

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. 52, No. 10

17th August 1982

## THEOSOPHY : THE INTEGRATOR

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, April 1944.—EDS.]

THE ETHICS of Theosophy are not the same as the ethics of the ordinary outside world, *i.e.*, the ethics practised in the world today. The ethics of the Vedas, of the Upanishads, of the Sayings of Muhammad and of Ali, of the Sermon on the Mount of Jesus, and of innumerable other Seers—these principles of ethics are very different from those that pass for ethics in the world. The concrete need in changing the mind of the race is the presentation of the principles of true ethics supported by their metaphysical counterparts. Unless man is shown the necessity, why it is in his own interest to be altruistic rather than egotistic, the mere preaching of ethics goes for naught, as is the experience of the preachers in many temples, many churches, many mosques. Even the virtuous principles enshrined in the words “the good, the beautiful, the true” cannot be practised unless good reasons are forthcoming as to why they should be. Why should a man practise self-sacrifice, kindness, and the other great virtues unless his mind gets some kind of a philosophical basis on which to rest and from which his actions should proceed?

Good actions may be instinctive and there is enough of good in human nature instinctively to manifest itself. But that does not help the world, for when competition arises the good instincts become submerged. The mind finds reasons why they should be given the go-by. And so the ethical values go under and people profess a religion very different from their speech, their ideation, their imagination.

The great value of the Theosophical philosophy is that when practised it removes from man those forces and tendencies which conflict one against the other in his brain and in his blood. The integrating process begins its miraculous work so that man is harmonious in his thought and in his words, in his feelings and in his imagination, and ultimately in his deeds and actions.

Most of the people in the civilized world and in educated society are not integrated beings. They hold views of one kind within themselves and they express opinions and views that are not in conformity with those. Men try to show themselves good outside and the inner volcano bursts within them, and so they begin to practise that great principle of modern human society — “You may do wrong but take good care that you are not found out.” Theosophy is against that principle. Why? Because through the practice of Theosophy integration takes place. It is not necessary for us who are students of Theosophy to be afraid of public opinion as it is called, provided our own higher and nobler nature is able to put the seal of its sanction on the actions and the words, the feelings and the thoughts of our lower nature. If such a seal is not forthcoming, all the flattery and the praise of the world, and all its condemnation also, go for naught.

Theosophy teaches that pretensions do not go very far. If other people cannot fool us for long, our lower nature also cannot fool the higher nature in us for very long. If we continue in that folly the great sin of hypocrisy results and instead of integrated individuals we become multiplex personalities, to use the favourite phrase of modern psychologists for a process which the teachings of Occultism in Theosophy explain in a very different way.

The teachings of Theosophy are to bring the mind and the heart, the brain and the blood of man into harmony, the inner with the outer, so that a man not only is not wicked but he does not commit the follies which sometimes produce greater catastrophes in the world than wickedness produces. Folly and wickedness — the man knows that wickedness is wrong; but when he commits folly he does not know that he is a fool and that is the great danger. That does not mean that Theosophy recommends wickedness! What Theosophy recommends is the recognition of one's own words and works at their proper worth.

Let us not try to fool ourselves. If we have told a falsehood

it is not necessary that we tell other falsehoods to protect ourselves, so that others may not find us out. But it is necessary that we should not protect the lower nature against the higher by pretending that we have not told a falsehood.

To what extent an individual is practising the great teachings of Theosophy, who can tell? Not his neighbour, but himself, if he is honest with himself. And intellectual honesty is a force that produces its own beneficent reactions. It is not his neighbours' business to tell a man he is doing his duty or he is not. To pass judgment on the duty of another is dangerous.

So the student of Theosophy works in the spirit of absolute freedom, but that freedom brings him to the recognition of the principles of Law which govern the universe. The student of Theosophy, if he is in earnest and true to himself, is a greater slave to his duty than a man of the world is a slave to his emotions, to his passions, to his desires and to the animal in him. But the student of Theosophy is in the way of becoming an integrated being, with all of his principles working in harmony, proceeding purposefully towards a recognized goal, while the wavering man of the world is "like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed."

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There seem to be two levels of teaching.

1. By precept and quotation:

"Thus have I heard . . ." This is Wisdom, knowledge digested, but not necessarily by the speaker.

2. By example:

No man can help his fellow save by the force of his example, save by the spectacle of his achieved holiness.

—From Myers' *The Root and the Flower*

## THE LAW THAT GOVERNS LIFE

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

—*St. Matthew, V. 23-24*

THE VALUE of any human life has to be judged by its ethical content. There exists no other yardstick. In the codes of all religions, brotherhood is enjoined not only as a religious tenet but as a way of life. For many a sincere aspirant it is brotherhood that precedes all other ethical practices, and sooner or later he comes to realize that there is no countervailing discipline to unbrotherliness. There prevails an erroneous notion among some of the learned that the debits of a man's life can be counterbalanced by credits and that therefore unbrotherliness with its debilitating effects can be neutralized by meritorious actions in other fields of endeavour. But experience has shown both in national and individual life that you cannot set off acts of unabashed unbrotherliness against deeds of piety and charity and religious fervour. In soul life, each debit entry is carried forward into the next or any succeeding incarnation till the person realizes that no law that governs life can be broken. He has perforce to restore the harmony which in his ignorance he violated, and that he can do only by a systematic elimination of the causes that inscribed an entry on the debit side of his ledger of life.

Emphasizing this aspect for the edification of the Corinthians, St. Paul told them that lack of charity could not be compensated even by the acquirement of such high possessions as the gift of prophecy, the understanding of all mysteries and the generating of that vast faith which could remove mountains. He then went on to enunciate one more aspect of the fundamental law by stating that even the bestowing of all one's goods to feed the poor will not profit the man who does not have the "charity" of which he speaks.<sup>1</sup> The wider and truer aspect of charity as an all-encompassing Brotherhood he expounded by giving the analogy of the human body. He declared that "there should be no schism in the body,

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<sup>1</sup> *I. Corinthians, XIII, 2-3.*

but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it.”<sup>2</sup>

In the higher life, charity and love immortal, or Brotherhood, is the first truth that has to be learnt, experimented with and assimilated. It is the first because it is the primal emanation that issues from the One Universal Life. From this oneness issue countless sparks at the dawn of each manifestation. They breathe and live, go out of existence and return, impelled in their corporate and individual evolution by cycles of larger and similar duration. Both universe and man are but the outward embodiments of an inner reality called the Spirit. This Spirit is universal, omnipresent, and is ever undivided and indivisible. The man who says, “Your Spirit and my Spirit,” attempts to divide that which *per se* is indivisible and impartite.

In the larger context of the universe, even as the evolutionary pilgrim moves from one experience to another, the presence of the ubiquitous Spirit can be sensed in its varied manifestations as the Spectator, the Admonisher, the Sustainer, the Enjoyer and the Highest Self. In any of these manifestations it is seen ever as the synthesizer, ever as the agent that initiates the tendency to restore broken harmony, the *fons et origo* and embodiment of the law of Love eternal. It is through this Spirit that the individual decrees glory or gloom to himself, and it is through this same spirit that the kingdoms below the human move ever within the ambit of the universal Law of Harmony that prevails in the realms of space, time, mind and matter. The periodical successions of light and darkness, the seemingly cruel cataclysms that in the ultimate bring on evolutionary changes are but the outward manifestations of the Law of Life—a law that is not merely mechanical but also intelligent, a law that adjusts and that is seen to move invariably to good when perceived in its vast and majestic sweep in the bosom of duration.

The individualized human mind cannot be understood nor can the laws governing man’s evolution be accepted and obeyed if he is considered as something apart and unconnected with the universe. He has to be viewed in fact and truth as a projection and an emanation of the universe of which he forms an intimate and inalien-

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<sup>2</sup> I. Corinthians, xii, 25-26.

able part. He is a copy in miniature of the vast whole, a copy moreover which is indissolubly connected with all life and therefore portraying in its little self the laws of that universal life. His little life is affected by that vast life and in turn his actions colour all life through the same intimate bonds of connection. He cannot will it otherwise. He is a creature that lives within the vast universal ocean of Life that envelops and surrounds him and therefore is he ever subject to the laws of that Ocean. The great laws of emanation and evolution, of periodicity and of time-bound cycles govern the universe and therefore govern him also in every particular. He bows to the laws of the seasons, he adapts himself to the cycles of youth, maturity, old age and death. Why then should he not embody and obey in his own life the law of the fixed arithmetic of the spheres, the law of emerging into manifestation and returning to non-manifestation and that other law which ever tends to restore broken harmony?

It is the animal in man that amuses itself by toying with the acquired power to choose either the right or the wrong. He sometimes chooses the wrong with deliberate intent and then stands awed and dismayed at the fury and force of the law that moves, maybe fast, maybe slow, to set right the broken harmony and restore equilibrium. The reasoning animal in him calls this retribution; the man with some ethical background sees in it only the play of that intelligent law which will not permit either distortion or disequilibrium to remain uncorrected.

