

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 67, No. 10

August 1997

SELF-RULE

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, April 1961.]

WHAT is self-rule? Why is it essential for true spiritual living? Why, in the second chapter of the *Gita*, do we have a long description of the "self-governed Sage," and why are there, in so many other sacred writings, references to such a man as being greater than the conqueror of cities? Why is the idea that man must be able to control what is loosely called "himself" emphasized in all religions, all education, all community living?

To answer these questions we shall have to analyse the subject and ask ourselves further questions: What is the Self? What is to be ruled? How is it to be ruled? What is the agent by whose help it can be ruled? And, finally, what is most important, why self-rule at all?

The last question can be answered by saying that evolution forces us to the point where self-rule becomes necessary. Just as plants have evolved the power of sensation, and animals the power of instinct, so for man evolution is by self-rule. As the Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* tells us, man's development is through "self-induced and self-devised efforts" in contradistinction to the lower kingdoms which developed by natural impulse. Man alone among all the kingdoms of Nature can choose self-consciously to obey the stupendous force of evolution, or to disobey it. Should he disobey, or refuse to co-operate, he falls out of the line and has to wait for another period of manifestation when, in time, he will learn that his only hope is full co-operation

with that force. As Emerson has pointed out, "Nature suffers nothing to remain in her kingdom which cannot help itself." Pain and sorrow are evolution's aids to man to help him choose the right path.

The answer to the first question, "What is the Self?" is—the very highest that we know of in ourselves. The Self here is not to be understood as the One Self of all but as that aspect of the awareness, the embodied Ego, which abides in man during any one life and which can be strengthened and aided by the Parent Ego. As the highest that we know speaks to us first as the voice of conscience, our first step is to listen to that voice. As we have been so often told, this voice can tell us what we should *not* do because it is the result of experiences garnered in the past. Few of us obey this voice at all times, and if any success is to be gained in the task of self-rule we must start here. But we know that we are often not sure as to what is the *right* action, and to learn this we must turn to what is called the "still, small voice" which speaks "where there is none to speak." This is a turning upwards to some source within ourselves which is higher than conscience, for it is the Voice of the Ego which is brooding over us and which is connected with the personality by that thin bridge of *Antaskarana*. We not only have to listen *to* this Voice but first we need to listen *for* that Voice. Therefore we are always taught to "search," to "seek"—that is the first step.

To enable us to make this idea a practical reality, Theosophy comes to our aid with its teaching of the dual aspect of man—the animal-man and the divine man. Both are rooted in the one great Spirit which is at the same time overshadowing man. It is the great Universal Life, Law, Bliss. The Self, therefore, is both the highest that we know and that higher that we have to seek and listen for and to; the former reveals to us what we have learnt, and the latter what we are now, in this incarnation, capable of learning. Were we not ready for this stage, we would not even be thinking of the problem! This is a great consolation and gives us courage.

The answer to the second question, "What is to be ruled?" is—everything less than the highest: the desires which form the basis of mental planning, the sensations which come through the sense-

organs, the passions that arise almost automatically in us through outer contacts *via* the sensations or desires or thoughts recalling former sensations, desires or thoughts. Do we not find ourselves constantly irritated by thoughts that we do not want to have, sensations that disturb, passions that are uncontrollable and for the exhibition of which we feel sorry and ashamed after they have expended themselves?

The third question as to how these lower, unwanted elements in our make-up are to be controlled, brings us to the agent that will do the controlling. That agent is the god within, the "I," irrespective of the body it suffers in, the feelings and passions it is absorbed by, or the thoughts that cloud it. If we like we can call this the sense of "awareness" showing through the feelings, passions, thoughts, for awareness is the faculty of the "I." It is because of this faculty that the "I" can become aware of what is low and base as well as of what is high and ennobling, according to whether it is pulled downward by Kama or by the animal-man, or allowed to turn upward toward Spirit, toward the Divine Man. It is through this individual "I" that the power of Spirit, namely **WILL**, can function. According to the stage of evolution of the being, this power functions as instinct and then as desire, for desire is the "mover of the will." Hence it is desire that makes for degradation or for upliftment. It is only by means of desire, the right kind of desire, that the animal-man can be ruled by the Divine, or by the god within.

It is therefore necessary that we try to understand the right relation between the animal-man and the god within, as *Through the Gates of Gold* tells us. "The god, given his right place, will...inspire and guide" the animal, "educate and develop it"; and the animal, given its right place, will find its pleasure increased a thousandfold. Once in its proper place, the animal becomes the servant of the god and the union between the two makes the animal more than animal because of the god within, and the god more than god because of the animal he has subdued. The animal is elevated and becomes "unimaginable in its great powers of service and of strength" when it is made the instrument of the god within. The god is able to serve through the instrument, while without it he is

helpless on the material plane.

How, then, shall we rule ourselves? Theosophy stands, among other things, for the inalienable right of private judgment, and maintains that man must rely on his own powers, consider himself his own saviour, and realize that he is responsible for all his actions. These points help us a great deal.

Man must make his own judgments. That is his right. He has the power of choice; but for the exercise of that power there must be different things or ideas to choose between. These things and ideas he must ponder over, and he must study all he can to learn which is the best. He must make up his own mind and not accept the conclusions of others, unless he has studied and agrees with them. In the *Gita*, Krishna does not tell Arjuna what to do, even though the latter asks his preceptor in the early chapters to choose for him "one method" of action. After having explained various systems of knowledge, Krishna says in the last chapter that he has given Arjuna all the necessary instruction, and he adds, "Ponder it fully in thy mind; act as seemeth best unto thee." If, after full study, we form a judgment and act on it, we shall learn by the effects whether or not it was a correct judgment, and thus alone do we grow. Even if we realize later that what we have done is wrong, in time our very nature will make us do from necessity that which in our folly we would not do, as Krishna points out.

We must rely on our own powers, for only thus will they grow. If we leave our work to others, our own powers cannot grow; and these are the powers of nature functioning in and through us. In *Isis Unveiled* we are told that the "one common vital principle" of nature is "controllable by the perfected human will." (II, 590)

It naturally follows that we must accept the idea that we alone can save ourselves. It is our self-effort that will count, but that does not mean we cannot turn towards the god in us so that its power can be felt more fully by us and can give us strength.

It also follows that, as our own saviours, we must accept the idea that we are accountable for our actions, including our feelings and thoughts. This should never mean that we can act without due care and then say, "I will accept the responsibility for the action," for we

do not know what the results of wrong actions will be.

What will be the result of following along the lines pointed out above?

Recognition of the right of private judgment will bring us strength. Reliance on our own powers will breed courage. Consideration of ourselves as our own saviours will bring us power. Remembering Emerson's statement that "Valour consists in the power of self-recovery," we can see that acceptance of the idea that we are accountable for our actions will develop valour in us, for we accept even the worst and begin to right the wrong we have done instead of harbouring despair, which is a negative attitude.

Look at the reverse side of these virtues. Lack of strength comes from failure to make up our mind and from letting others decide for us. What conviction can we have in another's plans for us? And conviction breeds strength. What can make us fearful and cowardly so easily as thinking and acting without any feeling that we *can* do this or that? If we do not believe that we are our own saviours, we become powerless, appealing, cringing victims, those that Nature "spews out of her mouth." If we do not accept responsibility for our actions, we shall never try to right them but shall run away, full of despair.

