

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE BEACON OF ARYAN OCCULTISM

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If it be permissible to symbolize things subjective by phenomena objective, I should say that to the psychic sight India seems covered with a stifling grey fog—a moral meteor—the odic emanation from her vicious social state. Here and there twinkles a point of light which marks a nature still somewhat spiritual, a person who aspires and struggles after the higher knowledge. If the beacon of Aryan occultism shall ever be kindled again these scattered sparks must be combined to make its flame.

THESE words of the Mahatma K.H. are as true today as they were in 1883 when they were penned. Though India has gained political independence, millions of its citizens are still steeped in a “vicious social state.” Indians today are not a united people: divisions and recriminations, provincialism and casteism, orthodoxy and dogmatism, are apparent. Religious fanaticism persists; and in the name of *dharma*, social ills, chicane, impudence and worse are creating evil Karma for the nation. In the absence of true knowledge, “progressive” notions from the Occident are accepted, which spoil the health of body, mind and heart. The remedy suggested by the Sage-Adept remains to be applied. Is it possible to revive cautious study of the science of Occultism leading to the lighting of the beacon of the noble Universal Wisdom? Have we not within the Theosophical fold a number of persons who aspire and strive after the Higher Knowledge?

The Master adds that the task of kindling such “scattered sparks” and combining them to make a flame is a “pleasant part” of the work of the Great Movement, “in which we would so gladly assist, were we not impeded and thrown back by the *would-be chelas* themselves.” Human nature changes very, very slowly,

and the aspirants of today are not very different from those of 1883.

Let us reflect upon what the Master further says:

I have suffered so much from the enforced insight at short distance into the moral and spiritual condition of my people; and been so shocked by this nearer view of the selfish baseness of human nature.

But His Compassion and Discrimination enable Him to assert:

I shall...confine myself to our prime duty of gaining knowledge and disseminating through all available channels such fragments as mankind in the mass may be ready to assimilate.

Are not these "fragments" disseminated through Theosophical endeavours? Are there such "available channels"? How many are there in our ranks who are "ready to assimilate"?

In our movement, we have the beneficence connected with the writings of the personage known as William Quan Judge. Among sources of real strength for Theosophical aspirants are their full-hearted recognition of that personage, their insistence on a constant study of his writings and, above all, the use they make of his status, in the words of H.P.B., the Guru, "as the Antahkarana between the two Manases," as a "Chela of 13 years' standing" in 1888. And we say all this here because it is in the advice and guidance to be found in the writings of Mr. Judge that aspirants will easily and readily secure the help needed. By paying heed and attention to his instructions they will make themselves fit "available channels," will become ready as a whole to assimilate the few "fragments" given out for our era and generation.

To aspirants who "mean business" and who *feel* ready to take themselves in hand to learn to serve all human souls, Mr. Judge has some very practical advice to offer:

(1) *When we make the first step and are determined to continue, then it contains in it the fulfilment of our desires, for each further step grows out of the first one.*

Now, what is the first step in treading this Path? Self-Discipline, Self-Knowledge and Devotion to the interests of others, of all those whose Karma brings them in our contact. When one practises the discipline enjoined by the Esoteric Philosophy and gains some knowledge, very soon he sees his true position on the Path of the Inner Ruler.

(2) *When a man gets where he can say that he knows his own unfitness or that he knows nothing, he is in a good position. Generally men assume that they are fitted for anything and good*

enough. This is because they do not—generally will not—understand the requisites demanded by the great Law and the Lodge, and then after a while they are disappointed and say they are deceived.

Our first enthusiasm diminishes in struggles with mundane, personal Karma. We do not replenish ourselves with greater knowledge, re-energize ourselves with active work and, above all, by sincere application. True knowledge is not easily acquired. It springs forth spontaneously only in the progress of time; and that only if the threefold recommendation is followed. It is in the fourth chapter of the *Gita* that we are told:

Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error.

And it is added:

He who is perfected in devotion findeth spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously in himself in the progress of time.

But the three conditions have to be fulfilled. The aspirant is often an eager seeker as well as a ready server; but he is apt to go astray if he has not the humility to see "his own unfitness." The wisdom of the shepherd's boy in *The Pilgrim's Progress* is always worth remembering, but especially so by the would-be Occultist:

He that is down, needs fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride;
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his guide.

The God within us, the Admonisher, is often not listened to, and still less appealed to, to speak. To know our limitations and our weaknesses, our frailties and foibles, is to fortify ourselves against temptations, when they come, and to be always on our guard.

What next?

(3) *The more pure-minded any person is, the more free from materiality, the more likely is that person to naturally perceive what is the truth.*

We are glamoured by the ways of the "learned" world and we wrongly assume that *purity* of mind is not essential for knowing truth. Morality and knowledge are separated. Occultism teaches that a very intimate kinship exists between them. It is not by

head-learning that we can master the science of Occultism. We have to begin with heart-wisdom.

(4) *We must try to understand with the heart, and from within a light will begin to shine which will clear up doubts and darkness.*

This Heart-Light is the reflection of *Maha Buddhi*, Eternal Light, in the Heart of every man. It is lying passive and latent—a kind of hibernating dragon. The Light of Manas is one remove from It. Our Higher Manas is the son of *Mahat* or *Maha Buddhi*. It is active; not so our Buddhi which is generally passive. Occultism teaches us how to activate it in the right way, the royal way, which is the way of righteousness.

These early undertakings will lead the earnest aspirant, if his mind is sincere, to further and deeper knowledge. The Path of Occultism begins in an open way but soon becomes invisible. The Heart Doctrine teaches Right Resolve, leads us through Humility to Purity, and reveals in our own Heart the Light of the *Divine Paramitas*.

These are the preliminaries which are very necessary, and W. Q. Judge has put them in his own simple, inimitable way. He has much more to offer, but why not make a beginning? He will take the honest mind and the earnest heart from the known to the unknown, the Depth of the Secret Wisdom. The Path stretches inwards. Lips make the resolve; humility and purity are of the mind; in the Heart is the Light to be used to learn, to understand, to teach. What next? Take no thought of it. The morrow will bring us its own Light.

MEDITATION in the broadest sense refers to the sacred voyage up the river of our being to the Snowy Mountains from which that river takes its rise.

—SRI KRISHNA PREM

MATTER AND MORALITY

THE veil of matter is a dangerous veil; none the less, it is a necessary veil. The trouble really starts when matter is considered so vital, so important to life's action, that it erases memory with a strong hand and leaves it void of all intimations of the planes that lie behind matter. The danger, however, is not limited to this aspect of life only; for some there have been who have succeeded in peeping through the outer layers of matter into the hidden layers of that which still remains matter. The novel experience, the greater power which they acquire, deludes them into the belief that their quest has led them into spiritual realms, and, glamoured by the unknown, they have oftentimes shouted "Eureka!" and claimed liberation. The efforts of science to scratch the surface of matter have made matters worse confounded and have added to the general confusion. For, those who burn incense at the altars of science tend to be hemmed in by the hard, almost unbreakable, crusts of dogmatism and blind themselves completely to the realms which lie beyond. Modern philosophy, on the other hand, is at present in a barren period, and philosophers are too apt to assume the mantle of pioneers and experts in realms of which they speak glibly but into which they cannot enter.

Why is science, or even philosophy, so circumscribed? Why does the modern world fail to bring forth Alchemists or Magicians of the type of Hermes, Apollonius or Plotinus? The answer, it appears, is unpalatable to the modern mind and hence is considered no answer by the modern intelligentsia. The deeper study which takes one into the hidden realms of power cannot be entered upon without a mastery of the art of moral equations. "Why," asks the modern physicist, "should you mix up morality with problems in the higher sciences of mathematics and electronics? To us the impurities of life become a hindrance only if they encroach upon our fields of intellect and of experiment." They can ask us whether the great scientists who unveiled for us the mysteries of the atom and of the electric force needed to be such moralists as a Jesus or a Buddha. Did they not achieve that which for centuries was not even dreamt of? The aeroplane and the typewriter, the telephone and the supersonic apparatus, the radar and the results of researches in medicine, are great, almost stupendous, achievements. How then can these benefits be lightly brushed aside or their values depreciated by the preaching of moral values? The case is well put, is even forceful and

convincing from the point of view of the human intellect. It fails and must be dismissed if we apply to it certain fundamental laws which are inviolate and which are the touchstone by which tinsel can be separated from gold.