The evolutionary journey of man is not that of a king who wades through slaughter to a throne; it is not that of one who by deceit and injustice takes by force or fraud that which is not his own; it is not that of one who deaf to the cries of sorrow tries to attain to a false eminence over his fellow-men, an eminence that turns later into a mockery of greatness. Such achievements are not offerings proper to the Soul and are rejected by it. The Spirit which is the same in all beings, whether they be evil or good, can accept that only which is homogeneous to itself and which is obtained through the power of love and through sacrifice which, bordering on a total self-effacement, attempts to bring each separated spark to the altar where the Universal Fire burns unextinguished and unextinguishable.

This helps define the general principle. Its ramifications are

endless and in the hurly-burly of life one all too often loses hold on the universal when struggling desperately with the calamities that beset life. If born to drudgery and penury, he resents it and determines to fight the circumstance. He tries to break the stranglehold that these adverse influences have on his life by shifting their load and discomfort on to the shoulders of another, the while he deprives that other of his ease and happiness. He exults in his new-found felicity. Perchance he says that in his own life he has proved that exertion is greater than destiny. But his very exertions viewed in the larger context of life give the proofs of his failure. The seeming success that he has achieved has unbeknown to himself sowed the seeds of devastating harvests for the future. He failed because his objective of rushing away from his misery was opposed to that other objective which nature provided for him and which he could reach only through the very adversity with which he was surrounded. His is a case analogous to that of the schoolboy who to escape the strains and stresses of learning plays truant and finds his enjoyment in forbidden pursuits during all the days he absents himself from school. When the time of reckoning comes he finds himself bereft of all merit.

So too with the delinquent soul. But the failure of the one who does not learn from adversity and shifts it on to another's shoulder goes far beyond the visible damage that he inflicts on himself. He fails to realize that the adversity that seems to dog his steps is the visible outward proof of an imbalance he himself had created in this or in a preceding life. He fails in this that he does not work actively to restore the balance. On the contrary, he seeks by further violations of the harmony to gain respite for himself. He thinks nothing of hurting others while seeking his own felicity. He violates the law of Love with impunity. It must then follow that in the long evolutionary process he will have to work on many a weary treadmill before he can expect the backlash of his ill-deeds to exhaust and spend itself by wave upon wave of calamities and frustrations. He will have to bear all this with patience if he, like the errant schoolboy, desires to undo his past mistakes.

But, asks the average man, why the universal fires and floods, why the inversion of poles that usher in vast and global cataclysms? Where, then, is the working of the law of harmony? As well expect a father to give a full and lucid answer to a child's ques-

tion as to what calculus is. The bars to knowledge are in the questioner and till he attains to a certain stage of advancement the higher degrees of knowledge must remain incommunicable. For arriving at an approximate answer to questions such as these, a knowledge of the processes of emanations and evolution has to be acquired and the answers sought by strong search. This requires that the beginner, before he can approach ancient and venerable texts, has to have humility and reverence for his teacher and his guide who is to lead him into realms hitherto inaccessible to him. However, this much may be said by way of answer: Cataclysms and seeming calamities that bring global and even universal destruction are but Nature's ways of ushering in a night-time for large segments of the evolutionary stream — an ushering in of the periodic state of non-manifestation for purposes which that particular state alone can achieve. To one who witnesses the destruction of continents these cataclysms appear as avenging furies, as calamities visited on man by cruel, crafty powers. This is so because with his limited vision he sees in them that which may disintegrate and pulverize his own living body. So he sees death (an inadequate word to describe a major transformation into something new and strange) as a calamity, and fascinated by his own fanciful and erroneous imagery, he fails to see the change that could not have been brought about save through the doors of a stupendous and almost all-embracing transformation.

The Law of Love is universal and it reveals itself only to those who are its votaries. He who generates forces contrary to it tries to match the puny force of his opposition against its onward and irresistible flow. His opposition is futile and foredoomed to failure. He has to learn that his own salvation across aeons of time lies in learning how to work harmoniously with others and with the inmost. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

And again:

Thou hast to saturate thyself with pure Alaya, become as one with Nature's Soul-Thought. At one with it thou art invincible; in separation, thou becomest the playground of Samvritti, origin of all the world's delusions.

# THE TEST OF THEOSOPHIC INTEREST

[Reprinted from *The Path*, January 1889.—EDS.]

THE TEST of Theosophic interest is precisely the test of every other kind of interest — What one will do to promote it. And here, obviously, two considerations arise.

The first is that no act which is superficial, or perfunctory, or for personal benefit, can at all gauge devotion to a cause which is both impersonal and deep-reaching. It is easy to descant on the glory of a system so elevated as the Wisdom-Religion. It is as easy to proclaim one's own appreciation of its tenets. It is not difficult to attend punctiliously the meetings of a Theosophical Society, and to absorb with readiness, perhaps with profit, whatever of truth may be there disclosed. It may not be easy, but it is entirely possible, to read every Theosophical work of repute, to extract its main thought, and to digest well the learning acquired. And yet, very evidently, the first two are exercises only of the voice, the last two only of the mind. If Theosophy was a matter of the breath or the brains, this participation in it would not only be salutary but ample.

In truth, however, Theosophy gives but a light benediction to either the mere talker or the mere student. It by no means undervalues sincere homage or zealous inquiry, but it is so intent on the work of transferring interest from the lower to the higher levels of being, so eager to excite the unselfish enthusiasm for others' good which, subordinating its own advancement, shall be most thrilled at the chance to advance Humanity, that its ideal is the man who is exerting himself to help others, rather than the man who is exerting himself to get ahead. And, as it believes that the present most efficacious agency for extending truth, vivifying motive, and elevating the race is the Theosophical Society, Theosophy regards as its best expositors those who are working most for the Society it has founded.

Some man with more impetuosity than perception will at once cry, "But this is only the Church and its motive over again!" Not at all. There is no question of doctrinal triumphs, of sect growth, of rival temples, of missionary comparisons. The elements of social distinction, of clerical rank, of legislative influence are all absent.

There is not even the ambition to push the Society into the area of recognized religious organizations, for it not only disclaims competition with Churches, but is disqualified for such competition by its lack of creed, its slight coherency of organism, and its vigorous assertion of individualism in opinion and in training.

Moreover, before assuming the danger of possible ecclesiasticism, one must remember that the standard applied to the Theosophical Society is exactly the same as that applied to a Theosophist — self-forgetfulness in work for others. If the individual member is held to the doctrine that he best realizes Theosophical aims through the obliteration of ambition and the substitution therefor of an altruistic life, similarly as to the Society. Self-aggrandizement, as a pursuit, might evolve a Black Magician; it might even evolve a Church; but it never could evolve a Theosophical Society.

Of the three objects contemplated in the establishment of the T.S., the first and greatest is the promotion of Universal Brotherhood. But this does not mean merely a sentimental recognition of a general human fraternity; it means an active beneficence towards the rest of the family. And if correct views, loftier ideals, richer motives, finer principles, healthier aspirations are more attainable through the Theosophic system than through other systems of faith or morals, the Theosophist is best serving the interests of his brother-men by giving that system all the publicity he can. And if, still further, he accepts the fact that the Masters have adopted the Society as their channel for conveying and distributing Truth to the human family, he reaches the conclusion that in labouring for the Society he is conforming most closely to their desires, benefiting most efficiently the race of which he is a part, using most hopefully the best agency for spiritual good. Practically, therefore, the truest Theosophist at the present day is he who is most interested in the Theosophical Society.

And now has been reached the point where the test of Theosophic interest may be applied to a Theosophist. *What is he doing to sustain the Society?* Not how many times does he place F.T.S. after his surname; not how loud his voice in benediction on the Founders; not how warm in praise his letters to active members; not how many meetings he attends, or books he reads, or intricate problems in Occultism he explores; not what food he eats, or clothes he wears, or opinions he proclaims; but *what is he doing to help?* He may be copious in phrases and efflorescent in gracious speech, or, as are

some, mysteriously mournful over the faults of others which so impede their own progression; he may fold hands before the needs of the Cause, and piously avow trust in the interposition of Mahatmas, or he may point out that the time is unpropitious, or that a spiritual system has no claim for cash, or that it degrades Theosophy to make a collection; he may suggest that in giving his name he does better than give funds, or that there seems as yet no opening for the expression of his zeal, or that his sympathies are with us and his one aspiration is to be upon the path. And yet the inexorable test, inexorable because in the nature of things and therefore not amenable to cajolery or humbug, stands before him — *What is he doing to help?*

The second consideration referred to at the outset is that the test of Theosophic interest is not the absolute amount of help given, but that amount as related to the capacity of the giver. Five cents, five hours, constitute a far larger proportion of one man's available means or time, than five thousand dollars or five months do of another's. Hence it is not the figures, but their fractional value, which determines the extent of the interest. Just so is it in every other human interest. How much one cares for a relation, for a friend, for a philanthropic cause, for a public object, is unerringly shown by the proportion of outlay he devotes thereto. And this does not mean a careless profusion with superfluous goods, but the cutting-off of personal indulgences, cherished but dispensable, for the better sustentation of a cause — in other words, *self-sacrifice*. Nor does self-sacrifice mean the sacrifice of other people, as some think; the bearing with great fortitude privations one does not share, the consecration of money or time or effort which really belongs to one's family or entourage. It means the sacrifice of *yourself*, of your own habits and enjoyments and expenses, in order to build up a cause you profess to love. And the extent to which this is done gauges the proportion of your love for that cause to your love for yourself.

