

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 VOICE AND THE WORD

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DURING this month of August all true students of the Esoteric Philosophy will remember to meditate upon the inner and real significance of the phenomenon called Birth. Human evolution is a series of births and deaths and of both there are different types.

He who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die

is true not only of the life of the body but of every constituent of our nature. Equally true is it of every being in Nature. *Nitya* and *Naimittika Pralaya*—the constant disintegration and the occasional dissolution—affects the whole of the manifested cosmos. Even Divine Incarnations appear and disappear subject to the Law of birth and death.

H. P. Blavatsky's Appearance in the body in 1831 took place in this month of August. Already our readers have passed the 11th of August and some among them may have finished their reflections on the import and significance of that Appearance; others, commencing on that day, may be in the midst of their meditations. There are those, however few, who are always reflecting on that theme because their self-chosen tasks and self-imposed duties demand remembrance of the mission which necessitated that Appearance.

Birth implies death for all mortals; when the Voice becomes the Word, and when Silence speaks, the same Law operates—the Voice withdraws and the Word remains as *Karuna-Rupa*, Compassion-Form, to radiate its beneficence in space and time. The Being known to the world as H. P. Blavatsky was one of the

Army of the Voice and her recorded Message constitutes the Word she formulated. The Appearance has disappeared from mortal ken, but the Message remains. It is used, it is abused; it is studied, it is neglected; it is interpreted, it is misinterpreted; just as is done with the Messages of her Illustrious Predecessors. All Divine Incarnations issue from the Single Lodge of Teachers, the One Fraternity of Men of Puissance, the United Band of Compassionate Renouncers. Therefore the Message all of Them deliver is identical—the One Truth comprising Living Ideas from which in each cycle some are expressed in language suited to time, place and circumstance.

Coming as H.P.B. did to a world getting ready for the International State, she wrote her Message in a language which has fast become a world-language—English. She lived and laboured in the U.S.A., India and Great Britain—the three geographical areas of three important continents, potent for influencing most the race-mind. Her Message is for all humanity, and all students anywhere and however situate can assimilate the power of that Message. The knowledge of the English language is widespread in India, and universal in the U.S.A. and Britain, and English is becoming increasingly popular everywhere.

The end of the nineteenth century, prodded by Karmic limitations and weaknesses, created materialism in knowledge which debased the mind and the morals of mankind. H.P.B.'s Work could have saved the European civilization if the Continent, and especially Britain, had accepted her Teachings. "Educated" India copied Britain's materialistic ways of thought and "illiterate" India was not strong enough to resist the impact of its natural leaders, the "educated"; the process, though checked, continues. In the U.S.A., Theosophy made a better and stronger impress, thanks to the work of W. Q. Judge; there Theosophical ideas are more in the air and have a greater influence, however indirect.

Men of science had not the open mind necessary to learn the laws of Soul-life and the Spirit-world; though, do what some of them might, they were forced by the Law of Cycles to enter the realm of super-physics, as had been clearly prophesied by H.P.B. in 1888—"between this time and 1897 there will be a large rent made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science will receive a death-blow" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 612). It was delivered by the discovery of radium and by subsequent discoveries by eminent men of science. Their morals, however, remained unchanged and the results we have before us. Materialistic science devoid of moral principles has brought us the atom-bomb. As long as modern science does not accept its responsibility

to morality and ethics, it cannot but encourage the forces of greed and hate.

Physics gained access to superphysical spheres but remained amoral. Psychology met with a worse fate: its materialistic outlook debased human aspirations; the sacredness of sex-force became degraded through lack of knowledge and false interpretations of its powers and potencies have ushered in an era of immoral irresponsibility and irresponsible immorality.

The wisdom of hoary India could have saved the situation to some extent, but the Indian theosophists did not rise and were not helped to rise to a spiritual altitude. Religious sectarianism and superstition (which H.P.B. and her Masters had tried to fight and overthrow) found not a few champions among persons who called themselves theosophists; most of them remained orthodox, explaining away corrupt religious institutions in a mysterious "mysticism" which considerably weakened the Cause of Pure Theosophy.

Such are some of the cogitations which force themselves upon us as we brood over the coming of H.P.B. to unveil the Wisdom of Isis and to expound the Truth of the Secret Doctrine. In spite of its vicissitudes, her Mission is succeeding along two very definite lines. Her recorded teachings are being carefully studied by small groups of students in numerous places in almost every country. The second line along which H.P.B.'s Mission has succeeded is that Theosophical ideas are fast permeating the mind of the race. Her books have obtained an amazing circulation among the general public and a great deal of "plagiarizing" has taken place; the unacknowledged use by numerous men and women of her thoughts and even her language seems to be on the increase. Neither she and her Master, nor we who are followers and pupils, would mind that!

To make her Mission more successful requires a wider dissemination and greater popularization of our ideas on Spirit and Matter, on Soul and Mind, on senses and body and on the indissoluble links which bind the visible to the invisible. That metaphysics and philosophy are equally indissolubly linked to Ethics and Morality needs to be made known to the educated classes, who, acquiring that knowledge, would teach the masses the truths of Universal Causation, Reincarnation, Karma and Universal Brotherhood. Ancient books contain much information which should be used and for gaining which discriminating study is essential. Behind and within the different religions is the Light of the One Religion; the historical and doctrinal links which connect the different religions need to be examined and under-

stood. Much has been done by the genuine students of the Esoteric Philosophy. Much more remains to be done. The Help of the Word is available and through it the Sound of the Voice can be caught.

THE declared policy of our Society and paper is: *war to death to every unproven human dogma, superstition, bigotry, and intolerance.* Our Society is a nucleus, around which cluster only those who, besides appreciating the theoretical importance, as the philosophical significance, of the Idea of a strongly united intellectual Brotherhood, are ready to carry out this idea practically: to concede to others all that they would claim for themselves; to regard as a brother any man, whether he be white, black or yellow, heathen or Christian, theist or atheist; to show, at least, an outward regard for the respective religions not only of our members, but of any man; and, to protect, in case of need, the creeds of the former from the unjust assault and persecution of other religionists. Finally, never to preach to, or force upon an unwilling ear our own personal, least of all sectarian, views. The success of our mission depends upon the crushing down, and the complete extirpation of that spirit of intolerance. . . . Therefore, our Brotherhood being possible only when men are gradually made to rise above any personal ambition and that narrow-minded sectarianism that dwarfs the area of their mental vision and, keeping man aloof from man, gives birth only to a host of Cains pouncing upon the weaker Abels—it becomes the imperative duty of us, who are the professed leaders and pioneers of the movement, to smooth the path for those who may succeed us in our work. Tolerant of everything, in every other respect we are uncompromisingly intolerant of *Intolerance* and aggression.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY (*The Theosophist*, May 1883)

TRANSMUTATION OF THE PERSONALITY

MAN is a self-conscious being, able to reflect, deliberate and choose—to say, “I suffer or enjoy, want this or that.” His sufferings and enjoyments, likes and dislikes, are largely confined to the objects and objectives, the wealth, comforts and ambitions of the society in which he lives. His head and heart are full of the myriad things which that society, in its complication, values and rejects.

But who stops to ask why the “I” in us wants this or that, and whether, once obtained, the objects of desire will really satisfy, or whether life will then be as empty as before? Of still greater importance, who asks or knows who this “I” is, this centre of consciousness, who deliberates and desires? This question either does not occur, or is evaded.

Popular religion makes no attempt to answer the question of the nature of the “I” in a way that would satisfy the logical, reasoning mind. Science in general is not concerned with this question. Those men of science who are concerned with stability and tension in the human psyche strive merely for adjustment, with the hope of achieving a truce in the emotion-torn field of consciousness. The general assumption has been that there is no “I” save as an excrescence of biological functions. Some few, however, in this latter segment of the scientific world, begin to detect a centre in the human consciousness which demands that life shall have some coherent and responsible meaning.

Does the ultimate of human awareness consist, pendulum-like, in an eternal oscillation between pleasure and pain? Is man but a “field” of sensations, the plaything of the accidents of nature or of some unknowable power which ever lies beyond his comprehension? Theosophy answers—“No.” It considers humanity as “an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.”