Where then does morality touch matter? Is there in matter some aspect of consciousness that reacts to the motive and the morality of the one who uses it? Can the taint of an evil person leave upon the substance which he handles an impress which remains indelible for long or short periods? These questions are not academic; for, if matter so reacts to the moral stimuli of man, then the whole question of scientific research must undergo a startling and radical alteration. The fundamental truth that science has forgotten is that in all its researches it touches life—be it in stone or mineral, chemical or man; and whether you are experimenting on new alloys or whether you are trying to find the nutritive elements in minerals, you are playing with one or another aspect of the all-pervasive and *intelligent* life.

In *Isis Unveiled* H.P.B. indicates the vastness of this field of study when she says: "Well, Oriental experience for a hundred centuries has shown that the germs of moral contagion linger about localities and impure magnetism can be communicated by the touch." Behind these general words lie the fields of grim reality. How can they be interpreted in the ordinary language of the day? Let us translate them into readily understandable propositions. Matter as we know it is sevenfold. It has memory and consciousness and it has, moreover, its sympathies and antipathies. The laws of chemistry will bear these statements out sufficiently. If, therefore, matter—the speck of dust, the "inert stone," the blade of grass, etc.—is to be understood, we have to analyze its make-up: (1) the outer form, (2) the inner nature which impresses upon and makes the outer form obey the laws of its nature, and (3) the spirit, the immortal aspect which remains unchanged and which is the grand spectator, the sustainer and the storehouse of all the experiences gone through. Neither science nor modern philosophy has gone beyond the first aspect, and they have therefore remained ignorant of the mighty laws that govern the inner life. In the tiniest molecule are layers of consciousness; layers, moreover, which are so subdivided that the one can retain the memory of the good, the other the memory of the evil, influences that impinge on that particular form of matter. Thus all forms and shapes—nay, even the shapeless and nebulous forms of matter—contain a vast storehouse of memories and of impressions. The analogy of a photographic record, or rather two

records, would therefore not be far wrong. But we now come to another aspect of matter which unfortunately is very little known—the ability of matter to release its memories automatically when galvanized in any one of its aspects by the attractive forces of consubstantiality which the human organism continuously liberates.

Let us suppose that a pen, a book, a fluid, has come under the strong magnetic influence (it may be a completely unconscious process) of a thoroughly selfish person. It gets saturated with this selfish force, which is then stored up in an appropriate part of its being and which will at any time release its memories of selfishness. Suppose now that an impressionable person who is a little selfish (and which of us is not in the wordly sense?) comes in contact with this surcharged form of matter. Because of the affinity of emotions (here selfishness) the exchange of essence becomes possible, and the individual is urged, seemingly against his will, to acts of selfishness.

There is, however, a still nearer karmic reservoir which pours into us the minute lives which either bless or damn our actions. A selfish act is by the very nature of selfishness hurtful to the lives used in the performance of that act, which in consequence receive its direct impact. These lives therefore react automatically, and, finding a lodgment in the make-up of their malefactor, troop down his hands, slide down his glance, penetrate through his words and despoil his good or heighten his evil, becoming thus the unconscious agents of his retribution. The vivisector, for instance, impresses his own photograph on the lives of his victim, and the more intense the pain he inflicts, the more vivid is their memory of him. These lives will cling to him, and, whenever the circumstances become favourable, precipitate themselves on any matter he may engage in, causing him continual disaster, either in this or in his future life.

On the deep of matter there must therefore inevitably be the shadow of darkness. In fact H.P.B. says: "Too much knowledge about things of matter is rightly shown as evil." The truth of the matter is that light is not the property of matter and can therefore never be found by the mere analysis of the outer crust of things. Modern science, if it is to come anywhere near the old sciences, has to enter into the realm of metaphysics. Our own museums and the grand architectural and other wonders that dot the world are ample proof that the ancient scientists knew and could handle forces which our modern scientists have been unable to touch or even to name. The *Vril* of Lytton's *Coming Race* was a force

once known and used by men. The force which drove Keely's "motor" at the mere touch of a hand—from whence did it come? Science does not know; but the force was discovered and bears testimony to the hidden side of things.

As will have been seen, there are laws which are delicately balanced and which take count of the motives and the purity of man. They must be respected, must be recognized. They were studied and lived up to in the ancient academies; they were certainly the basis on which rested the schools of Pythagoras and of the Neo-Platonists. It is therefore our duty to lead our scientists and philosophers to a search once again of the links that bind morality to action and therefore to science or to philosophy.

The Voice of the Silence has sage advice to give on the subject. Says the pupil: "The cloak of darkness is upon the deep of matter; within its folds I struggle. Beneath my gaze it deepens, Lord; it is dispelled beneath the waving of thy hand. . . ."

It is this tendency of the darkness of matter to deepen beneath the gaze of the ordinary searcher that is so frightening. The more intense the gaze, the profounder becomes the gloom. It is for this reason that in all of the much-vaunted discoveries of science we will always find lack of altruism and a tendency to accentuate one or another aspect of selfishness. "Those who live by the sword will perish by the sword" is a truism, and all that man has erected in non-altruistic endeavour will be the very things that shall devour him. In all ages, the wages of sin have been death.

What is the constructive line of ideation that Theosophy can offer to the philosopher and the scientist? Since altruism must remain the moral centre, all research, all efforts, must cease from inflicting pain, torture or death. All endeavours must have as their motive and basis the ultimate benefit of all beings, excluding therefrom not even the meanest of creatures. All efforts must be canalized to demonstrate to humanity at large that behind their bodies, behind their brains and minds, exists their Vital Self. The scientist can demonstrate this by a rediscovery of man's astral form and of the powers of the human soul. The philosopher can go further afield and trace the spiritual, psychic and intellectual pedigree of man and demonstrate how man is really the heir to all creation.

Science can, if strengthened by the moral codes of life, demonstrate ways by which the human intellect can find its full unfoldment under the benign radiance of the awakened soul. Furthermore, going deeper into the realms of true psychology, it can affirm the existence of the *Akashic* records and can formulate

the conditions required for any soul to enter that vast storehouse of divine knowledge. Lastly, both philosophy and science can show how matter has to be rightly handled, how we can intelligently guide it upon its upward way.

Mr. Judge has said that the Adept's work is to preserve the Philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to re-discover and promulgate it. One of the methods of rediscovery would be the planting of new ideas in clean places and allowing them to germinate in the mind of a congenial philosopher or scientist.

KNOW that mind is like a mirror which reflects images. But just as the mirror, the image, and the mode of reflection are three different things, so mind, objects, and the way of knowing are also distinct. There are five reasons which may prevent the object from being reflected in the mirror. (1) There may be something wrong with the mirror. (2) Something other than the mirror may prevent the reflection. (3) The object may not be in front of it. (4) Something may come between the object and the mirror. (5) The position of the object may not be known, so that the mirror may be properly placed. Similarly, for five reasons, the mind fails to receive knowledge. (1) The mind may be imperfect, like the child's. (2) Sin and guilt may bedim the mind and throw a veil over it. (3) The mind may be diverted from the real object. For example, a man may be obedient and good, but instead of rising higher to the acquisition of truth and contemplation of God is contented with bodily devotions and acquirement of means of living. (4) An external screen may, as it were, come before the objects. Sometimes a man who has subjugated his passions still through blind imitation or prejudice fails to know the truth. (5) There may be ignorance of the means for the acquisition of truth. Thus for illustration, a man wants to see his back in a mirror: if he places the mirror before his eyes he fails to see his back; if he keeps it facing his back it will still be out of sight. Let him then take another mirror and place one before his eyes and the other facing his back in such a position that the image of the latter is reflected in the former. Thus he will be able to see his back. Similarly the knowledge of the unknown from the known.

—ALGHAZZALI (1059-1111)

THEOSOPHICAL GLEANINGS

Notes on the "Secret Doctrine"

VII

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, September 1890.]

IT is hard to realize in thought the vast periods comprised in the rise, maturity, and decay of each of the Root-Races of our globe; hard to realize the slowness with which each Race quitted the stage it had occupied so long. Even today, as we have seen, there linger on the earth a few far-off direct descendants of the Third Root-Race; even today there are among us some few of the Atlantean stock that have not been fused into the Fifth Race. The "destruction of Atlantis"—as it is termed—due to "successive disturbances in the axial rotation" of the earth, lasted 200,000 years; the final remnant, Plato's famous island, disappearing within modern times.