Now Theosophy is not unreasonable or captious. It does not advise any man to starve himself, or to wear rags, or to scout at the conditions of life in the civilization wherein he was born and which express the laws of sociology. It does not enjoin monasticism, or seclusion, or parsimony, or want of public spirit, or abnegation of social amenities, or one-sidedness, or bigotry, or folly under any name. We are to be men, rational men, civilized men, cultivated

men, and we promote no noble cause, least of all the noblest, if we are unsocial, unpractical, or fantastic. But while all this is true, it is equally true that in one's own private affairs, in that sphere of personal belongings outside the claims of others and wherein absolute freedom is unquestioned, the test of Theosophic interest is directly applicable. It is, as has been shown, the proportion of time, money, literary or other effort, one is willing to give up for the Theosophical Society.

Not a few sincere readers may honestly ask, What is there for me to do? The answer to this is the showing what there is to be done, and then each may inquire within himself how and to what extent he can aid. First, there is the support of the Theosophical Society itself, its organic action and work. Hardly anyone is too poor to become a member-at-large and aid to the extent of \$1.00 a year. If able to contribute more, he can do so with the certainty that its growing needs in printing, postage, circulation of documents, advertising, the occasional schemes for Theosophic advance for which direct help is asked, constitute an ample channel for any donation. Then there is Theosophic Literature. Its periodicals need to be sustained, sustained by the subscriptions of those who believe them useful, sustained by those who both take them for their own reading and order them sent to points where they may do good. Pamphlets, tracts, documents may be bought by the zealous and sent to individuals where budding interest is suspected, thus aiding to make possible new ones and giving circulation to those now printed. Theosophical books may be presented to Public Libraries, and, as current facts show, *with the certainty that they will be read*. In private conversations a Theosophical idea or phrase may be dropped, enough to provoke inquiry, possibly investigation. Openings for the impartation of truth may be judiciously used. Then there is the establishment of a Branch. Every member of the Society in a town without a Branch may well judge its foundation his special mission. In many ways and in many hearts the seed may be sown, confident that time, possibly short time, will bring that harvest. If a member of a Branch, he has before him work in strengthening it, enlarging its Library, enlivening its meetings, helping to feed and not merely feeding, thinking out schemes by which its existence may be known through the community and it be recognized as a distributing centre of light. If having access to the press, he can secure the insertion

of brief items or clippings which will keep the topic before the public. If competent to write, he can present some truth he finds potent or correct some mistake he sees popular.

What is there for me to do? Everything that you *can* do. A word, a hint, a tract, a volume, a subscription. If it costs you nothing, your interest is nothing. If it costs you little, your interest is little. If it costs till you *feel* it, then it is that you feel your interest. And when you yourself, body, soul, and spirit, are devoted to the doing, when you thrill with that topic as with no other topic, when your pleasure is in self-sacrificing efforts for its promotion, when you forget yourself, have lost yourself, in it, then will you have become in measure what are the Founders — may one not even say, what are the Masters Themselves.

—HARRIS P.

THERE ARE very few persons in this country, who being in search of the ancient Aryan Philosophy, have obtained control over the bodily passions which trouble ordinary men beyond measure. Fewer still who like one now living in India, whom I dare not mention, are known. Almost all who have thoroughly studied or are studying that ennobling philosophy, keep themselves out of the public view in compliance with wise and inexorable rules. It is not through selfishness, as too many imagine. Though unseen, they none the less are continually working for the good of humanity. In thousands of cases what they effect is ascribed to Providence. And whenever they find anyone who, like themselves, has an ambition above the mere pleasures of this world, and is in search of that Vidya which alone can make man wise in this as well as happy in the next, they stand ready by his side, take him up in their hands as soon as he shows his worthiness, and put in his way the opportunities to learn that philosophy, the study of which has made them masters of themselves, of nature's forces, and of this world.

—DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR

## MIND, THE ORGAN OF THE SOUL

IN his Preface to *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali* W. Q. Judge emphasizes the distinction we should draw between Mind and Soul. Theoretically all students know this fact; practically, however, a thoroughgoing application is needed, for which we have to assimilate certain important ideas. Mr. Judge writes:

As he [Patanjali] lays down that the real experiencer and knower is the Soul and not the Mind, it follows that the Mind, designated either as "internal organ," or "thinking principle," while higher and more subtle than the body, is yet only an instrument used by the Soul in gaining experience, just in the same way as an astronomer uses his telescope for acquiring information respecting the heavens.

To separate body from Mind is comparatively less difficult; but to separate the Mind from the Soul, or Kama-Manas from Higher Manas, is a formidable task. Yet, unless this is done, real progress in Occultism cannot be made. We cannot begin to blend Mind and Soul, as is recommended in *The Voice of the Silence*, till we learn the nature of the Mind and how in its enslavement by desires it is opposed to the nature and course of the Soul, and till we cleanse it of its taints and colourings. Then only the other and higher process of the Soul-Mind uniting itself with the human Spirit and realizing the Great Self can take place.

Every aspirant to the life of pure Occultism has to experience definitely that mind is the organ of the Soul. In ordinary life and action we are so closely identified with our organs of sense and of action that only on very few occasions do we remember to say, "I see through my eyes"; mostly we say, "I see"; the same expression is used when we understand something with our brain-mind; we say, "I see," meaning "I understand." In reality we have to attain the position where we can say, "Yes, my mind now sees and understands."

The next step in this practical study of mental experience is to perceive the truth of the important teaching about "the modifications of the thinking principle." On that Mr. Judge writes:

The Mind is a most important factor in the pursuit of concentration; one indeed without which concentration cannot be obtained. . . . He [Patanjali] shows that the mind is, as he terms

it, "modified" by any object or subject brought before it, or to which it is directed.

Our lower Manas wanders so quickly, the speed with which it moves is so great and so erratic and the movement is so continuous, that many students jump to the conclusion that they fully understand the teaching about modification. In reality, the wandering of the mind, so graphically called the butterfly-mind which moves in a zigzag course from object to object, does not show how the mind modifies itself, doing what is described by Mr. Judge in *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (p. 141):

Mind is immediately tinted or altered by whatever object it is directed to. By this means the soul is enmeshed in the same thought or series of thoughts as is the mind. If the object be anything that is distinct from the Supreme Self then the mind is at once turned into that, becomes that, is tinted like that. This is one of the natural capacities of the mind. It is naturally clear and uncoloured, as we would see if we were able to find one that had not gone through too many experiences. It is movable and quick, having a disposition to bound from one point to another. Several words would describe it. Chameleon-like it changes colour, sponge-like it absorbs that to which it is applied, sieve-like it at once loses its former colour and shape the moment a different object is taken up.

To have a clear insight into the activities of this octopus-mind which grips the Soul by a hundred tentacles, we need to place the senses correctly on the one hand, and the Soul on the other. We should discern how the mind modifying itself presents a picture to the Soul. As long as the mind wanders and undergoes modifications, its *real* function as the organ of the Soul is in abeyance. Let us note the stages we should mark as students:

(1) Seeing that the mind wanders.

(2) Tracing the whereabouts of the wandering mind — how it flies to pleasant or to unpleasant subjects and objects. This reveals to us the nature of our attractions and repulsions.

(3) Noting the fact that our attraction-repulsion creates images which live, for a short or a long time, and which bequeath their legacy in the shape of impresses. In day-dreams and fancies and imaginings we live with our images, re-creating them from those

impresses in an internal way, just as in out-turned life we live with and among a variety of objects and things.

(4) Ceasing to create those images, we experience their self-reproductive power and we have to begin to demolish them by deliberate attempts. These internal images cast dark shadows on our Soul-light, as *The Voice of the Silence* points out.

(5) When success is attained in disintegrating the images and dissolving their constituents and make-up, a balanced condition of the mind is attained. What does such a cleansed mind in the condition of balance perceive? It sees ideas which are true — the world of ideas which are the recorded emanations forming the Divine Astral Light or *Akasha*.