Having thus thought over this problem with the mind, we need to turn to the heart side of the question. Krishna refers to "mental devotion, which is knowledge"; devotion is only possible for one whose mind is fixed immovably in contemplation. It is therefore from the mountain top which is reached by contemplation that we must think of self-rule. Krishna says that one who has his senses and organs in control possesses spiritual knowledge and remains "in devotion at rest in me, his true self." For such an one must keep his heart-thought on the Highest, not only as he knows It in himself but also as It is outside himself—the throbbing heart of the Universe, the Power Divine which moves to good, which is Bliss, the radiant power of the Great Ones as also the power of life in the tiniest grain of sand. He must begin to see himself as a temporary unit in the whole until he can mirror the whole in himself. He must see this world as dark and the vast spiritual realms as the realms of Light,

and constantly refresh his mental vision and his heart-beats by looking deep within and without and listening to the call of Love, Beauty and Strength, whether through the sound of Shiva's drum or the magic of Krishna's flute, or through the cry of an infant and the glory of youth and the beauty and peace of old age.

Self-rule is peace; other-rule brings war. But that peace is vital and living, vibrant with spirit in action, will, and glorious with the whole wealth of the Divine Heart.

Of the self-ruled one it is written:

Hark!...from the deep unfathomable vortex of that golden light in which the Victor bathes, ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

JOY UNTO YE, O MEN OF MYALBA.

A PILGRIM HATH RETURNED BACK "FROM THE OTHER SHORE."

A NEW ARHAN IS BORN.

PEACE TO ALL BEINGS.

SURELY, all sorrow is destroyed when there is reflection, investigation by one's self, which leads to knowledge. And knowledge, "the giver of happiness," is a "knowledge of the Self by self." What that means is that each individuality, every self, with its limitedness, is grounded in a higher reality, the Self, with its unlimitedness. But what is unlimited, is reached first through the perception of how limited individuality is. What is limited is narrow, circumscribed, petty, fleeting, sorrow. When it moves into the vastness of the Self, the *Atman*, the all-pervading reality, where there are no boundaries of any kind, only then begins the celebration of life, *utsava*, in every meaning of the word "celebration."

Knowledge is celebration. Truth, freedom, fullness, love, meaning, are celebration. It is in that spirit of invocation to the joy of life, the *utsava*, that the *Yoga-vasishtha* says to us, as it did to Rama : "Invoke the Self by the self. Worship the Self by the self. Having perceived the Self by the self, live in the Self by yourself."

—CHATURVEDI BADRINATH

THE LAW OF GROUPING

Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing Vina; mankind, unto its sounding board; the hand that sweeps it to the tuneful breath of the GREAT WORLD-SOUL. The string that fails to answer 'neath the Master's touch in dulcet harmony with all the others, breaks—and is cast away. So the collective minds of Lanoo-Shravakas. They have to be attuned to the Upadhyaya's mind—one with the Over-Soul—or, break away.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

THE Masters of Wisdom labour so that men may become brothers. Soul-kinship is stronger than blood-ties, and the first object of the Theosophical Movement, of which the U.L.T. is an integral part, lays stress on the formation of a nucleus of Brotherhood, a fraternity to which all who love humanity are heartily welcome. A band of brothers and sisters who are united in obtaining knowledge, in endeavouring to better their own natures, and in promulgating the sacred truths of Theosophy, have clubbed together because of the realization that only *united* effort attracts to itself the attention of the Masters. In union lies strength.

The first condition of discipleship is the recognition of the spiritual family, that of the soul. Just as at the birth of our body we find ourselves related by blood ties, so the birth of the Soul finds each of us in the company of like-minded and like-hearted companions, a band or group which becomes our spiritual family. This is an important idea, and we must see its metaphysical and philosophical rationale, so that we may derive its moral meaning and make its ethical application.

Look at Nature. It is vast, bewilderingly vast, in its variety. Underground there are metals and crystals and precious stones, evolving in an orderly manner, stratum over stratum. The outer crust of the earth becomes the basis and the support of all plant-life, the flora of the globe—moss, shrub, creeper, bush, tree, each belonging to its genus and its species. The surface of the earth is, so to speak, extended as the rosebud opens its heart to the sky, as the palm-tree raises its head to receive and reflect the radiance of

the sun, the light of the moon. Then look at the fauna; the same order and rhythm of the march of life showing forth in its genus and species, the insects, reptiles, birds, beasts. Next, look heavenwards and listen to the music of the rolling orbs—sun and stars and planets and man-bearing globes, all, all, living and labouring in unison, in close dependence on each other, influencing each other in life and in death, in creation, preservation and regeneration.

Everywhere we find order, not chaos but cosmos; and that order and cosmos are maintained by and through a process—the grouping process of Nature. The classifying, dividing and subdividing of all forms of life shows the existence of Law. When people do not perceive the Law at work, they invent "the hand of God" theory! But they cannot explain why "the hand of God" created the hurting thorn on the rosebush, the worm that devours the rose heart, the poisonous snake, and the most poisonous of all creatures—the human rat, the human vulture, the human pig! No, it is not the hand of God; it is the Law of Life, Life omnipresent and universal, Life omnipotent but impersonal—the One Life building all forms, from the atom to the cosmos, in a splendid pattern.

We can see this Law at work in the human kingdom. The ancient Science of Theosophy teaches the division of humanity into family-races, sub-races, root-races. It is a magnificent study which any one can prosecute with the help of the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*; and if one wants an ancient text, one can go to the *Vishnu Purana*, but its allegorical descriptions and metaphorical language will necessitate a key, otherwise it might be dismissed as a farrago of nonsense!

To one who has not studied botany or zoology, there is no order in the kingdoms of plants and of animals; to one who has not studied geology or astronomy, what lies under the earth's crust and in the firmament above, however fascinating it be, seems chaotic. So also modern knowledge is unaware of the right classification, in the scheme of evolution, of the human kingdom, and is not able to describe it—how, for instance, the savage came to be and why he persists, what mystery abides in the fact that in ancient times mighty civilizations flourished, etc. Today, the Vedddhas of Ceylon,

the Bushmen of Australia, the Aborigines of dark Africa, all live side by side with the civilized people. We find the same phenomenon in every era. Civilized, intellectual races of humanity have lived side by side with the narrow-brained savage races. Theosophy has reduced chaos to cosmos in this department as in other branches of knowledge.

It is the same process and law which works in the human kingdom—the Law of Grouping.

We have a proverb: "Birds of a feather flock together," and we are not wrong in applying that proverb to humans. People who think alike club together. There is an order resulting from the working of Law: Our feelings manifesting as our likes and dislikes; our thoughts showing our ways and devices to fulfil our likes and dislikes, all, all are the outcome of Law. Just as in sports some take to cricket, others to tennis, and still others to golf, so also we find that on the social plane artists come together, politicians form parties, economists and philosophers have their respective schools. The grouping arrangement is continuous, and evolution and growth take place through people banding themselves together to express the powers of Life, *i.e.*, of thought, of will, of feeling.

Unlike in the lower kingdoms of Nature, in the human kingdom will is free because man is a self-conscious intelligence. The faculty to select and reject, the power to choose, the sense of right and wrong, are peculiar to human evolution. Therefore we find that groupings come into existence which are unnatural, *i.e.*, contrary to the rhythm of Nature. We find arbitrary groupings, accepted today, rejected tomorrow. For instance, political parties are arbitrary groupings, therefore they change and dissolve. There is greater haphazardness and confusion in the human than in the other kingdoms of Nature, because true knowledge and ancient science are not paid any attention to. The Immemorial Wisdom shows the straight course, the undeviating path of evolution, through the grouping process, and once that Law which is at work in the human kingdom is grasped, we perceive cosmos and not chaos which is now said to be prevailing in our civilization.