We have seen the Lemuro-Atlantean Race differentiating on the Atlantic prolongation of Lemuria, and slowly, very slowly, emerged the vast continent, the Fourth, "bridging the ocean between America and Europe" (Vol II, p. 790). A mass of scientific evidence proving the existence of this continent is given in the *Secret Doctrine*, Vol. II, pp. 790 *et seq.* So many lines of evidence converge that it is easy to see that science will soon be quite indignant with the ignorance of any who deny that this continent once stretched where now the waves of the Atlantic roll. To us, who are Theosophists, the special interest of Atlantean man lies in the fact that he stands as the apotheosis of matter, the most material of human incarnations: that it was in those days that "the heaviest Karma of our Fifth Race was generated": that the third eye ceased to function as physical and psychic passions overpowered the spiritual: that Humanity, reaching its full physical development in these, at the middle-point of the Atlantean period "the door was shut," and no fresh Monads, thenceforward, incarnated on our globe (see Vol. II, pp. 302-303). The Atlanteans, "the first progeny of *semi-divine* man after his separation into sexes" (Vol. II, p. 273), were in all external characteristics men as we know them now, save that they were gigantic in comparison with their Fifth-Race descendants, passing along the same road as has been travelled by all plants and animals, the huge primeval organisms being now represented by comparatively diminutive types. Born of the less spiritual of the Third Race, the Fourth

started on its career under unfavourable conditions. "Endowed with divine powers, and feeling in himself his *inner* God, each [man of the Third Race] felt he was a Man-God in his nature, though an animal in his physical self. The struggle between the two began from the very day they tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Wisdom; a struggle for life between the spiritual and the psychic, the psychic and the physical. Those who conquered the lower principles by obtaining mastery over the body, joined the 'Sons of Light.' Those who fell victims to their lower natures, became the slaves of Matter. From 'Sons of Light and Wisdom' they ended by becoming the 'Sons of Darkness.' They had fallen in the battle of mortal life with Life immortal, and all those so fallen became the seed of the future generations of Atlanteans" (Vol. II, p. 272).

But these Atlanteans themselves degenerated as the centuries rolled on. From their earliest tribes, we are told, they separated "into the righteous and the unrighteous; into those who worshipped the one unseen Spirit of Nature, the ray of which man feels within himself—or the Pantheists, and those who offered fanatical worship to the Spirits of the Earth, the dark Cosmic, anthropomorphic Powers, with whom they made alliance. These were the earliest *Gibborim*, 'the mighty men of renown in those days' (*Gen. vi*); who become with the Fifth Race the *Kabirim*: Kabiri with the Egyptians and the Phoenicians, Titans with the Greeks, and Rakshasas and Daityas with the Indian races" (Vol. II, pp. 273-274). Hence the title acquired by the later Atlanteans, belonging to this "unrighteous race," of "the wicked"; in the Commentaries Atlantis is spoken of as "the abode of the wicked" (Vol. II, p. 401), and the Atlanteans "of the shadow" become the typical Black Magicians, the sorcerers, who were finally destroyed with the land they cursed.

The Atlantean is the type of intellect without spirituality, of terrestrial wisdom, of the triumph of Kama-Manas. He is the analogue of the Humanity of the Fourth Round, as described by a Master: "Intellect has an enormous development in this Round. The (hitherto) dumb races acquire our (present) human speech on this globe, on which, from the Fourth Race, language is perfected and knowledge increases. At this half-way point of the Fourth Round (as of the Fourth Root, or Atlantean, Race) humanity passes the axial point of the minor Manvantaric cycle... the world teeming with the results of intellectual activity and spiritual decrease" (Vol. I, p. 189). The language of the Atlanteans became agglutinative, and then, in the most highly

developed, passed on to its next stage: "While the 'cream' of the Fourth Race gravitated more and more towards the apex of physical and intellectual evolution, thus leaving as an heirloom to the nascent Fifth (the Aryan) Race the inflexional, highly developed languages, the agglutinative decayed and remained as a fragmentary fossil idiom, scattered now, and nearly limited to the aboriginal tribes of America" (Vol. II, p. 199). In colour, the yellow of the Third Race darkened into "red-yellow (the red Indians and the Mongolians being the descendants of these), and finally into brown-white Races—which now, together with the yellow Races, form the great bulk of Humanity" (Vol. II, p. 250).

We catch our clearest glimpse of the vast intellectual advances made by the Atlanteans in the astronomical knowledge handed down by them to their Aryan descendants. Asuramaya, the Atlantean, "as great a magician as he was an Astrologer and an Astronomer" (Vol. II, p. 50), stands, to the Occultist, at the very fountain-head of astronomical knowledge. To him are ascribed various astronomical works, based on the records of the mysterious Narada, Narada whose name appears in close connection with the Fourth Race, as with each other, but as to whom little information is given. He is spoken of in the Puranas, but the blinds are so complete that the reader is more likely to be led astray than to acquire trustworthy knowledge; thus, to take but a single instance: Narada visits Patala, the infernal regions; but Patala really means the Antipodes—Central America—as we find by collating the passage: "Some of the descendants of the primitive Nagas, the Serpents of wisdom, peopled America, when its continent arose during the palmy days of the great Atlantis (America being the *Patala* or Antipodes of Jambu-Dwipa, not of Bharata-Varsha)" (Vol. II, p. 182). And again H.P.B. points out that "Arjuna, Krishna's companion and *chela*, is said to have descended into *Patala*, the 'Antipodes,' and therein married Ulupi, a Naga (or Nagini rather), the daughter of the king of the Nagas"—adding in a footnote: "Ulupi has an entirely Atlantean ring about it. Like Atlantis, it is neither a Greek nor a Sanskrit name, but reminds one of Mexican names" (Vol. II, p. 214). This would seem to suggest that it is in Central America that we may hope to find some traces of Atlantean civilization; and if it be from the Atlanteans that the Mexicans and Peruvians descended, the problem that has puzzled many a student of their strange unique civilizations would be solved. It seems likely that as Atlantis was first populated as a prolongation of Lemuria, so the Fifth Continent would be first populated as a prolongation of

Atlantis; and then, separated from the Eastern hemisphere by the destruction of Atlantis, would be left to develop along the lines traced by the Atlantean progenitors, revealing, when rediscovered by the East, the remains of its archaic civilization.

To return to Asuramaya, the pupil(?) of Narada, and his astronomical records. The origin of the Zodiac is hidden in these dark regions: the Zodiac, with its original ten signs, becoming twelve by the separation of Virgo-Scorpio into two—symbolizing the separation of the sexes—and the addition of the sign later known as Libra (see Vol. II, p. 502, footnote). On this we read in *Isis Unveiled*: “The true Sabeian astrological doctrine secretly taught that within this double sign was hidden the explanation of the gradual transformation of the world, from its spiritual and subjective, into the ‘two-sexed’ sublunary state. . . . To make it clearer, the sign Virgo-Scorpio . . . became simply *Virgo*, and the duplication, or Scorpio, was placed between Libra, the *seventh* sign (which is Enoch, or the angel Metatron, or *Mediator* between spirit and matter, or God and man). It now became Scorpio (or Cain), which sign or patriarch led *mankind to destruction*, according to exoteric theology; but, according to the true doctrine of the wisdom-religion, it indicated *the degradation of the whole universe in its course of evolution downward from the subjective to the objective*. The sign of *Libra* is credited as a later invention by the Greeks, but it is not generally stated that those among them who were initiated had only made a change of names conveying the same idea as the secret name to those ‘who knew,’ leaving the masses as unwise as ever. Yet it was a beautiful idea of theirs, this *Libra*, or the balance, expressing as much as could possibly be done without unveiling the whole and ultimate truth. They intended it to imply that when the course of evolution had taken the worlds to the lowest point of grossness, where the earths and their products were coarsest, and their inhabitants most brutish, the turning-point had been reached—the forces were at an even balance. At the lowest point, the still lingering divine spark of spirit within began to convey the upward impulse. The scales typified that eternal equilibrium which is the necessity of a universe of harmony, of exact justice, of the balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces, darkness and light, spirit and matter” (*Isis Unveiled*, Vol. II, pp. 456-457). Such were the thoughts which brooded in the minds of the designers of the Zodiac, and it was under such influences that Asuramaya, the Atlantean, attained his knowledge of astronomy. “It is Asuramaya who is said to have based all his astronomical works upon

those records [those of Narada], to have determined the duration of all the past geological and cosmical periods, and the length of all the cycles to come, till the end of this life-cycle, or the end of the Seventh Race" (Vol. II, p. 49). On his works are founded the calculations of the Brahmin Initiates, the astronomy of Hindustan and thence of Egypt. Here is the explanation of that startling knowledge of astronomy among "the ancients" which has caused so much bewilderment among modern students. "There were giants in those days," in more senses than one.