We have purposely tabulated in a concise manner the stages through which the neophyte must take himself, for no lengthy descriptions can make the subject clearer.

Out of the world of matter we fashion a particular world of our own, with the aid of our senses and organs. So with the world of mind: it becomes hidden and obscured by our fancies, our fabricated images. In each state or on each plane we have this duality — the real hidden within the unreal. The unreal is made by our senses and brain; within is the real world of things and objects. (This latter is the field of research of the honest scientist.) Similarly, the unreal is made by our fancy through the modifications of the thinking principle; within is the real world of ideas. (This latter is the field of research of the real occultist.) At each stage we have to learn to discriminate between these two. Only in their unreal aspects are the senses and the mind the enemies of the Soul; in their real aspects they are the friends of the Soul. Therefore it is said that "Nature exists for the Soul's sake." Concludes Mr. Judge:

As the Soul is held to be superior to Mind, it has the power to grasp and hold the latter if we but use the will to aid it in the work, and then only the real end and purpose of mind is brought about.

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## “THE SECRET DOCTRINE” AND ITS STUDY

*The Secret Doctrine* by H. P. Blavatsky is the greatest literary production of the nineteenth century and, so far, of the twentieth. It may be described as *sui generis*. It is primarily concerned with the world of the Occult, of Mysticism; and yet expounds those simple esoteric truths that raise the corner of the curtain of mystery for the man in the street and make clear to him the essentials of his own nature, the purpose of his being, his life after death and his past and future in the great scheme of the cosmos. Equally it deals with some of the profoundest problems of modern science; it originally exploded more than one firmly accepted scientific hypothesis of its time, and indicated other solutions of those problems, solutions which have since been adopted by official science. It is a book for the general student and the specialist in mystic things alike; and it furnishes a hopeless problem for the materialist.

*The Secret Doctrine* asserts that it does not promulgate a new religion or bring forward a new philosophy; but it maintains that all religions, varying as they appear to do, and decadent as they all now are, sprang from a common root, are branches of a parent stem. The nature of this stem it is the business of *The Secret Doctrine* to elucidate, and for this purpose it makes use of accepted literary, scientific and philosophical material, well known or all but forgotten, as the case may be, and appeals to countless authorities, ancient and modern, all tending to one end, namely, to show that as all ultimate Truth is necessarily one, so does there underlie the seemingly antagonistic philosophical and religious systems of the world *one* basic Teaching, founded upon and expressing ultimate Truths. In brief, the Esoteric Philosophy reduces the Faiths of the World to a common denominator, and leaves it to the religionist concerned to add the numerator best suited to his personal predilection. But few of them, if any, really work out to a whole number!

The contents of *The Secret Doctrine* easily fall into three main divisions: Argument, Evidence and Instruction. Argument is concerned principally with modern science — that of 1888 — and discusses in a characteristically vivid manner questions geographical, chemical, biological, ethnological, and so forth. Certain of the issues raised have since been decided in favour of *The Secret Doctrine*, others yet remain *sub judice*; none have been decided *contra* H.P.B.

The section of Evidence remains a monument of erudition and industry; and it is worth noting in this connection that *The Secret Doctrine* was written in seclusion in Wurzburg, in very limited apartments in a private house, and with but few books and memoranda for reference. Yet H.P.B. refers to and quotes verbatim — giving chapter and verse — from innumerable books and MSS., some easily accessible to the travelling student in the great libraries of the world, others virtually out of reach. No ordinary explanation covers the facts in this case. The only explanation is H.P.B.'s own, that by her occult powers and training she was able to summon in the Astral Light before her an astral facsimile of the document needed, and so copy word for word the quotation required.

There remains now the soul of *The Secret Doctrine* — its Teaching. All else therein is incidental and subsidiary to this. And here we may for a moment glance at the problem which must have confronted and been considered by H.P.B. and Those whom she represented, before pen was put to paper. An exposition of certain tenets of the Esoteric Philosophy — kept from the world for centuries if not millennia — was about to be made, with consequences to follow (as we can now well see) almost incalculable. What method should be followed? What was the best thing to do? Of old such teaching was given orally and spread abroad by chosen disciples — disciples whose sincerity, devotion and ability, combined with a perfect verbal memory, could be relied upon. No such conditions, obviously, held good in Europe towards the close of the nineteenth century. For example, in the old days, at the T.S. Headquarters in London, following H.P.B.'s passing in 1891, it was the custom to quote H.P.B.'s real or alleged sayings, until the slogan "H.P.B. *always said*" was finally, to use legal argot, laughed out of court and was heard no more; for people's memory could not be trusted. There remained, then, but the printed word, accurate within the limit of H.P.B.'s peculiar Karma — printer's errors — as witness that rather flagrant example, *Isis Unveiled*. It is worth noticing here that two main features characterized the wonderful burst of occult sunlight into the grey world of theology and science of the late nineteenth century. The first is the lavish generosity with which true and unadulterated esoteric teaching was given out; and the second is the use of the pen, of the written — or to be quite exact — the *printed* word for the promulgation of that teaching. H.P.B. was a voluminous writer, endowed

with a facile pen and a vivid and thoroughly characteristic style.

H.P.B., then, from first to last, committed everything to writing, even at the risk of repeating herself or of revealing too much. Three times as much was written as was published of *Isis Unveiled*. The Countess Wachtmeister records that freshly-written MS. after MS. was committed to the flames during the writing of *The Secret Doctrine*. Bertram Keightley states that up to the last before the issue of *The Secret Doctrine*, H.P.B. corrected, re-corrected, added to and revised the printers' proofs until their bill for proof-corrections alone amounted to £300. Always the written or the printed word. Apart from H.P.B.'s personal and private teaching to this person or that, apart from her flowing, witty and sparkling conversation with one great scientific man or another, and apart, above all, from the "flapdoodle" with which she countered other people's "flapdoodle," everything that H.P.B. had to say about the Esoteric Philosophy was set forth by her in the one certain medium — the printed word — over her signature and before her death, an event of which she had early and certain foreknowledge and for which therefore in all senses she was well and adequately prepared.

The Esoteric Philosophy, then, was expounded in terms of the printed word in *The Secret Doctrine*. Let us glance at its heart: the Teaching. The Evidence and the Arguments we may leave to those who prefer them. Art is lengthy; Life is short.

Now, the whole philosophy is written round the Stanzas from the Book of Dzyan, and we do not purpose to recapitulate those Stanzas. Let us here make one suggestion: do not read *The Secret Doctrine* through from end to end and call that "study." Get a general idea of what it is all about — look through the very admirable "Contents" of each volume as an aid — and then settle your line of study, and search for all that bears upon it. Seek to create an atmosphere of the subject you are studying, and in that you will find yourself led to one discovery after another. For, reflect, it is not mere words and precise statements that you are looking for, but the essential idea underlying them or perhaps just hinted at by them. You are, if your study amounts to anything at all, in search of some phase or other of that most elusive and subtle of all things — soul-knowledge. To study *The Secret Doctrine* does not mean just to read a book; it means the picking up of loose ends leading to a more or less dim apprehension of tremendous realities.

And more, you must perform two interior acts of great consequence if your study is spiritually to benefit you, and through you, others. You must first disencumber your mind of much, or most, or all, of its mental furniture and impediments, your pet ideas, your sentiments, aye, even your beliefs learnt at your mother's knee. All these you must be prepared to cast overboard. A few of them may, it is true, be worth salving — time alone will show. The second act is this: you must be prepared to abandon all fear and with unbreakable moral courage to enter a new world, a world of new ideas, new conceptions, strange, startling, mind-shaking.

One peculiarity of *The Secret Doctrine* is that it is very sparing of description; it speaks almost casually of Hierarchies, Cosmic Powers, Elemental forces, Fohat, the Logoi, etc. — but it attempts no word-painting of them, it creates no false or fanciful images in your mind; it gives you an end of a thread, fine but unbreakable, and leaves it to you to follow up that thread, or merely to hold its end and imagine that you have really learnt something. Hence mere reading of *The Secret Doctrine* means next to nothing, although it is better than nothing. The practical question is: what part of your subjective make-up is doing the reading, and has it penetrated beyond mere words? Your essential attitude will largely decide the answer to this question. Do you, at heart, shrink from knowledge, or will you go forward and take whatever comes? One fundamental fact inherent in human psychology is that the fallacies of the faith in which you were brought up will inevitably follow you, will overshadow your soul and twist your thought unless and until you have, once for all, exorcised them. If you were drilled into belief in a personal God, you will seek that still under the name, it may be, of Logos. If you were taught that Jesus was God, and unique, you will tend to cling to that delusion and still place him in your mind as the foremost Mahatma. If you were told that God answers prayer and that it is a duty to pray, that fallacy will almost certainly reincarnate in your mind in some new and almost unrecognizable form. If you were taught that . . . but we forbear; be sure of this that these things are not the Truth and that being what they are they can but obstruct what glimpse of the Truth you may hope to achieve. And if you ask — some do — with what you shall replace them, the answer is, must be: learn to do without them, dispense with props, learn to walk on your own feet. The dip-

somaniac and the drug addict ask precisely the same question.

