

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 ORIGINAL IMPULSE AND THE ORIGINAL TEACHINGS

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Primitive peoples have disappeared, but primitive wisdom survives and is attainable by those who “will,” “dare,” and can “keep silent.”

—*Isis Unveiled*, II, 586

IN this month of August, devotees of H.P.B. will remember the day of her birth in 1831.

In 1877 her first book was published, *Isis Unveiled*, in which she chronicled the results of her great travels. She opens the book with a quiet and dignified but unequivocal statement: “The work now submitted to public judgment is the fruit of a somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science.” (I, v)

Of the Fraternity of Adepts with its centres of research and service, which H.P.B. names “secret brotherhoods,” something has been taught in her writings. In her first book she writes of these “secret brotherhoods”:

If they have been regarded as mere fictions of the novelist, that fact has only helped the “brother-adepts” to keep their incognito the more easily. We have personally known several of them who, to their great merriment, had had the story of their lodges, the communities in which they lived, and the wondrous powers which they had exercised for many long years, laughed at and denied by unsuspecting sceptics to their very faces. (II, 403)

Travellers have met these adepts on the shores of the sacred Ganges, brushed against them in the silent ruins of Thebes, and in the mysterious deserted chambers of Luxor. Within the halls upon

whose blue and golden vaults the weird signs attract attention, but whose secret meaning is never penetrated by the idle gazers, they have been seen but seldom recognized. Historical memoirs have recorded their presence in the brilliantly illuminated *salons* of European aristocracy. They have been encountered again on the arid and desolate plains of the Great Sahara, as in the caves of Elephanta. They may be found everywhere, but make themselves known only to those who have devoted their lives to unselfish study, and are not likely to turn back. (I, 17)

Among those travellers was H.P.B. herself. Mark this:

When, years ago, we first travelled over the East, exploring the penetralia of its deserted sanctuaries, two saddening and ever-recurring questions oppressed our thoughts: *Where, WHO, WHAT is GOD? Who ever saw the IMMORTAL SPIRIT of man, so as to be able to assure himself of man's immortality?*

It was while most anxious to solve these perplexing problems that we came into contact with certain men, endowed with such mysterious powers and such profound knowledge that we may truly designate them as the sages of the Orient. To their instructions we lent a ready ear. They showed us that by combining science with religion, the existence of God and immortality of man's spirit may be demonstrated like a problem of Euclid. For the first time we received the assurance that the Oriental philosophy has room for no other faith than an absolute and immovable faith in the omnipotence of man's own immortal self. We were taught that this omnipotence comes from the kinship of man's spirit with the Universal Soul—God! The latter, they said, can never be demonstrated but by the former. Man-spirit proves God-spirit, as the one drop of water proves a source from which it must have come. Tell one who had never seen water, that there is an ocean of water, and he must accept it on faith or reject it altogether. But let one drop fall upon his hand, and he then has the fact from which all the rest may be inferred. After that he could by degrees understand that a boundless and fathomless ocean of water existed. Blind faith would no longer be necessary; he would have supplanted it with KNOWLEDGE. When one sees mortal man displaying tremendous capabilities, controlling the forces of nature and opening up to view the world of spirit, the reflective mind is overwhelmed with the conviction that if one man's spiritual *Ego* can do this much, the capabilities of the FATHER SPIRIT must be relatively as much vaster as the whole ocean surpasses the single drop in volume and potency. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*; prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God! (I, vi)

And again:

Many years of wandering among "heathen" and "Christian" magicians, occultists, mesmerizers and the *tutti quanti* of white and black art, ought to be sufficient, we think, to give us a certain right to feel competent to take a practical view of this doubted and very complicated question. We have associated with the fakirs, the holy men of India, and seen them when in intercourse with the *Pitris*. We have watched the proceedings and *modus operandi* of the howling and dancing dervishes; held friendly communications with the marabouts of European and Asiatic Turkey; and the serpent-charmers of Damascus and Benares have but few secrets that we have not had the fortune to study. (I, 42-3)

It is important and necessary for the growing body of sincere inquirers and devoted students of Theosophy to learn, mark and inwardly digest what is implicit in the above extracts. They clearly indicate that the learning process through which H.P.B. passed was behind her in 1871 and that the new period of her teaching humanity had dawned. Having acquired knowledge during the 20 years from 1851 to 1871, she began teaching, declaring that the doctrine was not hers but his that sent her. The first large and solid instalment given in *Isis Unveiled* was veiled in parts; much was withheld, because the policy of her Masters was—step by step. One of them wrote:

It is the common mistake of people that we willingly wrap ourselves and our powers in mystery, that we wish to keep our knowledge to ourselves, and of our own will refuse—"wantonly and deliberately" to communicate it. The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most *if not all* of the Secrets are *incommunicable*. The receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct. The illumination *must come from within*. Till then no hocus-pocus of incantations, or mummery of appliances, no metaphysical lectures or discussions, no self-imposed penance can give it. All these are but means to an end, and all we can do is to direct the use of such means as have been empirically found by the experience of ages to conduce to the required object. And this was and has been *no secret* for thousands of years.

Some misguided students have opined that there are mistakes in the teachings in *Isis Unveiled*. How absurd that point of view is, can be seen from the above and other extracts in the book itself. H.P.B. began teaching when she had completed learning—gathering information and knowledge. One of the facts about the

writing of *Isis Unveiled* is that it is a most valuable compendium of psychical and psychological phenomena tabulated and explained with acumen and clarity.

Her subsequent articles and books amplify and add instruction, not newly acquired by her since the writing of *Isis Unveiled*; but what she knew before, she gave out in 1888 and later, because a body of students of Theosophy and aspirants had arisen demanding more. They had benefited by her work already done, and they called for the additional instalment which was then recorded for them.

Today we should like to emphasize an idea in conformity with and in continuation of the great work spoken of above. It is this. Students should more diligently take to the study of *The Secret Doctrine* and make it better known than before. Many of these fundamental ideas have already been accepted by the mind of our civilization. There are, however, other teachings which ought to be emphasized. One way to do this would be for students to cull for themselves the teachings that are of value to them, and point out that value to the general public through articles in popular periodicals and newspapers. The motion of the cycle has not stopped and the Work must go forward. The Lines to be followed in the coming years are an extension of the old Lines whose operation we have to examine from time to time.

“THE universe is an almost untouched reservoir of significance and value,” and man need not be discouraged because he cannot fathom it. His view of life is no more than a flash in time. The details and distractions are infinite. It is only natural, therefore, that we should never see the picture whole. But the universal goal—the attainment of harmony—is apparent. The very act of perceiving this goal and striving constantly toward it does much in itself to bring us closer and, therefore, becomes an end in itself. . . .

I realized how wrong my sense of values had been, and how I had failed to see that the simple, homely, unpretentious things of life are the most important.

—RICHARD E. BYRD

OUR LOFTY TASK

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind.” That is the greatest commandment. It comes first. The second is like it: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” Everything in the Law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments.

—*Matthew*, XXII, 37-40

O ye Bhikkhus and Arhats—be friendly to the race of men—our brothers! Know ye all that he who sacrifices not his *one* life to save the life of his fellow being, and he who hesitates to give up more than life—his *fair name and honour*—to save the fair name and honour of the *many*, is unworthy of the sin-destroying, immortal, transcendent Nirvana.

—LORD BUDDHA

THEOSOPHY has a wisdom of its own. Its cosmogenesis is stupendous in its cyclic sweep, while its anthropogenesis covers aeons of time and speaks with a studied authority wondrous to behold. It comments on the Stanzas of the *Book of Dzyan*—a volume lost to historians and Orientalists. It speaks of a language which was rendered in cypher characters, ideographs, numerals and colours—which all formed a cryptographic alphabet. It quotes chapter and verse from religions, philosophies and sciences, new and old, and gives extracts from tomes scattered over the world's libraries. For the first time in our recorded history, it revealed the core of Truth which underlay all past religions—some known by fragments still extant, the others lost to modern history. Side by side with transcendental metaphysics, Theosophy presents precepts of ethics which are but the translation of metaphysical realities into formulae for the governing of human behaviour. Goodness is shown as a demonstrable necessity, especially when placed against the background of a common origin and of a Brotherhood *in actu*.