We have already noticed that the heaviest Karma of the Fifth Race was generated among the Atlanteans: until the close of the Third Race there had been no death. The "men of the Third began to die out. Till then there had been no regular death, but only a transformation, for *men had no personality* as yet. They had Monads—breaths of the One Breath, and as impersonal as the source from which they proceeded. They had bodies, or rather shadows of bodies, which were sinless, hence *Karmaless*. Therefore, as there was no Kamaloka—least of all Nirvana or even Devachan—for the 'souls' of men who had no personal *Egos*, there could be no intermediate periods between the incarnations. Like the Phoenix, primordial man resurrected out of his old into a new body. Each time, and with each new generation, he became more solid, more physically perfect, agreeably with the evolutionary law, which is the *Law of Nature*. Death came with the complete physical organism, and with it—moral decay" (Vol. II, p. 610). With this complete physical organism and its occupation by its divine tenant came also moral responsibility, and therefore the generation of Karma. For, "in the case of the Atlanteans, it was precisely the spiritual being which sinned" (Vol. II, p. 302). Not content with using their intellect for the gaining of new experience, serviceable to their race, they followed "willingly the left Path," and went onwards to their destruction. Some—the one-third who "remained faithful"—moved from the lands fated to be submerged, and became the progenitors of the Fifth Root Race, some lingering on with the characteristics of their own Race until 11,000 years ago. "The wise races had perceived 'the black storm-dragons, called down by the dragons of wisdom'—and 'had fled, led on by the shining Protectors of the most Excellent Land'—the great ancient adepts, presumably; those the Hindus refer to as their Manus and Rishis" (Vol. II, p. 425). Taking root again in Central Asia, they produced the Turanians, the Mongols, the Chinese, and others. From these relics of the Fourth Race, their progenitors, budding Aryan nations learned

the elements of their civilization, "the hidden virtues of precious and other stones, of chemistry or rather alchemy, of mineralogy, geology, physics and astronomy" (Vol. II, p. 426). The unwise perished with the submerged continent of Atlantis; the last of the giant Atlanteans—on the Ruta and Daitya Island Continents—were overwhelmed some 850,000 years ago, towards the close of the Miocene age: the Aryo-Atlanteans disappeared with the last island of Atlantis—Plato's Atlantis—some 11,000 years ago only (Vol. II, p. 435). From the Ruta Atlanteans descended the Egyptians, with their marvellous civilization, their scientific knowledge, their mechanical skill. And thus, while the floods that whelmed Atlantis have left behind them the traditions that tell, both in Western and Eastern lands, of a supposed "universal deluge," the knowledge that made Atlantis great passed on to its children of the Fifth Race, that Race of which we are part, and before which still stretch many a thousand years.

—TWO STUDENTS

(Concluded)

Love the saints of every faith!
 Put away thy pride!
 The essence of religion is
 Humility, service, sympathy.
 Not fine clothes,
 Not the yogi's garb and ashes,
 Not the blowing of the horn,
 Not the shaven head,
 Not long prayers,
 Not recitations and torturings,
 Not the ascetic way,
 But a life of truth and love;
 Amid the world's temptations
 Is the secret of spiritual life.

—GURU NANAK

ON THE ALTAR OF SACRIFICE

ALL recognize the value of the Supreme Sacrifice made by others, and offer devotion, reverence and gratitude to those who have performed it. Yet each hesitates to make small sacrifices himself or herself.

The great figures of history are those who have performed the Sacrifice of self for the good of others, and their names are engraved on the Tablets of the Unseen Universe and reflected in the hearts of men. Few there are who succeed in making the reflected Image shine by its own light, but every great cycle of human progression brings some. The fact, however, that such Supreme Sacrifice is the result of a long, long line of smaller sacrifices is not recognized and therefore we do not see that here and now a beginning must be made.

The soldier makes the sacrifice of his life for his country; the mother, for her child; the animal, for its young. There is the story of the charred little body of a bird found sitting on its young in the nest after the forest fire had died away—the young alive, the mother burnt to death. There is the story of the Buddha's prior incarnation as a hermit, giving his body to the hungry tigress, and lives later gaining the power to sacrifice home and throne, wife and child, and even endless bliss for the sake of others. These examples should be taken from the realm of fancy and placed in the category of fact. Facts are something we can use. If the Buddha's sacrifice is not to be in vain, then the steps towards that sacrifice must be seen and traversed by us. The value of emulation is great.

Where shall we begin? Let us take stock of ourselves and see what we have to give up; see why we give it up, and to whom.

William Booth, the founder of the Salvation Army, is reported to have said, when a boy of fifteen: "I have decided that God shall have all there is of William Booth." Reformers give all there is of themselves to their reforms, and as the world possesses many reformers and many who "give all there is of themselves to God," why is the world in the condition in which it is? To answer this question we need to find out what "all of" ourselves means, and to what or whom we give it.

We give up whatever we do give up to an idea held in the mind. Religious reformers sacrifice themselves to bring the idea they hold of God and man down to actual fact on earth. The prison reformer gives of himself to his idea of what prison reform should be. The Hatha-Yogi gives himself to that idea of liberation or

concentration which he thinks is the highest. The selfish devotee holds the ideal of perfection and liberation and sacrifices himself to that, and ends by becoming that towards which he has aimed, but the price he has to pay is very heavy: "He disappears from the sight and the hearts of men."

It is a strange fact that we do not yet realize that the ideas by which we live are mostly those implanted in our minds in early youth, or reflected by our civilization. The religionist thinks he is so by his own desire, whereas, if he does not think about it and study the question from all points of view, he is merely living in the reflection of the ideas held by others. Few of us have the power to make up our own minds, through reasoning and common-sense, about any difficult question in life. Hence the mass following of this or that reformer, this or that medical "new" discovery. It is better to be barren of ideas than to hold rigidly to those which we have by reflection. Life will soon teach us some simple ideas to hold and live by if we cast out the others! H.P.B. says in *The Key to Theosophy* that even as students we cannot fail to be impressed and limited by our own preconceptions, prejudices and beliefs, so we are ceaselessly self-deceived.

What the contents of our workaday minds are, can be discovered by watching what we like and dislike, what we do or do not do, how we feel, what kind of recreation we take. These things are the outer reflection of ideas held in the mind, and of those ideas the most important, in its effects, is that which we hold of ourselves. We have built up in the mind an image of what we think we are, what we think are the rights we should have, of what importance we are to the world. We can liken this image to the ones in Mr. Judge's "Tell-Tale Picture Gallery." When we are angry, it is furious and warlike, hot and destructive; when we are feeling jealous or resentful, it is a perfect embodiment of those qualities. It is a pretty horrid image very often, and even when we are feeling "good," is rather like a Uriah Heep or a sanctimonious angel! It is always in the form of this body, even to the clothes worn. It is *its* path in life we are concerned with. Look at it as a marionette, capable of expressing feeling and thought and action, and we may feel like the woman who "saw her soul and died of it" with sheer horror.

But there is another aspect to this image. At times it can be beautiful, but then is not in the form of the body we know; it is a glow, a warmth, an illumination. These moments are when we turn our attention to the Soul and its nature, for this image will faithfully reflect higher ideas as well as lower ones. This image

is now a focus for the radiation of pure Light, and because Light is pure and uncoloured it throws up the colours of that on which it falls. One mark of the spiritual man is his capacity to bring out the qualities of those he meets.

To reach this condition the self-assertive, proud image must have lost its power or colouring. The despot strengthens his despotism by continued sacrifice of others; the saint strengthens his holiness by continued sacrifice of himself. Which would we be? Do we demand our rights? Do we point out the faults of others? Do we tell others they are hindering the Work? Do we frighten other plodding human souls? Do we, by lack of thought, cause suffering to others? When we die, will soft airs breathe, or will a sigh of thankfulness be forced instinctively from the hearts of those with whom we have lived? One of the great phrases in the *Gita* refers to him "of whom mankind is not afraid."

