

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### THE THIEF OF TIME

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If you urge that I am young and tender, and that the time for seeking wisdom is not yet, then you should know that to seek true religion there never is a time not fit. —*Fo-sho-hing-tsan-king*

He is not only idle who does nothing, but he is idle who might be better employed.—SOCRATES

For it matters not how small the beginning may seem to be; what is once well done is done forever.—THOREAU

When a human soul draws its first furrow straight, the rest will follow surely.—HONORE DE BALZAC

Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga.—W. Q. JUDGE

PROCRASTINATION has been well called “the thief of time,” for it is of the quality of *Tamas*, indifference or darkness, which, as Krishna tells Arjuna in Chapter Fourteen of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, “is the deluder of all creatures...it imprisoneth the Ego in a body through heedless folly, sleep, and idleness.”

Those who have had the good Karma of being favourably situated to study Theosophy are especially unwise, from the standpoint of their own interest, if they procrastinate. If they do so, they let slip the opportunity which they must have earned, in this life or in previous ones, and who knows whether they may not be thereby postponing the recurrence of such a chance for spiritual growth and service? Such postponement may not only retard their

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own progress but also that of the Cause of Theosophy and of those whom their example of faithful study and practice of the Theosophical teachings might have led to emulate it.

In “The Great Master’s Letter,” published as No.33 of the U.L.T. Pamphlet Series, He had written that there was “hardly a Theosophist in the whole Society unable to help it effectually by correcting erroneous impressions of outsiders, if not by actually propagating the ideas himself.”

When that letter was written in 1881, *Isis Unveiled* was the only book available to students of Theosophy in its modern restatement, though valuable additional teachings from Madame Blavatsky’s pen had been appearing in *The Theosophist* ever since its launching in October 1879. The two volumes of *Isis Unveiled* and those articles contained much teaching of importance, but the modern student is even better off in having readily accessible, besides these, *The Secret Doctrine* in two volumes, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, the *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, and the many helpful and inspiring articles by Madame Blavatsky, Mr. Judge, Mr. Crosbie and other faithful followers of the Lines laid down by the Mahatmas and their Messenger of this cycle, which offer a wealth of trustworthy explanation and simplification of the teachings as first given out.

Corresponding, however, to the opportunity offered to the modern student is the latter’s responsibility to the Cause of Theosophy and to his fellow men. The trusteeship of wealth applies no less to treasures of the mind and the spirit than to physical possessions.

It is true that a great Master once wrote:

Knowledge for the mind, like food for the body, is intended to feed and help to growth, but it requires to be well digested and the more thoroughly and slowly the process is carried out the better both for body and mind.

But He prefaced this by a reminder to His correspondent that it was a life-long task that he had chosen, and by a quotation from Christina Rossetti’s poem “Up-hill”:

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day’s journey take the whole long day?

From morn to night, my friend.

The longest journey has been recognized from antiquity as beginning with the first step, and many of the early steps of the Theosophical aspirant will naturally be on the path of study. Before we can properly pass on Theosophy we must know clearly what its basic tenets are. This is needed even to be sure that we are applying them in our daily life.

The conscientious student will naturally try as far as possible to keep his understanding of what he studies uncoloured by either prejudice or predilection. Almost inevitably, however, the teachings of Theosophy, though conscientiously studied and applied to the best of the student’s ability, and though faithfully given out by him as he understands them, whether in conversation, when another’s question or remark provides an opening, or from the platform of the U.L.T. as his willing contribution to the Lodge’s disinterested efforts at sharing Theosophy with the public, will bear, to a greater or less extent, the stamp of the individual student’s own approach to and comprehension of those teachings, as well as of his own mind and heart.

The analogy suggests itself of the different colours of the spectrum revealed when a beam of white light is passed through and dispersed by a prism. The latter represents in this case the sum total of an individual’s heredity, environment and life experiences, as well as his Karmic inheritance, mental, psychic and physical, from his own prior lives.

“Humanity,” *The Secret Doctrine* tells us, “is divided into seven distinct groups and their sub-divisions, mental, spiritual, and physical,” corresponding to the seven chief groups of Dhyana Chohans, there being a special bond, “known to every high Initiate in every age and in every country,” between the “radiations of one and the same Planetary Spirit.” Unrecognized though such a bond might be by ordinary individuals, would it not help to explain why

some gain more from equally conscientious and impersonal efforts to present the teachings from the platform by one or another speaker? And, if this be so, is it not desirable that as many earnest students as possible should participate in the propaganda effort of the U.L.T., whether by sharing the insight they have gained by study from the Lodge platform, or by contributing to magazines devoted to the promulgation of pure Theosophy, or even to the general press?