Man has his being in two worlds. Aside from this earth-plane, he lives in another world as an individual self-conscious intelligence—an Immortal knowing neither birth nor death. This Immortal knows, feels and sees the universe in its operation and purpose, sees the course of human history, collectively, and its own part in it, individually.

Periodically, it emanates a portion of itself, which reincarnates in a human form. Under the law of Karma, the continuous play of cause and effect, it sees the reappearance in each rebirth of former tendencies, the effects of paths pursued in former lives. The shifting skeins of characteristics, mental, moral and psychic, are like the dyes colouring a stream, the pure colours here and there distinct, here and there mixing and blending to produce

numberless shades and hues in the moving water. In the sight of the Immortal Ego, past, present and future are one.

This is Karma, the cause of all those qualities which we know as the man, mistaking them for the whole man. But what we see is only a temporary vesture, composed of mental and emotional idiosyncrasies as susceptible to change as the colours in the stream. All of Nature—animal, vegetable, mineral, and invisible lives—contributes to this vesture, and all is coloured by the user.

Man is dual. One portion is consciously immortal and sees the succession of lives in physical bodies as a continuous and shifting play of cause and effect. The other portion, immersed in the qualities and circumstances of any one life on this seemingly solid earth, is all but blinded to the immortal portion of his being. However, the higher is not totally obscured. It is that which makes men cling to some religion, religion signifying to them the Eternal. It is that which makes the scientifically-minded search for Truth in Nature.

Above the immortal, egoic portion of this duality is the Central Unity from which all in the wide universe has sprung, the source of all life, all powers and all order. It is the Eternal, in the essential nature of which there is no change.

The Immortal Ego knows and feels this source of its being—knows as an active, self-conscious entity, and would, as soon as it can, so order and govern the activities of humanity on earth that the harmonies of Life on the higher planes would be reflected in the institutions, social organization and private lives of men in our civilization.

In order to overcome the separative duality between the Immortal Ego and its *alter ego*, the personality, the latter must dissolve the chains and fetters which perpetuate the division. These fetters are not in the circumstances of life, but are in the ideas and attachments the personality holds regarding them. The alteration is inward. As the butterfly emerges from the cocoon only after the materials of its former existence have been transmuted, so must the personality transmute the very materials of its personal existence. From a worm comes a winged creature, rising into the sunlight and free spaces—but only after the transmutation. No transmutation, no butterfly; there is no other way.

Since it is an inward process, and all the ingredients of either slavery or freedom are within, the work to be done by the personality, the man, lies there. He must cultivate an introspective attitude amid, and while performing, the duties of life. For these duties are an interwoven portion of the karmic material of his being.

The thoughts, feelings and motivations that have become habitual and which constitute the day-to-day fare of the personal consciousness are, actually, but the dyes colouring the elements which are the material of a temporary vesture. This vesture has been mistakenly assumed to be the man himself. It is not Being, but rather the mutable vesture of Being. Individual Being is rooted in the Immortal Ego.

The habitual troops of thoughts, feelings and motivations must come to be regarded objectively by the seer within. They must be held up to comparison with time-proven Truths. To do this, a duality has to be induced where before there was unity, a unity in which vesture and "I" were confounded. This unity is not natural in man, although natural in the animal, which is impelled by instinct.

The seer, the perceiver, must, therefore, gain the ability to stand back—to resist the tendency to be drawn into every current and eddy of the familiar preoccupations of the brain consciousness.

The mind capacities of comparison and judgment, hitherto used in a desultory fashion, supplemented with indispensable philosophical principles, become the means whereby the work of alteration may be undertaken. Such principles are: the unity of all in Nature; that diversity consists in interrelationships between elements having their source in that Unity, and cast upon the screen of life; that nothing dies—life is continuous—only the masks come and go; that all changes occur under a law of cause and effect, following upon action initiated by some degree of intelligence; that seemingly solid and permanent earth-life is really alchemical rather than chemical, that is, that all things and conditions are alterable if we reach to and act upon their cause and inward being; that all forms of life and being are on a path of unfolding toward perfection; that all is one vast brotherhood of sparks of the Divine; that the human being is unique in that he shares, on this plane, the conscious creative power of the Divine, he being, therefore, a responsible agent in the progress of life.

Such principles entertained and made use of in the forum of the mind, and while the dual position of seer and seen is subjectively maintained with the help of the gradually awakening will, in the course of time enlist in their service the soul-energies that hitherto fed and kept alive the troops of personal, self-centred thoughts and emotions. These latter have been based upon such premises as: "I am inherently imperfect; I am merely a bundle

of cells; I am at the mercy of an unknown God, or of some inscrutable Fate."

This course followed, life begins to assume a new orientation; a bridge has begun to be built between the Immortal Ego and its world, and the *alter ego* in this world—between the Higher Manas (Mind) and the lower Manas.

This is the field of battle where most of us are now engaged. Although this path may seem plodding and unspectacular, yet it is the beginning (or recommencement of effort initiated in a former life) of the road that leads toward, to us, unimaginable glories of Life and Being—"glories untold, unseen by any save the eye of Soul," in the words of *The Voice of the Silence*.

The Masters and Adepts of the present and the past have travelled this same road. Passing the stage where we now find ourselves, their Soul-energies had so increased in intensity as to arouse at last the highest and most spiritual action of the Will. This Will carries all before it, it being described as the highest executive power in the universe; it is the means of raising mere man, as we know him, to Godhood in Great Nature.

Such Will and the attendant consciousness of the Self, which supports and acts through the whole manifested universe, are not utterly distinct from us. In intuition, momentary perceptions, and the seeds of deathless determination, they make themselves known. It is for us to take note of them, for they are the hallmarks of our divinity.

It is they which enlighten our lives and secretly urge us onward upon the path toward what our society has hardly the faintest inkling of—true Self-realization.

I HAVE been trying to think of the earth as a kind of organism, but it is no go. I cannot think of it this way. It is too big, too complex, with too many working parts lacking visible connections. The other night, driving through a hilly, wooded part of southern New England, I wondered about this. If not like an organism, what is it *most* like? Then, satisfactorily for that moment, it came to me: it is *most* like a single cell.

—LEWIS THOMAS

MISTAKEN NOTIONS ON THE "SECRET DOCTRINE"

[This article by H. P. Blavatsky first appeared in *Lucifer*, June 1890.]

EVER since the publication of the *Secret Doctrine* students of Theosophy (outside the inner ring of Occult Sciences) have complained that the teachings contained in the work do not satisfy them. One, mentioning the lengthy and rabid abuse of it by an old, though really insignificant, if brutal, enemy, takes me to task for leaving a door open to such criticism by taking too little into account modern science and modern thought(!); another complains that my explanations are not complete; thus, he says:

For the last ten years, I have been a close reader of theosophical literature. I have read and re-read the *Secret Doctrine* and collated passages, and nothing is more disheartening than to find some of the best explanations on Occult points, just as they begin to grow a little lucid, marred by a reference to some exoteric philosophy or religion, which breaks up the train of reasoning and leaves the explanation unfinished. . . . We can understand parts, but we cannot get a succinct idea, particularly of the teachings as to Parabrahm (the Absolute), the 1st and 2nd Logos, Spirit, Matter, Fohat, etc., etc.

This is the direct and natural result of the very mistaken notion that the work I have called the *Secret Doctrine* had ever been intended by me to dovetail with modern Science, or to explain "occult points." I was and still am more concerned with *facts* than with scientific hypotheses. My chief and only object was to bring into prominence that the basic and fundamental principles of every exoteric religion and philosophy, old or new, were from first to last but the echoes of the primeval "Wisdom-Religion." I sought to show that the Tree of Knowledge, like Truth itself, was *One*; and that, however differing in form and colour, the foliage of the twigs, the trunk and its main branches were still those of the same old Tree, in the shadow of which had developed and grown the (now) esoteric religious philosophy of the races that preceded our present mankind on earth.