The Masters of Theosophy, possessing the knowledge of genus

and species in the kingdom of mind and soul, work with the Law.

The *Gita* teaches that right grouping; so do the *Puranas*; so does the Pahalavi *Dinkard*; so does even the materialistic positivist, Auguste Comte. *Varnas*, castes, divide the human kingdom into four compartments, the *Barhishad Pitris* of the Hindu Shastras, now not understood, being their cause. Castes do not pertain to the body of flesh and blood, though the inner colours materialize and mark that body's skin. Castes result from qualities, *gunas*, and from actions of previous lives, or Karma. So teaches the *Gita*. In the Eighteenth Discourse, the virtues and the duties of castes are described, and if we apply what is stated there we find that *Brahmanas* exist among the so-called *mlechchhas*, while many who style themselves *Brahmanas* are really worse than *Sudras—Pariahs*.

It is human consciousness manifesting qualities, expressing will, thought and feeling, producing deeds, selfish, unselfish, selfless, which gives us the correct basis for classifying members of the human kingdom.

When the human mind discerns the Order of Nature, because it perceives the Law at work; when, exhausted and fatigued, it seeks the straight path of true progress, when that mind, tortured by pain and disease, yearns to know the purpose of life, then it sees that soul-grouping is a fact in Nature. When a person is struck by sorrow, he seeks the cause of sorrow; and if he is earnest and sincere, he soon finds that could he but take himself to the grouping of Nature where pain ceases, where death dies, he would be a free soul. No one compels us to put up with our lot. Each one among us is free to choose, free to determine, free to move. It is a tremendous responsibility.

The Masters of Theosophy give the knowledge of the vast, complex scheme of human evolution and unveil the mystery for us. Those of us who see that sorrow ceases when soul-knowledge is gained, nay more, that real human service becomes possible through that knowledge alone, leave behind political, social, national, religious groupings; for, Theosophy teaches that soul is the cause and the creator of our woes and our joys, that right thought is the power that evokes pure Will and controls low desires. Man, as soul,

is superior to the man of caste and creed, of sex and sentiment, of race and religion. Theosophy enables us to produce a spiritual grouping: those who think for themselves and yet think alike; who sustain the differences of personalities and yet are impersonal; who feel with one heart—feel sympathy for suffering humanity, feel love for all who try to remove that suffering rooted in ignorance, feel deep devotion to those Perfected Ones, Masters, Christs, Buddhas of the Race who give us the Light of true Knowledge to dispel the darkness of ignorance. We want more minds, more hearts, to come into unison with us, so that better and more efficient service of the Race may be rendered, through a strong but ever-growing Nucleus of Brotherhood, whose Nucleolus is the Lodge of Adepts, Mahatmas, Nirmanakayas. These Living Masters are facts, the path to them is open, and Theosophy flashes the signal : "Who will enter that Noble Path?"

As Ether, the lower form of Akas, now semi-material, will become visible in the air at the end of this Round—the 4th—so *manas*, now only semi-developed in this race, will be further evolved in the 5th Round at the same time with the parent source, and as the form of Ether spoken of will then be the superior element in nature, so at the same time the superior principle reigning in the septenary constitution of man will be *manas*. The full development of *manas* imposes full responsibility on the race, and thus we see how the turning point is reached and what it may mean, and also what is the meaning of the "moment of Choice." With full responsibility the choice must be made by the race which thus has perfect *manas*. It is for and towards that period that the Masters of Wisdom are now working so as to prepare the present Egos for the momentous days when the choice of the good or evil path must be intelligently made.

And as in many places in the *Secret Doctrine* the author says that we are the same egos who were in the Atlantean bodies, and that they had a very weighty karma, we may perceive why it is that we are those who will be compelled to make the great choice for good or evil destiny in the next Round.

—W. Q. JUDGE

TRUE HAPPINESS

WE all desire happiness. Some pursue it relentlessly, as an animal hunts for its prey, while others are drawn to it more naturally, as a flower turns to the light. In *Through the Gates of Gold* we are told:

There are certain pleasures which appeal to each individual; every man knows that in one layer or another of sensation he finds his chief delight. Naturally he turns to this systematically through life, just as the sunflower turns to the sun and the water-lily leans on the water. (p. 16)

Whether it is money the person desires, or whether it is some intellectual or academic interest that captivates him, he pursues that interest and tries to obtain maximum happiness. When he obtains what he wants, he feels happy. When a thirsty man gets to drink water, or when a problem worrying a person gets resolved in a sudden flash of illumination, or simply when a task has been brought to a successful completion, there is a temporary feeling of happiness. But, unfortunately, all these pleasures do not satisfy one completely. Because, as *Through the Gates of Gold* puts it, "no sooner has he obtained his pleasure than he loses it again and has once more to go in search of it. More than that: he never actually reaches it, for it eludes him at the final moment."

One may work very hard and get all that the world considers necessary for a happy life, yet one finds that none of these things singly nor all of them put together can satisfy that mysterious thirst for happiness. It looks as though even if one were to gain the whole world it would not suffice to satisfy that thirst.

Why does this happen? It is because either we do not get what we wanted in the first place; or, even if we do get what we wanted, in due course it all turns to dust and ashes in the mouth. A realized ambition becomes a bore, a love that promises fullest contentment loses its charm, its glamour, its thrill, and we find that it is after all not quite what we had expected it to be. Or it may happen that having got what we wanted, there is in us the desire to cling to that thing or that person forever, and that might not be possible under the circumstances.

Thus happiness is not the end, and goal of life. *Sorrow is*—that is the fact of conditioned existence. "Woe to those who live without suffering," we have been told (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 475), for it is pain and suffering that lead us toward an ever-growing perfectibility. As Aeschylus said, "Call no man happy till he is dead"; that is, till he has carried that happiness safely to his grave. Sangharakshita puts it thus:

According to Buddhism there are three kinds of suffering. Firstly there is actual suffering, as when you have a toothache or cut your finger. Secondly there is potential suffering, as when you possess something which is a source of enjoyment to you: even though it is a source of enjoyment at present, potentially it is suffering, in that you may—indeed must—have to give it up one day. Finally there is metaphysical suffering, which arises because nothing mundane, earthly or conditioned can give full or final satisfaction to the human heart and spirit—because true and lasting satisfaction can be found only in the Unconditioned, in Truth itself. Everything short of that is therefore in a sense a subtle form of suffering. (*Vision and Transformation*, p. 26)

Thus, we see that as long as we depend upon outside things for our pleasures, we are going to encounter pain. *Through the Gates of Gold* says:

It is part of the heritage of men, this pain and distress; and he who determines that nothing shall make him suffer, does but cloak himself in a profound and chilly selfishness. This cloak may protect him from pain; it will also separate him from pleasure. (p. 4)

So we see that we cannot plan our life in such a manner that we shall have only happiness. Even if we succeeded in doing so, we would not enjoy it for long. Pleasure, like beauty, is conditioned by contrast. The best experienced pleasures are the ones that come to us as a treat, so to speak, after having worked hard, after having undergone suffering, after having paid the price.