The recognition that this image we have built up of ourselves is only an image, a marionette, is the first stage towards spiritual living. It has its own will, its own qualities, often fine ones, but they have to be curbed and new and more universal ones have to be born in it. This can be done by the use of the Spiritual Will, and every time the lower is curbed by the higher concepts in our mind, every time the personal will is demolished by the higher will, we have taken a step towards the goal of the Supreme Sacrifice. Perhaps it seems too little a thing to offer on the Altar of Service. It does seem little, for it shows no immediate effect. Such curbing of the lower are unknown to any but the curber and the curbed. There is no applause to give us zest to go on; there are instead hurt and sadness.

We cease to give up things to another God or our own idea; we give up the lower to the Higher—a silent process. Only when we have learnt that life is for the walking of the Higher, not the lower, and then that even the Higher walks not for Itself but for the All, only then shall we arrive at that goal where we shall live for ever in the hearts of men.

WHEN freedom is not an inner idea which imparts strength to our activities and breadth to our creations, when it is merely a thing of external circumstance, it is like an open space to one who is blindfolded.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

WHO IS A THEOSOPHIST ?

Through the practising of benevolence, tenderness, complacency, and the disregard for objects of (personal) happiness, grief, virtue, and vice, the mind becomes purified.

—PATANJALI

IT is usually taken for granted that a member of a theosophical organization, or one who declares his belief in the doctrine, is, as a matter of course, a theosophist. It is a conveniently descriptive title. But H.P.B. in her writings frequently referred to “true” or “real” theosophists, and she would not do so without reason. She also said that there were not a great proportion of “real” theosophists in membership and that there were many outside the theosophical fold who could claim this high distinction. They would probably be the last to do so. Of course, she was writing of her own times and whether her dictum holds good today or not, is best left to individual consideration by a process of self-examination.

When writing as she did, H.P.B. was drawing a distinction between theoretical and practical theosophists. But strictly speaking the words “true” and “real” are redundant; no matter how firm our belief, we are either theosophists or we are not, and the right to such a title rests in the efforts we may make to support belief by practice. The question demands serious consideration. It has been truly said that there is no such thing as conversion to Theosophy. We reach it by the extension of previously held beliefs, arriving by a process of reasoning at what may be termed the theosophical door. At this point we may be regarded as theosophists in theory, the doctrine having appealed to our reason. Some of us remain at the door and theorize; others with greater wisdom, open the door and pass on. We must all pass on sooner or later, and the procedure amounts to no more than putting Theosophy into practice and thereby becoming theosophists in fact. Naturally we must all make our own rules, but some indication may not be out of place.

A theosophist will ensure that in himself is the reality of the brotherhood he preaches and which he should represent.

He will carry Theosophy into his everyday life, never forgetting that he is only a theosophist so far as he lives for and teaches the doctrine. This has nothing in common with the emotional disturbances usually associated with conversion. It is a calm spiritual and intellectual conviction that the only thing worth living for is Theosophy.

He will quell selfishness, anger and uncharitableness in himself, and strive to be faultless, while ignoring the faults he thinks he may see in others.

He will expound the doctrine to all who wish to know of it, yet protect it from ribald abuse.

He will think Theosophy if he cannot talk it. Thoughts are powers. It is possible to be a theosophist in a prison cell.

He will attend all theosophical meetings as a sacred duty unless prevented by a higher duty or physical incapacity. A group of people who are discussing and thinking about Theosophy must radiate a strong mental impulse for good. He will strengthen the impulse.

He will, as a matter of course, support any ethical cause so far as he is able, whether associated with a Theosophical organization or not.

He may feel that he is making progress, but he will never regard it as a personal triumph, though he may find contentment in the knowledge that it is for the good of all humanity.

Under the harsh commercial circumstances of our daily lives, this may appear to be a counsel of perfection beyond attainment. It is; but this and much more will yet be demanded of us. We will try, and fail often, perhaps disastrously. But our karma has placed us where we are, on the field of battle chosen by ourselves, and we must make the best of it. Each effort will bring its compensation in its own degree. Each failure should be a spur to greater effort. We must *will* ourselves to be theosophists.

NATIONS long for a state of affairs in which conflict will no longer be the law of international relations, in which relationships of societies amongst themselves will be arranged peacefully, in which all people will co-operate and lead their lives in this way. Although this attempt is at times neutralized by what the particular society of which we form part is concerned with, it remains lively to an undiminished degree and is increasing more and more in strength.

—E. DURKHEIM

LAW, ETERNAL AND UNCREATE

DEITY, in Theosophy, manifests as Universal Life, but also as Absolute Law, Law eternal and uncreate. Deity is Law and *vice versa*.

I am the embodiment of the Supreme Ruler, and of the incorruptible, of the unmodifying, and of the eternal law, and of endless bliss. (*The Bhagavad-Gita*, XIV, 27)

Thou art the supreme inexhaustible Being, the end of effort, changeless, the Supreme Spirit of this universe, the never-failing guardian of eternal law. (*Ibid.*, XI, 18)

One universal and immutable Law operates throughout the entire cosmos. It is known as the law of periodicity or of cycles. Its cosmic manifestation is the succession of Manvantaras and Pralayas, the periodic emergence of universes from subjectivity into objectivity, and their reabsorption once more into the unknown Root.

O son of Kunti, at the end of a kalpa all things return unto my nature, and then again at the beginning of another kalpa I cause them to evolve again. (*Ibid.*, IX, 7)

Those who are acquainted with day and night know that the day of Brahmâ is a thousand revolutions of the yugas and that his night extendeth for a thousand more. At the coming on of that day all things issue forth from the unmanifested into manifestation, so on the approach of that night they merge again into the unmanifested. This collection of existing things having thus come forth, is dissolved at the approach of the night, O son of Pritha; and now again on the coming of the day it emanates spontaneously. (*Ibid.*, VIII, 17-19)

Man, too, as a Pilgrim-Soul, passing through the great cycle of Necessity, goes from life to death and back to life again. "Death is certain to all things which are born, and rebirth to all mortals." (*Ibid.*, II, 27)

Each life of activity is followed by a period of rest, of Devachanic bliss and assimilation. When all the experiences of an incarnation have been assimilated and built into the fabric of the soul, it returns once more to active life on earth. Thus periods of activity and of repose rhythmically succeed each other.

And they, having enjoyed that spacious heaven for a period in proportion to their merits, sink back into this mortal world where they are born again as soon as their stock of merit is exhausted. (*Ibid.*, IX, 21)

Both I and thou have passed through many births, O harasser of thy foes! Mine are known unto me, but thou knowest not of thine. (*Ibid.*, IV, 5)

Even within the span of a single life, man goes through the minor cycles of childhood, youth, manhood and old age. "As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same." (*Ibid.*, II, 13)

There is also the Cycle of the great Avataras, when, at the proper period in the life of mankind, some high soul takes upon itself a body of flesh and voluntarily incarnates. This is sometimes for the benefit of a particular nation or race, but always to help on the spiritual progress of humanity.

I produce myself among creatures, O son of Bharata, whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness. (*Ibid.*, IV, 7-8)

"Periods of mental and moral light and darkness succeed each other as day does night." During a cycle of degradation the true doctrine disappears for a time from among men, but like the sun it is sure to reappear. Periodically, the same eternal Wisdom-Religion is restated in a form and language to suit the mind of the race and whenever the cycle for its reiteration dawns.

This exhaustless doctrine of Yoga I formerly taught unto Vivaswat; Vivaswat communicated it to Manu and Manu made it known unto Ikshwaku; and being thus transmitted from one unto another it was studied by the Rajarshees, until at length in the course of time the mighty art was lost, O harasser of thy foes! It is even the same exhaustless, secret, eternal doctrine I have this day communicated unto thee because thou art my devotee and my friend. (*Ibid.*, IV, 1-3)

Another name for the law of periodicity is Karma, the law of action and reaction. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Man, as a self-conscious being, is a generator of force, setting up causes on the various planes by his thoughts, feelings, words and deeds. The effects are bound to return to the centre from which the causes have been set in motion. Karma adjusts each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer.