Sometimes excessive modesty or shyness keeps a student from offering his services for platform assignments. Such an individual, if qualified by study to expound the teachings correctly, need not hesitate. It has been truly written that “fire is the same, if temple burn or flax,” and Olive Schreiner pertinently demanded: “Is it the trumpet which gives forth the call to battle, whether it be battered tin or gilded silver, which boots? Is it not the call?”

Sometimes a humble individual provides the spark to quicken another's conscience or to fire his aspiration or his zeal. Such was the case of Benjamin Lundy, described in the Supplement to *The Theosophist* for February 1889 as a member of the Society of Friends in the U.S.A., who early in the 19th century was carrying on such agitation against slavery as was in his power, and, despite his handicaps, kindled the enthusiasm of one of the most stalwart agitators for the abolition of slavery in that country.

He was deaf. He was a poor man. He was in feeble health. He was a bad speaker. But in addition to this he was on fire with the wrongs of the slave. He travelled on foot from town to town and from state to state, holding meetings wherever he could get a few people to listen to his broken words. In 1826 at Boston he converted William Lloyd Garrison. William Lloyd Garrison was an able speaker, and a fiery writer, who went straight forward through prisons and murderous mobs on to that final victory in 1863, when by the proclamation of President Lincoln every slave in the United States was set free.

“Tomorrow,” in whatever language spoken, is a word of hope and promise only if we are doing all that we can today. Otherwise

it serves as a narcotic; it can keep us marking time for ever if we become addicted to it, so that

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day....

“Next week,” “next month,” “next year,” “next life,” we say, and so our present opportunities slip away. It is not thus that we shall reach the goal. “Nothing succeeds like success” may have originated as a hard-headed business maxim, but it has its application also to spiritual advance. Those who feel drawn to Theosophy from their first contact with it in this life, whose reaction to its teachings of universal brotherhood, of an impersonal Deity, of the divine nature in man and the existence of Perfected Men, of Karma and Reincarnation, is an inner affirmation, “That sounds true,” may well have been in contact with it in a former life or lives.

Mr. Judge gives us the encouragement, in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, that “every point of progress gained is never in reality lost,” but we are free-willed beings. We may mark time life after life if we so choose. No one can pull or push us forward against our will.

Should not the efforts of all sincere students, convinced of the *bona fides* of Theosophy, be to acquire knowledge of it in order that they may apply it and pass it on? Says *The Friendly Philosopher*:

“The number of true Theosophists is not legion. The ranks are not crowded. They are not to be known or judged by standards of the world, but by the strength of their convictions. They are one and all *dead in earnest*.... They are those who move from age to age invincible and eternal....” Most minds instead of living and acting out their *ideals* in the present, and fulfilling their present known duties to others, waste most of their opportunities in memory and anticipation. To live and act fully and rightly in the present is the whole of life.

In an article entitled “Occultism: What Is It?” which Mr. Judge

published in *The Path* for May 1890, and which has been reprinted in U.L.T. Pamphlet No.18, “Culture of Concentration,” reference was made to “dilettanti” in Occultism, among whom our procrastinators may perhaps be numbered. And it was added:

Meanwhile the world of real occultists smiles silently, and goes on with the laborious process of sifting out the living germs from the masses of men. For occultists must be found and fostered and prepared for coming ages when power will be needed and pretension will go for nothing.

In *Julius Caesar* Shakespeare put in the mouth of Brutus a strong warning against the dangers of procrastination:

There is a tide in the affairs of men  
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;  
Omitted, all the voyage of their life  
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Even the warning in our teachings about the “moment of choice” which awaits us in the next Round, when the Manasic principle shall have reached its full development, is dismissed by many, perhaps most, as an ordeal to be faced on a day so distant that all consideration of it can be safely and indefinitely postponed. These would do well to heed what Mr. Crosbie wrote on this in his *Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy* (p. 201):

The moment of choice exists all the time for every individual. In that moment he may take any path, but when the general moment of choice comes, he takes the path to which he has become addicted by his nature and disposition. We are constantly following the line of separateness, or of unity, choosing one way or the other, and the time must come when the differences between those who take the right-hand path, and those who take the left, are so great that there is no possible conjunction between them.