This object, I believe I have carried out as far as it could be carried, in the first two volumes of the *Secret Doctrine*. It was not the occult philosophy of the esoteric teachings that I undertook to explain to the world at large, for then the qualification of "Secret" would have become like the *secret* of "Polichinelle" shouted in the manner of a stage *a parte*; but simply to give *that which could be given out*, and to parallel it with the beliefs and

dogmas of the past and present nations, thus showing the original source of the latter and how disfigured they had become. If my work is, at this day of materialistic assumptions and universal iconoclasm, too premature for the masses of the profane—so much the worse for those masses. But it was not too premature for the earnest students of theosophy—except those, perhaps, who had hoped that a treatise on such intricate correspondences as exist between the religions and philosophies of the almost forgotten Past, and those of the modern day, could be as simple as a shilling “shocker” from a railway stall. Even one system of philosophy at a time, whether that of Kant or of Herbert Spencer, of Spinoza or of Hartmann, requires more than a study of several years. Does it not, therefore, stand to reason that a work which compares several dozens of philosophies and over half-a-dozen of world-religions, a work which has to unveil the roots with the greatest precautions, as it can only *hint* at the secret blossoms here and there—cannot be comprehended at a first reading, nor even after several, unless the reader elaborates for himself a system for it? That this can be done and *is* done is shown by the “Two Students of the E.S.”¹ They are now synthesizing the *Secret Doctrine*, and they do it in the most lucid and comprehensive way, in this magazine. No more than anyone else have they understood that work immediately after reading it. But they went to work in dead earnest. They indexed it for themselves, classifying the contents in two portions—the *exoteric* and the *esoteric*; and having achieved this preliminary labour, they now present the former portion to the readers at large, while storing the latter for their own practical instruction and benefit. Why should not every earnest theosophist do the same?

There are several ways of acquiring knowledge: (a) by accepting blindly the dicta of the church or modern science; (b) by rejecting both and starting to find the truth for oneself. The first method is easy and leads to social respectability and the praise of men; the other is difficult and requires more than ordinary devotion to truth, a disregard for direct personal benefits and an unwavering perseverance. Thus it was in the days of old and so it is now, except, perhaps, that such devotion to truth has been more rare in our own day than it was of yore. Indeed, the modern Eastern student’s unwillingness to think for himself is now as great as Western exactions and criticism of other people’s thoughts.

¹See “Theosophical Gleanings: Notes on the ‘Secret Doctrine,’” reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, January to August 1987.

He demands and expects that his "Path" shall be engineered with all the selfish craft of modern comfort, macadamized, laid out with swift railways and telegraphs, and even telescopes, through which he may, while sitting at his ease, survey the works of other people; and while criticizing them, look out for the easiest, in order to play at the Occultist and Amateur Student of Theosophy. The real "Path" to esoteric knowledge is very different. Its entrance is overgrown with the brambles of neglect; the travesties of truth during long ages block the way, and it is obscured by the proud contempt of self-sufficiency and with every verity distorted out of all focus. To push over the threshold alone, demands an incessant, often unrequited labour of years, and once on the other side of the entrance, the weary pilgrim has to toil up on foot, for the narrow way leads to forbidding mountain heights, unmeasured and unknown save to those who have reached the cloud-capped summit before. Thus must he mount, step by step, having to conquer every inch of ground before him by his own exertions; moving onward, guided by strange landmarks the nature of which he can ascertain only by deciphering the weather-beaten, half-defaced inscriptions as he treads along, for woe to him if, instead of studying them, he sits by coolly pronouncing them "indecipherable." The "Doctrine of the Eye" is *maya*; that of the "Heart" alone can make of him an elect.

Is it to be wondered that so few reach the goal, that so many are called, but so few are chosen? Is not the reason for this explained in three lines on page 27 [Indian ed., pp. 29-30] of the *Voice of the Silence*? These say that while "The first repeat in pride: 'Behold, *I know*'; the last, they who in humbleness have garnered, low confess: 'Thus have I heard' "; and hence, become the only "chosen."

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE forms of activity in and for Theosophical work are endless: once stir the will to go forth and labour, and study that you may help others, the means will soon present themselves; the "harvest is plenteous, but the labourers are few."

—*The Vahan*, January 14, 1891

THE MEANS AND THE END

Before you volunteer to serve the Masters you should *learn Their philosophy*, for otherwise you shall always sin grievously, though unconsciously and involuntarily, against Them and those who serve Them, *soul and body and spirit*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

KNOWLEDGE is a necessary tool for the carving of character and the modelling of life. Ordinary people do not live; they muddle through existence. How many ask: Why is there life and death? What is the purpose and meaning of existence? How can one labour for and love with the Soul? And the Soul? Its very existence in the heretofore or its survival in the hereafter are vague rumours heard in the midst of pleasures and pains. For few only do they become even intimations.

Thousands of Hindus who revere the *Gita* fail to apply its injunction:

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 is that failure not true of many students of Theosophy?

In this verse, humility, obeisance and prostration are shown to be the means of study; they are more necessary than textbooks. Service of what is learnt and of Those who are the real Gurus is the purpose of the study.

To comprehend the Science of the Soul seems most difficult. But we feel some confidence when we learn the primary truth that to know the doctrine we must live it. In this verse, for instance, the means and the end are summed up in magnificent simplicity. We begin the attempt—the living of the Inner Life of the Inner Ego. In the measure of our sincerity and our earnestness that confidence becomes transformed into faith: we realize, however limited the realization, that to *do* Theosophy means to know it so that we can speak and write about it with conviction. Therefore, the first requisite is proper knowledge gained by the mind; implicit in the process is the exercise of elevation of the mind through its control and its use to purify the personal emotions. Without faith in the potency of the Doctrine to create a new man, the latter will never be born.

Many students of Theosophy hold it to be true that the Philosophy is capable of begetting the New Man. But do all such

sincerely wish to abandon the highway of routine on which they play with pleasures and with pains? The New Way demands a new gait. The sights and sounds, the tastes and colours, and the feelings these evoke on the highway of sense life, are not to be met on the narrow path that leads to Life Eternal. Another set of sights and sounds, of tastes and odours, and the feelings they evoke, will be experienced in time. The second set cannot be had at the same time that the first is indulged in. Between the two modes of life there is an abyss, of which Mr. Judge writes:

Many a student of Theosophy has in our own sight reached this point—all true students do. Like a little child who first ventures from the parent's side, we are affrighted at what seems new to us, and dropping our weapons attempt to get away; but, in the pursuit of Theosophy it is not possible to go back—*Because the abyss is behind us.* (Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita, p. 31)

Few among those who desire for knowledge are willing to tax their mental attention or patience. A thousand agencies manufacture pearls and scatter them abroad; very few indeed dive into the ocean to bring up real ones.

Similarly, the force of service is great in this age. With the turn of the cycle we are experiencing the desirable phenomenon of men and women aspiring to help and serve their fellow-men. Service is the highest feeling of the personal man. Its peculiar *maya* consists in thousands running to serve actively without a real basis in knowledge. Social servants and publicists in every walk of life are learning the important lesson that for the art of service to become the most beautiful of arts, the knowledge of the science of service is required. Service is not easy to render; it is the most difficult of all sciences and arts.

The statement of the *Gita* on the relation between service and knowledge is forthright. Three ingredients are mentioned: service; seeking of knowledge; and humility.

Humility not only in seeking knowledge—"Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom"—but also in the service of the people in promulgating its teachings—"Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered." This humility is, of course, not the mock modesty with which numerous students fool themselves. Coleridge calls the "pride that apes humility" the Devil's "darling sin." The esoteric concept of humility is profound. It also means obeisance born of a feeling of reverence, not only of gratitude to the Mighty Ones who sacrifice to serve humanity, but also reverence for all Nature which is alive and which serves each because of the Law of Interdependence.

“Seeking Knowledge,” likewise, has a special significance for the Esotericist. The philosophy and science of Occultism are *sui generis*. The tenets of the Esoteric Philosophy *lived* out in experience, however meagre, prove that we cannot judge the truth or the value of Theosophical teachings by the yardstick of any science, any religion or any philosophy. The mind must grasp and the heart must absorb by osmosis, and thus “learning by heart” takes on a new meaning for the earnest seeker of Eternal Wisdom.

When, thus, seeking is accomplished, service can follow in steps of realized knowledge. Humbly all service should be rendered, for it is rendered to gods and goddesses and the meanest thing is on its upward way to divinity. And it is rendered on behalf of those who are Masters of all knowledge.