Our earnest advice to those who wish to know what H.P.B. taught is to study what H.P.B. wrote — preferably in the original editions, printers' errors and all. Hence these few words about *The Secret Doctrine*. Bear in mind that the Eastern Philosophy makes no unreasonable demands on anyone. It seeks to lead the mind of the student to the world of causes rather than of effects, and to persuade him to the entrance of that mystic path that passes into the heart of things and to the world spiritual — which, indeed, lies within the depths of his own Inner being, its approach masked by the obscurity and darkness of his personal nature.

STARTING upon the long journey immaculate; descending more and more into sinful matter, and having connected himself with every atom in manifested *Space* — the *Pilgrim*, having struggled through and suffered in every form of life and being, is only at the bottom of the valley of matter, and half through his cycle, when he has identified himself with collective Humanity. This, *he has made in his own image*. In order to progress upwards and homewards, the "God" has now to ascend the weary uphill path of the Golgotha of Life. It is martyrdom of self-conscious existence. Like Visvakarman he has to sacrifice *himself to himself* in order to redeem all creatures, to resurrect from the many into the *One Life*. Then he ascends into heaven indeed; where, plunged into the incomprehensible absolute Being and Bliss of Paranirvana, he reigns unconditionally, and whence he will re-descend again at the next "coming," which one portion of humanity expects in its dead-letter sense as the *second advent*, and the other as the last "Kalki Avatar."

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 268

## THE SILENT SERVICE

IN the dense forest they cry aloud, "Betrayed by the Guide, shall the seekers perish? Is there no hope for those that try? Is there no justice for faltering feet but the bleeding pricks of the thistle and the thorn?" And the vision of Thy flickering smile, O Gurudeva, makes the lost Pilgrims regain their track. Like a glow-worm on the Path, they see the Light, and walk on.

My heart lay bare, like an arid desert with barren sands that admit not a blade of grass nor a drop of water. It lay open to scorching heat, dry, barren, self-consumed. But a breath of Thine, O Gurudeva, passed over the surface, and lo! a tiny seed, a speck, cries out to be freed, from beneath the granite stones of my heart's wasteland.

I sat sobbing under glaring skies, for I had no shelter; I sat in my nakedness and in my gnawing hunger. The night was dark with despair. At dawn, O Gurudeva, I saw Thy footprints wherein I made my home. The swish of Thy garments clothed my nakedness and Thy shadow cast over me has assuaged my hunger.

A wail beyond the river, a death-cry that pierces the sky — who shall hear it? The blind in the Eternal Night — who will be their leaning staff? The crippled on the sleeping couch — who will bear their agony and arrest the flow of their tears? A thrill vibrates through the air, the soft melodious echo of Thy love-laden whisper passes through the stringed lute of their lonely hearts, and lo! a Dawn breaks, a Song rises, and teardrops turn to dew-filled Joy.

I hang down my head, unable to look upon Thy face. Can the creeper in the mire aspire to the Elysian heights? Or the moth, to hold a handful of stars? O Gurudeva, grant me this, that I be a speck of dust underneath Thy feet, for thee to tread upon. So I cling to Thee, as long as Thou chooseth.

What is Present but a pinpoint in space? The Future is but the Potential Present. Thy mellow voice is the sweeping sound of Time and Thy glance dispels the darkness enveloping forlorn souls. How can one adore Thee? How can I light a lamp on Thy altar when Thou art the blazing Sun? How can I sing Thy hymns when Thou art the Great Hymn Thyself? How can I be Thy supplicant when Thou canst penetrate the very kernel and seed of my silent

thoughts?

Afloat upon Thy Ocean of Compassion, on the crest of the crashing waves of Thy Mercy, O Gurudeva, Thy Silent Service weaves its pattern at the twilight hour when Cycles and Kalpas merge into the whirlpool of Time. Stillness wakes, drums beat the Dance of Life, and Thou, O Gurudeva, entereth the secret chamber of my heart.

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WHAT Buddha says to each of us is, in effect, as follows: If you would be happy, you must live aright. If you would live aright, you must be able to distinguish reality from illusion. If you would distinguish reality from illusion, you must attain to knowledge of Reality, another name for which is Wisdom. I can tell you where and how wisdom is to be found. But I cannot find it for you. You must find it for yourself. The Rishis in their forests found it by meditation. But meditation, as they practised it, is in its fulness given to very few. It is the natural reward of a selfless life. Even the Rishis owed their power to meditate, and their consequent vision of Reality, in part to the fact that they lived, and had long lived, selfless lives. Do as they did. Lead the selfless life. Recognize the unreality of what you call self — the separate self, imprisoned in its own individuality, content with its separateness, ready to indulge and enrich, and aggrandize itself, even at the expense of others. Realize that this is not your true self, that this is not what you really are. Try to become what you really are. Control self, subdue it, develop it, expand it, transcend it. Little by little the wisdom that you seek will be given to you. With the expansion of self will come the expansion of consciousness; and with the expansion of consciousness will come the higher and clearer vision, the knowledge of Reality. By the light which that knowledge sheds on the path of life you will walk in the path more surely; and the light will become clearer and stronger as the path which it reveals takes you nearer to its inward source. . . . Live your way into the heart of Reality; and you will understand the Universe better than if you were to pore over its deepest problems for the rest of your days; for you will find that, at the heart of Reality, Ideal Good and Ideal Truth are one, and that as they become one they lose themselves in Inward Peace.

—EDMOND HOLMES

# PROBLEMS OF LIFE

FROM "THE DIARY OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN"

BY DR. N. I. PIROGOFF\*

## VIII

ON THE INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE METHODS

(Continued)

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, October 1891.—Eds.]

*February 29th and March 1st, 1880*

It is indeed difficult for the scientific empiricist who has adopted the inductive method of investigation to avoid the illusion which represents to him as impossible the existence of a conscious, intelligent life outside of organism and without the sense-stimulating organs. Nevertheless, this illusion is founded on a view and judgment of the individual phenomena of life, which, however it may seem apparently indisputable and attractive, is still only superficial and one-sided.

The PRINCIPLE which lives in us, that which senses and realizes the sensations, cannot be itself the organ, that is to say an object; nor can it be, by its very nature, the subject, or a being apart from the organ (not in a grossly material sense, of course); and, as a matter of fact, it cannot have any of the properties that are subject to our perceptions such as belong to organized beings. Closely linked with the organic elements, without which its sensuous manifestations would be impossible for us, with the destruction of that link it ceases to be the object, or rather an object for our sensuous investigation. But who can represent to himself the possibility of sensation, that of clearly comprehending and realizing that which he senses (hence thinks of and reasons about) without being at the same time conscious of himself, being, so to speak, his own subject? By breaking or discontinuing the connection of this subjective, sensing, self-conscious principle with the organic elements, we only destroy its objectively individual manifestation, hence that of life also, but not the life-principle. As to the question to what degree it can preserve its individuality, in other words its individual (personal) image after the destruction of the binding organic union, this is quite

\* Translated from the Russian, by H.P.B.

another thing, and in its very nature no less profound a problem: I may treat of it from my own standpoint elsewhere.

A theory in apparent contradiction with the idea that sensation and cerebration must be always conscious, has settled itself of late in modern science. It is true that judging from many facts it becomes difficult to deny in certain cases unconscious feelings and cerebrations. It is not always easy to seize the substantial difference between these forms of sensation and cerebration and those we call conscious. Here are facts. It is probable that the organism of the foetus senses unconsciously; most of the reflex actions are based on unconscious sensation conveyed to the motor-nerves. The interior organs, no doubt, transfer from themselves various kinds of sensations; but these are unconscious and are generally manifested only by reflex actions. The impressions communicated to us by the senses, by sight especially, from the outside world, produce in us correct representations of objects only, as it were with the help of unconscious cerebration, acquired by experience. Many movements of the body, also, are accomplished unconsciously. But in all these phenomena, classed under one name of unconscious sensation and cerebration, we must understand, firstly, only our organic receptivity, or the faculty of the tissues being stimulated—a faculty which would, perhaps, be better described as sensibility, without which the tissue could not be excited by stimulus, nor transfer it to the centres for the stimulation of the reflex. Secondly, a whole series of organic sensations (starting from the interior organs), though presented to our consciousness less clearly and definitely than external impressions conveyed to it by our senses, acts still on consciousness indirectly, by exciting at one time fancy, at another desires, stimulating our passions and other reminders of themselves: therefore such sensation cannot be called altogether unconscious. Thirdly, and finally, there are many fully conscious perceptions, which are so evanescent as to disappear almost instantaneously from the circle of our conscious activity and are not retained by memory.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, as

<sup>1</sup> This scientific statement will never be accepted by an Eastern Occultist, for he would say that nothing that takes place, no manifestation however rapid or weak, can ever be lost from the *Skandhaic* record of a man's life. Not the smallest sensation, the most trifling action, impulse, thought, impression, or deed, can fade or go out from, or in the Universe, We may think it unregistered by our memory, unperceived by our consciousness, yet it will still be recorded on the tablets of the astral light. Personal memory is a fiction of the physiologist. There are cells in our brain that receive and convey sensations and impressions,

during those moments when our attention is engrossed and centred on some subject, such sensations are not remarked at all, or reach our consciousness only by glimpses; as for instance sundry physical wants during hard mental work.

