious One, you are as still as the flame of a lamp burning in a place where there is no wind. You are as firm as the unshakable rock of ages. If I am fit to hear, if it is no secret of yours, I beg of you and solicit it as a favour. Why should you, foremost in righteousness and knowledge, perform this yoga?"

Krishna opened his eyes and softly spoke, almost in a whisper:

Bhishma, lying on a bed of arrows, who is like unto a fire that is about to go out, is thinking of me. Hence my mind also became concentrated on him. Collecting all his senses, concentrating his mind by the aid of his understanding, Bhishma sought my refuge in his meditation. It was for this that I had centred my mind upon him."

Krishna proceeds to detail the acts and exploits of the redoubtable Bhishma, which had been taken as subjects for meditation by the Master.

Further, He said to Yudhishtira, "When Bhishma disappears from the world every kind of knowledge will disappear with him. Go to him now, question him about whatever you may desire to learn."

"If your heart be inclined to be gracious, then we, all of us, shall go to Bhishma with yourself as our leader."

"Let my car be yoked," ordered Krishna.

Nearing the spot, on the Oghavati, Krishna and his friends saw Bhishma resembling in splendour the setting sun. They drew close and sat down among the many who surrounded Bhishma. Krishna felt a rather cheerless heart within him, observing Bhishma looking like a fire about to die out.

"I hope your perceptions are clear, your understanding unclouded. Give to this assembly the gift of your great knowledge, ere it disappears with you. Speak words of truth, especially for Yudhishtira whose mind has been clouded by grief on account of the slaughter of his kinsmen."

"How, O Krishna, when you are here, can I speak — a disciple in the presence of the Master?"

Thereupon Krishna blessed Bhishma.

"Endued with the Eye of Knowledge, behold all forms of Life in the great universe like fishes in a limpid stream. Having seen everything in the inward light pass it on to others."

“Why, O Holy One, do you not yourself discourse upon all that is good?”

“I am the root of fame and of everything that leads to beneficence. Who will wonder if the Moon be said to be of cool rays? Who will wonder if I be described as one possessed of the full measure of knowledge which leads to recognition? I have just inspired you with celestial intelligence, so that you, like a sire unto his sons, may discourse to them about high morality.”

Then Bhishma, waiting for the auspicious moment for passing away from the earth, spoke the grand discourse to be found in the *Shanti Parva*.

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WE BELIEVE in an impersonal “Unknowable” and know well that the ABSOLUTE, or Absoluteness, can have nought to do with worship on anthropomorphic lines; Theosophy rejects the Spencerian “He” and substitutes the impersonal It for the personal pronoun, whenever speaking of the Absolute and the “Unknowable.” And it teaches, as foremost of all virtues, *altruism* and self-sacrifice, brotherhood and compassion for every living creature, without, for all that, worshipping Man or Humanity. In the Positivist, moreover, who admits of no immortal soul in men, believes in no future life or reincarnation, such a “worship” becomes worse than fetishism: it is *Zoolatry*, the worship of the animals. For that alone which constitutes the *real* Man is, in the words of Carlyle, “the essence of our being, the mystery in us that calls itself ‘I’ — . . . a breath of Heaven; the Highest Being reveals himself in man.” This denied, man is but an animal — “the shame and scandal of the Universe,” as Pascal puts it.

It is the old, old story, the struggle of matter and spirit, the “survival of the *unfittest*,” because the strongest and most material. But the period when nascent Humanity, following the law of the natural and *dual* evolution, was descending along with spirit into matter — is closed. We (Humanity) are now helping matter to ascend toward spirit; and to do that we have to help substance to disenthral itself from the viscous grip of sense.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## “THE SELF IS THE FRIEND OF SELF AND ALSO ITS ENEMY”

[In *The Path* for June 1890, Mr. Judge announced the formation of a new Department of Branch Work and outlined a scheme to print from time to time a selected paper, a copy of which would be mailed to each Branch of the American Section of the T.S. A circular addressed to Branches explained:

“The General Secretary has long been conscious of that deplorable waste by which valuable and interesting papers, once read at a Branch meeting, are unused again, and has desired some arrangement making possible their circulation among other Branches, particularly among those weak in membership or in capacity for originating discussion. It is needless to enumerate the various difficulties, but a leading one has been the expense. He believes that the result of an organized and regular system of circulation will be threefold; 1st, to greatly extend the range of the best and newest Theosophical thought; 2d, to supply weak Branches with interesting matter for instruction and debate; 3d, to promote that attractiveness in Branch meetings which will make them sought by intelligent outsiders, thus giving the Branches a status in their communities, and tending to increase both their growth and influence.”

The following paper by Mr. Judge was issued in August 1890 as Branch Paper No. 5.—Eds.]

THIS sentence in the *Bhagavad-Gita* [see the title] has been often passed over as being either meaningless or mysterious; on one hand worthless to consider, and on the other hand impossible. Some students have, however, made good use of the teaching contained in it. It is a verse that bears directly upon Theosophy as applied to our daily life, and therefore may well be scrutinized.

It indicates two selves, one the enemy and also the friend of the other. Evidently, without the suggestions found in Theosophy, two selves in one person cannot seem otherwise than meaningless, except in those cases, admitted by Science, where there is an aberration of the intellect, where one lobe of the brain refuses to work with the other, or where there is some cerebral derangement. But after a little study of the constitution of man—material and spiritual—as we find it outlined in the Wisdom-Religion, we easily see that the higher and the lower self are meant,

The next injunction, to "raise the self by the self," clearly points to this; for, as a thing cannot raise itself without a fulcrum, the self which will raise us must be the higher one, and that which is to be raised is the lower.

In order to accomplish this task we must gain an acquaintance with the self which is to be raised. The greater and more accurate that acquaintance is, the quicker will proceed the work of elevating the being who attempts it.

Let us for a moment look at the obstacles in the way, the reasons why, with so many, their understanding of themselves is so plainly deficient.

Everyone knows that he can see the defects in the actions and character of other men better than his own. Some, of course, there are who do not allow that they have defects.

St. James says that a man looketh in a glass and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he is. While I have often doubted this, yet it is true in respect to that looking-glass which is often by others held up to us to see ourselves in. We see for a moment our appearance, and then forget it.

There are some things, however, as to which it is often impossible for us to know ourselves. Such of our tones as are harsh or disagreeable we often cannot hear as others do. For there is hardly anything so difficult as to really hear our own voice in its entirety of tone and accent. We are so accustomed to it that we cannot tell whether it be pleasing or repellent, musical or discordant. We have to rely upon the statements of those who hear it. Indeed, I doubt seriously if anyone can ever fully hear, in the way those to whom we speak do, the tones of his voice, because it is conveyed to us not only through the medium of the outer ear which receives the vibrations made without us, but we receive it in addition through the vibrations made within all through the skull, and hence it must ever be a different voice for ourselves. So it would not be profitable to pay too much attention to the sound of our voice if we do so to the exclusion of that inner attitude which nearly always determines the tone in which we speak; for if our feelings be kind and charitable, it is more than likely that the vocal expression of them will correspond. The cultivation of the voice, so far as it is possible, can safely be left to those teachers who aim to soften and polish it.

By taking a few examples from among the many about us and assuming that they represent possible defects and peculiarities of our own,

we may arrive at something useful in our Theosophic life.

Here is one who will constantly tell you that several others are always very fond of talking of themselves and their affairs, and appear to take no interest in the conversation unless it has themselves for centre. And after thus depicting the failing of the others, this person — man or woman — immediately proceeds to show that that is his own particular fault, for from that moment the burden of the conversation is "I" or "my" affairs.

Our next subject is one who talks a great deal about altruism and brotherhood, but would not give a dollar to any good cause. Not perhaps from intentional niggardliness, but from sheer habit of not giving and not helping.

Here is another who exemplifies the prominent defect of the century, inattention. He listens to you, but only hears a part, and then, when repeating what he says he heard you say, he gives a version entirely at variance with yours. Or, listening to an argument or discussion, he only attends to that part which being familiar to him strikes him favourably.

Next we have the bigot who, while exalting freedom of thought and the unity of all men, displays most frightful bigotry.