Yet, although this vast body of knowledge was put forward for the world's consideration, it was not presented as a mere addition to its learning. The aim was not to proselytize but to instruct. Learning was not the goal but rather the means for a recognition of ultimates. Wisdom, purity and power were desirable only if they subserved the ideal of laying the foundations of a brotherhood in clean places and virtuous surroundings. With this end in view, for the last 20 years of her public earthly presence, Madame Blavatsky gave out hints on the occult, referred to the Brother-

hood of the Adepts and even started a school for chelas and lay-chelas. She and those whom she called her Masters gave to the world the rational explanation of things—from stars, planets and suns to atoms, molecules and men; from the unseen world of spooks and elementals to the regions of *Akasha*, *Daiviprakriti* and *Ain-Soph*. The world is still trying to grasp what they gave.

What, then, was it that made this revelation possible and even desirable in the last quarter of the 19th century? What was the objective which moved the Masters of Wisdom to permit the launching of the Theosophical Movement and the dissemination of a part of their long-hidden Teachings? The answer to these questions lay in the peculiar circumstances which the Western world was then facing. Towards the late fifties of the last century the world was in the midst of a crisis in psychism. In private homes, around sensitives and mediums, there came to be formed circles and séances where, conditions permitting, the dead apparently returned and gave messages which, because of a mass of long-forgotten details which they revealed, could not have originated save from the person who had died. Little items of personal value—nicknames, confidential and long-forgotten facts—stamped the messages with an authenticity which could not be disputed. An emotional and psychic upsurge overspread the continents and was drawing people away from Church and Science alike. The rationale of these phenomena was not known and the stirring up of emotions by the possibility of a mode of contact with long-lost but dearly loved friends and relatives created a craze which was impervious to reason.

Herein lay the greatest danger to vast multitudes of men. For, since these psychic manifestations dealt with the hidden but still the mortal aspects of the person—living or deceased—a real danger existed because of the contamination which would inevitably ensue by a proximity of and sometimes a control by the decaying astral reliquiae of dead men. Cases of obsession and possession began to multiply. People were in danger of losing their physical and psychic health while their attempt to turn these phenomena into avenues of personal gain, revenge and indulgence in sensuality was leading them on the highroad to unmitigated sorcery. Men's minds had to be weaned away as much from the superstitions of the churches and the bigotries of science as from the soul-killing virus of fanaticism and false knowledge which was being daily injected into thousands by the necromantic practices of spiritualism so-called. A knowledge which could give a rational elucidation of the origin of things, the

doctrine of emanations, the constitution of man both in life and after death was the only panacea which was likely to build a protective wall around humanity. If men were to be saved in the mass, they had to be led away from ignorance and false knowledge towards the beneficent, soul-satisfying philosophy of the Ancients. The Hermetic philosophy had to be reintroduced as a priceless heirloom long forgotten but still available for him who sought its benign influence. The brotherhood of men had to be demonstrated and along with it had to be proved the dangers that lay inherent in the exercise of any power that had for its object the satisfaction of personal ends and the attaining of glory for oneself alone. The sutra of sacrificial action had to be sounded before a world eager to risk the plunge into selfishness and materialism and the disastrous worship of the dead.

To achieve this objective of shielding mankind from misery and sorrows hitherto unfelt, a bold attempt to call humanity to order was planned by men who had reached the high estate of Adeptship, Initiation and Mahatmahood. To carry out their policy and plan, willing volunteers from among men had to be found. When these came forward, the great attempt was ready to be launched. Thus it came about that under directions received, there was formed on 17th November 1875, in the City of New York, the Theosophical Society with the noble title of "Brotherhood of Humanity." The central figure round which lesser satellites fell into orbit was Madame Blavatsky, who remained till her death in 1891 the sole accredited messenger from the great Brotherhood of White Adepts. Her task was to gather round her a nucleus of devoted Souls who could by dint of effort and sacrifices build on earth a replica in miniature of the great exalted Brotherhood. If such a focus could be built and nurtured on earth, it could provide the channel of instructions between the world of mortals and the world of immortals. It could help focus on our earth the Knowledge and the Light from on high so as to provide in an ever-increasing manner a haven of refuge for tired and hungry souls. From the start, Madame Blavatsky had drawn attention to this important task.

To carry out this exalted purpose, the Society was divided into three distinct sections. First there was the Brotherhood of the Masters, the high Initiates, the Mahatmas who out of compassion were prepared to turn the 19th-century effort into a world movement. This section was represented on earth by their accredited messenger and amanuensis—H.P.B. The next section was that of Chelas who by right of special service had earned the privilege to

stand in the presence of the Masters. These, with the Lay Chelas, were to form the terrestrial nucleus of sacrificers who, putting service before self, were expected to labour for Universal Brotherhood and therefore for the good of humanity in the mass. The last section comprised those aspirants who from the outer world came into the circle of influence of the Society. If these latter were roused to altruism, they could be guided and helped by the members of the second section to reach that point of development which would qualify them as aspirants to lay-chelaship. The Theosophical Society was thus planned to be the Hall of Knowledge from which a constant flow of recruits could be expected to the second section. It was thus envisaged to be a training ground for altruists, a field of effort to promote and teach Brotherhood and sacrifice, charity and mutual tolerance for a disciplined and united effort at the upliftment of the race. Poverty, chastity and obedience were now being invested with a new dimension. Austerity became not merely an exercise towards a laboured purity but an aid to a nobler and therefore higher expertise in the fields of mind and soul.

During the early days of the Movement, one of the Masters of Wisdom speaking about Universal Brotherhood wrote:

The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase. Humanity in the mass has a paramount claim upon us. . . . It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind: and it is the aspiration of the *true* adept.

It was this paramount claim of humanity in the mass which was being recognized and endeavoured to be met by the establishment of the Theosophical Society. Few there were who lived up to this divine purpose. Some became avid of miraculous phenomena and hungered for the acquisition of powers; others came to seek their own individual salvation, while still others tried to arrogate to themselves powers and positions, leadership and acclaim. They thought, as many still think today, that their veiled motives were unfathomable even by the Mahatmas and that they could seek their own triumph over the fall or discomfiture of others. These failed for the simple reason that he who sets his face against his fellow men but creates antagonistic forces that will one day set up a vast turbulence within himself and make him learn through adversity and pain that the laws of brotherhood cannot be violated. What did this "Universal Brotherhood"—a strange phrase new in the 19th century and subsequently almost lost in the holocaust of two World Wars of the 20th—what

did it signify in human action and in the behaviour of man towards his past and his immediate present? Madame Blavatsky gave the answer in the Preface to *Isis Unveiled*, which, though it referred to her own literary effort, had a universal application in life. Here are some ideas culled from that Preface:

(1) Even justice must be done. Truth must be spoken without malice or prejudice.

(2) No mercy should be shown to enthroned error, nor reverence paid to usurped authority.

(3) Credit has to be given for achievements even though centuries may have withheld their recognition.

(4) Restitution has to be made of borrowed robes; calumniated but glorious reputations must be vindicated.

It is an irony of fate that within the Theosophical Society and the fragments into which it stood divided, the same unbrotherly traits of error, deceit, calumny and pilferage (borrowed robes) became manifest as decade after decade saw brotherhood at lower and lower ebbs. But even during the darkest hours of human aberration the mantras of brotherhood and service were never wholly forgotten. If in the thick of the fight the standard fell, there were eager hands to seize it and keep it flying. The flame lit in 1875 has not been extinguished. It is still being tended by the loving hands of those who watch and serve and wait. They believe that if Brotherhood is established within themselves, that if the channel of communication between Manas and Buddhi has been kept clear of the debris of earthly desires, then help must surely come from friends, associates and workers who are linked together by the psychic bonds which exist between themselves and the Gurus to whose bidding they have devoted their lives. The darkness of the night is nearing its end. May the sun rise on a brighter morrow and on a humanity eager to receive its beneficence!

In the Higher Self alone can be seen the unity of all. In it alone is found the ultimate proof of a vast and all-embracing Brotherhood. In the Universal, the personal and the individual have to submerge their own felicity, to find it return to them a thousand-fold intensified in the common good of all mankind. The incarnation of H.P.B. and her stupendous sacrifices have not been in vain. Let her disciples unite and in their individual lives portray the living force that resides in Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement.

THE ETHICS OF THEOSOPHY

[In *The Key to Theosophy*, in the sub-section entitled "On Self-Improvement" (Indian ed., pp. 52-55), H.P.B. quotes the words of "a true Philaletheian, an F.T.S." The writer was Dr. J. D. Buck of Cincinnati, U.S.A., one of Mr. Judge's closest friends and co-workers. We reprint here the whole of his article from *The Theosophist*, September 1883.—Eds.]