The first step consists in cultivating *contentment*. One notices that it is very difficult to make a discontented person happy. The condition of contentment is to recognize our limitations. In other

words, it means remaining happy with what we have, where we are, and the way we are. This does not mean complacency; we must certainly try to change our situation, but having tried our best, we must then feel resigned. Contentment cannot come by looking at those who have more than we have. It comes when we try to look at those who are worse off, who are less fortunate than we are. As a Christian saint has said, "I cried for boots until I saw a man who had no legs." The more the things we require for being happy, the greater our chances of despair and disappointment.

The second step is to be *less self-centred*. When we are self-centred, we want everything and everyone to revolve around us; we tend to regard them as stepping-stones; we place importance on our own self-interests. The more egocentric we are, the more vulnerable we become. The smallest thing that does not happen according to our wish can shatter our happiness. It may be something as petty as not being invited to a lunch party, while our other friends were invited. Or, it may be our inability to buy an expensive suit like our neighbour's. Not only in material matters, but even at the intellectual and spiritual levels there is every chance of our being disappointed so long as we are egocentric. For instance, if our office colleague gets a promotion and we do not, we become unhappy; or, if our friend is considered more able and intelligent, we feel jealous. If another person is said to be more kind, more noble, even then there is a tinge of jealousy in us. We fail to realize that in this world "extreme cases" are very rare. In Statistics, they have a normal curve which is bell-shaped, tapering off in two directions, thereby showing that extreme cases are rare, that extremely good or extremely bad people are very few and that all of us are mediocre as shown by the middle region of the curve. So what does it matter if another person is a step or two below us or a step or two above us, materially, intellectually or spiritually?

The thing to do is to cultivate *Mudita*, *i.e.*, sympathetic joy. If our friend is happy, then it should fill with joy our heart as well.

The third step is to cultivate *detachment*, something that is often difficult to practise. We are so given over to things external that if any of them are missing we feel thoroughly miserable. *We must cease*

to be other-possessed. We must exert our will in deciding what is good or bad for us, and not give in to outside stimuli or passing fancies. We would do well to follow Robert Crosbie's advice:

I used to look calmly and dispassionately at the very worst picture I could conjure up as happening to myself, and found it helpful in getting rid of "fear of consequences." I mentally took account of the very worst, saw myself in it with all that it entailed, went through it in all its parts leaving myself *alone*, dishonoured, stripped of everything. Those very things have happened to me, but I knew them, had outlived them, and went on undismayed. Had I not done it, I would not be where I am today. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 85)

We too can try to imagine what would be our state in the absence of the things and people we are attached to.

Above all, the question is of moulding our self-will. We keep asserting our personal will all the time. "The way of inward peace," we are told, "is in all things to conform to the pleasure and disposition of the Divine Will." ("Musings on the True Theosophist's Path," *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 1)

As *Through the Gates of Gold* says, "How can that which is external satisfy or even please the inner man?" Our lower Manas considers personality to be everything, and therefore strives for the happiness of the personal self. But if we want lasting happiness we must be prepared to surrender pleasures of smaller worth.

True happiness results when even for a few moments we forget ourselves, because then it is that we are able to establish contact with our higher nature. It results when we are closer to our Divine nature. Great beings experience this, to a certain extent, when they are in a state of *Samadhi*. Even we at our level sometimes experience this bliss when we become successful in meditation. The peace and the joy that we feel at those moments is something that nothing earthly can give us. We also experience this happiness when we forget ourselves in helping someone or in doing good works without any self-interest. There are so many people in the world who, although they themselves have been in tragic or unhappy circumstances, are yet working for the welfare of others. At the

highest level, there are Great Beings, the *Nirmanakayas*, who forgo their own peace and bliss, staying in the invisible atmosphere of the earth, thus remaining in contact with suffering humanity.

A "calm indifference for, but a just appreciation of everything that constitutes the objective and transitory world" is what is expected of us. So long as we are searching for happiness, we are bound to be unhappy. But when we cease making happiness our goal, we shall definitely have it as a kind of byproduct.

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THE LEDGER OF OUR LIFE JOURNEYS

IN recent years, reincarnation has been investigated, probed into, questioned. This marks a definite advance over the bigoted thoughts of centuries when church dogmas dominated the mind of the populace. But at present, when people are obsessed by science, this inquiry must of necessity restrict itself to the limited functions of reasoning and to the testimony of the senses supplemented by instruments which merely extend the perception of these senses. The West thus remains in doubt, yet willing to be convinced. In the East, reincarnation is being accepted blindly, instinctively, or as an article of faith; but the lure of wealth and ease is turning the intelligentsia away from a deeper probe into the implications that follow upon a survival through and beyond death.

If we carry with us the immortal spark from one life to another, we were perchance in Greece and Babylon, participated in the glory of Egypt, and helped to make China ancient and honourable. We must have witnessed the shifting of continents and served our human apprenticeship in Atlantis and Lemuria. We may have witnessed the dawn of humanity, when it had but one tongue and one rallying cry. We, the deathless, went through it all, and in one or another ledger of our journeys through life have left our record of reactions to men, matters and things we encountered. Can we, perchance through strong search, perchance through persistent strivings, find the ledger and learn to read its transcript? What will it reveal? Will it be a Pandora's box which were better be left unopened, its key thrown away; or will it be the box which holds the charmed talisman that will transform us to planes where the Soul speaks its own language and reads the words written there for its instruction and edification?

The importance of recognizing this doctrine of reincarnation lies in the fact that if one has lived before and will hereafter live again, then the entity which spans the gulf of death must somewhere have built up a storehouse of memories, of lessons learnt in pain, of data laboriously gathered from experiments with life. Why is it then that nature denies him access and shuts him off from his past as

effectively as it does from his future? The answer must of course be found in the working of the evolutionary programmes and in the operation of the law of cycles. If our births can stretch back and farther back, we cannot with any degree of certitude say that man never did possess the power to look into the picture-galleries of the past. May it not be possible that preoccupation with things material atrophied his inner vision, made the power less familiar and certainly set it aside in favour of the less arduous efforts at the acquisition of control over the material things of life? Even legend asserts that man lost his "third eye." This happened millennia back as gradually spirituality waned, and man now remains that strange being who has eyes but is incapable of sight. To the 20th-century individual, this would be mere speculation, and since the proof that can convince him lies in the opening of his third eye, it were well-nigh impossible to convince him. But, for those who have faith, the proofs always come from and to the inner planes of being.

People pose the oft-repeated question: "If I have lived before, why do I not remember my past lives?" The answer is not difficult—you cannot bring the old memories to your present brain consciousness for the reason that the present brain was not your possession in prior lives and therefore has no record of the impressions. The present brain may retain—though that too to a limited extent—the memories of this life. And yet, how poor must our powers of recall be that we misplace things, hunt for words or try to capture the mood of only a few hours back! The tablet of the brain, and shall we as an aside say, of the organs also, is one type of storehouse available to the individual. These tablets anon bless and anon damn him. In and around him there are several storehouses where memory is hoarded, the innate moral and motivating quality being the factor that makes the living record gravitate to one or another of the recording media. When he has forgotten something and desires to recall the memory, what part of his goes a-searching? Where does he go to make the search, and that too with the consciousness in *Jagrat*? That he does succeed in retrieving the forgotten word or the experience misplaced in the plethora of a full life proves that he does exercise an unfamiliar sense to pluck the

particular fruit which he wants from a particular tree.