What Mr. Judge wrote in an answer appearing in *The Theosophical Forum* for March 1893 is also pertinent to this subject:

The race as yet has not fully evolved Manas—the 5th principle—and will not until the next round. For that reason it cannot, as a race, make a fully intelligent choice [at this time]. But each man's life now is important, inasmuch as in it he is either sowing seeds of weeds or wheat. If weeds, they may grow so as to choke all the rest; if wheat, then when the time for the great reaping comes he will be able to choose right. Those who deliberately in the 5th round make a choice for evil will be annihilated as far as their souls are concerned; those who drift along and never choose right or wrong, but are whirled off to the indifferent side, will go into that state Mr. Sinnett describes [a state of unconsciousness until the next Planetary Manvantara]...while the consciously wicked who deliberately choose wrong will have no place whatever. In a smaller degree it is the same for each man in every life or series of lives; for we are setting up tendencies in one direction or the other, and thus in the end compel ourselves to make very disagreeable choices for next life. And man's little life is a copy in miniature of the greater life included under the word Manvantara....

Is procrastination wise?

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We should therefore go through our appointed task, not only courageously but gladly, knowing what it leads to, and what the great end is in view. The lives we have lived with joys and sorrows, pleasures and pains, are forgotten; the one we are now living will pass into the same limbo of the past; but we shall be what we have made ourselves, strong or weak, as the case may be, and face once again what we have brought about. We have only the present in which to do what may be done, so we ought to be bold and courageous and go forth and show our strength in the face of any and all difficulties, for they are veritably our saviours.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## THE DESIGN OF LIFE

EVERYWHERE in Nature we see symmetry—lines, curves, angles and ellipses meet us at every turn. The most ancient of Seers discerned the design of the constellations in the starry firmament. The modern observer describes the pattern of an element or an atom. Look at the crystal; it is exquisite in shape as in transparency. A grain of sand or of salt has a geometrical form. Every flower dazzles us, not only with its colour and fragrance, but also with its structure. Every blade of grass, every leaf, every fruit, presents to us a form and a shape. This phenomenon is so common in Nature that often we fail to read the message or to enjoy the beauty of the design that surrounds us on every side.

When we observe this, the question suggests itself to us: Is there a purpose in what looks like the “hobby” of Mother Nature to create design and pattern all the time, everywhere? Why all this symmetry? Is it meaningless?

Let us turn from the wonderful world of Nature outside us and look within ourselves. Our body is composed of many parts and different systems. Through the cerebro-spinal system we see one picture; through the sympathetic system, another. Again, every organ is built according to a plan. The eye, the ear, the liver, the spleen, everything in the body has a shape, and one organ approaches and joins itself to another organ according to a definite design. When we study the functions of these different organs we find that the shape of each is most intimately related to the shape of every other organ; and all of them combine in a co-ordinated form we know as the body. Even a little knowledge convinces us that Nature did not produce the shapes and forms of these organs aimlessly; the very shapes are indicative of their purpose.

In the study of our subject, it is necessary that we grasp the underlying principle of this phenomenon. Everywhere in Nature there is design with which beauty is associated; but something more than beauty, which endows even seemingly unattractive forms with a kind of beauty. There is purpose; every design reveals beauty

and brings to us intimations of purpose.

From the visible and the known we pass on to the invisible and the unknown. No one doubts that human life has a purpose, though there are differences of view as to that purpose. The great philosophers of India have reasoned to prove that life has a purpose—a study of the Upanishads shows that. The early poets of India have sung about the design of life, as the Vedic hymns clearly indicate. It is a fashion nowadays to turn for guidance to the West and look for something new all the time, overlooking that in India, thousands of years ago, the human mind solved and the human heart realized the meaning and purpose of life.

We carry within ourselves certain intuitions—call them instincts, if you like, or hunches, or premonitions. We all know that there is in our body a kind of feeling for what is healthful to it. Similarly, there is in our heart an instinctive feeling for what constitutes moral duty, or nobility. Again, we have in our very soul-consciousness a feeling that life cannot be meaningless, that it has a purpose, a divine purpose. Often there is no authorization from a doctor for our bodily instinct; there is no priest who can override a moral feeling; and similarly no scientist can do away with the soul-intuition that life has a meaning and a purpose. Our difficulty is to read correctly and to understand the design of life. People want to know the true meaning of existence so that they may live worthily. Their intuitive feeling that there is some divine purpose to life also tells them that it cannot be petty or small; it must be a grand, beautiful purpose. Therefore if we were to live truly according to the design of life, fulfilling its real purpose, our own life would be grand and beautiful and radiant—grand with power, beautiful with peace, radiant with joy.