Study and Service, then, are two sides of one shield which protects us as we progress.

The student of Theosophy knows this truth, or ought to know it, very early in his career. Study and service, linked by application, will enable him to bridge the abyss harmoniously. That is the message of the *Gita*. There are many abysses and each can be bridged if study is linked to service, by self-discipline. What a warning and also what a hope are contained in the words of H.P.B. quoted at the beginning of this article! And what better assurance than these words of a Master—

Lead the life necessary for the acquisition of such knowledge and powers, and Wisdom will come to you naturally.

It is not the duty of a Theosophist to pry into the motives, the means, or the actions of other members. By attending strictly to our own duties we will have enough to do. We cannot know the limitations nor the conscience of any other person.

What is the plain duty of every Theosophist? To read and understand, so as to be able to explain theosophical doctrines. The Society has never suffered from outsiders so much as it has from its unintelligent representation by members. The world is full of minds who wish to know, and Theosophists should form clear conceptions of what they think they believe, in order to meet objections, dispel doubts and carry conviction. Such is our duty.

—W. Q. JUDGE

CONSIDERATIONS ON DEITY

IT is useful for students of Theosophy to study over again the idea their Philosophy puts forward with regard to God, for familiarity with the words used often tends to stop fresh thought, as also application of what has been learnt. In these days, when belief in a personal God who can be prayed to still persists, it is more and more necessary for students to understand thoroughly this whole concept of God and religion, of priestcraft, ritual, ceremonial and prayer. It needs to be understood also why there is fear of breaking the "customs" we have been used to, and just when and how we can break through these customs, social or religious, in the light of further knowledge.

Writing in the early days of the Theosophical Movement, a Master wrote that "the word 'God' was invented to designate the unknown cause of those effects which man has either admired or dreaded without understanding them." Realizing this, we understand the truth of the statement in *Isis Unveiled* that "a man can have no god that is not bounded by his own human conceptions. The wider the sweep of his spiritual vision, the mightier will be his deity."

Today the idea of the personal, omniscient man-god with a long white beard, who sits in Heaven high up in the skies, surrounded by angels who sing his praise, and who created heaven and earth less than 10,000 years ago (though geologically it is well known that the earth is much, much older than that) is no longer widely held. But all the same the old conception still lives in minds hypnotized by those who, through implanting fear in the emotional nature of the ignorant, exert power over them to their detriment.

Fear is a strong deterrent to thought, and it needs courage to live by what our minds tell us is true. But doubt is our greatest foe. People are apt to think, "After all we may be wrong, and if so, by denying a personal creator-god we may be in danger of hell fire! Let us play safe."

Fear plays havoc with the wish to give up ceremonies and to do away with priests. The priest may say that if certain ceremonies are not performed this or that will happen, but we need strong faith to refuse the ceremonies, even though friends and family urge us to agree. For, growth in the spiritual life requires obedience to our own conscience, not to that of others! But we must be sure of our conscience, whose dictates must be based on thought, logic, and common sense. Hence also we must be sure of just what Theosophy teaches with respect to God.

First, Theosophy points out that a personal being who creates something out of nothing is an absurdity. Creation itself is an absurdity. If God is a person, he is limited and therefore not omniscient. If he can forgive infringements of his laws, then the laws are not immutable and there is no order, no justice in the universe. The jealous God has not been replaced by the loving Father of Jesus. The God who shows partiality and bestows favours is still appealed to by Christians fighting each other. Most prayers continue to remain petitions for help. Jesus said that we should pray not in public but in secret; but few Christians have really understood what he meant. Certainly it is time that the Christian churches went back to Jesus, which really means going forward from where they are today! The same could be said of other religions as well.

What does Theosophy offer in place of the personal-God idea?

There is but one indivisible and absolute Omniscience and Intelligence in the Universe, and this thrills throughout every atom and infinitesimal point of the whole finite Kosmos which hath no bounds, and which people call SPACE, considered independently of anything contained in it. (*S.D.*, I, 277)

Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link. Break a single link and all passes into annihilation; but this is impossible. (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 138)

From *Gods* to *men*, from Worlds to atoms, from a star to a rush-light, from the Sun to the vital heat of the meanest organic being—the world of Form and Existence is an immense chain, whose links are all connected. (*S.D.*, I, 604)

We should meditate on these quotations until we can evolve their practical aspect as Emerson did. "The true doctrine of omnipresence," he wrote, "is, that God reappears with all his parts in every moss and cobweb."

Shelley saw the same truth with his intuitive perception:

I know
That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
In love and worship, blends itself with God.

("Epipsychidion")

Shelley brings out here the idea of worship—the inner urge of the being to join itself with something higher which it feels is

akin to it. This can only be realized when we meditate on the following conception and make it a part of ourselves:

Our Deity is the eternal, incessantly *evolving*, not *creating*, builder of the universe; that *universe itself unfolding* out of its own essence, not being *made*. . . . It is the one law, giving the impulse to manifested, eternal, and immutable laws. . . . (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 65)

The practical aspect of the above is that if God is omnipresent he is within us and within every animal, plant and stone, in every star and planet, in the sun and the moon, in the storm and the rain, in the sky and on the earth and under the earth. As one of the Psalms says,

Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence?

If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. (*Book of Psalms*, cxxxix, 7-8)

The whole Universe is but the outer manifestation of God. All exists in us; all forms, from the smallest to the largest, are expressions of God. In the super-men, the Christs and the Buddhas, this inherent divinity shines forth fully; in the ordinary man it shines forth at times, in the animal still less, and in the plant and the earth in lesser and lesser degrees; but, though dormant, in all there is an aspect of the ever emanating or evolving Spirit or Life which is God. Shall we scorn that part of the Universe which is unenlightened because the God within it is still sleeping? Not so, for we are told that "*matter is nothing more than the most remote effect of the emanative energy of the Deity.*" (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 35-36)

Let us ruminate on this. If it is true that we are innate Gods then we must have within us the power to emanate, to build, to mould matter, to help the evolving Life. We do indeed use the power today, but we emanate that part of ourselves which is our lower nature—still an aspect of Deity—whereas we should emanate the divine in us which has already begun to express itself. What we mentally learn we must put into practice. We must consciously "people our current in space" with good thoughts and acts instead of unconsciously peopling that current with anything less than the best we are capable of.

There is but one Force. Therefore when we use energy we are using the one energy which all have in common, the energy of the immanent and omnipresent God.

When we think, what we are actually doing is to use the power of the Universal Mind, the sum-total of all the intelligence in the Universe. The sculptor visualizes mentally the image he wishes to create out of the stone, the potter visualizes the kind of pot he wishes to mould. Both have to use the one Force, of desire and will, to create what they want to create. We envision Universal Brotherhood, love among all creatures, not only between man and man. But our vision most often remains a vision and is not actualized, and finally it fades away, for we do not truly *desire* it, we do not work towards it, we do not use our energy and will to bring it into actuality because we do not sense that the basis of such a Brotherhood is true love, or union with the inherent God in all. This union starts with our attitude towards others—our family, our neighbours, our office companions, our servants. If we think and feel Brotherhood then we must use our energy to build it with that which is available around us, as the potter uses the clay he has. It is not enough to think it or to feel it. Our field of operation is at hand.

In fact Theosophy teaches that all we learn from it must be changed from thought to action, brought to vitality in our daily lives. That is making Theosophy a living power in life. We must try to realize that we emanate ourselves into our surroundings; our energy has to be given to people and to things without making distinctions on the basis of our likes and dislikes. That energy is not to be turned within for our own salvation, but has to be poured forth into the common reservoir of one Life, one Force, one Godhead immanent in all.