Then there is another who illustrates a variety of the first to which I referred; — the man who wishes apparently only to impose his own views upon you, and is careless about knowing what your opinions may be.

Here is the partisan who favours such a school or set. Nothing can be said against them, no defect may be pointed out. Partisanship clouds it all.

Now all of these are only samples; but in some degree every one of us has them all, perhaps slightly, but still there. They are all the result of the predominance of the lower self, for they all show a disposition to put the personal *I* to the front. They are the present triumph of the lower self over the efforts of the higher. They may be abated in some degree by attention to their outer expression, but no real progress will be gained unless work upon the hidden plane is begun. Such a defect as that one of not listening long to another man's views, but hurrying to tell him what you think yourself, is one that affects the acquiring of new ideas. If you constantly tell others what you think, you are gaining nothing. For your experience and views are your own, well known to you. The repeated expression of them only serves to im-

print them more strongly on your mind. You do not receive any of the new lights that other minds might cast upon your philosophy if you gave them the opportunity.

There are other factors in our constitution which are powerful for the production of faults. Every man has two lines of descent. One is that which comes through his parents and has to do with his mental and physical make-up. This line may run back into the most strange and peculiar places, and be found winding in and out among manners and minds not suspected by us. Suppose your physical line of descent comes through Danes or Norwegians and mine through the French. There will be to some extent a want of sympathy and appreciation on the mental plane between us. Of course this effect will not be apparent if the period of time is long since our blood ran in those bodies, but still there will be left some trace of it. There will be a tendency always for the physical, including the brain, to show the characteristics which result from the preponderance of inherited faculties and dispositions. These characteristics belong wholly to the physical plane, and are carried down from the centuries past by inheritance, affecting the particular body you may inhabit in any one incarnation. It is your Karma to have that sort of physical environment about your inner self. Now the obstacles to the perception of truth and to the acquirement of knowledge of self which are in consequence of the physical inheritance, are difficult to perceive, involving much study and self-examination for bringing them to light. But they are there, and the serious Theosophist will search for them. These differences in the physical body, which we will call for the time differences in inheritance, are of the highest importance. They resemble the differences between telescopes or microscopes made by different opticians, and tend to cause us to see truth clearly or blurred, or surrounded by many-coloured mists. What we most desire to have is a mental telescope that is not only powerful, but also devoid of the colours which achromatic quality only will dispel.

The second line of descent is that one which belongs purely to the inner man; that is, the psychical line. It is obscure, and, indeed, can only be discovered and defined by an adept or a trained seer whose clairvoyance permits him to see that intangible yet powerful thread which has so much to do with our character. It is just as important as the physical descent, in fact more so, because it has to do with the ever-living man, whereas the physical tenement is selected by or follows upon the actions which the inner man compelled the former body

to perform. So it may be altered at any time with ease if we live in obedience to the higher law.

Passing from the broad line of descent in a nation, we find each individual governed also by the family peculiarities and faults, and they are not as easy to define as those that are national, since few men are in possession of any facts sufficient to ascertain the general family tendencies.

Coming down now to ourselves, it is almost axiomatic that each one's mind acts in a way *peculiar to itself*. There is a tendency that daily grows stronger after our earlier years for the mind to get into a rut, its own rut or mode of looking at things and ideas. This is of great importance. For the man who has freed his mind so that it is capable of easily entering into the methods of other minds is more likely to see truth quicker than he who is fixed in his own ways.

We must then at once constitute ourselves our own critics and adversaries, for it is not often that anyone else is either willing or capable to take that part for us.

Our first step and the most difficult — for some, indeed, impossible — is to shock ourselves in such a manner that we may quickly be able to get out of, or rather understand, our own mental methods. I do not mean that we must abandon all our previous training and education, but that we shall so analyse all our mental operations as to know with certainty, to easily perceive, the actual difference in method between ourselves and any other person. This is a thing seldom undertaken or accomplished by men nowadays. Each one is enamoured of his own mental habits, and disinclined to admit that any other one can be better. When we have become acquainted with this mental path of ours, we are then in a position to see whether in any particular case our view is false.

This is the psychological and metaphysical equivalent of that scientific process which classifies and compares so as to arrive at distinguishing differences in things in order that physical laws may be discovered. For, while we remain in ignorance of the method and path of our mind's action, there is no way in which we can compare with other minds. We can compare views and opinions, but not the actual mechanics of the thought. We can hear doctrines, but are unable to say whether we accept or reject from right reasoning or because our peculiar slant on the mental plane compels us to ratiocinate wholly in

accordance with a mental obliquity acquired by many years of hurried life.

The value of thus understanding our own mental bias so that we can give it up at will and enter into the bias of another's mind is seen when we consider that each of us is able to perceive but one of the many sides which truth presents. If we remain in the rut which is natural, we pass through an entire life viewing nature and the field of thought through but one sort of instrument. But by the other practice we may obtain as many different views of truth as the number of the minds we meet. When another human being brings his thoughts before us, we may not only examine them in our way, but also take his method and, adopting his bias for the time as our own, see just that much more.

It is very easy to illustrate this from ordinary life. The novelist sees in the drawing-rooms of society and the hovels of the poor only the material that may serve as the basis for a new book, while the social schemer drives thought of hovels away and sees in society only the means of gratifying pride and ambition, yet the artist can only think of the play of colour and arrangement of figures, the harmony that delights his artistic sense.

The plain man of affairs is not attracted by the complex events of every day which have no relation to his business, whereas the student of Occultism knows that very obscure events point to other things yet in the future. In every stratum of society and every art or profession we constantly have it brought home to us that each man looks at any subject from but one or two standpoints, and when a well-balanced mind is found looking at events and men and thoughts freely from all sides, everyone sees at once a superiority in the person, albeit they may not be able to explain it.

But it is in Theosophic study especially that it is wise for us to constitute ourselves our own critics and to adopt as far as possible the practice of leaving our own mental road and taking up some other. The truth is simple and not so difficult to arrive at if we will follow the advice of the Hindu *Upanishad* and cut away error. Error grows largely out of notions and preconceptions educated into us by our teachers and our lives.

The influence of these preconceptions is seen every day among those Theosophists who are seeking for more books to read upon Theosophy. Their minds are so full of old notions which are not violently expelled, that truth cannot be easily perceived. But if they read fewer new books and spent more time in re-reading those first

attempted, meanwhile studiously endeavouring to enter into all of the author's thought, much more progress would be gained.

Take, for instance, the *Key to Theosophy*. It is full of all the main doctrines of the Wisdom-Religion, and of hints towards others. Many persons have read the book and then sought another. They say that they have mastered it. Yet if you put to them some questions or listen to their own, it is apparent that only that part of the work which in some way coincides with their own previous training and line of thought has been grasped. Now this is just the part they need not have dwelt upon, because, being like to themselves, it may at any time be understood. But if one will ever stand as one's own critic, then those parts which seem obscure will be attacked, and, being viewed from all sides, may be soon turned into a possession. And just because such has not been the practice, it has come to be the fact that some extremely valuable presentations of doctrine and philosophy remain buried in earlier Theosophical books and magazines, while those who once read them have gone feverishly on to other works and forgotten that which might have enlightened them.

The Theosophist who delights to call himself practical and logical, an abhorrer of mysticism, should try to see what the mystical Theosophist means, and the mystic one should read carefully the words of the practical member to the end that he may counterbalance himself. A wholly practical or entirely mystical mind is not well balanced. And as long as the logical and practical man in our ranks scouts mysticism and never reads it, so long will he remain deformed and unbalanced in the eyes of those who see both sides, because he is wrapped up in ideas and methods that are only right in their own domain. The attitude of mind proposed is not to be observed only toward our literature and the philosophy studied; it is to be that of every hour and applicable to our dealings with our fellow-men. It will lead us to discern the common failing of refusing to consider the thoughts expressed by another because his or her personality is disagreeable to us. Often in our ranks we can find those who never pay any attention to certain other members who they have decided cannot reason properly or talk clearly. Now aside from all considerations of charity and politeness, there is an occult law much lost sight of, and that is that everyone is led insensibly by Karmic law to address others on these topics and to afford an opportunity to the person addressed of taking a leap, so to say, out of his own favourite way, and considering life as seen through the eyes of

another. This is often brought about, if we permit it, through the endeavour to control the irritation or dullness caused by the way in which the other person presents the thought in his mind. But if we refuse to use the opportunity, either by absolutely running away or by covering our minds with a hard coat of indifference, the new and bright idea just trembling into the field of our consciousness is thrown back and lost in the dark recesses of the mental plane. Or, taking another view, we may under Karmic law be the one and only person just then fitted to elucidate our brother's idea, and we remain still the debtor to him if we do not accept the opportunity. On either hand the result is demerit.