That memories can be the undoing of many a sincere effort finds ready proof in the life of the aspirant. In *The Theosophical Glossary*, referring to "the step of memory" (*Tchitta Riddhi Pada*), we are told that it is "the third condition of the mystic series which leads to the acquirement of adeptship, *i.e.*, the renunciation of physical memory, and of all thoughts connected with worldly or personal events in one's life—benefit, personal pleasures or associations. Physical memory has to be sacrificed and recalled by *will power* only when absolutely needed." It would therefore be dangerous in the extreme if the memory tablets of man's iniquities were thrown open to the gaze of the beast in him. Ruminations over the escapades of yesteryears are grist to the man's mill. The animal in him wallows in such memories and perpetuates them by repetition. To the aspirant, these memories are explosives acquired during bouts of animalism which have the strength to force him back to haunts where the Soul is not.

It were useless for a person to remember his past life—the house in which he resided and the names of his friends and family members. In our age, such a discovery may be sensational, but it does not take one even a tiny step forward. Will it make him embrace morals or crucify himself for the alleviation of the condition of the race? He will only be the wonder of a day whom a few will believe and the others stone. If instances of chance recovery of snatches of memory prove that something does survive death, then it would be right to infer that the memory of the plan set for any incarnation exists; that the memory of moments when one feels exalted are never erased but eternally reside in the immortal part of the individual, that the storehouse must of necessity be accessible and await the producing of the right sign and the correct password.

If it is true that the principles of economics and political science, for instance, cannot be discovered by the use of the telescope or the microscope, it is more profoundly true that the principles which govern the inner animating life of man and atom are not fathomable by the tools of modern science that deal with matter in its gross forms. Science does not have the instruments to produce or measure,

much less register, vibrations of sound and colour in their higher spectra. In order to tune oneself with the frequencies in which resides the Wisdom of the Ages—the *Sanatana dharma*—one has first to understand how the strings that vibrate on the human sounding-board have to be tuned to concert pitch. The hot and burning passions of lust and covetousness, the dullness of intellect, the lethargy of old age, the dejection which numbs the Soul—all these make it impossible for the creation of harmonious vibrations. The lyre of an undisciplined life can produce only discords. Discipleship requires a virile touch, a dauntlessness that borders on the fanatical. For, before the higher vibrations can be mastered, one has to plough one's way through oppositions that are to be met from the outside environment of family, friends and enemies alike as also the more terrible opposition that automatically arises and bursts into open rebellion—the resistance of well-entrenched desires, attractions and affinities for ignoble cravings, the pull of the grossly material and the hankering after the tinsel show of things.

In man, there are seven planes or states on which his consciousness can function. It must therefore follow that one must have faculties to function on each of these planes. There would thus be memories of actions done on a plane for which recording tablets must perforce exist. It must also follow that, for each plane, the tablets form a library of all the thoughts, aspirations and feelings consubstantial with that plane. Since these memories are not mere words and pictures but are recorded on a congeries of lives, they may get attracted by any mind that vibrates in unison. The drunkard attracts and is in turn hypnotized by one set of living pictures. The saint vibrates on quite another plane and draws his solace and sustenance from other and superior planes. The aspirant to renunciation in rare moments of ecstasy gets his strength and comfort from planes reached only through the region of the Higher Mind.

If history has aught to teach us, there exist and have always existed those who, in the words of Saint Paul, have dedicated their lives to such works as make men give glory to their Father who is in Heaven.

UNITY OF ALL FAITHS

H.P.B. wrote that "it is only by studying the various great religions and philosophies of humanity, by comparing them dispassionately and with an unbiased mind, that we can hope to arrive at the truth. It is especially by finding out and noting their various points of agreement that we may achieve this result" and discover their common basis. In such a survey, Sikhism, Taoism, etc., have to be included, as well as Judaism and its offshoots or outgrowths, Christianity and Islam, besides the ancient Aryan religions, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism of India and Zoroastrianism of ancient Iran. A division into Semitic and Aryan religions is neither wholly accurate nor complete. Each religion evolves in the soil of an older religion and such a division is not a happy one.

The open-minded study of comparative religion will convince anyone that no creedal religion is altogether free from dogma and superstition. But this is not to imply that any creed is altogether lacking in the light of Wisdom. On the contrary, each of them contains something of the true Religion which binds all men and women to the One Reality which is in all and contains all, and therefore binds each to all others. This in spite of the fact that in some religions this inner core of Truth is almost covered over with superstitions or with ritual observances and taboos or with exclusive and hence mutually conflicting claims; sometimes with all these obscurants together. But the Truth is there in every case and patient search can reveal it. It has been said that error persists only by virtue of the grain of truth that it contains.

Each creedal religion has been compared to a coloured ray of the white light of Truth, into which these rays, like the colours of the spectrum, will merge back as the sun of truth rises higher and higher on the horizon of our perception.

The feeling of devotion, of instinctive aspiration, is innate in every normal individual, and the mystical elements in every faith agree fundamentally with those in every other; the mystic's realization of unity does not differ from that of other mystics, except in degree. It matters little whether the awakened and

glorified Spirit of Truth is called Krishna or Christos or Buddha or Ahura Mazda or Allah.

Similarly the ethics of all faiths are in essential agreement, resting on harmony and truth and expressing themselves in the Justice which is also mercy, in brotherly service and in love or the "charity" proclaimed by St. Paul as also by the Prophet of Islam, who described even "smiling in your brother's face" as charity. Religion is properly a way of life.

Seeking points of agreement between the world's faiths with a mind free from prejudice is a quest fruitful in mutual understanding and sympathy. This is especially true if the search is directed to the original formulation by the Prophets or Great Teachers claimed by the several religions but whose universal Message is the rightful monopoly of none.

What is needed is to bring people out of the twilight of sectarianism, the creedalism that divides, into the clear light of the Inner Religion which unites, the Religion of the Heart. As this is practised, it is sure to lead to an ever-deepening realization of the Divine in oneself and in others, and the ever fuller and more enlightened application of Universal Brotherhood. It is written in *Isis Unveiled*:

The world needs no sectarian church, whether of Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Swedenborg, Calvin, or any other. There being but ONE Truth, man requires but one church—the Temple of God within us, walled in by matter but penetrable by anyone who can find the way; *the pure in heart see God*.

The Buddha tells us in the *Dhammapada*: "The Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be?...by self alone is one purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No man can purify another."

Guru Nanak of the Sikhs says: "In each and every one there is eternal light; know this the essence of the Guru's teaching," and he also says: "O foolish man, turn thy thought to the one God in thy heart."

Each one ideally should be a priest unto himself. In a work

entitled *Remarkable Lacedemonian Sayings* is printed a dialogue ascribed to Plutarch. A Spartan asks a priest, "Is it to thee, or to God, that I must confess?" The honest priest replies, "To God," and the Spartan rejoins, "Then, MAN, stand back!"

What is needed is to help people to acquire the knowledge which makes it possible to lead the right kind of spiritual life, not withdrawn from the world but working in it, in harmony with the eternal and universal principles, the great virtues or Divine Paramitas. The existence and nature of the Religion of the Heart need not be, ought not to be, a matter of blind faith. It should have the support of the reasoning mind as well as the intuition and the conscience, and it can have that support if the scriptures of the world are searched and the self-compelling basis of right ethics is found. The labour of that search has been lightened for those who study the reformulation of the Ancient Wisdom for this era, which the modern Theosophical Movement has made widely known.