THOUGH several thousand miles from the seat of your labours, it is not a difficult matter to see that you are in the "Church militant" rather than "triumphant." Misrepresentation from without, misinterpretation within the fold. It seems to me that the greater danger is from the latter cause. My budget of information is the pages of the *Theosophist*, as I very rarely see a single member of the T.S. The difficulty seems to arise from a misconception of the meaning of the word Theosophy, and many who have outgrown the old creeds, and are inclined to sneer at all creeds, turn to your Society out of mere curiosity. They are simply *phenomena hunters*. They say "show us a sign" and we will believe, and they seem to believe even when favoured by the *Mahatmas* that true wisdom can be tacked on to one like barnacles to a ship. Clearly and repeatedly has it been set forth in the *Theosophist* that Theosophy is a *life*, not wonder-working, nor even a belief, nor intellectual acquirement, but an entire regeneration of the whole man.

The powers of the *Adepts*, nay, their very existence, is a matter here of secondary importance, since we are plainly told that they do not exist for the unregenerate. What man or woman can be helped in the *Divine Life*, by cutting off a poor Chela's fingers who is bedeviled into an experiment, which, no matter how it may result, will advance the beholder no more in the Path, than a feat of jugglery? Simple mental greed is little better than any other form of gluttony; one may pile up facts and witness wonders till the "day of doom," and still be as uncharitable, intolerant and unregenerate as ever. But little "learning" is required to assist one to "deal justly and walk humbly," yet no amount of worldly wisdom will take the place of that little. How many of us poor mortals can even realize the bare fact of subjective existence, and how many of us, when getting rid of this objective body and its conditions, and born into the subjective, will be any better than the maimed, puny, anaemic, scrofulous waifs, born into this world with an inheritance of pain and suffering, and a premature

departure to another? We are plainly told that this world is a gestation-state, and that the next life or condition will be the net result of this, turned *inside out*, to speak crudely. The basis of all great religions and philosophies sets forth the same doctrine, that nothing but right living *here*, can help us *there*. Now how much can sight-seeing, or all the phenomena imaginable, help one, more than money-getting, or fame-getting? Do not all these pertain to this present objective existence; nay, do they not prevent the very condition aimed at by leading astray, or dwarfing the spiritual faculties? In vain has man been told for ages, "*Know thyself.*" How many of us want to know ourselves, how many dare know that an hour of retrospection will reveal to the best of us, ordinary mortals, the emptiness or rottenness, and yet what else remains when we shuffle off this mortal coil? What every man needs first is to *find himself*, and then to take an honest inventory of his subjective possessions, and bad or bankrupt as it may be, it is not beyond redemption, if *we set about it in earnest*. It requires neither oracle nor miracle to do this; but it requires a *strong will* to keep at it, and the will that is strong enough to do this, may find itself capable of doing more than it had imagined. There are many helps, but one worker only, in this vineyard. Men have been deceived and deluded long enough; they must break their idols, put away their shams, and *go to work for themselves*—nay, there is one little word too much or too many, for he who works "for" *himself* had better not work at all; rather let him work himself for others, for all. For every flower of love and charity he plants in his neighbour's garden, a loathsome weed will disappear from his own, and so this garden of the Gods—Humanity—shall blossom as a rose. In all bibles, all religions, this is plainly set forth—but designing men have at first misinterpreted and finally emasculated, materialized, besotted them. It does not require a new revelation. Let every man be a revelation unto himself. Let once man's immortal spirit take possession of the temple of his body, drive out the money-changers, and every unclean thing, and his own Divine Humanity will redeem him, for when he is thus *at-one* with himself, he will find himself at-one with all; then shall he see and know the "builder of the temple." Why should he care for miracles and wonder? He will be a miracle and a wonder—God manifest in the flesh.

It seems to me that the desire to witness and then to be instructed how to be able to perform wonders is a dangerous rock to the theosophists, and will land them where the vicarious atonement lands thousands of its believers, followers of the "Man of

Sorrows," professing love and charity, and yet robbing widows and orphans, and grinding the face of the poor; hard-hearted, hard-fisted, though often rich and prosperous according to worldly standards. And so a witch might ride a broomstick through the air, or a devil fly feet first to the moon, and be witch or devil still. What we need most and first is tolerance, charity, and loving kindness, a *brotherhood* that is not a sham, and a life, or an unceasing striving towards a life, that shall lift man from the animal towards the spiritual plane, and enable him to claim his birthright. The reticence of the "Brothers" and their unwillingness to exhibit their powers teaches the same lesson. Occult phenomena have their uses, but there are a thousand men who would walk ten miles to see a so-called "*miracle*," who would not cross the street to relieve the distress of a brother or an outcast, and who, when they have seen the latest or last wonder, will turn from "Theosophy" to the next novelty. Let us have magnetic cures like those performed by Col. Olcott, the relief of pain and misery! Let the strong heal the weak, the rich assist the poor, the wise inform the ignorant! That, and no less, is *Universal Brotherhood*, the true Theosophy.

CINCINNATI,
U.S.A.

—J.D.B.

It has been commonly believed that throughout the ages there have been many different religions. But there never has been but one religion—that inner religion in which all men believe and which is the flowering of the instinctive feeling, deep in the human heart, that there exists in the universe a Spiritual Power which is eternal and all-pervading, and which symbolizes to every man his own individual conception of the highest good. The religions on the surface of history are therefore but different manifestations of that innate feeling. There are no such things as dead religions: merely the worn-out and discarded garments of the one and only religion which never dies—the religion in the heart of man.

—MERTON S. YEWDALE

WE ARE MASTERS OF OUR FATE

“EXERTION is greater than destiny,” it is said. Destiny is dead, whereas exertion is a living force; destiny is a result, the crystallized past, whereas exertion is a cause, the seed of the future.

Our destiny, our fate, is the result of what we did and were in the past. Of course, like other dead things, what we did and what we were produce effects. Suppose we have made ourselves such that poverty and obstructions are our lot. Result: We grumble and sit down to wait for better times, meanwhile growing poorer and less successful all the time. Or—to give a pleasanter and less obvious example—we support various charities without looking into their nature or their value simply because the family has always done so or “everybody’s doing it.” Echoes of the dead past absorb our attention, but we need not allow this to happen. They are an illusion and a little exertion on our part puts us in a position to tap the living force within us. Then we become masters of fate and realize that exertion is indeed the stronger of the two.

Like all simple statements of profound truth, the above definition proves to be a seed which, when fructified by our effort to understand, produces sustenance for the mind along several lines. Take, for instance, the following statement in the *Bhagavad-Gita*: “Whatever thou doest, O Son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me.” What does this really mean? One meaning at least is surely connected with the relation between destiny and exertion. For every act is either the automatic progeny of destiny, or the child of exertion. The past makes the setting and gives the natural impulse to act in a certain way—but there is always a moment in which the wakeful consciousness can exercise its human privilege of choice. Every act performed on the basis of choice—deliberate choice of the mind—is one committed unto Krishna, a libation, however small, of spiritual energy. On the other hand, the act caused by the momentum of the past wastes the life force instead of increasing it.

The following passage from a letter written by one of the Elder Brothers in the early days of the Theosophical Movement of our century is most suggestive in this connection:

In conformity with exact science you would define but one cosmic energy, and see no difference between the energy expended by the traveller who pushes aside the bush that obstructs his path, and the scientific experimenter who expends an equal amount of energy in setting a pendulum in motion. We do; for we know there

is a world of difference between the two. The one uselessly dissipates and scatters force, the other concentrates and stores it. And here please understand that I do not refer to the relative utility of the two, as one might imagine, but only to the fact that in the one case there is but brute force flung out without any transmutation of that brute energy into the higher potential form of spiritual dynamics, and in the other there is just that. Please do not consider me vaguely metaphysical. The idea I wish to convey is that the result of the highest intellection in the scientifically occupied brain is the evolution of a sublimated form of spiritual energy, which, in the cosmic action, is productive of illimitable results; while the automatically acting brain holds, or stores up in itself, only a certain quantum of brute force that is unfruitful of benefit for the individual or humanity. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 29, p. 3*)

It may seem a far cry from the scientifically trained brain to the ordinary man choosing his simple course of action. The link between these two is, of course, the human mind. In both cases the act is performed at the behest of Manas, the great spiritual dynamo. Though in the former, no doubt, the energy involved is more far-reaching in its effects, still even the apparently insignificant occasion when a man checks the all-too-common tendency to act automatically shares with it that quality of being mind-induced and mind-initiated which makes it valuable.