Are we then to act as unfolding Gods, as innately divine beings? Yes, but it needs to be recognized that if we are unfolding Gods then so are all others. We must remember that within us the deity is still almost sleeping hidden deep behind the hard crust or rock of self. Even the truth that we must take the responsibility for our actions is misconstrued by us and we say, "I will do this or that and take the consequences." Only pride allows us to say this, for though we shall have to bear the consequences anyway, have we thought of the repercussions of our action on others, and that includes *all* beings? The God within has to be searched. For,

all are entitled to the grateful reverence of Humanity . . . and man ought to be ever striving to help the divine evolution of *Ideas*, by becoming to the best of his ability a *co-worker with nature* in the cyclic task. The ever unknowable and incognizable *Karana* alone, the *Causeless Cause* of all causes, should have its shrine and altar

on the holy and ever untrodden ground of our heart—invisible, intangible, unmentioned, save through “the still small voice” of our spiritual consciousness. Those who worship before it, ought to do so in the silence and the sanctified solitude of their Souls; making their spirit the sole mediator between them and the *Universal Spirit*, their good actions the only priests, and their sinful intentions the only visible and objective sacrificial victims to the *Presence*. (*S.D.*, I, 280)

What a way we have to go!

To set out deliberately to be full to the brim (*i.e.*, satisfy every desire) is not so good as to know when to stop.

If you are thorough in sharpening a sword, you cannot preserve its edge for long.

If you will fill your hall with gold and jade, there is no way by which you can guard it.

If you are rich and of exalted station, you become proud, and thus abandon yourself to unavoidable ruin.

When everything goes well, put yourself in the background:

That is the way Heaven acts.

Are you able, as you carry on with the restless physical self, to embrace the oneness of the universe without ever losing hold?

Are you able, as you control your breathing and make it more and more gentle, to become an unself-conscious babe?

Are you able, as you cleanse the Mysterious Mirror, to leave no traces of self-consciousness?

Are you able to love the people and rule a state, without being known to men?

Are you able to have a right understanding of all creatures and never interfere?

Give life to them and nourish them;

For to give life but not to own, to make but not depend on,

To be chief amongst but not to order about,

This is what is meant by the Power of unconscious influence.

—LAO TZU

THE MIDDLE WAY

ALL familiar with *The Light of Asia*, Sir Edwin Arnold's verse rendition of the Buddha's life and teachings, will recall the acknowledgment by the latter, given in Book the Sixth, of the lesson taught him, before the Great Enlightenment, by a passing nautch-girl's song to the accompaniment of a brass-threaded sitar:

Fair goes the dancing when the sitar's tuned;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high. . . .
The string o'erstretched breaks, and the music flies;
The string o'erslack is dumb, and music dies;
Tune us the sitar neither low nor high.

As she and her companions passed, "Buddh lifted his great brow and spake":

The foolish oft-times teach the wise;
I strain too much this string of life, belike,
Meaning to make such music as shall save.

And prominent among the Buddha's later teachings was the Middle Way, between self-indulgence and mortification of the body.

. . . he who is tranquil and serene and calm and lives a tamed and restrained life of holiness and has ceased to injure living things, though richly attired, he is a Brahmana, an ascetic (Samana) and a monk (Bhikkhu). (*The Dhammapada*, Verse 142)

Let us, then, live happily, we who possess nothing. Let us live like the Shining Ones nourished on joy. (*Ibid.*, Verse 200)

In *The Key to Theosophy* Madame Blavatsky describes altruism as "an integral part of self-development," and she declares that "no man has a right to say that he can do nothing for others, on any pretext whatever." In her article, "Let Every Man Prove His Own Work" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*), she further writes that "without good works the spirit of brotherhood would die in the world; and this can never be." She makes it plain, however, that although we have to do good, and all human beings "are a part of ourselves, according to the law of human brotherhood which no disowning of it can destroy," yet "it takes a very wise man to do good works without danger of doing incalculable harm." Doing good intelligently involves learning as well as doing.

The negative description of a Theosophist—the statement of what a Theosophist is not—was put forward by Madame

Blavatsky in the first volume of her magazine *Lucifer*, in her editorial for November 1887, and she credited this explanation to those who had laid down as the first rule of the Theosophical Society, elsewhere described as its first object, the formation of the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood. That definition reads thus:

HE WHO DOES NOT PRACTISE ALTRUISM; HE WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO SHARE HIS LAST MORSEL WITH A WEAKER OR POORER THAN HIMSELF; HE WHO NEGLECTS TO HELP HIS BROTHER MAN, OF WHATEVER RACE, NATION, OR CREED, WHENEVER AND WHEREVER HE MEETS SUFFERING, AND WHO TURNS A DEAF EAR TO THE CRY OF HUMAN MISERY; HE WHO HEARS AN INNOCENT PERSON SLANDERED, WHETHER A BROTHER THEOSOPHIST OR NOT, AND DOES NOT UNDERTAKE HIS DEFENCE AS HE WOULD UNDERTAKE HIS OWN— IS NO THEOSOPHIST.

The student who wants to serve the Cause of Theosophy must be on his guard not only against laziness but also against excessive and misdirected zeal. Comparatively few of those attracted to Theosophy, it may be assumed, err on the side of excessive zeal in study. How many, on the contrary, fail to put forth the effort that they could and should to grasp its fundamental precepts and to apply them! Obviously, however, if its study were pursued with such excessive intensity that other duties were put aside and the conditions of physical or even mental health neglected, that would be a departure from the Middle Way.

Even in doing good there is a golden mean. In the section on "Practical Theosophy" in *The Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky wrote:

A man has no right to starve himself *to death* that another man may have food, unless the life of that man is obviously more useful to the many than is his own life. But it is his duty to sacrifice his own comfort, and to work for others if they are unable to work for themselves. It is his duty to give all that which is wholly his own and can benefit no one but himself if he selfishly keeps it from others. Theosophy teaches self-abnegation but does not teach rash and useless self-sacrifice, nor does it justify fanaticism.

Charity of the heart is much needed in our judgment of each other, even of fellow students of our great philosophy. St. Paul wrote in the thirteenth chapter of the first epistle sent to the Corinthians:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling

cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

The verses immediately following these in that Epistle give a beautiful positive definition of true charity, of which we need to be reminded frequently:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never faileth. . . .

The Prophet Mohammed declared:

Every good act is charity. Your smiling in your brother's face is charity; *an exhortation of your fellow men to virtuous deeds* is equal to almsgiving; your putting a wanderer in the right road, is charity; your assisting the blind, is charity; your removing stones and thorns and other obstructions from the road, is charity; your giving water to the thirsty, is charity. A man's true wealth hereafter, is the good he does in this world to his fellow men.

Would any of these types of charity involve departure from the golden mean, so that we might invoke it to salve a conscience sensible of failure to exemplify them? Hardly, without adding to our negative past errors of omission the positive and unforgivable sin of hypocrisy!

MAN'S task is to bring the greatest possible benefit to his fellow-men.

—V. VERNADSKY

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF OCCULTISM

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X

THE TWOFOLD ACTION OF THE LAW OF KARMA ON THE VARIOUS PLANES

BY the term *Karma* we understand the law of conservation of energy which regulates the effects of merit or demerit. It is the law of compensation on a plane where individual will and reason come into action; the law by which merit receives its reward and demerit its punishment, not according to the arbitrary decision of a natural or supernatural judge, but as a certain and necessary consequence of thoughts harboured or acts performed. To be capable of merit or demerit, it is necessary that the being deserving punishment or reward should be to some extent a responsible and reasonable being; because only such a being is competent to judge of his actions and to choose between good and evil according to his own will. A stone, a plant or an oyster cannot voluntarily confer benefits, avoid dangers or discriminate between good and evil, and although the law of cause and effect holds good on the lowest physical planes as well as on the higher ones, the law of Karma can only be said to come into operation when moral responsibility has commenced and it must cease with moral responsibility. Life is made up of the results of previous Karma gained either in this life or in a former one, and of the action of the will either consciously or unconsciously induced. The lowest kingdoms of nature act entirely in accordance with the laws of nature that control them; there is no exertion of individual will, consequently no individual responsibility, no merit or demerit, no punishment or reward. In the highest spiritual planes the individual will is entirely controlled by the universal will which is set in motion by supreme wisdom. There can be no more deviation from the law; evil intentions and evil acts have become impossible; to do good has become a matter of course, which does not need to be decided on or considered for a moment. There is no more choice and consequently no more merit, and no more action of the Law of Karma. To express it in other words: On the lowest planes of life desire has not yet attained to consciousness and consists only in the form of unconscious attraction and repulsion; on the highest spiritual planes selfish desire has ceased to exist and there is no more necessity to choose between

good and evil, because everything is good.