With regard to unconscious cerebration, in the absence of which we could not explain many of the functions of our senses, *e.g.*, the calculation of distances by the eye, the correct appreciation of objects seen from all sides, perspective, etc., even here it is only apparent; for this seeming unconsciousness is, in many cases, only the result of habit and experience. That which in the early days of our life we have learned to recognize owing to conscious, gradual and practical experience, having become familiar to us in afterlife, may often seem to be taken in by our senses unconsciously, and we make use of the fruits of that acquired knowledge without thinking that the latter is due only to long practice. It is but natural that a mental appreciation of things which has become for us a matter of everyday habit, should cease in time to be regarded as a mental appreciation at all, but appear on the contrary something quite evident, not necessitating the slightest exercise of thought. To know that two and two make four is not generally regarded by us as necessitating an expenditure of cerebration; it appears to us as evident as a chair or a table before our eyes, the correct appreciation of which objects has demanded of us at one time of our life as much mental study as that  $2 + 2 = 4$ . Moreover, we have to re-

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but this once done, their mission is accomplished. These cells of the supposed "organ of memory" are the *receivers* and *conveyers* of all the pictures and impressions of the past, not their *retainers*. Under various conditions and stimuli, they can receive instantaneously the reflection of these astral images back again and this is called *memory, recollection, remembrance*; but they do not preserve them. When it is said that one has lost his memory, or that it is weakened, it is only a *façon de parler*; it is our memory-cells alone that are enfeebled or destroyed. The window glass allows us to see the sun, moon, stars, and all the objects outside clearly; crack the pane and all these outside images will be seen in a distorted way; break the window-pane altogether and replace it with a board, or draw the blind down, and the images will be shut out altogether from your sight. But can you say because of this, that all these images—sun, moon, and stars—have disappeared, or that by repairing the window with a new pane, the same will not be reflected again into your room? There are cases on record of long months and years of insanity, of long days of fever when almost everything done or said, was done and said unconsciously. Yet when the patients recovered they remembered occasionally their words and deeds and very fully. *Unconscious* cerebration is a phenomenon on this plane and may hold good so far as the personal mind is concerned. But the Universal Memory preserves every motion, the slightest wave and feeling that ripples the waves of differentiated nature, of man or of the Universe.—[TRANSL.]

member that even fully conscious thoughts and perceptions remain such occasionally for a very short period; the glimpses of thought that pass through our consciousness are, at times, so rapid that they can be compared to flashes of lightning without any exaggeration. Nevertheless, notwithstanding their evanescent nature, many among these, unnoticed as they were, remain in our memory, inciting us to actions; in such cases, those thoughts themselves that have served them as motives may appear to us unconscious. It also happens that our attention, being all absorbed in some occupation, does not take note at all of either actions performed or the thoughts that guide the latter, though neither of them are unconscious. In order to solve conclusively the question of the consciousness or the unconsciousness of our perceptions, thoughts and opinions, it is necessary that we should first learn to transform our subjective *I* into the object of a constant and incessant observation of that *subject*, by itself.

But such an intense and one-sided activity of our attention to the conscious and the unconscious in us, is evidently abnormal, so that even the result of such observation can hardly be regarded as trustworthy or fit for control. It is stated that Johann Müller became almost insane during such a self-watching. He had determined to note the precise moment, in himself, of the transformation of the waking into the sleeping state; in other words, he had undertaken to catch himself in the passage from consciousness to unconsciousness. But we cannot step out from the magic circle, however great our efforts and desire to determine with better exactitude our subjective individual meaning. In its general features it is identical in all humankind, and has, moreover, many a feature in common with the subjectivism of other animals. But the resemblance is manifested objectively only in three ways: through the voice (sound), speech (articulated words), and motion — direct and reflected. All our experiments and observations of the phenomena of the subjective individual being of men and animals have no other criterion. But if all these, the important knowledge acquired through them, notwithstanding, are untrustworthy, doubtful, two-faced and contradictory, how much more so the sciences which may have been acquired by purely subjective observations!

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# A THEOSOPHICAL CATECHISM

## FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN

### LESSON III

[Reprinted from *The Path*, January 1891.—EDS.]

1. Q. In our last lesson we spoke of the Eternal Principle of Life. Can you tell me by what other name it is called?  
A. 'The One Life.
2. Q. What does this mean?  
A. It means that one universal Life flows through all worlds and beings.
3. Q. How may we regard that Life?  
A. As a stream flowing eternally from the Infinite.
4. Q. What may we say of its drops or essential Atoms?  
A. We may say that every one is a living soul.
5. Q. Is one soul separate from another or from the whole?  
A. No. They are distinct as the drops or waves of ocean may be distinct, yet are always united to the whole body of water.
6. Q. Is this Life stream more than alive?  
A. Yes. It is intelligent also.
7. Q. Are there different degrees of it?  
A. The Life is the same. The intelligence differs according to the bodies in which the Life Principle is found.
8. Q. What else may the Life Principle be called?  
A. The living Breath of the unknown Eternal One.
9. Q. Can you tell me something of its action as regards bodies?  
A. When it passes into a body, that body is what we call "alive." When it passes out of a body, that body falls to pieces, but the Life forces are still present and begin to separate all its parts.
10. Q. Can you give me an illustration?  
A. A fish that lives in the ocean is part of it. The fish shares the life of the ocean and has a special part too of its own. Then the fish dies. The water forces begin to tear it to pieces so soon as its special part of Life force passes back into the ocean. All the particles of the fish are spread over the ocean; some become food for other fish, some pass slowly back into the water again, some pass

into new forms, but still the Life of the ocean is one and the same.

11. Q. What does this teach us?

A. Universal Brotherhood.

12. Q. Why?

A. Because all worlds, men, and creatures breathe the same breath of Life. It passes back and forth between them. What is now mine may next be yours, and then it may pass into other creatures and things. It is always one. We live in it, we are suspended in the Ocean of Life as fish in the sea. So what one does affects all, and brotherly actions are for the good of all.

13. Q. Can we know more of this Principle of Life?

A. A few wise men may know it, but most men know only some of its laws.

14. Q. Can you tell me what its great Law is?

A. The Law of Karma.

15. Q. What does Karma mean?

A. Action.

16. Q. Then is this a Law of Action only?

A. No. Every action has its reaction, so Karma is the Law of action and reaction.

17. Q. Explain this.

A. If I throw a ball against a wall, it bounds back. Whatever we say or do goes on and on until it reaches the bounds of our solar system. Then it must return as the ball does, so it comes back.

18. Q. To whom does it come back?

A. To the person that did it, as the ball to the hand that threw it.

19. Q. Why?

A. Because it is easier for it to return along the path that it made.

20. Q. But how can a thought, a word, or a deed return?

A. Because all these are like waves set up in the ocean. The waves beat the shore and roll back. There is a great Life ocean about us, and whatever we do makes ripples in it. These ripples go on and on, then they return.

21. Q. If, then, I do a bad deed, or think a bad thought, what will happen?

A. It will return, after a time, to you, and will be your punishment.

22. Q. Do good deeds return also?

A. Yes, and they are our reward.

23. Q. What is a good deed?

A. Whatever is brotherly and kind or helpful to all creatures and people.

24. Q. Then it is really happier for us to do good to others than to please ourselves?

A. Yes. For a selfish deed comes back and hurts us, while it has only pleased us for a little time. But an unselfish deed brings great happiness to all.

25. Q. What makes this so?

A. The nature of the Life Principle.

26. Q. And what else?

A. The Law of Karma.

27. Q. Give this Law another name.

A. The Law of Periodicity.

28. Q. What does Periodicity mean?

A. Regular periods in changes. That is, ebb and flow, influx and efflux, come and go, in fixed, regular periods.

29. Q. Is this Law universal?

A. Yes, it is.

30. Q. Name some instances of it.

A. Light and dark. Winter and Summer. Pleasure and Pain. Good and Evil. Life and Death. The tide comes in and goes out, Men breathe in and out. They are young, then old. Everywhere we see regular changes which show this Law.