It would seem, then, that there are two distinct kinds of karmic future built up by the above two types of action respectively. The one washes away the individual who, as a human being, should no longer be driven by natural impulse, further and further away from the world of the "living" back into the ocean of passivity and negation and final death. The other, being fathered by the characteristically human principle of discrimination, brings the actor one step nearer to life eternal.

As suggested by the above-quoted verse from the *Gita*, these opportunities to make a contribution to the spiritual aspects of things come to us daily, hourly. Walking, eating, performing the simplest of tasks, may be made spiritually important no less than the more obviously complicated deeds that life requires of us. With every little turn in the affairs of our lives comes a great opportunity, though most of us seldom realize this.

Daily with souls that cringe and plot,
We Sinais climb and know it not.

For purposes of self-analysis and practice it is well to note that the act based on discrimination may prove to be the same as that

which would have followed automatically, but the fact of its origin in the positive human principle raises it into the higher class. To adopt a method or routine suggested by circumstances is often highly to be recommended, but this way of working should be chosen consciously. Those who forget this important point will be apt to lapse into a negative form of automatism, as it were, by automatically objecting to the path indicated by natural impulse instead of automatically following it.

Nor should it be forgotten that our effort to discriminate in the matter of action will not always lead us to do "right." In fact, the striving to stand on one's own feet, self-energized and self-determined, will itself occasionally prevent a man's seeing the obvious as the best. Yet even such failure to see clearly is of more value to the individual and the race than the success born of passively following the line of least resistance. It is better to carve out our future than to drift, and this applies to small matters no less than to great ones.

SOME may ask if there is not any sort of study that will enable us to shave off the old erroneous modes of thought. To them I can only give the experience of many of my friends in the same direction. They say, and they are supported by the very highest authority, that the one process is to enquire into and attempt to understand the law of spiritual unity and the fact that no one is separate but that all are one in the plane of spirit, and that no single person has a particular spirit of his own, but that *atman*, called the "seventh principle," is, in fact, the synthesis of the whole and is the common property of every being high and low, human, animal, animate, inanimate, or divine. This is the teaching of the *Mundaka Upanishad* of the Hindus, and the meaning of the title "Mundaka" is "Shaving," because it shaves off the errors which stand in the way of truth, permitting then the brilliant lamp of spiritual knowledge to illuminate our inner nature.

—W. Q. JUDGE

AFTER-LIFE STATES

WHEN the review of the life that is closing is accomplished and the soul has finally withdrawn its energy from that vast and marvellously organized community of atoms or "lives" which we call the body, the millions of components thereof enter upon a new phase of experience. They are now like children let out of school, or like labourers whose day's work is over. They are no longer subject to the authority of their teacher or foreman; the soul, whose instruments they had formed and whose rules they had been obliged to obey, no longer binds them. Each goes its own way, alone or with the group that is most nearly allied to it. This process is what we know as decomposition; and, because it is not a healthy one from the point of view of the "living" bodies of souls still using such vehicles, it is advisable to cremate the dead so as to minimize the undesirable influence.

Occultism regards cremation as vastly preferable to burial and the Theosophical Movement of the present cycle did pioneering work in this connection. That quick and clean method of disposing of a dead body has the great advantage of hastening the natural process of decomposition, thereby reducing the unhealthy aspect thereof to almost nothing. It is a well-known fact that the earth's power of assimilating decaying matter, though great, is limited and the noxious gases from decaying corpses a few feet underground must affect adversely the health of the living. Since the soul is in no way benefited by the preservation of the body which it has left and the living are distinctly harmed by its very slow decomposition after disposal under the earth or in a tomb, it is much better to adopt the well-tried way of reducing it to ashes. H.P.B. states that "*Cremation was universal till a comparatively recent period—some 80, or 100,000 years ago*" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 753). (This "recent period" will, no doubt, make modern men of science smile!)

In view of the above it is not surprising that the artificial preservation of the body by embalming, which of late years has been in vogue in some lands, is also discouraged by occultism.

So much for the body. Meanwhile the real man finds himself still embodied, but his vehicle is now an astral one, that important principle which during life permeates the physical body and after its death becomes in turn man's outermost covering. In this the soul now lives, but, instead of turning outward and striving to gain experience from the world around, its one interest is to disentangle itself from this astral phantom. For people who die

while still very deeply immersed in worldly concerns, or full of the coarser physical desires and passions, that task is comparatively difficult and may take considerable time to be accomplished. But when death has come in the natural course and the life just closed has been a reasonably pure and controlled one, no great difficulties arise. The soul subsides into a kind of somnolence and Nature does the rest, like a mother undressing a child already half asleep.

As Mr. Judge has put it: "Natural death is like the falling of a leaf near the winter time"; the time being ripe, its stem has but a slight hold on the branch and it lets go without resistance. So, too, the vehicles of man fall apart when the cohesive force that has held the threefold man together and made of him a unity weakens and finally becomes ineffective. After this the soul is free to live its own life in the blissful condition already referred to, known in Theosophical terminology as Devachan; and the discarded astral body, the more ethereal physical corpse, as we may call it, is, like the denser one, left to disintegrate.

A great deal can be learned from Theosophical literature, ancient and modern, about the fate of this astral corpse or shell. If it was properly used and cleansed by its creator before he died and was obliged to leave it uncontrolled, its process of falling to pieces is quick and causes no trouble. If this was not the case, or if the astral shell is molested by mediums and thus drawn into unnatural contact with earth life by means of spiritualistic practices, its existence may be prolonged to the detriment of those among the living with whom it comes in touch, as well as of the man who owned it and has shaken it off. We cannot here go into the complications to be met with and solved by the soul in its next incarnation as the result of the vicarious life an astral shell may be made to live under the influence of a medium, but they are many.

Meanwhile, the reincarnating Ego is now ready to enter upon its real "life after death." It awakens and finds itself in that state of consciousness for which the modern Theosophical Movement has selected the term "Devachan," or "Land of the Gods," because it is the condition in which the immortal Soul is happy and "at home."

It is to this that H.P.B. refers when she speaks of the bliss that awaits us in the intervals between earth lives. In the Devachanic state the soul garners the results of all its experiences on earth in so far as they are susceptible of spiritual elaboration. Any thoughts or aims inspired by unselfish love, for instance, revive

in the mind of the Devachanee and become a seed of happiness. We are told that there is scarcely a soul who has not sown some such seeds while on earth, however mean and undesirable its life may have seemed.

The evil that men do cannot find expression in that state; bad tendencies lie latent while they are in Devachan; they will have to be corrected and compensated for in another incarnation but, for the time being, those who had such tendencies in life are at rest from them, as we are from irritation when the person whose presence arouses it in us is absent. For only that part of the astral body which becomes the discarded shell contains those elements which respond to what is inharmonious and self-seeking.

For the vast majority of those human beings who are not entirely absorbed in the pleasures of the flesh and in money-grabbing, a very important factor in their happiness is the presence of those whom they love. We cannot imagine bliss apart from our dear ones. The question therefore naturally arises: "What becomes of the friends that mean so much to us, when their physical presence is withdrawn by death?" H.P.B. answers:

We are with those whom we have lost in material form, and far, far nearer to them now, than when they were alive. And it is not only in the fancy of the *Devachanee*, as some may imagine, but in reality. For pure divine love is not merely the blossom of a human heart, but has its roots in eternity. . . . Again we say that love beyond the grave, illusion though you may call it, has a magic and divine potency which reacts on the living. . . . It will manifest in their dreams, and often in various events—in *providential* protections and escapes, for love is a strong shield, and is not limited by space or time. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 148)

A word about what is often called abnormal death. Unnatural death is not really death at all in the proper sense, because the force of cohesion mentioned above pertains to the whole man, and therefore the second death—the disintegration of the astral body—is not yet possible in such cases. In cases of unnatural death, what happens is that the physical envelope is suddenly put out of commission. The man himself remains clothed in the complete astral body and, instead of coming to rest and being divested of his astral garment, preparatory to proceeding to the refreshment of Devachan, he struggles to "live," that is, to maintain contact with the physical world of men which is still the field of natural expression for him. The fact that he no longer has a physical instrument is a source of much suffering, and the

shock of prematurely losing it brings in its train a number of consequences fraught with great evil. The sufferers from this abnormal form of departing from this life are suicides, victims of capital punishment and all who die before their natural term, through violence.