Thou canst create this "day" thy chances for thy "morrow." In the "Great Journey," causes sown each hour bear each its

harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World. With mighty sweep of never erring action, it brings to mortals lives of weal or woe, the karmic progeny of all our former thoughts and deeds. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 37)

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the karmic heart. (*Ibid.*, p. 30)

Learn that no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke remains not traceless. "A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again." The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn. (*Ibid.*, p. 37)

The absolute universality of the operation of the Law of Cycles is seen in such common phenomena as day and night, waking and sleeping, summer and winter, cold and heat. All pairs of opposites are but manifestations of the ever-operating, beginningless and endless law of cycles. "These two, *light* and *darkness*, are the world's eternal ways." (*Gita*, VIII, 26)

IT looks as if telepathically received impressions have some difficulty in crossing the threshold and manifesting themselves in consciousness. There seems to be some barrier or repressive mechanism which tends to shut them out from consciousness, a barrier which is rather difficult to pass, and they make use of all sorts of devices for overcoming it. Sometimes they make use of the muscular mechanisms of the body, and emerge in the form of automatic speech or writing. Sometimes they emerge in the form of dreams, sometimes as visual or auditory hallucinations. And often they can only emerge in a distorted and symbolic form (as other unconscious mental contents do). It is a plausible guess that many of our everyday thoughts and emotions are telepathic or partly telepathic in origin, but are not recognized to be so because they are so much distorted and mixed with other mental contents in crossing the threshold of consciousness.

—H. H. PRICE

THE TRANSMUTATION OF WORK

It is not *what* is done, but the spirit in which the least thing is done for Them who are all, that is counted.

—W. Q. JUDGE

DO our routine tasks seem humdrum, dull, or boring? It is our own fault chiefly, for it is the spirit in which our duties are approached and carried out that lends its zest to their performance or makes them burdensome. The simplest action may be touched with grace. What hallows the common task is, in the words ascribed to the devout and humble Brother Lawrence, toiling steadily and tranquilly in the kitchen of his monastery three centuries ago, “not the greatness of the work, but the love with which it is performed.”

What frees us from “the good and evil experiences which are the bonds of action” is acting without selfish interest in the results, committing whatever we do, eat, sacrifice or give, whatever mortification we perform, to the Lord in the heart—whether we call It Krishna or by any other name—or to the unseen Master of whose nearness some are conscious in high moments.

It goes without saying that such actions as we know to be unworthy of our better nature cannot be laid on the great spiritual altar in the heart; if we are in earnest, the recognition of that impossibility powerfully reinforces the promptings of conscience. Duty performed in that spirit of dedication and with indifference to praise or blame gives a satisfaction all its own.

The only possible reward which the great Masters’ constant labours to benefit mankind can bring to Themselves was said by one of Them to be the consciousness that They were doing Their duty to humanity. Such a consciousness, in a degree commensurate with the development and earnestness of each and with the spirit and quality of his service, can be shared by every individual who has dedicated his life to Their service and to that of Their humanity on the lines laid down by Them.

Whatever be the task that under Karma lies before us, what matters is, first and foremost, our motive, and, secondly, the way in which we do that which we have to do. We may feel confident that our motive is to help another, but if we lack heart sympathy, which finds its natural expression in graciousness and tact, we may apply corrosive instead of balm to the wounds which under Karma he has suffered and which we sought to heal.

The most brilliant intellectual work untouched by the heart quality may be a monument to the author’s industry and learning,

may even be acclaimed as great, but its days will be numbered. It has been truly said that "only the mystic who can wield a pen can produce immortal literature."

Ideally, every action should meet the test of all-round rightness—being performed with the right motive, in the right place, at the right time and in the right way. This demands full concentration, whatever the duty before us is, but it does not rule out keeping in the background of our consciousness our ideal and our goal. On the contrary, holding the ideal of the true Self within, or of the Masters and Their service as the subtone of our thinking, will in fact increase our power of concentration on whatever we are doing. Some have found helpful for this practice the phrase, "With the eye of the heart on the distant goal and the eye of the mind on the step ahead."

A letter written, or even signed, with the Divine in view, carries an invisible blessing, breathes perhaps the message, "Theosophy" and "Help and hope for thee." It is perhaps to action in this spirit that best applies the 17th-century George Herbert's verse:

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws
Makes that and th' action fine.

The habit of thinking on the higher plane can be developed, Madame Blavatsky has written, though with difficulty by those not born with the gift. She tells us that the thought of one who thinks about even the most trifling things from the higher plane of thought "will be so far more intense than the thought of an ordinary person, that by this very intensity it obtains the power of creation."

Will not, therefore, even a routine task—including those superciliously called menial—performed by one possessing this gift, carry a special potency for good? Such a task efficiently and cheerfully performed: a room well swept, a field ploughed in straight furrows, a column of figures dependably added, a meal prepared with the idea in the background of consciousness of supplying proper materials for building the living temples of human bodies—must not even such humble tasks, performed in the right spirit, contribute each its mite to the sweetening of human relations and the slow building of a better world?

THE PHOENIX ASCENDING

X.—From Death to Life Eternal

... as when

The bird of wonder dies, the maiden phoenix,
Her ashes new create another heir,
As great in admiration as herself;
So shall she leave her blessedness to one—
When heaven shall call her from this cloud of darkness—
Who from the sacred ashes of her honour
Shall star-like rise, as great in fame as she was,
And so stand fix'd.

—SHAKESPEARE (*King Henry VIII*)

IF crucifixion is symbolized by the cross, the resurrection on the third day is referred to as the phoenix arising from its ashes. The two events are annually enacted in Nature. Who has not admired the fall, the season of mists and mellowed fruitfulness, when the land is covered with foliage! But it is only the few who have discovered in this annual pageant the secret laws of human death and immortality.

Botanists tell us of the miracle that takes place in the leaf during this season. After the resurgence of spring, which bathes every vein of the leaf with the elixir of life, when all the forces in the tree are expanding from within without, there comes the preservative or conservative aspect of the cycle in the summer days, to be followed in the fall by an indrawing back to the heart of the tree. We see then the heavy fall of leaves from the tree and imagine that the branches and leaves are dead. No, say the scientists. The leaves do *not* die. That which is thrown away is but the external husk, like the snake shedding its skin. The real living part, the protoplasmic content of the cells, is well preserved deep within. This is the precious treasure of chlorophyll, which in the presence of sunlight converts carbon dioxide and water into carbohydrates. As the autumnal season progresses, most of the hoarded stock gradually withdraws from leaf to twig, from twig to branch, nay, even to the trunk sometimes, where it remains in suspense ready to blossom forth in the new period of growth to ensue in the spring. "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" is the optimistic hope that leaps in the heart of the poet, which is only in harmony with the true laws of Nature.

The botanist continues the story of the leaf by observing that once the living treasure is safely stored within, a layer of cork-

like cells is formed between the leaf-stem and the twig, obstructing the connection between the two. This has the double effect of sealing up the entry path of the leaf into the tree for its sap as well as the escape of the sap outside. The leaf left starving is ready now to fall down at the slightest whiff of the breeze, while earlier the strongest storm could not affect it, while clinging to the twig.

If one can comprehend the working of laws in an atom or a cell, it is the countless adaptations of these laws that constitute the manifested universe of living things—plants, animals and human beings. Here in the life of a single leaf is witnessed the cycle of birth, death and regeneration. There are many references in *The Secret Doctrine* to the symbolism of the tree and cosmogony, the tree and the Tau, the Cross and the Circle, etc., to which attention has been drawn in previous articles of this series.

To the follower of the true Eastern archaic Wisdom, to him who worships in spirit naught outside the Absolute Unity, that ever-pulsating great *Heart* that beats throughout, as in every atom of nature, each such atom contains the germ from which he may raise the Tree of Knowledge, whose fruits give life eternal and not physical life alone. (*S.D.*, II, 588)

The esoteric student is not so much concerned with the colour and beauty of the autumnal foliage as with that Force, the sap running through the trunk on to the branch, to the twig, and to the leaf—that which directs the growth of the tree, the ever mysterious, as the ever unknown.

For this vital Force, that makes the seed germinate, burst open and throw out shoots, then form the trunk and branches, which, in their turn, bend down like the boughs of the *Aswattha*, the holy Tree of Bodhi, throw their seed out, take root, and procreate other trees—this is the only FORCE that has reality for him, as it is the never-dying breath of life. (*S.D.*, II, 589)

Although the symbolism of the tree, playing as it does an important role in the journey of the pilgrim-soul, may take us to the *Katha Upanishad* and the *Bhagavad-Gita* (Chapter XV) referring to the Ashwattha Tree with its roots above and its branches below, let us confine ourselves to what H.P.B. describes as “the mystical tree Ababel—the ‘*Father Tree*’ in the Kuran—[which] shoots out new branches and vegetation at every resurrection of the Kerkes or Phoenix.” (*S.D.*, II, 617)

It is refreshing to note that she draws the comparison between

the Hindu scriptures and the Persian, Phoenician, Chaldean and Egyptian cosmogonies, including the Rabbinical literature on this subject. She refers to the *garuda* as the Indian phoenix and says:

The *Phoenix*, connected with the Solar Cycle of 600 years (with ciphers taken out or with more added according to which cycle is meant), the Western cycle of the Greeks and other nations—is a generic symbol for several kinds of cycles.