This brings before us the question: What is good and what is evil? And we shall find that *good* and *evil*, in the sense in which they are commonly used, are relative terms, that an action may be good on one plane and at the same time bad on another, that what may be good for one individual may be bad for another, and that absolute good can only exist on the spiritual plane, while absolute evil can exist nowhere. Whatever is relatively good in one direction is relatively evil in another direction. No light can be imagined without darkness, and the word darkness has no meaning unless it refers to a contradistinction from light. To decide whether an action is good or evil we must first analyse its effects on all the planes of existence, in the physical, astral, intellectual, moral and spiritual planes, sum up the good results, compare them with the evil results it has produced, and the balance will show whether the action may be called good, bad or indifferent.

An action may be said to consist of three elements: *the Motive*, *the Performance* and *the Act*. A motive (desire or impulse) may exist without being put into execution, and only when it is put into action it becomes an act; an act can only be accomplished when it is performed, but an act can be performed without a motive. The performance itself is only the mechanical process of putting the will into action and as such it possesses neither merit nor demerit; but the means which are taken for the purpose of accomplishing a result constitute intermediate acts and produce intermediate results. We see therefore two essential elements, which in a complete action come within the operation of the law of Karma, the motive and the act, each of which produces separate effects on separate planes, but which interact and react upon each other. The conservation of energy and the indestructibility of matter—in the physical as well as in the metaphysical sense—hold good on the higher as well as on the lower planes. All motion, whether in the material or spiritual world, is the result of previous motion on the plane on which it exists, and produces subsequent motion on the same plane. A motive-power on the physical plane can only produce a mechanical result on the physical plane, but the results of a mechanical action may give rise to mental emotions, intellectual processes, moral tendencies and spiritual aspirations, which again may react down to the physical plane. A mental impulse belongs to the astral plane and as such it acts on the astral plane; but the physical acts induced by a mental impulse will produce physical results, which again may

react upon the higher planes. If the mental impulse is governed or directed by intelligence, it will have its primary effect in the sphere of the intellect; if it is under the guidance of moral considerations or spiritual aspirations, the higher spheres will be the ones primarily affected.

A motive without an act cannot affect the physical plane directly; but the disturbances caused by it on the astral plane may induce important changes on the physical plane. A sudden terror, for instance, may cause the heart to cease its action, the blood to recede from the brain and so induce death. Hate, love, revenge, jealousy, greed, envy, malice, etc., leave their impressions (which may become more or less permanent) on the features; the mind moulds the physical body and a man's character is usually more or less perfectly expressed in the lineaments of his face, the development of his skull and the proportions and characteristics of the various internal and external parts of his body. If the motive originates from a high plane, the effects acting through the astral plane upon the physical plane will be more powerful and lasting. So, for instance, a murder may be committed under a sudden impulse and on the spur of the moment, and the act may be regretted as soon as the physical force necessary to perform it is expended; but if the act is the result of long-continued reasoning, there will be little or no regret, unless new causes come into action to produce a change of opinion. A motive—even without being put into action—is an accumulation of energy which cannot be annihilated, but which can be changed into another form, and be used in a different manner from that originally intended.

An act without a motive deserves neither merit nor demerit and can only primarily act on the lower planes, where it is governed by the law of cause and effect; but the results of that involuntary act may be productive of new causes which may affect the higher planes and from them react again upon the lower ones. If I break my leg by an unavoidable accident, I deserve neither merit nor demerit; but the primary consequences on the physical plane will be same as if it had been broken on purpose. It was an act, not an action, because it was done without a motive; but I shall have to undergo physically the same suffering or inconvenience as if I had done it intentionally; and the suffering caused by the accident or by the confinement in the room may give rise to new causes which will have their effects on the higher planes and from them react again upon the lower ones. A case is known of a woman who, while in a state of somnambulism,

poisoned the food for her family, who partook of it in the morning and died. There was no conscious motive in that act and the primary effect consisted for her simply in the loss of her family. The effects on the higher planes, such as grief, sorrow, etc., were in this case caused by the effects of that act and would have been just the same if the act had been committed by another person.

A motive may be either good or bad, or good in one aspect and bad in another. If we save the life of an individual, from motives of benevolence, the motive will be good; if we kill an animal uselessly, the motive will be bad; if we kill one animal to prolong the life of another, the motive will be good in one aspect and bad in another. The same may be said about acts without motives.

An action to be good must have good motive, and the best of motives amounts to very little unless it is properly executed. If we commit an act of stupidity with the best of intentions, we feel almost the same regret as if we had made an intentional mistake, and if we should happen to do a great humanitarian act by mere accident, it would give us little satisfaction, because there is no meritorious motive attached to it. To determine whether an action is good or evil it is not only necessary that the intention should be meritorious, but that the act itself should lead to good results. If I give a beggar some money so that he may get the means of satisfying his hunger, my motive is evidently good; but whether the act was good or bad will depend on the use which he makes of the money. The act of giving is under all circumstances bad for me on the physical plane, because I dispossess myself of the sum given, and if the beggar spends the money for the purpose of getting drunk, it will also be bad for me on the intellectual plane, because I shall have cause to regret my want of judgment. All this would go to make the action bad; but if the beggar should spend the money for what it was intended, then the action would—notwithstanding my loss, on the physical plane—be pre-eminently good.

Again, if I give a beggar some money, having sufficient cause to believe that he will use it for a bad purpose, then the motive will be undoubtedly bad, and if he does what I expect him to do, the act will also be bad for me not only on the physical but on the moral plane. Should he, however, in spite of my anticipations, make some good use of that money, then I shall have done a good act with evil motives—an act which may bring me a reward on the physical plane, but for which no direct good Karma could be expected on the moral plane.

We may now divide all complete actions into four classes:

1. *Actions in which the motive may be pre-eminently good and the act pre-eminently evil.* In such cases the Karma created by the motive will have its immediate good effects on the higher planes, while the effects created by the act on the lower planes will be evil. History tells us of many great criminals who committed the most horrible crimes with the best of intentions. Torquemada burned heretics in order to save their souls; Robespierre butchered people to liberate mankind from servitude and to put a stop to differences of opinion. The motives which inspired such persons were undoubtedly good from a moral standpoint—however much they may have been mistaken intellectually—and the effects produced by such motives must necessarily have been good on their moral planes and given them some temporary happiness; while the effects of such evil acts will necessarily be felt on the lower planes and render them miserable. A person during his life may be physically happy and mentally suffering, or he may be happy in his mind while undergoing physical tortures; but when after death a division of his higher principles from the lower ones takes place, such a simultaneous state of happiness and misery becomes impossible. He cannot at the same time rejoice and suffer; the effect of one set of energies must exhaust itself before the other energies can come into play. But we have seen that the higher energies are more potential and enduring than the lower ones. They will therefore be the first to act and to unroll themselves, while the bad Karma created on the lower planes will have its effects on these lower planes whenever the individual monad redescends to them by the process of reincarnation.

2. *Actions in which the motive is pre-eminently bad and the act pre-eminently good.* Such actions may be imagined to occur if a person commits a selfish or criminal act, which produces beneficial results that were not originally intended. For instance, a hypocrite may ostentatiously endow a humanitarian institution with funds for the secret purpose of gaining political influence which he expects to use for bad purposes. In such cases the effects created by the act on the lower planes will only be felt on the lower planes. He may obtain riches and honours, but as there was no good motive to create Karma on the higher plane, no direct good result can there be expected, while on the other hand the evil intentions by which his acts were inspired will produce suffering on the moral plane. Now if the sum of his evil Karma created on the higher planes preponderates over his good Karma on these planes, the evil energies must become ex-

hausted before the effects of the accumulation of good energies can come into play. It must, however, be remembered that comparatively few people do evil simply for the sake of doing evil. A motive may be selfish and induce a selfish act on account of some real or imaginary necessity, and in such cases the evil energies created are not sufficiently strong and powerful to overcome the effects of the man's good motives and good actions, and the Karma of evil will remain latent in the lower planes until the individual monad redescends to those planes in its next incarnation.