31. Q. What causes this Law and makes it Universal?

A. That Breath of the Unseen Eternal.

32. Q. What do you mean by that?

A. All we know of the Eternal is its Great Breath.

33. Q. What else is this called?

A. Spirit or Motion.

34. Q. Into what is it breathed?

A. Into substance or Matter.

35. Q. What else is this called?

A. The World-Mother or the Oversoul.

36. Q. Are Spirit and Substance separate?

A. No. They are eternally united.

37. Q. When the Breath is breathed out into Substance, what occurs?

A. The worlds and all things in them are evolved, or made out of the action of Spirit and Matter or Substance.

38. Q. By means of what?

A. By means of Motion. Motion in matter makes forms.<sup>1</sup>

39. Q. What do you mean by Substance?

A. That which sub-stands or stands under. The one substance out of which all things are made is beneath everything that is. This is why it is called the World-Mother.

40. Q. After the Breath is breathed out and worlds are made, what next occurs?

A. All the worlds and all things in them have action and reaction in every part.

41. Q. And what next?

A. After a long period, The Great Breath is drawn in again.

42. Q. What happens then to the world of Being?

A. It is all dissolved back again into The Breath.

43. Q. Does it too cease?

A. No. It is ever coming and going. It is eternal.

44. Q. Why do all things share this action of The Breath?

A. Because it is in everything and moves them to and fro. They are made of it and through it and in it, so their action is like its own.

45. Q. What more do we know of the Unseen One?

A. Nothing except this Law which is Its nature.

46. Q. What then may we say of the Law of Karma?

A. That wherever Spirit or Life is, there the Law of Karma is also.

47. Q. Do you know any saying that gives the moral spirit of this Law?

A. Whatsoever ye sow, that shall ye reap.

48. Q. What do we learn from this Law?

A. That strict justice is the eternal nature of all being.

49. Q. What is true justice on the part of Man to other Men and creatures?

A. Universal Brotherhood.

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<sup>1</sup> Let the teacher explain crystallization. Also that sounds spoken into a tube against a membrane covered with paste make forms. The action of sand on glass if a bow is drawn over the glass, and so on.

50. Q. Why so?

A. Because what is done by one affects all the rest, as all men and beings are living under this law.

51. Q. Can you give me an example of this in human life?

A. Yes. If I speak an angry word to anyone at the beginning of the day, it makes both him and me feel differently for some time. This affects what we say to others, changes them to us, and so all are injured by the one selfish deed.

52. Q. What then is the only true justice?

A. Mercy and Love.

—J. CAMPBELL VERPLANCK

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To know, but to be as not knowing, is the height of Wisdom.

To the good I would be good; to the not good I would also be good, in order to make them good.

He who knows how to shut need no bolts — yet you cannot open.

When warriors join in battle, he who has pity conquers.

Those whom Heaven would save it fences round with gentleness.

I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize — gentleness, frugality and humility.

Temper your sharpness, disentangle your ideas, moderate your brilliance, and live in harmony with your age.

He who has been the means of the death of many people should mourn over them with bitter tears.

Tao gives to all good men without distinction.

The further one goes away the less he knows.

One may be transparent on all sides and yet be unknown.

Silent teaching, passive usefulness — few in the world attain to this.

—JAPANESE SAYINGS

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Not too long ago, it would have been unthinkable for the leading scientists of the day even to hint at the existence of a hidden spiritual world; but this is precisely what several top theorists are suggesting today. Their work leads them to the same conclusion: there is more to man than traditional science has hitherto accepted.

John Gliedman's article, "Scientists in Search of the Soul" (*Science Digest*, July 1982), is based on what these men of science, among them some Nobel-Prize winners, have to say on this basis issue:

Sir John Eccles... the great physiologist, has declared war on the past 300 years of scientific speculation about man's nature. Winner of the 1963 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his pioneering research on the synapse — the point at which nerve cells communicate with each other — Eccles strongly defends the ancient religious belief that human beings consist of a mysterious compound of physical matter and intangible spirit.

Each of us embodies a nonmaterial thinking and perceiving self that "entered" our physical brain sometime during embryological development or very early childhood, says the man who helped lay the cornerstones of modern neurophysiology. This "ghost in the machine" is responsible for everything that makes us distinctively human: conscious self-awareness, free will, personal identity, creativity and even emotions such as love, fear and hate. Our nonmaterial self controls its "liaison brain" the way a driver steers a car or a programmer directs a computer. Man's ghostly spiritual presence, says Eccles, exerts just the whisper of a physical influence on the computer-like brain, enough to encourage some neurons to fire and others to remain silent. Boldly advancing what for most scientists is the greatest heresy of all, Eccles also asserts that our nonmaterial self survives the death of the physical brain.

Eccles is not the only world-famous scientist taking a controversial new look at the ancient mind-body conundrum. From Berkeley to Paris and from London to Princeton, prominent scientists from fields as diverse as neurophysiology and quantum physics are coming out of the closet and admitting they believe in the possibility, at least, of such unscientific entities as the immortal human spirit and divine creation. While differing among themselves on everything from the neurophysiological implications of quantum theory to the scientific evidence for ESP,

these renegade rationalists share a willingness to mix rigorous science with unfashionable religious and metaphysical beliefs and a common hostility to all forms of dogmatism and cant. . . .

Eccles has a powerful ally in Sir Karl Popper. . . . According to Popper, in order to qualify as scientific, a hypothesis must be falsifiable — that is, it must be possible to *disprove* the theory absolutely. Clearly, says Eccles, the Eccles-Popper theory of the nonmaterial self interacting with a material brain does not meet this criterion. . . .

But even while most eminent scientists agree that every scrap of scientific knowledge about brain function is consistent with materialism, some physicists who study the basic structure of physical reality as revealed by quantum physics believe that science comes close to proving what Eccles and Popper postulate: the existence of a nonmaterial conscious mind that influences ponderable matter. . . .

Some agreed with the distinguished physicist Fritz London that John von Neumann's rigorous formulation of quantum mechanics showed that physical reality was a figment of the human imagination and that the only true reality was thought. . . . But it was not until the early 1960s that one of the greatest physicists of the century, Eugene Wigner, winner of the 1963 Nobel Prize in Physics, boldly spelled out in public what von Neumann's followers had been whispering in their laboratories and sometimes mentioning in technical treatises obscured from public view by formidable forests of mathematics: man may have a nonmaterial consciousness capable of influencing matter. . . .

No world-famous physicist takes the claims of Eastern mystical philosophy more seriously than Cambridge University's Brian Josephson, winner of the 1973 Nobel Prize in Physics. Josephson is fascinated by the problem of human intelligence and has staked his enormous scientific reputation on the possibility that he can gain insights into objective reality by practising traditional Eastern meditational techniques.

David Bohm, professor of theoretical physics at Birkbeck College, London, also believes in the human mind's ability to grasp higher realities denied or ignored by conventional science. . . . In moments of artistic and scientific creation, says Bohm, the mind briefly escapes from its self-imposed prison.

These and other scientific iconoclasts who feel that traditional materialism is seriously incomplete and that man is more than a

material being may be in the minority today, but there are signs that the debate may gain momentum and what is today a trickle may well become a flood.

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A staunch advocate of the mind-over-body influence in curing human illness, Norman Cousins, Editor Emeritus of *Saturday Review*, has his own experience to back him. He has described his dramatic recovery in his book *Anatomy of an Illness*. Since then, for the past three years, he has been studying some 40 patients who have recovered from supposedly irreversible illnesses, including malignancies, cardiac infirmities, and diseases of joints and muscles. He has especially been trying to learn whether these recoveries had anything in common that might be useful to others similarly afflicted.

In his editorial in *Saturday Review* for May 1982, entitled "Maximizing the Possible," Mr. Cousins brings home to us the point that it is within the power of a patient to take his cure in his own hands and prove the experts wrong. The case histories of the persons he has been able to observe and interview in depth reveal certain common facts: The illnesses in all cases followed upon an emotional crisis of one form or another, producing severe and prolonged apprehension or depression. When the diagnosis of the illnesses was made, the patients were told by their doctors that they did not have much of a chance. Though they all experienced panic and their illnesses thereafter became intensified, a point came when a conscious decision was made to reject all notions of inevitability and to take an active part in the quest for their own recovery instead of relying exclusively on the treatment provided by doctors.

The underlying philosophy in these points [writes Mr. Cousins] is that all the patients decided they wanted to live and were prepared to make a supreme effort towards that end. They recognized that they were bucking unfavourable odds in the eyes of the specialists but they were not going to be deterred by expert opinion. . . .

Treatment for any disease has twin requirements. One is the availability of the best that medical science has to offer. The other is that the patient himself or herself become fully involved in the recovery effort. Brain research is now turning up evidence that attitudes have biochemical effects. Attitudes of defeat or panic will constrict the blood vessels and have a debilitating

effect on the entire endocrine system. Attitudes of confidence and determination activate benevolent and therapeutic secretions in the brain.