Among the objects of this Movement "the study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study" stands second only to the formation of "the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour." Brotherhood is a fact in Nature, but until people recognize that fact they cannot be expected to live up fully to its implications. The same divine Spirit animates all, and all humans are made of the same material physically and morally; but, Madame Blavatsky has written, unless humanity "becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals."

CARE about people's approval and you will be their prisoner.

—*Tao Te Ching*

BENEFITING HUMANITY

"TO live to benefit mankind is the first step." All students of Theosophy are familiar with this statement from *The Voice of the Silence*. Some think it is so "beautifully simple," while others say: "How difficult! It requires so much knowledge!" Perhaps both overlook that there is the middle position which all who wish to practise the injunction have to adopt.

To carry out the full implication of the precept is certainly not a simple task; but neither can it be said that it is an impossible one. For each can, nay, must, begin just where he finds himself, with what knowledge he does possess—and we all possess *some* knowledge.

We can at once appreciate the logic of this proposition and intellectually consent to it. If we are sincere and have accepted the ideal and the fact of Universal Brotherhood, then obviously to live to benefit mankind is the first step toward the realization of it and toward becoming one of those who work to form a conscious nucleus of that Brotherhood.

But we forget that in more than one way "the Mind is the great Slayer of the Real," and we pause, repeating the precept and satisfied with its mere intellectual perception. This will not do. "The end of man is an *action* and not a *thought*, though it were the noblest"; and so what knowledge we possess must be used to guide and control our actions in every department of our daily lives.

It is natural that a man's behaviour is conditioned by his upbringing, his education, his subsequent social environment and his acquired habits. It is unfortunate that most of these forces oppose and hinder him once he determines that he shall live to benefit his fellows. But at least he finds something to do, something to work with and upon. So the sincere and resolute aspirant begins to watch, check and correct his way of living and the ideas that impel him.

One thing that is usually discovered at once is that it is easier to argue ourselves into believing that our customary ways are beneficial than to abandon them. It seems pleasanter too! But if we are earnest

and watchful, the effects of our actions also begin to reveal to us the quality of our thinking—sometimes in a rather alarming way which is far from pleasant.

Our only hope of getting out of our wrong mental grooves is to base each thing we plan to do, or not to do, on impersonal and universal principles and to keep asking ourselves a few basic questions as we go along—for instance: (1) What benefits mankind? (2) Who do I expect to benefit by this action? (3) Why should I do or not do this act?—and insist that the answers be based on Theosophical propositions and principles, not upon personal considerations, convenience, habit or opportunism.

This practice will take time. But if we have devoted thought to the first of the above-mentioned questions and are clear in our own mind and heart about the answer to it, then the other questions can be answered more and more easily as we go along.

We can always encourage and sustain ourselves with the recognition that "whatever is worth doing at all is worth doing well" (anyway, as well as we can), never mind if it takes a little more time. We shall be impressed with this especially if we have ever had the temerity to ignore this admonition a few times and have carefully watched and honestly evaluated the consequences!

It takes some courage, dispassion, a sense of humour and love to try to live to benefit mankind sincerely, gracefully, and without pushing our personality forward. All these qualities and virtues are necessary, or one appears simply cranky—which does not help at all.

ONCE we assuage our conscience by calling something a "necessary evil," it begins to look more and more necessary and less and less evil.

—SYDNEY HARRIS

OBSERVATION AND EXPERIENCE

ALL of us know, in our heart of hearts, that we gain knowledge both by experience and from observation. It is only when we look wholly outside of us that we fail to see this. In fact, in reading any of our Theosophical texts, we should try to bear in mind that there is that in us, a department of our nature, where the knowledge actually exists of anything and everything that the Teachers write about; then, we would begin to look within ourselves to corroborate, from the harvest of our own past experience, our observation of what the Teachers say.

There is, however, a vast difference between a man asleep or a man dreaming, and a man awake. The thing to observe is that it is the same man, regardless of what state he is in. Let us apply that to knowledge: if this teaching is true, we have been active and a part of this solar system ever since it had a beginning—not to go farther back. There is not a single state, a single condition, a single form of life and being in this solar system that every one of us has not been through over and over again, in all the kingdoms below as well as in the present human kingdom; in all of the seven states of consciousness, not merely the one we are aware of now.

Where is this experience? It is dormant in us. Our business, then, is to awaken to the same kind of consciousness that we have here and now in other states of matter and on other planes of life and being. Only a part of our nature is awake. At other times, in the past, other parts of our nature have been awake. We identify ourselves with the part of our nature that is awake; we do not recognize our whole nature, and so make no effort to rouse that part of us which is not active.

Could we learn all that remains to be learned by observation? Surely. Learning from observation distinguishes man—even the savage, the lowest of men—from the brute kingdom. Animals cannot learn from observation; they can learn only by experience. The most backward among men can choose. If the impulse arises in him, say, to run from something that he sees as danger, he can say, "Well, shall I run or shall I stand fast and fight?" And no matter how

much his legs want to run, he can choose to stand and fight, and do it. But when the same situation presents itself to the animal, it has only one perception; it never reasons, because it sees no contrast. It can see only one thing at a time. If we observe ourselves, we shall find that 99% of what we know comes from observation. The other 1% comes from experience. We conduct ourselves by bringing what we see (observation) and what we experience into coadunition and consubstantiality—that is knowledge.

If we use the word "observation" in a subordinate, and the word "experience" in a general, sense, then all observation is a part of our experience; but if we take the two words as they stand, "observation" *and* "experience," then experience is direct perception and observation is indirect perception. Patanjali says that the means of knowledge are *three*, not two. The first means of knowledge, says Patanjali, is direct perception—that is what we call experience. One who has tasted tabasco sauce knows that it is liquid fire: that is direct perception. The second form of knowing is by the direct perception of others which they tell us about. They may tell us, "Don't drink that bottle of tabasco as you would drink a glass of water," and, attaching sincerity, good faith and common-sense to them, we only smell of the sauce or touch it with our tongue; we go slowly. So we have direct perception of our own, which is experience; we have the testimony of others in regard to their experience; and then we have, says Patanjali, a third method, *inference*—the deductions that we make whether from our own experience or from the testimony of others.

There is a fourth method of knowledge that we seldom think about. It is peculiar to the Adepts. Have we ever thought of Universal Brotherhood, or union, as *the* means *par excellence* of gaining knowledge? And yet that is the way the Masters get their knowledge. In *The Ocean of Theosophy* we are told that the Mahatmas have power over space, time, mind, and matter, precisely because They are Perfected Men; that is, They have had a sufficiency of experience, of testimony, of inference, to satisfy Them that there is fundamentally no separateness at all between one being and another, one state and another. The separateness is

in one's own eye.

Then They said to Themselves, "Why could I not put myself in that man's place? If I could just do that, I would feel as he feels; I would think as he thinks; I would get all of his experience instantly." Suppose They want to know about ants. Do they read books on ants? No. Do They hire people to go out and observe ants, experiment with them, and get testimony about them? No. The Mahatma puts himself in the ant's place, and instantly he knows the universe as an ant knows it, feels it and lives it. This, then, is the method that Patanjali describes as peculiar to the ascetics.