In regard to the first and last of these three groups, motive and circumstances play a very important role in mitigating the ill effects of the pseudo-death. The condition of the criminal may be sketched as follows:

[At death] when the final tremor comes, the various inner component parts of the man fall away from each other and let the soul go free. But the poor criminal has not come to the natural end of his life. . . . These parts are not ready to separate. . . because they are bound together by law and a force over which only great Nature has control.

When such a premature separation is effected, the inner man is merely dazed for a time, after which he wakes up in the atmosphere of the earth, fully a sentient living being save for the body. He sees the people, he sees and feels again the pursuit of him by the law. His passions are alive. He has become a raging fire. . . the victim of his fellows and of his own crime. . . . The criminal has only hate and desire for revenge. . . he has become a menace to the living. . . he carries with him. . . the pictures of his crimes, and these are ever living creatures, as it were. . . . In the very realm in which our mind and senses operate, he is for ever coming in contact with the mind and senses of the living. More people than we suspect are nervous and sensitive. If these sensitives are touched by this invisible criminal they have injected into them at once the pictures of his crime and punishment, the vibrations from his hate, malice and revenge. . . . Many a person has been impelled by some unknown force to commit crime; and that force came from such an inhabitant of our sphere. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 217-18)

Enough has perhaps been said, and a great deal more can be learned from Theosophical literature, to show how important it is to begin informing oneself regarding the life after death and not to wait till our last hour on earth approaches. Death is unavoidable and the earlier we find out what it entails for the soul the better for us.

THE DOCTRINE OF REBIRTH

ARGUMENTS IN ITS FAVOUR BROUGHT TOGETHER AND SOME
OBJECTIONS ANSWERED

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THE term *reincarnation*, as used in Theosophical literature, means the coming again and again of the human soul into successive human bodies of flesh, but *never* into the body of a lower animal.

In evolution the door always closes behind the eternal pilgrim, and, for this informing and indwelling principle, there is no going back. Its progress is like the flow of the blood through the heart. Valves open for the forward flow of the life current in its cycle, but close against a backward flow. Or it is like that of the chambered nautilus that builds itself new mansions as the old ones grow too small, and never goes back; in fact, cannot, for the old house is outgrown. So when once a centre of self-consciousness has been evolved from the Universal Consciousness, and has incarnated in a fit vehicle for its use, the human body, it can never enter the body of a lower animal or function through its organism.

Re-embodiment, or change of form, is a method of progress in the involution and evolution of the whole cosmos, but re-embodiment of collective life in forms below the human is succeeded by reincarnation of individual thinking entities when the human stage is reached.

We see evidence of design in all nature, a working towards an end, and in this working a cyclic law obtains—alternate periods of subjective and objective life. We see it clearly in the vegetable kingdom. The tree drops its old garment of leaves, the life principle withdraws to the root and dwells in subjectivity till the period of reawakening, when it comes forth again into trunk and branch and takes on a new body of leaves. Not only the leaves, but branch and stalk of other plants, die, leaving only root or bulb or seed to hold the latent life and ideal plan of the plant. But the life and the plan are there, however unmanifested, and nature never makes a mistake in re-embodiment of the one in accordance with the other. In this kingdom a physical vehicle is not dispensed with during subjective periods, but is reduced to small limits.

Re-embodiment is plainly discernible in the insect world, where the same old material is worked over into a new and entirely different body, but always with the intervening subjective states. We have a familiar illustration of this in the caterpillar, chrysalis,

and butterfly. Higher in the scale, transformations in the same body are limited to organs, the informing principle is more developed, and it has no longer a physical body during subjective states save in hibernation, sleep and trance.

As re-embodiment, with alternate periods of activity and rest, obtains in the lower kingdoms, analogy would lead us to infer the same for the higher. If it is worth while to conserve the informing principle of a plant with its specific character and re-embodiment it, surely the soul of man deserves as much.

The immortality of the human soul demands re-embodiment of some kind, somewhere, and the fittest body at present is the human organism, which required so many million years for its building, and the fittest place is earth so long as earth can furnish needed experience. If the life of the soul is without an end it must also be without a beginning, for that which has one end must have two. A beginning with the body implies an end with the body. That the soul is not the product of the body and does not necessarily perish with it is evident from its superiority over the body, as no stream can rise higher than its source.

The aim we see about us in nature is surely not set aside when we come to man, and since the soul of man incarnates, it must incarnate for a purpose, and that purpose must be the development of all the latent potentialities within it through experience by its contact with matter on the physical plane. This development includes the conquest of matter and the training of the animal man till it becomes a fit instrument for the divine, and implies also the helping of other souls in their development. This object we plainly see cannot be accomplished in one earth life, even the longest; and how many quit the body at birth or in early childhood! If these can complete their development under other conditions than those afforded on the physical plane, then were it never necessary to incarnate at all and incarnation is a farce. But incarnation being necessary, reincarnation must be so also. To acquire wisdom there must be opportunity for all experience, and to learn the unsatisfying nature of material life it must be tested in every phase. Many, many lives on earth are necessary for this; and the desire which first brought the soul into physical life will bring it again and again until physical life has nothing more to offer that can draw the soul.

The theory of repeated earth-lives in which a reincarnating ego reaps what it has sown and sows what it will reap is the only one consistent with the idea of justice. The great differences in mental and moral capacities of different individuals, as well as in

their circumstances, can be just on no other ground than that each individual has made his own capacities and conditions. What justice is there in creating new souls, without any wish, will or action on their part, for all new-born bodies, and making these souls with widely different tendencies and capacities, placing some, often weak ones, in the most wretched and vicious surroundings where only the strong could be virtuous, and others in beautiful, good and happy homes with every incentive to virtue, and then holding all alike responsible for the outcome of their lives? There is no justice in it. Only on the theory that each soul makes for itself its character and conditions is there any justice in the existing state of things. But this theory demands pre-existence of the soul and reincarnation.

Neither is there any justice in the theory that some race in the future will reap the grand results of the experience of preceding races, unless that race be composed of the same egos as the preceding or has rendered or will render them like benefits.

The wide divergences in mental and moral characteristics in the same family can be accounted for only on the theory of a persistent ego that incarnates again and again gathering up, assimilating and carrying on the results of all its experiences. Heredity will not account for these differences, for even in the case of twins where not only the ancestry but the prenatal conditions are the same, these wide mental and moral divergencies may be seen in connection with great physical similarity. Heredity accounts for the physical likeness and is a co-worker with reincarnation by affording the ego a suitable instrument for its purposes, an instrument which the ego has earned by its past.

Reincarnation and not heredity accounts for genius and infant precocity. Often the genius is the only one in his family possessing his striking qualities in any marked degree. He neither inherited them from ancestors nor transmitted them to posterity, but must have acquired them by his own exertions in the past, and still carries them with him. To call these qualities the unearned gift of a Creator is but to ascribe partiality and injustice to that Creator.

Infant precocity shows remembrance of knowledge acquired in the past. This is true not only of a Mozart, who composed a most difficult concerto at the age of four years, but of less noted persons who at a very early age were able to read without having been taught in the present life.

Some persons comprehend and accept with great readiness Theosophical teachings on first presentation, because these are not

new to their egos, while others of equal intellect comprehend and accept with difficulty or not at all. We readily accept those new ideas which are only an extension of our previous ideas.

Great spiritual lights, such as Jesus and Buddha, are no products of heredity with the added acquirements of one life only; but the suffering through which those souls were perfected and made one with the divine spirit was the suffering of many lives.

Reincarnation best accounts for the decay of highly civilized races and nations and the rise of new ones. The egos that brought on the high civilization of the old race quit it for the new, and then less and less advanced egos incarnate in the old, thus bringing on its decay. By the law of progress through heredity the race ought to go on to greater things instead of going back. Through reincarnation there is real and continued progress. The going back is only apparent, for all the egos go forward, and only the race made use of as an instrument by successively less and less advanced egos goes back. The instrument, but not the user, wears out.

Only the theory of reincarnation gives a satisfactory explanation of the extinction of races. All the egos in the present cycle of development, having progressed beyond the need of anything that a certain race can furnish, will no longer incarnate in it, but will seek a more advanced race, so births cease in the old race and it becomes extinct.