3. *Actions in which both motive and act are pre-eminently good.* Under this head we may classify all actions which relieve individual or collective suffering or assist in the progress of humanity, and which are undertaken without any selfish considerations. These are the actions of all truly great reformers, philosophers, statesmen, poets, inventors, artists and teachers, as well as of those persons who attend to their duties without any view to personal reward or punishment to be received either in this life or in another. Such actions necessarily create good Karma on the higher as well as on the lower planes; but as no act can be absolutely good in all planes, there must be necessarily relative evil mixed up with it, the amount of which may be large or small according to circumstances and coincidences. History furnishes sufficient examples. Some of the greatest inventors have lived and died in poverty and misery because they concentrated all their energies on the intellectual plane, neglecting the claims of the physical plane. Often the unavoidable coincidences necessary to accomplish a good result are so unfortunate as to render it almost doubtful whether we should consider their originators as criminals or heroes. If we examine the history of Napoleon I, for instance, we can hardly doubt that he began his conquests with the good motive of spreading civilization; neither can it be doubted that by his conquests civilization was spread and the world became more enlightened; and yet how many individuals were made the victim of his noble ambition, and how many homes were made desolate by his victories! The soldier perishes in the battle, and the statesman who causes his death only knows the approximate number of his victims. They cannot accuse him as their murderer; they are the victims of casualties or acts without premeditation; the general may be responsible for the safety of an army; but he cannot be held responsible for the killing of an individual. Whether his acts are meritorious or deserving of demerit will depend on the justice of his cause and the manner in which he performs his duty.

4. *Actions in which both motive and act are pre-eminently evil.* To this class belong those actions which are performed with entirely selfish motives and for purely selfish purposes on the physical plane. They include such actions as hinder the progress of an individual or of a community; they include acts that are committed for the purpose of gratifying passions, such as revenge, lust, hatred, jealousy, greed, etc.; they include what are called crimes, and are in most countries punishable by law. The motives in such cases arise from the lowest planes of thought, the acts belong to the lowest planes and the Karma created will act on the lowest planes. Even the worst criminals have in the majority of cases some good impulses and may have done some good, and unless their evil energies are so powerful as to entirely overcome the effects of their good Karma, the evil energies on the lower planes cannot become active until the energy of the good Karma is exhausted. But if the evil energies accumulated during life are so powerful as to entirely overpower and neutralize the accumulation of occasionally manifested good energies, then the evil Karma will immediately come into action in the subjective condition and the good Karma manifest its effects in the next objective existence.

The majority of evil actions are not perpetrated from absolutely evil motives, but for the purpose of receiving some benefit; so, for instance, a theft is not usually committed for the purpose of depriving the possessor of the article desired by the thief, but because the thief wants to enjoy its possession. Such acts are pre-eminently evil; but as they are not inspired by any positively malicious motive, the energy of the Karma created by them is not so powerful as to overcome a certain amount of energy that has resulted from actions which were done for good purposes. There is, however, a point at which the Karma created by good actions and the Karma created by bad actions might be so evenly balanced, that they would exactly neutralize each other. In this case the personality would have neither good nor bad energy, and it would amount to the same thing as if he had never existed, or as if his life had consisted in actions which were neither good nor evil.

5. *Actions which are neither good nor evil.* Under this head may be classed the actions of idiots, imbeciles and weak-minded people, and such actions as are done from fear of punishment or hope of reward. While the good or evil produced by the act creates effects on the physical plane, it is the motive which makes an action good or evil in the common acceptation of those terms. But an act without any intellectual or moral motive can create

no active energy on those planes; hope and fear belong to the astral plane; they may be considered as emotions of the animal principle in man. But where no higher activity is at work, there can be no accumulation of energy on higher planes; there will be neither merit nor demerit, no important Karma to produce effects; such persons are neither good nor bad, or, as the Christian Bible says, they are neither cold nor hot; they are useless, and for such there is no permanent existence possible; because no higher energies are brought into consciousness on the higher planes, there is nothing that could or would reincarnate as an individual. Man may be looked at as a materialized or incorporated idea or a set of ideas; but a person who has no idea of his own and no will of his own worth speaking of, an unthinking person, whose ideas are mere reflections of those of others, will, after the dissolution of his lower principles, have no need for a new form in which to incorporate his higher ideas, for the simple reason that he has none such left. This fact explains the danger that arises from a false belief in personal gods and saviours; because weak-minded men and women will not exert their mental energies, thinking that an invisible saviour will do for them what they ought to do themselves; the motives of their actions are caused by cowardly fears or idle hopes and they gradually lose their individuality, unless they are aroused and made to exert themselves, and so create Karma.

6. *Actions which are absolutely evil.* An action to be absolutely evil would have to be one in which the motive as well as the act would be evil on all planes and in every aspect, and such an action is unthinkable, because every intellectual motive has some object in view by which it desires to accomplish something; and if it accomplishes that which it desires, then the act was good for that purpose. Moreover, most criminals commit acts by which they themselves at least desire to receive some benefit. An all-powerful being who would want to destroy the world, would do so for some purpose, and the suicide who seeks to destroy himself wants to escape from life. But there are actions which very nearly approach absolute evil. Such actions are those which are committed for the sole purpose of doing evil without receiving thereby any personal benefit. If a great deal of intellectual energy is employed to execute such actions, the energies made active will be very strong, and in proportion to their strength will be their duration. The ideas which make these energies active, necessarily do not rise up to the moral plane; they move entirely in the sphere of the intellect and we see therefore in

such cases a strong and enduring energy accumulated in the lower planes, where those energies will finally become exhausted which can only be accomplished by long individual suffering.

7. *Actions which are absolutely good.* An act which accomplishes its purpose is in so far good and if the motive that inspired it was good, then the action may be said to be good; provided that the intermediate results did no serious harm; but an action which would be absolutely good on all planes and in every aspect would be difficult to imagine. An act means a change and a change can only be produced at the expense of energy. An act of benevolence causes a loss to the benefactor on one plane, while it may benefit him on another; and even the planting of a useful tree is done at the expense of time, space and energy; which might perhaps have been expended to some more useful purpose. But as there are actions which come very near to being absolutely evil, so there are others which come very near to being absolutely good. The energies created (made active) in such cases belong to the highest spheres and are enduring in proportion to the power of will by which they have been set in motion. They become necessarily exhausted in the course of time during the subjective condition; but this process is one that causes happiness, in the same sense as the recollection of a good action causes happiness, while the memory of a bad action causes remorse.

Life may be therefore called a great mathematical problem in which he will gain most who best knows how to calculate, and to foresee the effects of his actions. The good mathematician will be the gainer when the book of life is closed, a poor mathematician will have debts to pay; while those who have neither merit nor demerit will have no claims, neither can anything be claimed from them, and nature needs them no longer. But those who have accumulated a large store of good energy without leaving any debts behind will have treasures laid up which may not be exhausted for ages, or they may enter the sphere of absolute good, whence no more return to matter is necessary.

The process of human development and the attainment of perfection is therefore accomplished by natural laws. It is not merely directed by sentiment, but is a scientific process, guided by mathematical rules, which demonstrate that to be good it is necessary to be wise, and that the highest expression of wisdom is universal justice.

(To be continued)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Leo Tolstoy, as he lay dying, offered a last word of advice in a letter to his son and daughter who did not share his views on non-violence and other matters:

The views you have acquired about Darwinism, evolution and the struggle for existence won't explain to you the meaning of your life and won't give you guidance in your actions, and a life without an explanation of its meaning and importance, and without the unfailing guidance that stems from it, is a pitiful existence. Think about it. I say it, probably on the eve of my death, because I love you.

Tolstoy's complaint has been the most common of all indictments against a narrow Darwinian view of evolution, from the publication of the *Origin of Species* in 1859 to now. Darwin based his theory of natural selection on the dismal view of Malthus that growth in population must outstrip food supply and lead competing species to bloody battle—"the struggle for existence" and "survival of the fittest," to cite Darwin's own choice of mottoes.