BECAUSE scientific aristocracy is full of vanity and struts on stilts of its own fabrication; because modern philosophy is materialistic to the roots of its hair; because both, in their pride, forget that in order to understand and to appreciate the evolution of the future it is necessary to know the evolution of the past, should one consider everything that is not understood by this scientific aristocracy and this materialistic philosophy to be "intellectual derangement and mere jugglery"?

It is precisely because of these "thinkers who experience at the present time an indefinable discomfort," when observing the crumbling of all truths, that the "missionaries from the Himalayas" offer their knowledge and their light. A very feeble light, but one whose rays, proceeding as they do from the Sun of Truth, are worth more in any case than the artificial lights offered by physiologists and pathologists, suddenly elevated to the ranks of psychologists. Can it seriously be believed that to fathom the mystery of the origin and essence of the human soul, it is sufficient to paralyze certain regions of the brain and to excite certain others? In order to kindle a ray of hope which their tired eyes can hardly distinguish from the grimacing Chinese Shadows, manipulated by pseudo-scientists who tell the public: "Here is Science!"—we display the "symbolic Lotus" before these thinkers, the malcontents of life.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Modern physics has been undergoing a very profound change, a change towards a view which shows great similarities to ancient philosophical and mystical traditions of the East. As Dr. Fritjof Capra, author of *The Tao of Physics* and *The Turning Point*, once remarked: "Modern physics can lead us along two different paths, to the Buddha or to the Bomb." Recent research findings in particle physics are making scientists veer round to the view that there indeed are parallels to mysticism and that this can shatter the very foundation on which the edifice of modern science has been built.

Recently, physicists in Germany announced the possible discovery of a bizarre new subatomic particle called the leptoquark. When confirmed, states an article in *The Sunday Review* (June 29, 1997), "it could topple existing scientific models of what the universe is made of." Not too long ago, the atom was believed to be the smallest particle of matter. That myth was shattered with the finding of subatomic particles that make up the atoms, which in turn make up all the universe. Until now, particle physicists had believed that these subatomic particles belonged to two tribes—quarks and leptons, and that nothing could be smaller than these two.

Experiments at the Deutsche Elektronen Sychotron (DESY) in Hamburg, Germany, using a device called the "particle accelerator" and involving two international teams with over 400 physicists peering into the strange world of the subatomic, have revealed what was till lately thought to be impossible—that there perhaps exists an even smaller particle within the quark and the lepton. DESY physicists have named it "leptoquark." The discovery, if corroborated, could revolutionize scientists' understanding of the ultimate building block of the universe.

The Sunday Review article states:

It's one of the most romantic stories of science: the search for the elusive, indivisible, subatomic particles that hold the secret to what makes up the cosmos, particles so tiny that they live for barely one-millionth of a second, with behaviour so eccentric yet so profound that they leave a trail of flummoxed scientists

and smashed theories....

"A leptoquark would have such enormous consequences for our understanding of physics that I don't dare dream of it," spokesperson for the two teams, Dr. Ralph Eichler, a Swiss physicist, told *The New York Times*....

It's almost like the time when physicists Murray Gellman and George Zweig first talked about the quark in 1964....The subatomic particle is not a "particle" like a particle of dust. The difference is not merely in size. A dust particle is a thing, while quark and friends are so ephemeral that they are considered not existing but with "tendencies to exist." The strength of these tendencies, however, is in the realm of probability. A subatomic particle is a "quantum" of "something." And that "something" is the fascinating cosmic riddle winking at physicists.

Quark and friends refuse to conform to basic existential rules. For instance, they are not matter or energy....In fact, as Gary Zukav elaborated in his bestseller *The Dancing Wu Li Masters*, "at the subatomic level there is no longer a clear distinction between what is and what happens, between the actor and the action. The dancer and the dance are one."...

Zukav marvelled that the worldview of particle physicists now conformed to what the Buddha discovered 2,500 years ago. Buddha's experience was that the physical solidity of our world is only an apparent reality. At the actual level, everything is ephemeral, impermanent, insubstantial. The gigantic particle accelerators seem to draw the same conclusion.

This quantum world, particle physicists found, defied explanation in regular scientific terms. How could they fit in characters like quarks and leptons who refused to conform to classical definitions of what is real and what is unreal? As a result, the terminology of the quantum world came to be as colourful as the personalities of the subatomic beings they described....

The leptoquark may reinforce one school of thought, that the hunt for the ultimate building block of the universe will result in the discovery that there just isn't any. Or as *Newsweek* wondered recently, whether it is likely that "the universe will never surrender its ultimate secret; that beneath every level of particles there lurks another, still more esoteric and inaccessible."...

The search has revolutionized the way we look at ourselves. Physicists are being drawn cautiously closer to Eastern wisdom. Says P. L. Dhar, professor of physics, IIT, Delhi, "One begins to realize there is no difference between 'I' or 'you.' At the subatomic level one realizes we are all partners in the same biodance."

As far back as 1888, when scientists believed that the atom was indivisible, H.P.B. affirmed its "infinite divisibility." She also said how this fact, once accepted, would deal a deathblow to the mechanistic view of the universe that scientists had held.

From the standpoint of Materialism, which reduces the beginnings of all to *matter*, the Universe consists, in its fullness, of atoms and vacuity. Even leaving aside the axiom—now absolutely demonstrated by telescope and microscope—taught by the ancients, that nature abhors vacuum, what is an atom? "It is, we are answered by Science," writes Professor Butlerof, "the limited division of substance, the indivisible particle of matter. To admit the divisibility of the atom, amounts to an admission of an infinite divisibility of substance, which is equivalent to reducing substance to *nihil*, a nothingness. Owing to a feeling of self-preservation alone, materialism cannot admit infinite divisibility; otherwise, it would have to bid farewell for ever to its basic principle and thus sign its own death-warrant." ...Infinite divisibility of atoms resolves matter into simple centres of force, *i.e.*, precludes the possibility of conceiving matter as an *objective* substance.

This vicious circle is fatal to materialism....Accept the explanations and teachings of Occultism, and, the blind inertia of physical Science being replaced by the *intelligent active* Powers behind the veil of matter, motion and inertia become subservient to those Powers. It is on the doctrine of the illusive nature of matter, and the infinite divisibility of the atom, that the whole science of Occultism is built. It opens limitless horizons to *substance* informed by the divine breath of its soul in every possible state of tenuity, states still undreamt of by the most spiritually disposed chemists and physicists. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 518-20)

True to H.P.B.'s prediction, in our century modern science has proceeded in the direction of recognizing the divisibility of the atom, step by step—finding first electrons, then protons, then neutrons, then quarks and leptons, and now leptoquarks—each time thinking it had found the ultimate particle. The mysteries of Nature are vast and profound, and are all to be found in Eastern esoteric sciences, and "one by one facts and processes in Nature's workshops are permitted to find their way into the exact Sciences, while mysterious help is given to rare individuals in unravelling its arcana" (*S.D.*, I, 611-12). As H.P.B. had prophesied, a large rent has been made in the Veil of Nature, and materialistic science has received a deathblow.