The reappearance of certain types of civilization after intervals of 1500 years goes to sustain the doctrine of reincarnation of the same ego after that interval in a subjective state. As an example of this, note the reappearance of the conquering, colonizing and empire-loving character of the Romans of the Augustan period in the English of the Elizabethan age. See also at the present time in the currents of mystic, religious and philosophical thought a reappearance of the mystic thought, Gnosticism and Neo-Platonism of the fourth century.

The instinctive feelings of attraction and repulsion felt on first meeting people and without any apparent reason, may be due to old relations existing in former lives and not yet severed on the invisible planes. Indeed they are sometimes hard to account for on any other hypothesis.

Peculiar emotions connected with certain things and events point to some unknown former relationship to them.

Dreams often indicate a familiarity with persons and things not known in this life.

Intuitions of former lives enrich the page of the poet. Wordsworth says:

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar.

The same thought in varying phrase is expressed by many other inspired poets.

There are many people who have distinct remembrance of former lives, and that all do not remember is no proof of previous non-existence; for we do not remember the first years of our infancy nor many of the events of our later life, yet we do not on that account consider ourselves to have been non-existent. The reason so many of us do not remember is because the new brain we use in the present body is not sufficiently sensitive to the fine vibrations of the Higher Ego to be impressed with its knowledge of the past. But when the lower nature has been sufficiently trained and purified, then each personality will be able to receive the knowledge of the past and be strong enough to bear it. But at the present stage of development, it is a blessing to most of us that we are not burdened with a memory of the details of the past, and many would be glad to forget portions of the present life could the lesson be retained without the remembrance of the mistakes that taught them. This is just what we have from our past lives.

The objection to reincarnation is sometimes offered that it is unjust to suffer for an unremembered past, or for the deeds of another personality. Those who make this objection, however, never think of injustice in reaping the happy rewards of an unremembered past, or of the deeds of another personality. They fail also to consider how many causes of suffering sown in this life are forgotten before the suffering comes, yet they do not for that reason think the suffering unjust. Through all lives the ego is the same; and each personality, though a new one, is an aggregation of qualities from the past. So the suffering is just.

Some people object to reincarnation because, as they say, they do not want to come back, they have had enough of the troubles of earth and are tired of earth-life, or they do not wish to lose their individuality or be separated from their friends or fail to recognize them. All these objections are based on the likes and dislikes of the objectors, as if these were sufficient to change facts and laws of nature. These people lose sight of the common fact in

everyday experience that their not liking things does not prevent their being. But granting the potency of likes and dislikes, one may be weary of earth-life under certain conditions and yet be eager to try it under others. In fact, it is a common thing to hear people say, "Oh, if I could only live my life over again with the knowledge I now have, how differently I would act!" This chance they sigh for they will have.

As for losing the individuality, this is a mistake. The individuality, which includes all that is worth saving, is not lost. It is only the undesirable portion of the being that is broken up. The new personality is but a new putting together of old material which has to be worked over till something better is made of it, or till it is so refined and purified that it is worthy to be preserved.

The objection regarding the failure to recognize friends is based on externals. That these friends must continue to have the same outward appearance is entirely unreasonable, as they do not do this even through one short earth-life. Applied to the soul-plane, this objection would preclude all mental and spiritual growth. In regard to the separation of friends, souls that are truly bound together by pure unselfish love are not separated by either birth or death of a body. Attachments hold over from one life to another and bring the same individuals together in successive incarnations.

Another objection put forward against reincarnation is that by presenting the opportunities of future lives it will make people careless regarding the present, that they will follow evil courses, indulging in whatever gratifies the lower nature. This might be so if there were no retribution, but every evil thought and deed carries in itself the seed of pain. The law of Karma is inseparably linked to that of reincarnation, and there is no escaping the consequences of one's acts. This knowledge, instead of making people more inclined to lead evil lives, will have just the opposite effect.

The appearance of vicious children in virtuous families and virtuous children in vicious families is offered as an objection to the theory that the soul is drawn to reincarnate in a family having similar characteristics to his own. Other factors than this, however, enter into the account. The interlinking of past Karma may be such as to bring together in the same family very different characters. Sometimes strong souls that have a mission to help humanity may be born into low conditions from choice, for by such birth they are best enabled to help all. They are too strong and pure to be overpowered by the conditions and so rise above them. But by their lowly birth and passing up through all ranks they are enabled to come into sympathetic touch with all.

Reincarnation accounts for the divergences in families while heredity does not, although it is claimed that they may be accounted for by reversion. Yet the theory of reversion is disproved by the appearance of a single genius in an obscure family; for had any of his like appeared before in that family it would not have been obscure.

It is claimed that reincarnation sets aside heredity, or that heredity invalidates reincarnation, neither of which is true; for reincarnation works with heredity, the latter affording the suitable physical environment for the returning ego.

Increase of population is put forward as an objection to reincarnation, yet it is not positively known that the population of the earth increases, there being no statistics of population in many parts of it; and even if the population should increase there are so many more egos out of incarnation than in it that the increase could easily be accounted for without affecting the theory of reincarnation.

Reincarnation is believed in by the majority of the human race. It is the belief of Brahmans, Buddhists, Zoroastrians, Sufi Mohammedans and many of the tribes of North and South America, among them the Mayas. It is held by some Jews and Christians and by most of the members of the Theosophical Society of whatever religion. As a theory reincarnation is becoming less strange and unreasonable to the western mind, and it certainly best accounts for known existing facts.

This doctrine is very clearly taught in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, which is accepted by both Brahmans and Buddhists, and also in the Upanishads. It belongs to the ancient religious teachings of the Egyptians. The "Song of Resurrection" by Isis is a song of rebirth. It is taught in the *Talmud*, the *Zohar* and *Kether Malkuth*, and in the *Old and New Testaments*. Micah prophesies the coming again of one whose "going-forth" had been from everlasting (v, 2).

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do men say that I am?" And they answered, "Some say that thou art John the Baptist; some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (*Mathew*, xvi, 13-14). So it was thought that any of these might come again. And the same belief on the part of his own chosen disciples is implied by the question, "Who did sin, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" (*John*, ix, 2), which implies the possibility of his sinning before birth. And Jesus said nothing against such a belief in either case, although he says of himself, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (*John*, xviii, 37). On the contrary

he declares that, "Before Abraham was, I am" (*John*, viii, 58), and that John the Baptist was Elias come again (*Matthew*, xi, 14). In *Revelation* (iii, 12), is the statement, "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out," which implies that he had been out before and would go out again unless he overcame. In *John* (iii, 13) is the passage, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven," which teaches pre-existence unless heaven has been and is devoid of men. There are numerous other passages supporting the teaching of reincarnation to be found in the Christian Bible.

A general knowledge in the Western world of the doctrines of karma and reincarnation would be a very beneficial influence. It would greatly increase the sense of moral responsibility and consequently the moral character of the people. It would change the attitude of the rich and the poor towards each other for the better. The rich would feel themselves accountable for making the best use of their wealth, would know that if they practised injustice and unkindness in their treatment of the poor and had no sympathy for their suffering, they might expect sometime to be poor themselves and suffer like treatment to learn a needed lesson. So even from a selfish point of view there would be a strong incentive to brotherly action. A thorough assimilation of these doctrines would strike deeper root than this and would really make people less selfish. On the part of the poor, these teachings would enable them to see that they themselves were the real makers of their hard lot, that they had earned it by their own past or that they had chosen it for their own soul-growth.

This knowledge would help them to bear with patience what would otherwise be revolted against as great injustice, and it would take away their hate and envy of the rich, while at the same time the rich would be more kind to them, so that a general brotherly feeling would arise. A wholesome teaching is this:

Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince
For gentle worthiness and merit won;
Who ruled a King may wander earth in rags
For things done and undone.

FACTS VERSUS CHERISHED BELIEFS

COMPLETE intellectual honesty is among the rarest of human qualities. With most human beings, truth which conflicts with preconceptions or challenges prejudice has scant chance of a hearing. How often the opportunity to prove or to disprove a belief is deliberately evaded! An instinct, half-protective, half-defensive, prompts the millions of devotees of a Personal God to avoid putting Him too sharply to the test. There is not a Personal God of any religion who does not fail to live up to the promises made on His behalf by priests who claim the right to speak for Him. A person who fails to fulfil the terms of his contract, if he is not the victim of circumstances beyond his present control, is recognized as guilty of a breach of faith and others are hesitant to deal with him in future. Not so when God fails those who serve Him most punctiliously. The faithful may fulfil to the letter all the conditions they are told their God demands, but when the due response is not forthcoming, instead of taxing Him with bad faith or with impotence, they evade the issue with pious excuses. "His ways are past finding out." "He doeth all things well." "These things are mysteries into which it is not lawful to inquire."