The Phoenix—called by the Hebrews Onech (from *Phenoch*, Enoch, symbol of a secret cycle and initiation), and by the Turks, *Kerkes*—lives a thousand years, after which, kindling a flame, it is self-consumed; and then, reborn from itself—it lives another thousand years, up to *seven times seven*, when comes the Day of Judgment. The “seven times seven,” 49, are a transparent allegory, and an allusion to the forty-nine “Manus,” the Seven Rounds, and the seven times seven human cycles in each Round on each globe. (*S.D.*, II, 617)

The phoenix is referred to in other scriptures, too, and H.P.B. quotes Kenealy, according to whom

the Phoenix is very plainly the same as the *Simorgh*, the Persian *roc*, and the account which is given us of this last bird, yet more decisively establishes the opinion that the death and revival of the Phoenix exhibit the successive destruction and reproduction of the world, which many believed to be effected by the agency of a fiery deluge—and a watery one in turn. When the Simorgh was asked her age, she informed Caherman that this world is very ancient, for it has been already *seven times replenished* with beings different from men, and *seven times depopulated*; that the age of the human race, in which we now are, is to endure *seven thousand numbers*, and that she herself had seen *twelve* of these revolutions, and knew not how many more she had to see. (*Ibid.*)

There are many legends about the phoenix, one of which declares that buried in the sun is a “cosmic phoenix.” The “phoenix” is a vast mass of fire at the very heart of the sun that burns itself out, after incalculable periods of time, and then mysteriously renews itself. The fable of the phoenix is the profoundest of truths in a mythology that, under the form of stories and legends, had given many profound truths. As a symbol of death and resurrection it has been a favourite metaphor in Pagan and Christian literature.

In Egyptian mythology, the phoenix is sacred to the sun-god. In the best-known version of the fable, the bird was supposed to appear at Heliopolis once in every 500 years and build a pyre,

on which it was burnt, a new phoenix rising from the ashes.

According to the Greek legend, the fabled paradise of the phoenix lies in a secret land, hidden away among the towering mountains. There in a wondrous tree the phoenix builds a nest, where it assembles from far and near the sweetest and most delightful plants and twigs of spice-trees to perfume it. Great is its longing to convert, by the activity of its mind, old age and decay into growth and life. When the Sun, the jewel in Heaven, shines hottest above the shaded trees in summer time, the phoenix sits ready for departure, surveying the world and enduring its fate. Suddenly the nest is ignited by the radiant sun; the spices glow and the pleasant hill fumes with the sweet odours. The fierce heat enfolds the nest, ultimately devouring it, and the body of the phoenix, its time having come, is consumed by the fire. But its life, the doomed one's soul, escapes as the flames sear flesh and bone. In due season, new life returns to it, when once the ashes begin, after the fire's ravages, to knit together and cohere into a ball. Out of it grows a wonderfully beautiful worm, as if it had been hatched from an egg, bright from the shell. It grows in the shade, becoming first like the young of an eagle, then thrives until it is decked with bright plumage. Its flesh is renewed, born again, shorn of all sin. It touches no earthly food, save the honeydew. With this it supports its life, until it visits its own dwelling place, the ancient land. Renewed is the ministrant of the Sun, while the luminary of Heaven, the most flashing of jewels, rises over the ocean in splendour from the East.

Such a renewal goes on for ever and ever like the eternal spring; for the truth buried here in the legend of the phoenix is the constant rebirth or resurrection of man and of all life, or, to put it in different words, the conservation, transformation and indestructibility of spiritual, mental and physical energy in a world that can never die. Spring follows winter; and winter, spring, in eternal succession. That message is the constant refrain of many festivals, the Holi in the north, the Makara Sankranti in the south, the Easter in Christian lands. Easter is the ceremonial that crowns all the other religious festivals of the year with its springtime halo of resurrected life.

The Greek word for the resurrection is *anastasis*, "the standing-up," meaning the phoenix ascending. Only a little prefix distinguishes it from *ecstasis*, "standing-out." Man's "up-standing" or "out-standing" refers only to the exit from his "tomb" of flesh. It is worth while to look into the similarity of the etymology of the Greek words for body and tomb, namely, *soma* and *sema*,

respectively. Obviously in the Hermetic esoteric philosophy, the human body was the living tomb, grave, sepulchre or the winding-sheet or sheath in which the real man lay in death, till resurrected by the sun of divine light and truth in the springtime turn of the cycle, following the winter of sleep. The annual cycle of the four seasons depicts the pilgrimage of the real man (not the "image," as the *Voice* indicates at the bottom of page 2), round the cycles of existence; the spirit in man being the little sun, the perfect parallel of the sun in heavens. In the words of the *Isa Upanishad*: "I am that very Person that is yonder in the sun" (verse 16). The four cardinal turns of the sun's progress in the zodiac correspond to the epochal stages in man's spiritual evolution, say the sages.

It is the soul's immersion in the body and its equilibrium with it that brings consciousness to function. Like any seed sown in the soil, it sinks its roots deeper into matter; for, at its later stages of growth it must be able to utilize the energy of matter's atomic force for its own onward march towards spirit. Even as the mighty oak can exalt its majestic form to highest reaches by its own dynamic energization received from the earth, so does man lift himself up to heights of cosmic consciousness by drawing upon the inner dynamo of power, mentally and emotionally. Down, down it strikes its roots till it reaches its nadir during Christmas time. This is the turning point, when the potential energies of the seed feel the first touch of quickening power and begin to stir. The winter solstice signifies the end of "death" and the rebirth of life in a new generation. Hence is it named the time of the "birth of the divine sun" in man, the birth of Christos, the Messianic child of spirit. The sun-power of the spiritual light bestirs into activity the latent capabilities of life and consciousness. As H.P.B. writes:

The earth passes through its definite phases and man with it; and as a day can be coloured so can a year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfil them consistently. (*Lucifer*, January 1888)

With increasing power, the vigour of the spiritual light bestirs into activity the latent capabilities of life and consciousness, and the hidden beauty of the spirit breaks through the limiting soil of the body and stands out in the fulness of its divine expression in Easter. The vernal equinox ushers in spring, and when in full bloom, it brings the inner man in a burst of glorious light out of the tomb of fleshly "death," giving him verily his resurrection.

No longer is man a denizen of the lower worlds, for spring has come and released not only nature but man too from the earthly dungeon. Bursting through the gates of death and of Hades, they march in triumph upward to become lords of life in higher spheres of the cosmos. The ascent of the phoenix is the symbol of Easter, the risen Christ. For the Christ is no man, but "the Divine Principle in every human being," says H.P.B., and she adds:

He who strives to resurrect the Spirit *crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions*, and buried deep in the "sepulchre" of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back *the stone of matter* from the door of his own *inner* sanctuary, he *has the risen Christ in him*. (*The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*, p. 2)

Every year the fresh beauty of nature wakes from the winter sleep during Easter and rises radiant from the bare furrows and the dried forest trees. The branches put forth their leaves, and the soil smiles with her blossoms. And as Chaucer puts it in his queer Middle English:

And smale foules maken melodie,
That slepen alle night with open eye,
So priketh hem nature in hir corages.

But more glorious is the Easter day of the mind, when the brain rises from the depth of ignorance and breaks out of the tomb in which it has been buried, shut out from the sunshine of knowledge and of truth. Each mind and heart must have their own Easter days of resurrection, save those on whose tomb the priests have rolled the stone of fear. But humanity in this Aquarian age has, like the phoenix, arisen boldly to proclaim the truth and nail down the lie, to cradle a new verity and strike down a hoary superstition, and become strong enough to roll away the stone from the door of the sepulchre of ignorance, fear, doubt and hypocrisy.

(Concluded)

NEXT to knowing when to seize an opportunity, the most important thing in life is to know when to forgo an advantage.