Let us, then, conquer self in the field indicated, and thus turn the inward insidious enemy and deceiver into the friend and constant guide.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

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As part of the technique of definition and adjudication of the criminal act, we have blithely assumed that punishment for evil has a good outcome. Somewhere there is the assumption that by doing evil to evil-doers we shall achieve good ends in the person so treated. Every experience... proves the opposite. There is not a shred of evidence that punishment — severe or mild, with good intentions or bad ones — has beneficial effects on the future lives of the men punished. If experience proves anything, it proves the opposite. It proves that evil, even when done in a good cause, has evil consequences. All that we know about prisons indicates that punishment merely confirms the criminal in his career. There is implicit in our procedure, of course, the old Benthamite assumption that pain and pleasure can be balanced off at some equitable point. The assumption is false and derived from a false reading of human nature. Punishment does not reform. It does not alter the criminal who is already formed, nor does it act as a deterrent upon others who are thrown in the way of crime by the subtle incidence of companionship, habit, appetite, judgement, and opportunity. If we have learned nothing else from our experience, we have learned that to send a criminal to prison is almost to make certain that we shall have the task of sending him again, after his release...

The present method of punishment is an empty and expensive exercise in futility, ending only in chagrin and bitterness and further crime and further punishment. We need an alternative to punishment.

—FRANK TANNENBAUM

## SHUN ILLUSION

We must divest ourselves of the illusions of the material life.  
The power that Nature has of deluding us is endless.

—W. Q. JUDGE

IGNORANCE-*Agyana* and Illusion-*Maya* are man's real foes. They may be compared to the generals of a large army commanding lust and wrath and greed, craving and temptation, sensuousness and sensuality, enmity and malice and jealousy, and many more.

The beginner who is learning to blend his mind and soul is told to shun ignorance and illusion. Both these have a dual aspect — there is abject ignorance and there is that knowledge which is worse than ignorance. There is abject *Maya* which sees the forms of matter as concrete realities. But there is also the knowledge that concrete things are in a continuous flux and that “we are such stuff as dreams are made on; and our little life is rounded with a sleep”; and yet we live as if this truth were never perceived, as if we were not going to die. This is the deeper kind of *Maya*.

The Man of flesh, or the Personal Man, is made up of Ignorance and Illusion: not to know our nature is ignorance, but to view ourselves falsely is greater ignorance; to value the world as the Personal Man values it is to be illusioned, but to value it as false knowledge views it, is the darker *Maya*, worse than ignorance.

The Man of Spirit, the Real Man, is made up of Wisdom and Reality. To be ignorant of this truth is bad; to deny the existence of spirit because of false knowledge is worse; to accept its existence as real and act against it is the worst. To acquire true knowledge of our own Self and self is good; to realize the abiding power of the former and to handle the ever shifting ephemerality which is the latter is better; to turn the transitory to advantage in service wherein the Light of Wisdom streams forth for all is the best.

The student enters the path of the higher life and becomes a neophyte by the fact of his having seen that within him abides some power which is eager to pour itself out in the service of all. The nature of that power and of the yearning for its expressions is vague to his brain-intelligence. What control of the Personal Man means, and how the Light within should be made to shine forth in and as sacrifice — these are matters of conjecture and confusion. Ignorance and illusion as-

sume different meanings for him, more complex and subtle — but they do exist.

He is very often enveloped by undigested or misunderstood knowledge and he is unaware of this. The savage is blissful in his ignorance, the man aware of his ignorance seeks to acquire knowledge. The man satisfied with the world corresponds to the savage; the inquirer and seeker after Theosophy, to the man who has awakened to his ignorance. Correspondentially there are two stages in the student's Theosophical career. First, he is blissfully ignorant of his real ignorance of the fact that his understanding of Karma, Reincarnation, causation; Spirit, Soul, Body; Patience, Dispassion, the Higher Carelessness; Love, Charity, Compassion; Harmony, Rhythm, Adjustment; Shells, Elementaries, Elementals; etc., etc., is partial and limited. Therefore he goes wrong when he acts as if that understanding were complete and true. This is his Ignorance or *Agyana*. But worse than this Ignorance is the faulty understanding of the science of the Soul, leading to dangerous applications which make him stray away from the Path of Adeptship to that of mediumship.

The neophyte's partial knowledge has to unfold correctly and should not be allowed to be deflected. As he passes on from the study-practice of the exoteric to that of the Esoteric, he faces the *Maya* peculiar to his stage of Evolution — the Warrior-Soul on trial face to face with the psychic world. All life is probationary, but that of the neophyte is peculiar to his stage. He is a Probationer in a more specific and special sense.

Born of this stage is the powerful Illusion or *Maya*, not of the Hall of Sorrow but of the Hall of Probationary Learning. Between the *swapna* of the ordinary man and that of the neophyte in the Hall of *Probationary* Learning there is a fundamental difference. For the neophyte, *Maya* assumes a new embodiment; it has become *Mara* — "personified temptation." *Maya* is no more the darkness of ignorance; it is *Mara* from whose jewel a light shines, bewitching the senses and blinding the mind. In the Hall of Probationary Learning, the neophyte beholds its perfidious beauty, is caught in its deceptive light, and unless he flees from it he is well-nigh doomed. Linger in that Hall, he weaves for himself his Dark Garments of Illusion.

To the neophyte everything must appear different. To the ignorant the sun rises in the East and sets in the West; to the astronomer the sun does not move from the East to the West. Similarly, to the ordinary

man other people's words and acts, strifes and longings, are concrete realities; to the neophyte they are different, because of his Theosophical knowledge, which includes the doctrine of illusion. But the neophyte's understanding of those words and acts, those strifes and longings, is still not correctly evaluated because the glamour of the personal has deepened. To what extent the glamour leads him astray he can know only when he has freed himself from the subtle life of the subtle senses.

How many Probationers have taught themselves to look upon the *objective* world as the Hall of Probationary Learning, corresponding to *swapna*? How many of them do not continue to live in and with the senses instead of as Egos made up of Wisdom and Light? Have they fled from the Hall of Probationary Learning? Not so, when they are constantly steeping the senses in the subtle essences of the sensuous world.

The neophyte's evaluation of objects and events is different from that of the worldly man, but not necessarily wholly true. He has shunned worldly ignorance and materialistic illusion, but has he averted his face from world deceptions? Has he learnt to mistrust his mental senses and his emotional urges? Has he sought out the Impersonal in the body of sensations? Herein we find an explanation of how so many failures in chelaship occur.

The neophyte lives in the Hall of Probationary Learning but acts as if he were living in the Hall of Ignorance. He judges acts, events and phenomena of Nature looking at their superficialities. He so often overlooks that behind words are ideas, behind acts are motives, behind ideas and motives are desires and will. Outer acts result from the actor's imagination and ideation. We judge the act (even when we do not judge the actor) without adequate knowledge of the thought and feeling, motive and will, behind the act.

The waking world of material objects is the world of acts. It is the inner invisible world where thoughts, emotions, motives are. To evaluate objects while taking no cognizance of the inner world is to disregard a fundamental teaching about deeds and works. On this the *Gita* has to offer us certain principles. In judging acts, our own as other people's, these principles can and should be used as yardsticks to measure with.