One person who ultimately recovered from such mental paralysis confessed that as a deeply religious youth he had given up praying with the half-realized motive, which he certainly would not have admitted at the time, of saving God's face. God did not answer prayers even for things it would have seemed very easy for Him to arrange and even apparently to His interest as well. Obviously He couldn't manage it. It seemed to the lad unkind to keep putting God in positions where His impotence was made so plainly obvious. He felt sorry for the Deity. For years he kept to himself his discovery that God was ineffectual. For a long time he went to church more assiduously than before, but he left off prayers for specific things as unfair to god, not sporting, as it were.

What are such expedients but a defence mechanism for beliefs intuitively recognized as not sufficiently robust to withstand frank challenge? The blind believer shrinks from facing facts as owls avoid the sun. He prefers resting undisturbed in what he wants to think. To the orthodox of any creed a universe of law, just and unerring, seems chill, inhospitable. Cause and effect offer a dreary substitute for the glamorous possibilities of miracle. So in all ages men have let their fancy range in wish-fulfilment dreams and scouted facts that negatived their cherished beliefs.

The infantile mind has always resented opposition and refused

to recognize any law transcending its desires. Many people grow up incredulous that men and circumstances will not ultimately bend before their will. Our civilization is full of adults whose attitude to life is still that of spoiled and petted children. When they meet opposition from their fellows or from their environment, such men and women instinctively turn for backing to a higher power, as in their infancy they demanded and received enforcement of their thwarted wishes through the intervention of parent or of nurse. The *deus ex machina* is invoked, as in ancient drama, to descend to disentangle the confusion of events and bring his devotee to victory.

But that most convenient device of the ancient dramatist to further the action of the play has no counterpart in real life. Causes once set in motion will sweep inevitably to their due effect as the breaking wave spreads itself out on the sandy shore. No intensity of hope or fervency of prayer can turn the wave back till its force is spent. No power on earth or in heaven can make the fusion of two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen anything but water; as the gun is pointed when the trigger is pulled, so the bullet will fly; the apple-tree will bear apples, the mango-tree mangoes; so it always has been and so it ever will be. The law works throughout the physical universe—no effect without its due cause, no cause set up that does not produce its effect. Logic and universal experience point to the identity of this law of action and reaction with the moral law and to the impossibility of any legerdemain, human or divine, averting the destiny which each has sown and must in due course reap.

Belief in a Personal God and in the efficacy of intercessory prayer flouts the Law, as it belittles Deity, the divine principle of omnipresent Life. Such belief substitutes a caricature for the majestic concept of the Boundless and Unknowable. It pictures God as a celestial sleight-of-hand performer who could, if he but would, at any time produce a rabbit out of a high hat or other gape-seed for the credulous. Faith in such a God may make life more interesting for the immature, but such a faith at best gives a factitious sense of freedom from the law, as drugs may make the prisoner forget his bars. In fact, sincere belief that one can so transcend the laws of nature as to escape the consequences of his acts, whether by unaided effort or through appeal to a heavenly ally, is a form of megalomania no less pathetic because it is so common.

The most unfortunate effect of the Personal God complex, however, is not this delusion of greatness which it fosters.

Megalomania *per se* is relatively harmless. But the logical deduction from the fallacy that legitimate results can be turned aside is that the motive and the course of action do not greatly matter. That is a fatal error. The world today is reaping in misery and confusion the results of centuries of action on this false notion and of failure to recognize that with power, always and everywhere, goes corresponding responsibility.

The lesson has not yet been learned. The average man still prefers comfortable mental inertia to intellectual effort. Comparatively few can echo sincerely the noble words of Emerson, "I covet truth." The power of passive resistance is never more clearly illustrated than when blind faith is challenged by an uncongenial fact. The will to believe is the most implacable foe of truth. Fact and logic are alike powerless against an intense will to believe in that which their testimony contradicts. Illogical and dangerous, therefore, as are belief in a Personal God and the resulting denial of the universality and impersonality of Law, they will persist as long as human beings desire to be deceived.

But the religious devotee is by no means the only blind believer. The average scientist, however open his mind in his own laboratory, offers an impregnable front to facts which negative his basic conceptions. The attitude of almost all the little men of science, and of many of the so-called great as well, towards well-attested psychic phenomena is strongly reminiscent of the reaction of the ignorant old man who on his first sight of a giraffe stoutly declared that there could be no such animal. Suggest to such a scientist that the Wise Men of the East, ancient or modern, may have possessed or may possess today truth far beyond the ken of Western science of the present time—and observe his reaction!

The technique of meeting truth which comes from an unpopular source and which conflicts with preconceived ideas is well developed: to deny as long as possible; to ignore what can no longer be denied; and, when neither denial nor ignoring quashes unwelcome truth, to attack the *bona fides* of whoever stated it. Few men indeed among the ranks of either scientists or churchmen of whatever creed observe the wise ancient injunction: "Never utter these words: 'I do not know this—therefore it is false.' One must study to know, know to understand, understand to judge."

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Sunspots have been a subject of perennial interest to astronomers who study the sun. The explosive flares witnessed in recent months, they say, herald the arrival of the solar maximum: the period every eleven years or so when the sun reaches its peak levels of activity and ejects huge masses of gas. Created by intense magnetic fields and cooler than the surrounding gases, sunspots are visible as dark blemishes on the fiery surface. The cover story in *Time* magazine for July 3, "Fury on the Sun," reminds us of the awesome power of our great luminary:

At maximum, the sun bombards the planet with radiation and particles, causing unusually brilliant auroras, communications black-outs and power failures. But it also gives scientists a fresh opportunity to solve some of the mysteries surrounding the star that provides the earth with energy, drives the weather and sustains life itself.

During a maximum, marked by a jump in the number of sunspots and flares, giant loops of incandescent gases, called prominences, proliferate, shooting tens of thousands of miles above the solar surface. . . . The earth's upper atmosphere, pummeled by solar particles, is laced by electrical currents of as much as a million amperes. These in turn create powerful magnetic fields that raise havoc below. . . .

The intense solar observations should provide clues to many of the still unanswered or only partly resolved questions about the sun: Does the solar cycle affect terrestrial weather? What internal mechanisms control the cycle? Is the sun growing cooler? Hotter? Is there a basic flaw in the current theory about the fusion process that powers the solar furnace? . . .

The sun has long been pre-eminent in human thoughts and actions. Almost from the beginning, people worshipped the sun as the beneficent provider of light and life, and as a god, called Ra by the Egyptians, Helios by the Greeks and Sol by the Romans. To the Aztecs, the sun god was Huitzilopochtli, whom they nourished with human sacrifices. Egypt's great pyramids at Giza were built with their sides aligned with the rising sun at the vernal equinox, and the temple complex at Karnak was dedicated to Ra. The ancient circle at Stonehenge, in England, was apparently constructed so that the sun would rise over one of the great stones at the time of the summer solstice. From the beginning of history and literature, human beings have also invoked the sun. . . .

Since the sun in myriad ways governs the very existence of all

terrestrial life, the cyclic changes in the sunspot population have inspired speculation about their effect on solar radiation and, consequently, on the earth. . . . Like a giant nuclear-fusion furnace in the sky, the sun radiates stupendous amounts of energy. Some of it departs in the form of speeding particles, mostly electrons and protons, that form a solar wind blowing from the sun in all directions. It is this continuously flowing wind that feeds particles into the earth's Van Allen radiation belts and distorts the terrestrial magnetic field. . . .

Also radiating from the solar surface is energy in the form of visible light, ultraviolet and X rays. Enough of this energy penetrates the atmosphere to deliver some 100 trillion kW of power to the earth. . . . It is this vital sunlight that provides the energy for photosynthesis, the process plants use to produce carbohydrates for sustaining their growth. And it is solar energy—stored in ancient plants that have become today's fossil fuels—that powers factories and runs automobiles. Sunlight also drives the earth's weather system, supplying the heat that causes atmospheric circulation and evaporates seawater to form clouds and rain. It bombards oxygen in the atmosphere, converting it into the ozone that, paradoxically, screens out much of the sun's lethal ultraviolet radiation.