—BENJAMIN DISRAELI

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Reflections on the future of the human race and the options we face have become all too common in this our nuclear age. Rusty Schweickart, a former astronaut and Air Force officer, orbited the earth for ten days in 1969, and his remarks, based on an address to philosophers and theologians in Kyoto, appear in the *July Discover*. He speaks of the predicament we find ourselves in and the revelations that came to him from circling our planet:

As you pass from sunlight into darkness and back again every hour and a half, you become startlingly aware how artificial are the thousands of boundaries we've created to separate and define. And for the first time in your life you feel in your gut the precious unity of the earth and all the living things it supports. The dissonance between this unity you see and the separateness of human groupings that you know exists is starkly apparent.

During my space flight, I came to appreciate my profound connection to the home planet and the process of life evolving in our special corner of the universe, and I grasped that I was part of a vast and mysterious dance whose outcome will be determined largely by human values and actions. . . .

We're amazing beings, and wonder about our origins and purpose, our past and future. Above all, we can think and do. We can wrestle with ethical dilemma, ambiguity, and paradox. By any measure, we're a marvellous experiment. But we're now also capable of terminating this cosmic experiment. . . .

Is anybody actually in charge? Or have we lost the handle on our technology? It sometimes seems as if our machines have developed a life of their own. . . .

This marriage of human and machine has created the ultimate predicament. Our technology has progressed to where we can now manipulate energy and material to free ourselves from our earthly womb, or to destroy all life on it. Which will it be? I believe the right choice can only be made if we overcome our fears, our distrust of each other, our assumption of separateness.

Our future—indeed, our survival—is closely tied to the idea of our *common* destiny, and we must act, individually and together, out of an appreciation of that grand vision. . . .

Action, for good or ill, comes out of vision. What I've been talking about is envisioning our role in life, in the cosmos. When I understand you and me to be one, I think and act differently from when I see us as separate. Yet while we may see ourselves as members of a community, there's no escaping individual

responsibility. History emerges from a succession of individual, apparently independent, actions.

As an erstwhile pilot of planes bearing nuclear bombs, Schweickart had at one time to face a momentous moral dilemma. "I now understand," he reflects, "that we can't pass along such decisions [to drop the bomb] to higher authority, for there is no higher authority than that which exists in each of us, individually, as we face our complicated and ambiguous world." In his view, it is these individual moral choices, when repeated and aggregated in the behaviour of families, of communities, of nations, that are the very essence of our humanity—and of our survival.

So here we are, approaching the twenty-first century.... Our dilemma becomes increasingly daunting. Will our vision of the human future be large and clear enough to lift us beyond the uncertainties and fears of our cosmic birth? Will we have the wisdom and courage to accept the individual moral authority within each of us? Or will we defer to experts and impersonal systems of authority in the false belief that in them reside greater wisdom and morality? In how we answer these questions may lie the outcome of the great experiment of life.

Our world is beset with urgent, intractable problems, and to solve them "it is not new scientific knowledge and technology that we need so much as new *actions*: new policies, new international relations, new institutions and social arrangements, new ways of living," says Nicholas Maxwell, lecturer in the history and philosophy of science at University College, London. An article in *New Scientist*, May 14, based on his book, *From Knowledge to Wisdom*, makes a plea for a new way of thinking; new, more co-operative, wiser ways of living:

The dreadful truth is that science has played a crucial role, often unwittingly, in the *creation* of our problems. This is glaringly obvious in the case of the nuclear arms race. But it is true of our other problems as well....

We need to learn how to resolve our conflicts in more just, humane and rationally co-operative ways. This in turn requires that we create new institutions and traditions of learning, rationally devoted to helping us to learn how to become more co-operative and wise. We need a new kind of academic enterprise, all over the world, which takes as its basic task to promote not just

knowledge, but rather *wisdom*—wisdom being defined as the capacity to solve problems of living so as to achieve what is of value, for oneself and others (wisdom thus including but going beyond knowledge)

When viewed from the standpoint of helping humanity to solve its global problems, the kind of academic inquiry that we have at present is an intellectual and moral disaster For what it does is to increase our power to *act* without at the same time increasing our power to act *co-operatively and rationally*, that is, without increasing our power to choose good goals in life—those that enhance justice, peace, democracy and co-operative ways of living. Our global problems are the all but inevitable outcome: they are precisely the outcome of increased power to act divorced from any increase in our power to act co-operatively.

We need, in other words, to bring about a major revolution in the overall aims and methods of education, so that the basic object becomes not just to impart knowledge and information, but to fit us to cope with the real problems of living. “It would not, of course, be the job of academics to dictate to the rest of us how we should think and act,” says Maxwell. “Their job, rather, would be to help the rest of us to improve our own thinking and living for ourselves.”

Edward de Bono is a world-renowned originator, propagator and enthusiast of the idea of lateral thinking—thinking which is creative, insightful and provocatively innovative in problem-solving. (See “In the Light of Theosophy,” May 1987.) He presented an impromptu article, dictated on the spot, to *Science Today* (Bombay) when he was being interviewed during his recent lecture tour of India. The article reads in part:

Regarding the different levels I’m working on, one is, what is the nature of thinking? Can we design different concepts? I’m working on a language for thinking, an international language which would cut across different languages. The next level is education; specifically schools. Then the next level is business where there is a growing interest in thinking. The level after that is where I’m setting up an international organization like an intellectual Red Cross to really provide neutral objectives for creative thinking.

What I’m doing in schools is introducing practical ways to teach thinking. Only one sixth of this is creative thinking. Many

people say that creativity is fine for adults but you're going to confuse children. Why we teach thinking in schools is because it's ordinary thinking of which creativity is part. Also, most schools focus on descriptions: "This is the information, handle this information, learn skills" and that sort of thing. As soon as the youngster leaves school, he or she is going to be operating—meaning working in the future. Dealing with decisions, plans, initiatives, priorities, objectives, what other people think, etc. None of which is taught in schools. We believe—to my mind quite falsely—that if you *know*, then action is easy. The point is, it's not. There are skills of action. . . .

The other point is that intelligence by itself is not enough—it is just a potential. It's like a car. The horsepower of the car, the springs, the road-holding are the potential. The way you drive it is the driving skill. Intelligence is the potential of the mind, but the way you use it is thinking. . . .

My approach to the teaching of thinking is not the usual "I'm right," "you're wrong," "challenge this," "that is wrong," but it's a constructive "let's explore," "let's develop alternatives" and "this is acceptable." . . . Critical thinking is constructive.

Style *versus* content is the theme of Charlotte du Cann's article in *Telegraph Sunday Magazine* (England) for April 26. After years of "designer tyranny" in many things that concern the surface life-style, the time has come, the writer argues, to look under the surface; it is content that counts. Style is concerned with how things look rather than what they are, whereas content is *quality* of life:

According to the critics with their unstylish social consciences, style was merely a device used by the barons of the consumer society, the shopkeeping, media and advertising men to make those who had money spend more of it, and those who didn't, envy those who did. . . .

What is being pilloried by the critics is the serious marketing of design-is-style whereby every shopping arcade is packed full of uncomfortable monochrome. The feeling is encouraged that if you do not possess these dark, designer objects and life-styles, you will somehow be dismissed from court. Out of the scheme. ("Schemies" is Glaswegian slang used to describe the anxious haves who shop at the style emporia)

Style is now recognized as a paranoid, jealous chameleon. . . .

The clock has gone tock: tock is the sound of style admitting an emptiness at its heart. . . .

Content is the word being bandied around by those who were previously preoccupied only with style. Farewell, declare the critics, to monochrome and humourlessness. They describe content as the new classicism. Goodbye, they say, to a view of people as categories, as the sum of their possessions, as mobile style objects; welcome back fellow countrymen, human beings, people as content. . . . Content knows the value of things—by which it does not mean the price tag on a stylishly wrapped package with nothing much inside.

Seeing is said to be believing. That is why criminal lawyers depend so heavily on eyewitnesses. One such testimony can send someone to the gallows or set him free. Psychologists, nonetheless, have suggested that such evidence should be viewed with a great deal of circumspection.

Recently, Dr. Clive Hollin and Dr. Elizabeth Noon of the Leicester University conducted a test involving 40 men and 36 women, including some law students, for their ability to recall traumatic events to which they were witness. Fourteen different test items were presented to them. On an average, only eight of these were recalled by the subjects with a fair degree of accuracy and reliability. The remainder almost always evoked inaccurate answers. (*The Times of India*, July 2)

The reason for this, say the psychologists, is that when a shocking event is unfolding before them, the unwitting witnesses are subjected to high physiological and mental stress. This confusion affects adversely their ability to perceive and recall details of the happening. The researchers, therefore, caution lawyers about relying heavily on eyewitness accounts.

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The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELE, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and whenever situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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