The Path of Action is obscure. (IV. 17)

The truth is obscured by that which is not true, and therefore all creatures are led astray. (V. 15)

All human acts are involved in faults, as the fire is wrapped in smoke. (XVIII. 48)

Every man is involuntarily urged to act by the qualities which spring from nature. (III. 5)

All actions are effected by the qualities of nature. (III. 27)

The qualities act only in the qualities. (III. 28)

Though the *Gunas* moving among themselves cause actions — moral, mental, verbal or otherwise, good or bad, the embodied Soul gets entangled in their currents and loses itself therein. The task of the neophyte is to attend to these three *Gunas*. Writes H.P.B.:

The three *gunas* of "Prakriti" — the *Sattwa*, *Rajas* and *Tamas* (purity, passionate activity, and ignorance or darkness) — spun into a triple-stranded cord or "rope" pass through the seven, or rather six, human principles. It depends on the 5th — *Manas* or *Ahankara*, the "I" — to thin the *guna*, "rope," into one thread — the *sattwa*; and thus by becoming one with the "unevolved evolver," win immortality or eternal conscious existence. Otherwise it will be again resolved into its *Mahabhutic* essence.

This is to be achieved by a patient, careful application of the teaching in the following verses of the *Gita*:

All actions are effected by the qualities of nature. The man deluded by ignorance thinks, "I am the actor." But he, O strong-armed one! who is acquainted with the nature of the two distinctions of cause and effect, knowing that the qualities act only in the qualities, and that the Self is distinct from them, is not attached in action. (III. 27-28)

To know the nature of causes as distinct from the nature of effects and to learn to generate right causes is the task to be essayed.

When we apply the truths implicit in these teachings to our own private acts or public works we gain courage and humility. When we perceive the deeds and events, personal or collective, with the aid of these teachings, we develop discrimination and mercy. Then only do we come upon the Eternal Man waiting behind the Impersonal forces of the Personal Man. Then only do we touch in experience the Uncreate in us, feel the Presence of the Uncreate in the Hall of Wisdom and become ready for the Second Birth.

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## MUSINGS IN THE TWILIGHT

THERE comes a time when you get what you wish for. That is the time of dangerous responsibilities.

When you plan to do good, take time to see whether you cannot simultaneously help remove an obstacle or a defect.

Never, never consciously try to surpass another. That is the death of Brotherhood.

Your motives are hidden from you. So, you are not in a position to desire that which you deserve. When Nature gives you anything or takes away anything, be grateful, for it metes out what you deserve and therefore that which you should have desired.

The Soul can carry you safely through the market-places; but it can bloom only in the SILENCE.

Concentration does not come by the creating of a strain in one's nature. The whole life of the man has to settle down to fixed patterns of behaviour before concentration can be achieved. Seek for the guidance of Karma in this.

You rarely think. You mostly cerebrated. Thought is like the waters of the pent-up reservoir. The force of the waters is there, but you do not see it. When the dam is breached, the strength of the thought will be seen as in the rush of mighty waters. Prepare for that day and wait in patience for the moment. The hour waits on your moment of awakening.

Be charitable to what you may think are the weaknesses of others. This may be their hour of learning, and when they have successfully learnt, they may appear far ahead of you on the road to peace and power.

Do you know that you can consciously imbibe the holy atmosphere during the silent watches of the night and release it gradually during the day, thus helping men who know not the Truth?

Nature has its failures. So have the Dhyani-Chohanics Hosts. What right have you to expect that failures shall not attend your efforts? You are not concerned with effects. Why then rejoice or weep over them?

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# THE THIRTY-SEVEN PRACTICES OF ALL BUDDHAS' SONS

## I

[We reprint here the translation of another Tibetan work, *rGyal-sras, lag-len so-bdun-ma* (Thirty-Seven Practices of All Buddhas' Sons), composed by the Bodhisattva Thogs-med bzang-po (1245-1369), a teacher of scripture and logic, both for his own benefit and for the sake of all others. The translation is by Sherpa Tulku, Khamlung Tulku, Alexander Berzin and Jonathan Landaw, under Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey, and was first published in 1973 by the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. The concluding portion of this work will appear in our next issue.—Eds.]

I pay heartfelt homage to you, Lokeshvara;<sup>1</sup>  
You have true compassion extending to all.

To those who in every coming and going  
Have seen that each thing is inherently void,  
And thus can devote both their time and their efforts  
With one aim in mind — “Let me benefit all!”  
To such foremost Gurus and you, Lokeshvara,  
All-seeing protector, with utmost respect  
I bow down before you in constant obeisance,  
And turn to your service my thoughts, words and deeds.

The Fully Enlightened Victorious Buddhas,  
From whom all true pleasure and benefits derive,  
Have reached their attainment by following Dharma<sup>2</sup>  
And leading their lives through this noblest of paths.  
To live by the Dharma depends on full knowledge  
Of how we must practise and what we must do,  
Thus I'll attempt now a brief explanation  
Of what is the practice of all Buddhas' Sons.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>The embodiment of Buddha's compassion; another name for Avalokiteshvara.

<sup>2</sup>The teachings of the Buddhas,

<sup>3</sup>Bodhisattvas —literally, “those whose essence (*sattva*) has become intelligence (*bodhi*),” and who work towards the attainment of Buddhahood for the sake of all beings. In the metaphysical sense, *Bodhisattva* is a title given to the sons of the celestial Dhyani Buddhas.

## (1)

This sound human body endowed with full leisure —  
 An excellent vessel rare to be found —  
 Since now we've obtained one in no way deficient,  
 Let's work night and day without veering off course  
 To take 'cross the ocean and free from samsara<sup>1</sup>  
 Not only ourselves but all others as well.  
 First listen, think hard, then do much meditation —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (2)

Remaining too long in one place our attraction  
 To loved ones upsets us, we're tossed in its wake.  
 The flames of our anger towards those who annoy us  
 Consume what good merit we've gained in the past.  
 The darkness of close-minded thought dims our outlook,  
 We lose vivid sight of what's right and what's wrong.  
 We must give up our home and set forth from our country —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (3)

Withdrawing completely from things that excite us,  
 Our mental disturbances slowly decline.  
 And ridding our mind of directionless wandering,  
 Attention on virtue will surely increase.  
 As wisdom shines clearer, the world comes in focus,  
 Our confidence grows in the Dharma we've learned.  
 Live all alone far away in seclusion —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (4)

Regardless of how long spent living together,  
 Good friends and relations must some day depart.  
 Our wealth and possessions collected with effort  
 Are left far behind at the end of our life.  
 Our mind, but a guest in our body's great guest-house,  
 Must vacate one day and travel beyond

<sup>1</sup>The circle of life and death filled with suffering and arising from ignorance.

Castaway thoughts that concern but this lifetime —  
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (5)

From staying together with friends who misguide us,  
Our hatred, desires and ignorance grow.  
With little time left to continue our studies,  
We don't think of Dharma; we meditate less.  
Our love and compassion for all sentient beings  
Are lost and forgotten while under their sway.  
Sever such ties with misleading companions —  
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (6)

When placing ourself in the hands of a Guru,  
We're turning sincerely for guidance to someone  
Whose competence both in the scriptures and practice  
Expands like the moon growing full.  
We'll then solve all our problems, dispel our delusion,  
If we place our full confidence solely in him.  
We must cherish our Guru far more than our body —  
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (7)

The gods of this world are not free yet from sorrow,  
For caught in samsara, some day they must fall.  
If they're bound as we are, how can they protect us?  
How can someone in prison free anyone else?  
But Buddha, his teachings and those who live by them  
Are free to give comfort — they'll not let us down.  
Go to the Three Jewels of Refuge<sup>5</sup> for shelter —  
The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (8)

Buddha has said that the grief past endurance  
Of creatures whose lives contain nothing but pain,

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<sup>5</sup>Buddha, his teachings, and the monastic community of those who understand and practise them.