Is not the World one gigantic lie? Is there anything under the sun that offers such rich variety and almost countless degrees and shades as lying does? Lying is the policy of our century, from society lying, as a necessity imposed upon us by culture and good breeding, up to individual lying, *i.e.*, uttering a good, square unmitigated lie, in the shape of false witness, or as the Russian proverb has it—"shifting off a sin from a diseased on to a healthy head." Oh *lie*—legion is thy name! Fibs and lies are now the cryptogamic excrescences on the soil of our moral and daily lives as toadstools are those of forest swamps, and their respective orders are as large. (H.P.B. in "It's the Cat!"; reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, April 1978, from *Lucifer*, June 1889)

These words are as true today as they were over a century ago. Lie has existed in the world for millennia past—ever since man became *selfish*. Every class of society lives on lie, and our customs and conventionalities are all supported by it. It takes diverse forms, as H.P.B. says in the same article: "...there are fibs and fibs, conscious and unconscious, hoaxes and impostures, deceptions and calumnies—the latter often followed by moral and physical ruin—mild perversions of truth or evasion, and deliberate duplicity." But there are also catchpenny lies, in the shape of newspaper chaff,

and innocent misrepresentations due simply to ignorance."

Until recently, lying was almost entirely ignored by psychologists, leaving serious discussions of the topic to ethicists and theologians. But now, as psychologists delve deeper into the details of deception, they are finding that lying, though a common phenomenon, is yet too complex. Allison Kornet's article, "The Truth About Lying" (*Psychology Today*, May/June 1997) cites the findings of several present-day psychologists:

For starters, recent work by Bella DePaulo, Ph.D., a psychologist at the University of Virginia, confirms Nietzsche's assertion that the lie is a condition of life. Most people, she found, lie once or twice a day....Furthermore, some types of relationships, such as those between parents and teens, are virtual magnets for deception: "College students lie to their mothers in one out of two conversations," reports DePaulo....

Leonard Saxe [a polygraph expert and professor of psychology at Brandeis University] points out that most of us receive conflicting messages about lying. Although we're socialized from the time we can speak to believe that it's always better to tell the truth, in reality society often encourages and even rewards deception....Moreover, lying is integral to many occupations. Think how often we see lawyers constructing far-fetched theories on behalf of their clients or reporters misrepresenting themselves in order to gain access to good stories.

It's tempting to think that the world would become a better place when purged of the deceptions that seem to interfere with our attempts at genuine communication or intimacy. On the other hand, perhaps our social lives would collapse under the weight of relentless honesty, with unveiled truths destroying our ability to connect with others.

The ubiquity of lying—deceit and hypocrisy are two of its forms—is clearly a problem, and it might seem as though everything would fall to pieces without it. It is necessary to understand what created such a situation and what in the ultimate analysis is the compulsion behind lying. H.P.B. goes to the root of the problem when she says in her article "What Is Truth?":

SELFISHNESS, the first-born of Ignorance, and the fruit of the teaching which asserts that for every newly-born infant a new soul, *separate and distinct* from the Universal Soul, is "created"—this Selfishness is the impassable wall between the *personal* Self and Truth. It is the prolific mother of all human vices, *Lie* being born out of the necessity for dissembling, and *Hypocrisy* out of the desire to mask *Lie*. It is the fungus growing and strengthening with age in every human heart in which it has devoured all better feelings. Selfishness kills every noble impulse in our natures, and is the one deity, fearing no faithlessness or desertion from its votaries. Hence, we see it reign supreme in the world and in so-called fashionable society. As a result, we live, and move, and have our being in this god of darkness under his trinitarian aspect of Sham, Humbug, and Falsehood, called RESPECTABILITY. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 17*)

Millions of people around the world wear lucky charms, amulets, or talismans to bring them health, wealth and good fortune. Is it possible for an object to provide protection against illness or accident, to repel the malign influence of the "evil eye," or to bring strength and power? *Asia Features* looks into the potency of certain precious and semi-precious stones and other objects that people wear for good luck or some such purpose:

The word talisman, probably derived from the Greek word *telesma*, is an object over which a ceremonial rite has been performed to endow it with the power of attracting favourable influences. An amulet, from the Roman *amuletum*, is an object which naturally possesses the power to protect the wearer from unwanted influences. In other words, an amulet acts like a shield, whereas a talisman is more like a sword....

But just as a charm may bring good fortune, so may it bring bad. There are several well-documented accounts of objects bringing nothing but bad luck to whoever possesses them, such as the famous Hope Diamond. This 44-carat stone of a rare sapphire colour was reputedly stolen from a Burmese temple some 300 years ago. The tragedies associated with the stone are too uncanny to be dismissed as a series of coincidences....Is it

possible that the diamond was able to wreak revenge for being stolen from its rightful home?

One suggestion for the process by which a charm may work, is that the owner is aware of the charm's supposed powers and constantly pictures the effects, which may then actually happen. If this is true, it is possible to make a talisman, provided you have sufficient will.

H.P.B. writes in *Isis Unveiled* that "WILL-POWER is the most powerful of magnets" (I, 472), and that "by a determined concentration of the will an otherwise inert object may become imbued with protective or destructive power according to the purpose directing" (II, 463). She explains further:

Apply a piece of iron to a magnet, and it becomes imbued with its subtile principle and capable of imparting it to other iron in its turn. It neither weighs more nor appears different from what it was before. And yet, one of the most subtile potencies of nature has entered into its substance. A talisman, in itself perhaps a worthless bit of metal, a scrap of paper, or a shred of any fabric, has nevertheless been imbued by the influence of that greatest of all magnets, the human will, with a potency for good or ill just as recognizable and as real in its effects as the subtile property which the iron acquired by contact with the physical magnet. (*Ibid.*, I, 462)

In the name of scientific enlightenment, biology students have been dissecting animals for generations. Some have found the procedure simply disgusting, but it was, and still is, mandatory in several schools and institutions.

A rebellion has been growing in the science laboratories of U.S. schools as a growing number of students refuse to dissect animals, on the ground that it is inhumane (*New York Times Service*). "Animals are just as alive as we are," said an 11th-grader who refused to dissect any animal in biology. "They have feelings. They have families."

Many states are now pondering bills that would allow students to complete alternative work in science if they oppose dissection.

Such laws have been enacted in California, Florida, Maryland, New York and Pennsylvania. Without such a law, students who refuse to dissect animals routinely face sanctions, or lowered grades, from science teachers. But now the Anti-Vivisection Society sponsors a toll-free number for students facing academic trouble for their opposition to dissection.

Humane groups say that lessons can be taught just as effectively with plastic models or computer simulations, usually at a saving. Jonathan Balcombe, an associate director for education at the Humane Society of the United States, said that growing unrest over dissection among environmentally conscious students had forced many schools to offer an alternative. About six million animals are killed each year for academic inquiry, he said.

Alternatives to blood transfusion may be safer for patients, and researchers have for some time been experimenting with suitable alternatives. A genetically-engineered blood clotting factor for patients with the clotting disorder hemophilia, and a drug to prevent or control bleeding associated with surgery, especially heart surgery, have joined other alternatives to regular "homologous" blood transfusion—blood transfused into someone other than the donor. These new products are said to eliminate the risk of transmission of viruses such as hepatitis or HIV, the virus that causes AIDS (*Science Update*, April-May 1997)

In addition to drugs, several medical practices are available to lessen the risk of disease transmission. The alternatives include using the patient's own previously donated blood, recycling the patient's blood shed during surgery, and diluting the patient's blood before surgery with intravenous fluids to make up for the drawn blood. Use of the patient's own blood may reduce the chance of infection or other adverse reactions, including subtle psychic or psychological reactions—for blood, says Theosophy, has occult properties. Even medical researchers admit that blood is "extremely complex."