Astronomers admit that though the sun flared into life around 4.5 billion years ago, the workings of this star closest to the earth still remain a mystery. Is the sun's energy output constant, or does it vary with the ebb and flow of sunspots? And can such short-term changes have any significant effect on terrestrial existence? The correlation between the sunspot cycle and phenomena on earth is still not fully understood, though astronomers say that some of the coincidences cannot be easily dismissed. The cyclic waxing and waning of solar flares has been known to affect, among other things, the Earth's climate and geophysical phenomena, as also the harvests, which in turn affect foodstuff and raw material prices, bringing about economic changes. The growth rate of trees, the biological processes of our bodies, epidemics of disease, even accident-proneness, are all related to sunspot activity.

The Sun in Occult Philosophy is not a globe in combustion, but simply a world, a glowing sphere, behind which is hidden the *real* Sun, the visible being only its reflection or shell. The Sun *in abscondito* is the heart of the solar system whence vital energy is radiated into every part of the great body.

There is a regular circulation of the vital fluid throughout our system, of which the Sun is the heart—the same as the circulation

of life; the Sun contracting as rhythmically at every return of it, as the human heart does. Only, instead of performing the round in a second or so, it takes the solar blood ten of its years and a whole year to pass through its *auricles* and *ventricles* before it washes the *lungs* and passes thence to the great veins and arteries of the system.

This, Science will not deny, since Astronomy knows of the fixed cycle of eleven years when the number of solar spots increases, *which is due to the contraction* of the Solar HEART. The universe (our world in this case) breathes, just as man and every living creature, plant, and even mineral does upon the earth; and as our globe itself breathes every twenty-four hours. . . . It is similar to the regular and healthy pulsation of the heart, as the life fluid passes through its hollow muscles. Could the human heart be made luminous, and the living and throbbing organ be made visible, so as to have it reflected upon a screen, such as used by the astronomers in their lectures—say for the moon—then everyone would see the Sun-spot phenomenon repeatedly every second—due to its contraction and the rushing of the blood. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 541-42)

The text of Dr. Richard von Weizsäcker's speech given at a religious Congress, before he took up his present office as President of the Federal Republic of Germany, is reproduced in *Universitas*, a Quarterly German Review of the Arts and Sciences (Vol. 31, No. 1, 1989). Referring specifically to the Christian faith and its meaning for co-existence in society, he said that the Bible commandment to love one another might seem to be incompatible with the systems prevalent in the world, but the contradictions are not insurmountable. The tension between the ideal and that which the world considers "practical" governs our lives unceasingly and challenges us afresh every day. In Dr. Weizsäcker's own words:

Liberation from existing systems and dependences in the political history of democracy has brought with it a definite increase in social justice. But now people find themselves in danger of emancipating themselves from their own nature, and thus becoming rootless. For, wishing liberation from all ties and all duties to our fellow-men does not make our lives free, but impoverished, lonely and meaningless.

It is similar with social structures. . . . But we must not lose sight of our yardstick. Those who trace everything back only to the

social conditions end by degrading people to mere objects. The attempt to make the social conditions perfect and thus bring about the salvation of men in the end means converting the structures instead of people.

But this a fundamental error. We can and must strive to improve the political system according to the yardstick of love. We cannot, however, bring about its salvation. Structures are of human making too. The change that love can bring about does not begin and end with the system but with the unique human being. It must never become the tool of a programme. . . . What this involves, above all, is solidarity. Both the individual and the community are dependent upon it. . . . A decisive element in solidarity is caring between individuals. . . .

It is not in some ethical superstructure divorced from real life, but in the midst of the problems of this world itself that ethical standards have to prove themselves. To love belong sobriety and reason. It is not an offence against the commandment to love one another, but an ethical requirement, to refrain from obstructing a reasonable balance of power for the preservation of peace and human co-existence. . . . Peace does not only require a particular kind of behaviour, but also has a particular content. The content of peace is humanity. . . .

Love is the yardstick of our political system. . . because we know that love has more power than any other force.

Love is much more than that. It is the foundation of all existence and without it nothing can possibly continue to exist.

Love—divine love—is the source of life, of light, and happiness. It is the creative principle in the Macrocosm and in the Microcosm of man. It is *Venus*, the mother of all gods, because from her alone originate Will and Imagination and all the other powers by which the universe was evolved. It is the germ of divinity which exists in the heart of man and which may develop into a life-giving sun, illuminating the mind and sending its rays to the centre of the universe; for it originates from that centre and to that centre it will ultimately return. (*Lucifer*, January 1888)

Pupul Jayakar, formerly Chairperson of the Festival of India and at present Cultural Adviser to the Prime Minister, outlines "Some Paradigms of the Creative Process" in her article under that title (*Indian Horizons*, Vol. 37, Nos. 1-2):

An immensely old school of philosophy, the Sankhya, based on

the conservation, transformation and dissipation of energy, as also concepts of space and time, described the ultimate ground of the universe and all manifestation as Prakriti, the first cause, the female principle, primeval matter, undifferentiated, holding within it both the expressed and the pre-expressed, without beginning and without end. Within her lay dormant the potential seed of sprouting. The root meaning of the word "Pra-Kriti" was Pra=excellent, Kriti=creation, excellent creation.

The three constituents of Prakriti as unmanifested ground in a state of total equilibrium, were: Satva as essence or luminous intelligence, with the tendency to manifestation, for reflection, but without mass or gravity and therefore unable to manifest. Tamas as matter, mass, gravity, volume and density, the ingredients of manifestation, but with inertia which made any independent movement or action impossible. And Rajas as energy, the moving principle, that could counteract and disperse the inertia of Tamas.

When touched by Rajas as energy, the inertia inherent in Tamas as matter, mass and gravity was overcome. The process of evolution and the coming into being of the universe was by challenge to Prakriti as equilibrium—by the touch of Purusha, as the luminous, the male immutable principle. What triggered the happening is never satisfactorily explained.

Every phenomenon was a transformation of energy and disturbance in the equilibrium of these three elements, of Satva, Rajas and Tamas. A play of these three coming together and moving apart was the bringing of form out of non-being, out of its pre-manifest state, to a state of revealing or manifestation. The infinite manifestations of the world arose from the multiple ways the three gunas come together—the one playing a dominant role. . . .

The birth of form and the craft needed for its manifestation has always demanded the seer as the explorer into the within of nature and the self, the craftsman as the explorer into tool and physical matter, and the explosion of essence or Rasa, to come together in intimate relationship. This alone creates a milieu where insight, transmutations and transformations and skill as excellence in action, coalesce; that instant is the anonymous birth of the creative, of the presencing of form, of luminous revelation.

Mausumi Chakraborty, the "wonder girl" of Adra in Purulia district of West Bengal, is only seven, but solves tough problems of higher mathematics with ease and explains in a jiffy the mo-

lecular structure of inert gases and Newton's Law of Motion. She is at home with the Constitution of India, well-versed in English, Hindi and Bengali, and is at present learning Dutch and German. The child prodigy has already studied physics, chemistry and mathematics at the B.Sc. level. She keeps abreast of global affairs, reads at least three newspapers every day, and is conversant with world currencies, the history of olympics, and the present "glasnost" in the Soviet Union. Mausumi is, moreover, a proficient typist with a speed of about 40 words a minute. (*The Times of India*, July 11)

In recognition of her talents, the West Bengal board of secondary education has granted her permission, as a "special case," to appear in the Madhyamik (secondary) examination in 1991, at the age of nine. The gifted girl is now looking forward to setting a "world record" as the youngest person to have obtained the school-leaving certificate. The board has agreed to move the state government for necessary arrangements so that Mausumi could appear at the next level of examinations, the higher secondary and university levels, after passing out the Madhyamik examination.

Egos capable of exhibiting remarkable intellectual powers at a very early age seem to be appearing on the world scene more and more frequently in recent times. The expression of intelligence of course differs in quality from case to case. The increasing appearance of child prodigies was clearly foreseen by H.P.B. decades ago. *The Secret Doctrine* says with regard to the "coming new race" that

it will silently come into existence; so silently, indeed, that for long millenniums shall its pioneers—the peculiar children who will grow into peculiar men and women—be regarded as anomalous *lusus naturæ*, abnormal oddities physically and mentally. Then, as they increase, and their numbers become with every age greater, one day they will awake to find themselves in a majority. (II, 445)

It is to be hoped that the development of such peculiar children, "geniuses" as they are called, will not be forced into narrow grooves and that their nature will be well rounded and wholesomely balanced.

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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, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

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