Obviously, we can't expect to live forever. We can't expect that every disease will be reversed. But we can get the most out of whatever is possible. We can give it our best shot. Not until then do predictions mean anything.

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A World Assembly on Aging was held in Vienna from July 26 to August 6. Organized by the United Nations, the Assembly examined problems facing people as they grow old. In particular it took stock of the consequences of aging for social and economic development. This is a vital issue as the elderly become an increasing proportion of the population.

The banyan tree, symbolizing longevity, self-reliance, continuing growth, and a community meeting place, was appropriately chosen as the logo for the Assembly. From its main branches the tree drops aerial roots which establish themselves in the ground to form additional trunks. These trunks send out other aerial roots, and thus the tree can grow to cover an immense area. One tree is said to have reached 600 metres in circumference, providing shelter for 20,000 people. The banyan tree is a graphic symbol with a deep and philosophical significance attached to it.

A special issue of *Unesco Features* (No. 774) highlights the conditions of the senior citizens in various parts of the world. The process that drastically changed the position and status of old people in industrialized countries has now also got under way in more traditional societies. Throughout Asia and Africa, with the erosion of cultural values the age-old tradition of taking care of the aged in the family is rapidly disintegrating. As the younger generation moves to the cities, adopts the increasingly individualistic values of urban life, and becomes more preoccupied with Western culture, the blight of old people's homes has made its appearance in some Asian and African cities; and where there are no such homes, the aged are stranded without support.

The issue is defined in Paul Lengrand's opening article, "The Challenge of Old Age," in the *Unesco Features* special issue:

The shift in the structures of society, which has resulted in

the multi-generation family being replaced by the two-generation unit, has had a negative effect on the role of old people, many of whom have lost their place in the family. Gradually, most of them have been relegated to the fringes of society, where they remain isolated and unused. This is true in all industrialized societies, though very rare in rural areas, where old people are still appreciated for their skills and experience, and for the advice they can impart. . . .

Generally speaking, the generation gap is tending to widen, whatever the type of society. The prestige enjoyed by the older generation is waning, while young people are becoming indifferent, if not disrespectful, towards them. Above all, changes that would previously have occurred only gradually over several decades now take place within a generation. Ideas, customs, fashions and patterns of behaviour and interpersonal relations are evolving at such a pace that it is hard for an old person to follow or understand them, let alone adjust to them. Lack of understanding swiftly turns into refusal, rejection and irritation on both sides of the age line. Young people are often too busy living their own lives to pay attention to the difficulties old people have in adjusting. . . .

Except in those societies where the old person continues to be normally integrated and suffers no loss of social status, his or her psychological equilibrium is sapped by all sorts of factors — a fading away of work relationships, a decrease in financial resources, a decline in physical strength and in certain faculties, isolation, a gradual loss of much-loved relations and friends, and the collapse of certain traditional values.

For many, the greatest challenge in their life is coming to terms with old age.

What, then, can be done? There must first be an increased awareness of the way cultural values are being eroded. Then welfare activities must be made to harmonize with time-honoured family traditions. Above all, something must be done to make the young more aware of old people's intrinsic worth. Their wisdom and experience would usefully complement the youth and vitality of the modern generation. The old still have something to say, and the respect conferred on them by traditional society should not be regarded as anachronistic.

H.P.B. was ever critical of the aping of the Western way of life by the peoples of the East. "Like a hideous leprosy," she wrote

almost a hundred years ago in her article "Civilization, the Death of Art and Beauty," "our Western civilization has eaten its way through all the quarters of the globe and hardened the human heart. . . . Almost every race and nation under the Sun in Asia has gone mad in its passion for *aping* Europe" — now America. The reassertion of the value of Oriental traditions and cultural identity would encourage the young in Asia and Africa to build a modern society not based solely on imported values ill-suited to their socio-economic conditions and spiritual ideals.

Ancient Indian and Chinese sages laid great emphasis on respecting the elders. The Laws of Manu insist on the service of father, mother, and teacher, and call it "the highest austerity" (II, 229). These three are types from archetypes: "The teacher is the image of Brahman; the father, of Prajapati; the mother, of Prithivi" (II, 226). "He who habitually salutes and constantly pays reverence to the aged obtains an increase of four things, *viz.*, length of life, knowledge, fame, strength" (II, 121).

The hoary traditions of the East go even further. In addition to the seven qualifications for Chelaship as given in H.P.B.'s article "Chelas and Lay Chelas" (reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*), two more are mentioned in the editorial reply to a correspondent's inquiry in *Lucifer* for December 1887:

(8) Blessings of both parents (or one, if the other is dead) and *their permission to become an Upasan* (chela); and (9) Celibacy, and freedom from any obligatory duty.

The two last rules are most strictly enforced. No man *convicted of disrespect to his father or mother, or unjust abandonment of his wife*, can ever be accepted even as a *lay chela*. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, February 1966, p. 148)

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Barbara Ward's article (*The Observer*, London, June 20), written just before her death last year, looks back at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, which was held at Stockholm 10 years ago and which she largely inspired. The author reflects:

Over the past 10 years we have gradually come to appreciate the extraordinary interdependence and fragility of that tiny part of our planet in which life is possible. A few thin metres of soil, a few miles up into the sky and a similar depth down into the

oceans, encompasses virtually the whole of the biosphere in which we and other living things can survive.

Within this tiny realm the sea-borne wastes of one continent become the marine pollution of distant beaches. Toxic fumes from an industrial complex fall as acid rain hundreds of miles away, poisoning lakes and streams. A few greedy nations can overfish the sea's wealth and deprive all mankind of valuable foodstocks. And the desperate search for farmland and fuelwood by poor families in many parts of the Third World leads to the destruction of forests, then soil erosion, floods, and drought....

Before Stockholm, people usually saw the environment — many still do — as something totally divorced from humanity. To them the only *real* environment is a wilderness area, where people are excluded — except of course those who are rich enough to keep everyone else out. Stockholm recorded a fundamental shift in the emphasis of our environmental thinking.

No matter how much we try to think of ourselves as separate sovereign entities, nature itself reminds us of humanity's basic unity. The vision of unity shared by so many of the great philosophers and so central to all the great religions is recognized now as an inescapable scientific fact.

In the 1970s, after Stockholm, there was a growing realization of the basic and indestructible links between what humans do in one part of the world and what they do in another. This interconnectedness was one of the great insights of Stockholm, neatly summed up in the conference slogan "Only One Earth." There was a beginning of a sense of shared stewardship for our common planetary home.

Now, in the 1980s, some Western leaders are starting to abandon the concept of our joint voyage on Spaceship Earth, and to dismiss any concern for the environment or for the South as "do-goodism." They appear to regard the universe as expendable — as long as their tiny bit of it is not expended.

While the idea of a global interdependence was developing in the 1970s, so too was a reaction against this trend. The author deplores the reversion toward a narrower nationalism in recent years. Nationalism is a tough political power to replace. At UN conferences, over a hundred governments have repeatedly voted in favour of resolutions on international action, but signally failed to do much to implement them. There is a curious tension between what governments subconsciously know to be the international realities and

what they are prepared to accept in limitation of their own sovereign interests.

The move towards breaking out of the narrow old allegiances and the barriers imposed by the cruder forms of nationalism needs must appeal to earnest students of Theosophy, which is itself above all artificial distinctions between man and man, whether of nation, creed or race. The old approaches, old habits of thought, that are part of a world divided into hardened national sovereignties, are no longer workable. The kind of breakthrough we need may require people to think about themselves in a new way, with new and higher relationships and loyalties, as part of a larger global community.

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The following appeared as editorial "Reflections" in the July issue of *World Union* (published by World Union International, Pondicherry):

It has been said that man is essentially selfish... and serious doubts are being expressed about the practicability of love ever becoming natural to humankind.

Appearances, however, are deceptive. It is true that the average human being is selfish, self-centred. The ego is his base and also his point of reference. The ego is by its very constitution self-regarding and all movements based upon it are naturally self-oriented. And this will remain so as long as man allows himself to be ego-driven.

But it need not always be so. The ego is found to be only a surface formation in nature. It is a pseudo-self. The real self, the true centre of the being, is deeper — it is the soul. And the characteristic quality of the soul is love. Anyone who shifts his centre of reference from the nature-ego to the soul within, finds the soul-action of love spontaneous. And it is the destiny of man in evolution to displace the rule of the ego-self by the reign of the true-self, the soul. In the manner in which he succeeds in doing so, selfishness drops away and a natural movement of love takes its place.

Man is selfish as long as he is the prisoner of his ego. As he frees himself from this limitation and allows the true soul to guide his life, he radiates love naturally. He becomes capable of spontaneous love.

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