Is unfortunate fruit of the wrongs they've committed  
 Against other beings in lifetimes gone by.  
 Not wishing to suffer from horrible torment,  
 Not flinching if even our life is at stake,  
 Turn from all actions that harm other beings —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (9)

Like the dew that remains for a moment or two  
 On the tips of the grass and then melts with the dawn,  
 The pleasures we find in the course of our lives  
 Last only an instant, they cannot endure;  
 While the freedom we gain when becoming a Buddha  
 Is a blissful attainment not subject to change.  
 Aim every effort to this wondrous achievement —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (10)

In each incarnation, through all of our lives,  
 We've been cared for by others with motherly love.  
 While these mothers of ours are still lost in samsara,  
 How cruel to ignore them and free but ourself!  
 To save other beings, though countless in number,  
 To free from their sorrow these mothers of old,  
 Produce Bodhichitta,<sup>6</sup> the wish to be Buddha —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (11)

All of our sufferings, without an exception,  
 Derive from the wish to please but ourselves;  
 While the thoughts and the actions that benefit others  
 Conceive and give birth to supreme Buddhahood.  
 Thus in exchange for our selfish desires  
 And shameful neglect of our suffering kin,  
 Replace thoughts of self with concern for all others —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

<sup>6</sup>An Enlightened Attitude; the motivation to reach the Full Enlightenment of Buddhahood to be able to help all beings out of their suffering.

## (12)

If under the sway of compulsive desire  
 And longing for things that he does not possess,  
 Some unfortunate person has stolen our riches  
 Or lets others rob us and idly stands by;  
 Then out of compassion and with no attachment,  
 To him we must dedicate all of our prayers:  
 May he have wealth, our body and merits —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (13)

Although we're not guilty of any offence  
 And never have harmed anyone in our life,  
 If someone deluded should threaten to kill us  
 Because he is crazed with a tormented mind,  
 Then mercifully wishing for him not to suffer  
 Further misfortune because of his state,  
 Selflessly take on the effects of his actions —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (14)

If someone insulting should spread ugly rumours  
 About us with cruel words unpleasant to hear,  
 And even if what he has said spreads to others  
 And gains wide acceptance as being the truth;  
 Yet out of our wish for the one who's maligned us  
 To conquer his troubles and gain peace of mind,  
 Praise all his virtues and treat him with kindness —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (15)

If in the midst of a large crowd of people  
 Someone should single us out for abuse,  
 Exposing our faults before all within hearing  
 And pointing out clearly the flaws we still have;  
 Then not getting angry nor being defensive,  
 Just listening in silence and heeding his words,  
 Bow in respect to this man as our teacher —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (16)

If someone we love and have cared for with kindness,  
 As an unselfish mother would cherish her child,  
 Should shun our devotion with thankless resentment  
 And treat us as if we're his most hated foe,  
 Then seeing these acts as a terrible sickness  
 Befallen our child and affecting his mind,  
 Treat him with even more love and affection —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (17)

If by our own equals or those who are lower  
 In intellect, spiritual level, or wealth,  
 We're insulted and treated as if we were nothing  
 By the force of their pride and their jealous contempt,  
 Then seeing that they are like Gurus to teach us  
 To be always humble and conquer our pride,  
 Treat them with honour and place them above us —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (18)

If we are but men of most meagre subsistence  
 And always receive a great deal of abuse,  
 If we find ourselves constantly gripped by much sickness  
 And experience harm, interruptions and pain,  
 Then accepting ourselves all these hardships which others  
 Would surely have suffered from the wrongs they had done,  
 Never lose courage to take pain from others —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

## (19)

Though praised and well-known, admired by many  
 Who act most respectful by bowing their head,  
 Though having obtained a vast treasure of riches  
 Which equals the store of the great God of Wealth,  
 Yet seeing full well that this fruit of samsara,  
 Though fortunate, still has no essence at all,  
 Cast out what pride we might have in these glories —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

(20)

If anger that dwells in our heart lies neglected  
 And, turning instead to our external foes,  
 We try to destroy them and even kill thousands,  
 Then thousands of others will plague us still more.  
 So seeing this action is not the solution,  
 Let's muster the forces of mercy and love;  
 Turn inwards and tame the wild flow of our mind-stream —  
 The Sons of the Buddhas all practise this way.

*(To be concluded)*

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HAPPINESS consists in being perfectly satisfied with what we have got and with what we haven't got. It is not how much we have, but how much we enjoy, that makes happiness.

—SPURGEON

HAPPINESS can be built only on virtue, and must of necessity have truth for its foundation.

—DOLERIDGE

MEN of noblest dispositions think themselves happiest when others share their happiness with them.

—JEREMY TAYLOR

THE HABIT of being happy enables one to be freed, or largely freed, from the domination of outward conditions.

—ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON

Happiness resides  
 Not in possessions  
 and not in gold,  
 The feeling of happiness  
 Dwells in the soul.

—DEMOCRITUS

## THE SECOND OBJECT

THE SECOND OBJECT of the Theosophical Movement is the study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study. This is one of the ways of achieving the first object, the formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, without any of the separative divisions made in the world, for it enables one to perceive the Truth in whatever way it is presented, and breaks through sectarianism.

It is interesting to trace the influence of the Theosophical Movement since the Theosophical Society was founded in 1875. In Britain, there is today a different climate of thought. Some 50 years after the founding of the Theosophical Society, the World Congress of Faiths was inaugurated in London, its moving spirit being Sir Francis Young-husband. Interrelations between the various faiths increased, as did the number of books on comparative religion. About the early 1970s, the influential SHAP Working Party (named after the place where it started) began activities for the comparative study of world religions at the educational level. It introduced courses, devised curricula for universities, colleges, and schools, prepared helpful bibliographies on the different religions, and in general promoted the study, through visual aids and other means, of different facets of the subject. Perhaps there has been a tendency, as one of the founder-members claimed, to emphasize the phenomenological side of the religions, the rituals and ceremonies and cultural aspects, rather than the more profound spiritual aspects. The mystical aspect of religion with its direct experience (as in the Quakers' "Inner Light") has also been taken up by various "New Age" sects, though it could lead to mistaken notions, since a feeling of conviction is not necessarily true. Nevertheless the seeking is there.

The ferment has very largely broken down the old dogmatic, sectarian viewpoints that negated mutual understanding and brotherhood. Hitherto exclusively Christian publishers in the U.K. (Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge) are bringing out, under a subsidiary name (Sheldon Press) a series of books sympathetically presenting various world faiths. Inquiry into the realities of Christianity as against the accepted creeds and dogmas is also to the fore. Not only are there numerous inter-faith dialogues and conferences, but representatives of the different religions, Eastern and Western, are joining together to try

to solve in harmony the practical problems of poverty, wars, injustices, the claims of the third world and so on, though reports of these often do not find space in the ordinary media. The multi-racial society has helped with this, and though there are today fundamentalists (literal believers in the Bible), fanatical followers of Islam, etc., and those to whom religion is a mere social affair, yet there is, generally speaking, greater tolerance towards other viewpoints.

Even the concept of "religion" is changing. It formerly included those systems of thought that held to a personal-god idea. Buddhism, for instance, was called a philosophy. Today, the SHAP Working Party have gone back to the etymological meaning — religion is that which binds men together, or binds them back (*i.e.*, to unity). Thus any ideology or teaching that binds its followers to a common aim and purpose, that of helping mankind, is counted by SHAP among the religions, and therefore includes humanism and communism (as in their original ideals).

Society today is in somewhat the same position as the Theosophical Society when it started on the basis that was the next step forward for it. Theosophical Society members could still keep their own faiths, Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and so on, provided they showed the same tolerance to the beliefs of other members that they would wish for their own. The cross-fertilization itself could be of value.

The second object speaks also of the demonstration of the importance of a comprehensive study of religions, philosophies and sciences, and this is the step that still needs to be taken. For this importance lies in the fact stated by Theosophy, that all of them, past and present, are derived, directly or indirectly, from one root, the all-inclusive spiritual knowledge. It is not a religion, a philosophy, a science, but all three as one. It is "a *knowledge* of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical and intellectual constituents of nature and of man." This common origin can be logically recognized by the fact that the fundamental ethics of all religions are the same. Their symbols and mythologies (which are not just fairy tales, *i.e.*, fantasies) may seem superficially different, but, when rightly understood, give allegorical instruction about the laws and forces that affect nature and man. The relationships of the gods and goddesses can denote, for example, chemical equations, psychological reactions, cosmic, metaphysical and soul interactions. For life is one integrated whole, and the same pattern is found throughout — the smallest mirrors the

greatest.