In the July issue of *Natural History*, Stephen Jay Gould says that the apparent discordance between nature's way and any hope for human social decency has defined the major subject for debate about ethics and evolution ever since Darwin. A solution has been advocated by some thinkers who wish to find a basis for morality in nature and evolution. The most famous expression of this solution, says Gould, may be found in Russian author and political reformer Peter Kropotkin's book *Mutual Aid*, published in 1902:

As the title suggests [Gould writes], Kropotkin argues, as his cardinal premise, that the struggle for existence usually leads to mutual aid rather than combat as the chief criterion of evolutionary success. Human society must therefore build upon our natural inclinations (not reverse them, as Huxley held) in formulating a moral order that will bring both peace and prosperity to our species. In a series of chapters, Kropotkin tries to illustrate continuity between natural selection for mutual aid among animals and the basis for success in increasingly progressive human social organization. . . .

Kropotkin did not deny the competitive form of struggle, but he argued that the co-operative style had been underemphasized and must balance or even predominate over competition in consider-

ing nature as a whole. . . . “Sociability is as much a law of nature as mutual struggle”:

“If we . . . ask Nature: ‘who are the fittest: those who are continually at war with each other, or those who support one another?’ we at once see that those animals which acquire habits of mutual aid are undoubtedly the fittest. They have more chances to survive, and they attain, in their respective classes, the highest development of intelligence and bodily organization.”

There are no shortcuts to moral insight. Nature is not intrinsically anything that can offer comfort or solace in human terms. . . . The answers to moral dilemmas are not lying out there, waiting to be discovered. They reside, like the kingdom of God, within us—the most difficult and inaccessible spot for any discovery or consensus.

Scientists, by and large, condemn astrology, and some serious astrologers themselves are of the view that astrology as practised today is inadequate and based on unverifiable assumptions. Ironically, however, many scientific discoveries go to support celestial-terrestrial correlations, and astrology’s main plank of reasoning is: “As above, so below.”

One of the most ancient of these evidences is the tides. We know that tides are the result of a “tug-of-war” primarily between the moon and the earth, with other heavenly bodies playing their role in a subtle way. But in recent years more startling phenomena have been documented. An article in *Mirror* (July 1988) refers to some of them:

Oysters, for instance, open and close their shells according to tidal rhythms. . . . Tests have proved it was rather the moon than the tidal waves that influenced their behaviour. . . . The rate of growth of beans and potatoes—and even the formation of chemical precipitates—varied according to extraterrestrial rhythms.

If our own satellite (moon) has been responsible for many earthly phenomena, the sun is not far behind. A great many earthly phenomena are now linked to sunspots, the huge magnetic storms on the surface of the sun. Accidents, violence, crime and suicide are known to increase severalfold during the days following such solar flares.

The magnetic disturbances in the earth’s atmosphere (which correspond to the incidence of solar flares) can be predicted according to the conjunctions and aspects formed by the major planets. According to this view, as related by John H. Nelson, a

radio engineer, when the planets line up in the traditionally "inharmonious" angles, magnetic disturbance is stronger; when they line up in traditionally harmonious angles, weakest. This therefore shows that the wealth of earthly phenomena ought to be—as it is—cyclical in nature. Thousands of instances of these cyclical patterns corresponding to the rise and fall of the number of sunspots have been accumulated. Salmon catches in a particular area, the price of a particular commodity, the number of marriages in a given area, the incidence of specific diseases and so on have been found to follow a cyclical pattern. . . .

Generally full moon days are affiliated with baneful effects or aberrant human behaviour. Suicides and crimes of all varieties are said to be on the increase on nights of the full moon. Insanity is linked to the moon. . . .

It is true these physical phenomena on earth need hardly evoke any surprise as it is a well-known fact that there exists a gravitational pull between the heavenly bodies. Just as lunar gravitation exerts its power on the ocean (water), it is possible a similar effect is asserted on the internal, biological ocean in man (over 60 per cent of the human body being composed of water) and the chemical components, varying so diversely in each, might be the cause for the effectuation of "tides" in different ways in each man.

These physical evidences (including perhaps such catastrophes like earthquakes and volcanic eruptions) gained through the application of science, certainly do not affirm the genuineness of astrology which is more intricate in nature. . . . It is the particularity of the individual throughout his lifetime that makes astrology an astounding science of compelling attraction.

Theosophy would say that there is a real and a false use of astrology, and it warns of the dangers of the latter and recognizes the value of the former. In *Isis Unveiled* H.P.B. states:

Astrology is a science *as infallible* as astronomy itself, with the condition, however, that its interpreters must be equally infallible; and it is this condition, *sine qua non*, so very difficult of realization, that has always proved a stumbling-block to both. Astrology is to exact astronomy what psychology is to exact physiology. In astrology and psychology one has to step beyond the visible world of matter, and enter into the domain of transcendent spirit. (I, 259)

"When doing any duty put your whole heart into it. . . . Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga. . . . If you can do no

more than duty it will bring you to the goal," wrote W. Q. Judge.

An article by Gurcharan Das in the *Sunday Review* of *The Times of India* (July 17) argues that the wealth of a nation consists in each trying to do his best in the sphere of life he finds himself in. It is mediocrity that holds a nation back and leads to "deterioration of standards, shoddy education, debasement of taste, cheap politics and vulgar art." There is greater joy in "a stubborn striving for excellence," in working hard for something one believes in, than in enjoying a life of pampered idleness. Excellence can be experienced at every level and in every occupation, and demands discipline, tenacity of purpose and the will to win, says the writer.

The *Gita* formulated excellence brilliantly in the conception of *nishkama karma* or selfless action: you must lose yourself in your work to find your true self. Excellence comes from working with dedication, without thinking of rewards or without the intervention of one's ego. . . . Happiness lies in striving towards meaningful goals which we set for ourselves and in devotedly and selflessly achieving them. . . .

Competence is a condition for the survival of a free democratic society. When a person does a slovenly job, whether he is a teacher or a truck driver or a policeman, he endangers that freedom. He diminishes us all by lowering the tone of our society. He makes us weak and vulnerable. . . .

In the future we will have no choice but to develop human potential at all levels. It will take more than an educated elite to run a complex technological society. Thus we have to foster excellence at all levels if we are to survive. An excellent plumber is infinitely more admirable than an incompetent scientist. A society which scorns plumbing because it is a humble activity and tolerates shoddiness in science because it is an exalted activity will have neither good plumbing nor good science. Neither its pipe nor its theory will hold water.

Every human being wishes to be respected regardless of his ability and in moral terms we are bound to grant him that right. The more we continue to create the impression that only a person who has gone to college is worthy of respect in our society, the more we contribute to a fatal conclusion which injures everyone. Human dignity and work should be assessed only in terms of those qualities of mind and spirit that are within the reach of every human being.

Mahendra Gill's reflections inspired by the four-volume compendium of speeches and writings of Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Order appear in the *Sunday Review of The Times of India* (July 3, 1988). The book is published by Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan under the title *Eternal Values for a Changing Society*.

The most unique contribution of India [says Gill] is the development of religion and philosophy which are inseparably intertwined. To say that Hindu religion is other-worldly is not true. . . . In ancient India investigations of physical phenomena, industrial techniques, scientific methodology and algebraic analysis have gone hand in hand with the highest abstract philosophy of monotheism known to humankind. . . .

In the elementary stages of human evolution the mind developed, and it started looking inquisitively at the external world and endeavoured to unravel its mysteries. . . . A later development in evolution was man's inquisitiveness about himself, about his own mind, about the observer of the observable; about *Atman*, about *Brahman*.

Researchers in the domain of the physical sciences have shown that the external world is unfathomable; the more you discover, the more mysterious become the origins. The physical sciences have also therefore started searching for the ultimate reality, a unity, behind every mysterious manifestation. The Hindu religious search is also for a similar unity behind bewildering diversification. The Indian mind set about searching the mystery behind the observer, believing that it is that mystery which, if unearthed, will solve the otherwise unending mystery behind the physical phenomena as well. The internal search is religious; the external, scientific; but because both of them have decided upon a common nucleus, they have virtually coalesced in Indian philosophy. . . .

It is painful to say that the Hindu religion is fast losing its relevance. . . . Hinduism in theory is quite different from Hinduism in practice. . . . Mere references to a distant past are hardly a consolation. No doubt there was a time when a vast country like India, thinly populated and rich in natural resources, cut off from the foreign invader for centuries, excelled in mental prowess and lived a life of tolerance and contentment. But now we find the same people so unrecognizably disparate.

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS

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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 founder 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 SELF, and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however 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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