This our sphere of earth is not the only one on which evolution began, and spiritual knowledge is not the outcome of the speculation or experience simply of earth-beings. There are Great Beings ahead of us in evolution as in spiritual knowledge, who have been through and transcended the human stage. There are inner planes of existence as well as the physical planets and solar systems. Because Life is one, such high exalted Beings have a concern for mankind struggling to transform its still animal-human nature into a divine-human nature. Midway in the earth's evolution, when the mind of man was beginning to be lit up into self-consciousness in place of instinct, these Beings "descended" from higher subjective spheres in thought-created bodies to rule and teach infant humanity. They represented the two poles of Spirit-Matter. One group, the Watchers, impressed the fundamental spiritual truths and ethical laws on mankind's nature, so that it could guide itself to its own conscious divinity. The other, the Architects, instructed it in all the arts and sciences by which it could build a community that expressed in its proportions and energies the harmony of spirit. This may sound like science-fiction-type fantasies, but imitations and fakes give evidence of the existence of the reality they copy, however distortedly. Corroboration is found in the fact that all the ancient religions refer to a Golden Age when Gods or Divine Kings ruled mankind, and in the increasing recognition, at the level of archaeological research, of the sophisticated scientific knowledge and marvellous achievements of so-called prehistoric peoples.

Mankind, however, had to grow out of its childhood and assume responsibility for its own progress, and, under cyclic law, the Divine Kings retired again into subjectivity, leaving, however, a fraternity of the wiser, more advanced human beings, to collect, check, test, verify and correlate this comprehensive wisdom about life and to preserve it in secrecy for the future ages, giving it out little by little as men became more able to understand and less liable to misuse, through selfishness, the power that such knowledge could give. The members of this Fraternity had already won through to spiritual conscious immortality (the Race that never dies) and it is said that all the great Spiritual Teachers belong to it. Some of them emphasize the religious, mystical and ethical aspects; the work of others is more concerned with the law and order of the community, the reform of evils that oppose brotherhood.

Under cyclic law the Teachers or their agents come out into the

world with whatever of the accumulated wisdom is appropriate for the needs and worthiness of the nation and age to which they come. They come, not as innovators, but as reformers. They may stress one or another aspect of the great perennial philosophy, wisdom-religion, or occult science — all of which terms are appropriate for this synthesis of spiritual knowledge. There are larger and smaller cycles, and the one that concerns us particularly now is the centenary cycle, under which, at the end of each century, there is a natural turning by mankind towards the inner side of life, both spiritual and psychic. For, just as light is accompanied by shadow, so an increase of knowledge has the dark shadow of potential misuse following on. Hence the knowledge of the laws of the inner science that we call magic must be preceded by the purification of the nature through philosophic understanding and the heart influence of ethics and religion.

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OF all Impotencies in the World, Credulity in Religion is the greatest. . . . Man is not at all settled or confirmed in his Religion, until his Religion is the selfsame with the Reason of his Mind; that when he thinks he speaks Reason, he speaks Religion; or when he speaks religiously, he speaks reasonably; and his Religion and Reason is mingled together; they pass into one Principle; they are no more two, but one; just as the light in the Air makes one illuminated Sphere, so Reason and Religion in the Subject are one Principle.

—BENJAMIN WHICHCOTE

## IS CREATION POSSIBLE FOR MAN?

[The following letter and the editorial reply to it appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for December 1881.—EDS.]

The Editor of *The Theosophist*.

MADAME,

Talking the other day to a friend, who, like me, without being a Theosophist, takes a very great interest in the movements of your Society, I incidentally happened to remark that the "Brothers of the first section" were credited with such large powers, that even *creation* was not at times impossible to them. In support of my assertion, I instanced their own cup and saucer phenomenon, as narrated by Mr. Sinnett in his *Occult World*, which phenomenon appeared to me to be something more than the mere *reproduction, transference* or *unearthing* from its hiding-place of an article *lost* or *stolen*, like the brooch. My friend, however, warmly objected to my statement—remarking that creation was not possible to man, whatever else he may be able to accomplish.

Believing, as I then did, in Christianity as the most perfect heaven-descended code of ethics on earth, there was a time in the history of my chequered life (chequered, I mean, as regards the vast sea of doubt and unbelief on which I have been tossing for over twenty years) when I would have myself as warmly, even indignantly, repelled the idea of creation as a possibility to man; but the regular reading of your journal, and a careful perusal of Mr. Sinnett's book and of that marvel of learning and industry, your own *Isis Unveiled*, have effected quite a revolution (whether for good or bad has yet to be seen) in my thoughts, and it is now some time since I have begun to believe in the possibility of phenomena beyond the range of my own narrow vision.

Will you kindly tell me which of us is right, my friend or I? Not having the honour of being personally known to you, I close this letter only with my initial.

H.

### OUR ANSWER

The question to be dealt with is hardly whether our correspondent or his friend is right, for we understand him to take up the prudent attitude of a seeker after truth who shrinks from affirming dogmatically that creation *is* possible for man, even while unwilling to accept

the dogmatic negative assertion of his friend that "it is impossible." Before coming to the gist of the question raised, we have, therefore, to notice the illustrations which this letter affords of the ways in which such a question may be considered.

When our correspondent's friend denies that creation is possible for man, we can hardly assume that he does so from any conviction that he has sounded all the mysteries of Nature, and knowing all about the universe — being able to account for all its phenomena — has ascertained that the process, whatever that may be, which he conceives of as creation does not go on anywhere in obedience to the will or influence of man, and has further ascertained that there is something in man which makes it impossible that such a process should be accomplished. And yet without having done all that, it is bold of him to say that creation is impossible. Assuming that he is not a student of occult science — and the tone of the letter before us conveys the impression that he is not — our friend's friend when he makes his dogmatic statement, seems to be proceeding on the method but too commonly adopted by people of merely ordinary culture and even by a few men of science — the method which takes a large group of preconceived ideas as a standard to which any new idea must be applied. If the new idea fits in with, and seems to support the old ones, well and good; they smile upon it. If it clashes with some of these they frown at it, and excommunicate it without further ceremony.

Now the attitude of mind exhibited by our correspondent, who finds many old beliefs shattered by new ideas, the force of which he is constrained by moral honesty to recognize, and who, therefore, feels that in the presence of the vast possibilities of Nature he must advance very cautiously and be ever on his guard against false lights held out by time-honoured prejudices and hasty conclusions — seems to us an attitude of mind which is very much better entitled to respect than that of his over-confident friend. And we are the more anxious to recognize its superiority in the most emphatic language, because when we approach the actual question to be discussed, the bearing of what we have to say will be rather in favour of the view which the "friend" takes of "creations," if indeed we are all attaching the same significance to that somewhat over-driven word.

It is needless after what we have just said to point out that if we are now going to make some statements as to what is, and what is not the fact, as regards some of the conditions of the universe, we are not

on that account infringing the rules of thought just laid down. We are simply giving an exposition of our little fragment of occult philosophy as taught by Masters who are in a position to make positive statements on the subject, and the credibility of which will never be in danger from any of those apparently inexplicable occurrences related in the books to which our correspondent refers, and likely enough, as he justly conceives, to disturb many of the orthodox beliefs which he has seen crumbling around him.

It would be a volume we should have to write and not a brief explanatory note, if we attempted to begin by elucidating the conviction we entertain that the Masters of Occult Philosophy above referred to are entitled to say what is and what is not. Enough for the present to say what we believe would be said, in answer to the question before us, by *those who know*.

But we must have a clear understanding as to what is meant by creation. Probably the common idea on the subject is that when the world was "created," the creator accorded himself or was somehow accorded a dispensation from the rule *ex nihilo nihil fit* and actually made the world out of nothing — if that is the idea of creation to be dealt with now, the reply of the philosophers would be not merely that such creation is impossible to man but that it is impossible to gods, or God; in short absolutely impossible. But a step in the direction of philosophical conception is accomplished when people say the world was "created" (we say fashioned) — out of CHAOS. Perhaps, they have no very clear idea of what they mean by Chaos, but it is a better word to use in this case than "nothing." For, suppose we endeavour to conceive Chaos as the matter of the universe in an unmanifested state, it will be seen at once that though such matter is perfectly inappreciable to ordinary human senses, and to that extent equivalent to "nothing," creation from such materials is not the production of something which did not exist before, but a change of state imposed upon a portion of universal matter which in its previous state was invisible, intangible and imponderable, but not on that account non-existent.<sup>1</sup> Theosophist-

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<sup>1</sup>It is one of the many reasons why Buddhist philosophy refuses to admit the existence and interference in the production of the universe of a direct creator or god. For once admit, for argument's sake, that the world *was* created by such a being who, to have done so, must have been omnipotent, there remains the old difficulty to be dealt with — who then created that pre-existing matter, that eternal, invisible, intangible and imponderable something or chaos? If we are told that being "eternal" and imperishable it had no need of being "created," then our answer will be that in such a case there are two "Eternals"

Occultists do not, however, use the word "creation," at all, but replace it by that of EVOLUTION.

Here we approach a comprehension of what may have been the course of events as regards the production of the mysterious cup and saucer described in Mr. Sinnett's book. It is in no way inconceivable that if the production of manifestation in matter is the act accomplished by what is ordinarily called creation, then the power of the human will in some of its transcendent developments may be enabled to impose on unmanifested matter or chaos the change which brings it within the cognizance of the ordinary human senses.

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CONSIDER this matter in the following similitude. A grain of wheat has the air and light of this world enclosed or incorporated in it. This is the mystery of its life, this is its power of growing, by this it has a strong continual tendency of uniting again with that ocean of light and air from whence it came forth, and so it helps to kindle its own vegetable life. On the other hand, that great ocean of light and air, having its own offspring hidden in the heart of the grain, has a perpetual strong tendency to unite and communicate with it again. From this desire of union on both sides the vegetable life arises and all the virtues and powers contained in it.

—WILLIAM LAW

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and two "Omnipotents"; or if our opponents argue that it is the omnipotent No. 1 or God who created it, then we return from where we first started—to the creation of *something* out of *nothing*, which is such an absolute absurdity before science and logic that it does not even require the final unanswerable query resorted to by some precocious children — "and who created God?"—Ed. [*The Theosophist*]

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

India had special reasons for commemorating the centenary of the publication of Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia*. Arnold belonged to that select and small band of British administrators in India who not only combined literary and scholarly pursuits with their official work but also identified themselves with the feelings, ideals, aspirations and traditions of the Indian people. He was among the first western writers who tried to remove prejudices against India in the western world and to present a fair picture of the positive aspects of Indian culture. Arnold's translation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* was dedicated to India.

V. S. Naravane's article, "Edwin Arnold and *The Light of Asia*," in *Indian Horizons* (Vol. XXIX, No. 1) pays rich tribute to the author and his work:

The true verdict on a book, Emerson once said, is not passed by its immediate readers but "by a court, as of angels . . . which is not to be bribed, not to be entreated, not to be overawed." In some rare cases, however, the "court of angels" appointed by posterity upholds, word by word, the judgment pronounced by the immediate readers. Sir Edwin Arnold's *The Light of Asia* — a poetical biography of the Buddha — belongs to this rare class of books. It was published in England a hundred years ago and immediately became a bestseller throughout the English-speaking world, including India. Within a few years sixty editions were published in England and eighty in America, the total sale running into millions. It was translated into a dozen languages. This popularity has remained unabated. What Sir Denison Ross said in 1932 can be repeated today: "The poem still remains the best description of the life of the Buddha in the English language." . . .

Arnold was not yet thirty when he set before himself the clear aim of making India better understood in the West. In a note he said: "A long residence in India, and close intercourse with her people, have given the author a lively desire to subserve their advancement. No one now listens to the precipitate ignorance which would set aside as 'heathenish' the high civilizations of this great race; but justice is not yet done to their past development and present capacities." And in his Preface to *The Light of Asia*, written nearly two decades later, he again expressed his deep feeling for India. "It has been composed," he wrote, "in the brief intervals of days without leisure, but is inspired by an abiding desire to aid in the better mutual knowledge of East and West.

The time may come, I hope, when this book . . . will preserve the memory of one who loved India and the Indian peoples."

A century ago, when Arnold wrote his poem, the mention of Gautama, the Buddha, evoked in western minds the image of a gloomy, austere prophet, brooding over the vanity of all earthly things and bemoaning the pain which was the lot of mankind. *The Light of Asia* presents an entirely different image. Prince Siddhartha, in his boyhood and youth, is shown as a complete, balanced human being. There is "nothing — no single act or word," to quote Arnold himself, "which mars the perfect unity and tenderness of this Indian teacher, who united the truest princely qualities with the intellect of a sage and the passionate devotion of a martyr." As for the Buddha's teaching, Arnold sees in it "the eternity of a universal hope, the immortality of a boundless love, an indestructible element of faith in final good, and the proudest assertion ever made of human freedom." . . .

Arnold's poem helped in reviving interest in Buddhism by drawing attention to the human aspect of the Buddha's legendary life; by viewing the Buddha's teaching as an inseparable part of the Indian spiritual heritage; by emphasizing the aesthetic side of Buddhism; and by regarding Nirvana as a positive state of blessedness rather than a merely negative concept of extinction of the finite. Arnold was not the first to put forward these ideas. Others had done so in a much more scholarly and systematic manner. But Arnold's poetical presentation went straight to the hearts of millions of readers and did more to popularize the life and teachings of the Buddha than the learned expositions of specialists.

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According to a *New York Times* News Service report printed in *The Times of India* for June 24, fossil remains of the oldest cells ever found on Earth have been uncovered in ancient rocks in the remote and arid reaches of northwestern Australia. It is believed, on the basis of radioactive dating as well as chemical and microscopic examination, that the discovery pushes back the date at which such relatively advanced forms of microbial life are known to have appeared to 3.5 billion years ago — 1.2 billion years earlier than believed before. The report goes on to say:

The discovery of such microbes, according to the scientists

who made it, may compel some fundamental rethinking about when life began on this planet. This is because it now seems that fairly complex and self-contained bacteria-like creatures flourished at a time when previous evidence suggested that there were only primitive globules of organic matter without cell walls.

The fossils are three-quarters as old as the Earth itself, which is about 4.5 billion years old.

"This says that the origin of life occurred quite a lot earlier than we had expected — and that evolution had proceeded to an advanced level in the first billion years of the history of the planet," said Prof. William Schopf, a paleobiologist at the university of California, Los Angeles, who heads the international team of scientists that made the discovery. . . .

The discovery is the latest and most dramatic of a series of scientific advances in the last 15 years that have steadily pushed back man's knowledge about the date of the origin of life. . . .

The team was startled not only to find the well-preserved cells but also to discover they were varied and complex. About five different types were found — almost identical structure at least to several modern-day bacteria. Moreover, chemical analysis by Mr. John Hayes of Indiana University, a team member, raises the possibility that some of them were able to "fix" carbon dioxide — meaning they may have been able to perform photosynthesis. This was a plant function not thought to have evolved until millions of years later.

At what time life began on earth, or when the evolution and formation of our little planet began, it is difficult to say with precision. "It is impossible to calculate its age," says *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 206), "unless the time of its birth is given — which the TEACHERS refuse to do, so far." Some chronological hints, however, have been given, as for instance:

Occultism says: "The astral prototypes of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms up to man have taken 300 million years to evolve, re-forming out of the cast-off materials of the preceding Round, which, though very dense and physical in their own cycle, are relatively ethereal as compared with the materiality of our present middle Round. At the expiration of these 300 million years, Nature, on the way to the physical and material, down the arc of descent, begins with mankind and works downwards, hardening or materializing forms as it proceeds. Thus the fossils found in strata, to which an antiquity, not of eighteen,

but of many hundreds of millions of years must be ascribed, belong in reality to forms of the preceding Round, which, while living, were far more ethereal than physical, as *we know the physical*. That we perceive and disinter them as tangible forms, is due to the process of materialization or crystallization referred to, which took place subsequently, at the beginning of the Fourth Round, and reached its maximum after the appearance of man, proceeding parallel with his physical evolution. This alone illustrates the fact that the degree of materiality of the Earth changes *pari passu* with that of its inhabitants. And thus man now finds, as tangible fossils, what were once the (to his present senses) ethereal forms of the lower kingdoms. . . ." (II. 68 fn.)

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Nature abounds in fascinating rhythms expressed in the physical and behavioural changes in plants and animals which seem to follow regular and predictable patterns. In human beings, too, such cycles exist for many processes. Living beings exist in environments which themselves manifest rhythmic periodicities in many factors, such as light intensity, temperature, humidity, and pressure of surrounding air or water. These factors fluctuate with the day-to-night solar cycle or with the tidal cycle as also the annual changes of the seasons. Correspondingly, organisms show daily, tidal, or annual rhythms.

Until recently, it was assumed that it was the changes in the environment which provided the cues for changes in animal/plant behaviour. But even when the physical environment is kept constant, organisms show such rhythmicity. It is now established that the daily rhythms of behaviour or physiology of many plants, animals and human beings appear to be "internally generated."

V. Sukumaran's article, "Plants and Animals Keep Their Own Time," in *The Times of India* for June 22, refers to recent findings in this field:

Three things, explains Eric Pengelley of the University of California at Riverside, confirm the existence of these endogenous (internally generated) daily clocks in certain plants and animals. They keep their own time, roughly corresponding to the day's length. The rhythm they control seems *not* to be synchronous with any daily environmental signal such as a change in light or temperature. And the period of rhythm appears *not* to be affected by the level of ambient temperature in the organism's environment. . . .

Which part of the anatomy in man and animals could act as the regulatory biological clock?

Richard Wurtman and Julius Axelrod have long suspected the pineal gland. About one-fourth of an inch long and one-tenth of a gram in weight in man, the pineal gland, lying near the centre of the mammalian brain, has always been a mystery with regard to its exact function. Chances are that the pineal gland acts as a "biological clock" regulating the activity of the sex glands.

It is very likely that the pineal gland converts cyclic nervous activity generated by light in the environment into endocrine, that is, hormonal information. The gland somehow regulates the gonads. More studies, obviously, are intended.

So little is known to modern science about the function and significance of the pineal gland that further investigation is certainly merited. A study of the section entitled "The Races with the 'Third Eye,'" in the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 289 *et seq.*), will reveal many truths on the subject. In *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 119), H.P.B. describes the pineal gland as "in truth the very seat of the highest and divinest consciousness in man, his omniscient, spiritual and all-embracing mind."

G. H. Keswani's article, "Man, the Rational and the Irrational," in the *Sunday Review* of *The Times of India* for July 13, refers to the lack of harmony and integration between the instinctive and the rational regions of the brain. This, it is believed, is responsible for many of the problems facing mankind.

Commenting on this, it is stated editorially in the same issue of the *Sunday Review*, under the title "Man's Two Worlds":

Since the dawn of civilization, man has been the subject of man's investigation and discourse. Developments from animism to the highest religions bear witness to it as do prehistoric myths, totems, taboos and medical practices. Myths and religions have been as much an expression of man's response to the external reality in the form of nature, at once benevolent and malevolent, as of his understanding of himself and his needs. In the face of the theory of evolution and the enormous evidence in support of it, it is difficult to sustain the elevating belief that God has cast man in his own image. But it cannot be seriously disputed that

man has cast his gods and goddesses and, indeed, even the One and Only God of the Semitic tradition in his own image. The seers and prophets were men of vision and inspiration. They saw far beyond their fellow beings. But vision is not divorced from knowledge slowly and painfully accumulated over millennia.

In our vanity we have come to believe that knowledge in those distant days was largely intuitive and therefore nebulous, unverifiable and unreliable. But this is a form of vanity which cannot survive careful inquiry into the past. The practitioners of Shamanism in Central Asia had obviously detailed knowledge of the human anatomy. Yogic exercises and practices would not be worth a moment's attention if they were not based on a masterly understanding of the human being's physical and psychological condition. Buddhist texts have been interpreted to establish that their authors had deep knowledge of human psychology, knowledge which has not been superseded so far. It is inconceivable that acupuncture and the Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine could have developed without empirical investigations of the human nervous system and of thousands of plants.

Modern civilization is at once a continuation of what has gone before and a departure from it. It is not holistic in its approach. It divides and sub-divides not only objects but also human beings. Its noble spirits, Einstein foremost among them, have tried to develop a unified theory of knowledge, but have failed. The moderns specialize in breaking up the reality into its "components" and not in discovering, emphasizing and accepting the "unity of opposites." As the accompanying article shows, they have finally located two centres in the brain to explain man's "rationality" and "irrationality" as if they are polar opposites. But the poles are connected by earth and so are the two centres in the brain.

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Most people associate stress with distress and regard it as a prime threat to their physical and mental health and a major obstacle to their happiness; but, according to Dr. Robert Sharpe and David Lewis, authors of the book *Thrive on Stress* (published by Warner Books), if properly controlled and used, stress can become a powerful creative force which can energize and transform our life for the better. The authors write:

Stress is usually associated with the less pleasant aspects of

life. Stress is too much work and too little relaxation. Stress is hostility from others. Stress is too little income chasing too many outgoings. Stress is noise and dirt, being too hot or too cold, too tired or too depressed.

All the descriptions of stress in general use have one thing in common. They imply that stress must be equated with distress and that it is something which we encounter in patches on the journey through life. It is thought to increase as we get older and to be worse in the present than it was in the past. . . .

Our definition of stress is more comprehensive and avoids this dangerous misconception. *Stress is an individual's perception and assessment of the environment.*

Let us examine exactly what this definition involves. First of all it means that everything we see, hear, feel, taste, and smell is a source of stress, whether it involves a quiet country lane in summer or a congested city street in the middle of a winter storm. It also means, since we ourselves are part of our own environment, that the way we think, our memories, ambitions and dreams are also sources of stress. . . .

But the definition implies more than a passive perception of the world around us. The fact that we assess the environment with a cerebral cortex which contains a unique collection of memories and learned responses means that our view of that environment is equally unique. All living things share the same world only in a limited physical sense. Because external stimuli are filtered by different senses and by individual minds we each inhabit a distinct and personal environment. It can be said that there are as many worlds as there are "I's" to see them.

The amount of stress at which each individual functions most effectively is termed the Optimum Stress Level (OSL). It can vary from one area of life to the next. . . . It is impossible to set any figure for the OSL because one can only determine it in a subjective way. You are the only person who can satisfactorily fix your OSL for any particular area of your life. You do so by assessing how efficiently, happily and enthusiastically you are carrying out some particular task. So long as you are performing any piece of behaviour in a successful and effective manner, without feeling any mental or physical ill effects, your OSL is being realized. . . .

So long as stress is maintained close to the optimum level, it is valuable and motivating. If it rises too high or falls too low, then performance, health and happiness will be increasingly

affected. Stress levels which either fall below an individual's particular OSL or rise drastically above it produce responses which make it more difficult or less pleasant to perform a desired piece of behaviour. We have termed these Negative Stress Responses. . . .

Stress can destroy a society as effectively as it can cripple and kill an individual. Controlled and used creatively, it can transform the nature of that society as beneficially as it can improve and revitalize your own life. Negative Stress Responses are the root cause of almost every social ill which confronts us today. We must learn to eliminate them through imaginative stress control procedures rather than continue on our present suicidal course of attempting to repress them or divert attention away from them.

Only in this way will modern society, like modern man, discover that it is possible to thrive on stress.

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A symposium on the theme, "Toward a New Image of Humanity," was held under the auspices of the Psychical Research Foundation, according to *Theta*, the journal of the PRF. One of the speakers, Myron Arons of the psychology department at West Georgia College, described modern man as one who is searching for the means to transcend his lot and become Superman, through science and technology. But, Arons argued, the "superness in humanness" lies at the centre — in creativity, which is one of the "super" qualities of humanity. The vehicle for reaching this centre is not science or technology but meditation.

Another speaker, William Beidler of the Department of Religion and Philosophy at Guildford College, reminded the audience that all attempts in psychology and philosophy to develop a science of man have been abandoned, but that we should explore methods for developing a newer and more integrated science of man. Beidler also recommended meditation as a useful tool.