Nature all around us reveals that the life-process is rhythmic. Then why is our own life not rhythmic? And how can we make it rhythmic? Can we handle our own life in such a fashion that we are able, consciously and deliberately, to trace the design of power and peace and beauty? If we desire a house built for us, we take the assistance of the architect in determining the plan or the design

of the house. In getting our clothes made, we seek the help of the tailor. Is there anything or anyone we can consult about the design of life? The one unanimous answer that ancient poets and prophets have given us is to seek and to establish some philosophy of life. Most people live without any basis of philosophy. They live aimlessly, and their very enjoyments and sufferings fail to bring them understanding. It is true philosophy that helps us to perceive the design of life.

One of the greatest of difficulties that stands in our way in perceiving the design of life is the mental habit whereby we lose ourselves in the innumerable details of existence. We become absorbed in our daily affairs and leave ourselves no time to look at the *whole* of life, with steady insight. Because of this, the very first lesson that philosophy offers us is to detach ourselves, at least for a time, from our daily rut.

“Distance lends enchantment to the view,” the poet with his insight has said. So also philosophy teaches us to stand away from the hustle and bustle of life, on some high ridge, and look at life as a whole and not in parts. Our elations and depressions vanish when we survey the whole of life with the aid of noble, universal thoughts. True philosophy provides that ridge and altitude. We have to learn the technique of separating ourselves from the bustle and tumult of duties and recreations. To put it another way, we must find time, nay, we must *make* time, to be in the high company in which all our ordinary humdrum doings fall into a back place, and we obtain a vision of magnificence and beauty. Our own life, in spite of its weaknesses, will look beautiful, will appear magnificent from a truly philosophical height.

How to do this? The very first step is the company of great books. In our time, any number of books are published, but how many among them are great books? One of the tests of a great book is its capacity to reveal to us the whole design of life. There are poems and novels and essays which reveal a bit of life's design, but there are great books which have become immortal and which reveal to us the full design of life. Take, for instance, such a gem

as the *Bhagavad-Gita*, or Buddha's *Dhammapada*, or Lao Tzu's *Tao Te King*. They give us ideas which are like mirrors; just as our form and face are reflected in a mirror, so our life's design, its beauty and grandeur and holy purpose, are reflected in the ideas of these great books.

Take such a verse as the following from the *Gita*, describing the spiritual soul of man, of every one of us:

It is not a thing of which a man may say, “It hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter”; for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed. (II, 20)

What an inspiring vision it is! Our life looks full of grandeur, for we catch a glimpse of our immortality. The body will die, but we will not. The body came into existence when it was born; in our inner nature we are birthless and deathless, but never purposeless. We know that we are weak and frail and full of errors and limitations, but in the company of such a verse, applying its significance to our own lives, we feel like heroes, like gods, and our life becomes full of charm lent to it by the soul. The first thing we need in life is confidence in our own divinity, in our own inner strength, our own heart's resourcefulness. We get all that in a single verse of the *Gita*.

What about the daily sordidness of life? What about our weaknesses? What about the mistakes we make? What about our sins of omission and commission? All of us know that god and devil are both fighting in us, in our brain and blood. We do not need any philosopher to tell us that. As Zoroaster states in his famous sermon in the first *Gatha*, there are two spirits, *Spenta Mainyu* and *Angra Mainyu*, and they battle with each other, everywhere in Nature. They battle in us also; in fact they are the makers of the design of life of each one of us. The important and practical point is what we do with them. What shall we do with our ambitions, our passions, our angers, our greeds, our irritabilities? How shall we suppress them? On the other hand, how to maintain and sustain the peace we have felt sometimes,

however rarely, the patience we have exercised on some occasions, the selflessness we have shown for our own kin and friends and which we want to show for all? In the *Dhammapada* the Buddha says:

The Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will find a Lord very difficult to find. (Verse 160)

There is a play upon the word “Self.” The Spiritual Self is the Lord of the lower Kamic or personal and passionate self. Here we get a clue. Who is to help us? As the Buddha says, within us there is a Great Lord; sitting in our heart is the Soul, and by its aid we can control and purify and raise our own personal self. We do not need anyone outside of us; let us look within, seek in our own heart for the Master and Guide. Call him Christ or Krishna or by any other name; but we are It—the Divine, the Eternal, the Immortal. But that Real in us, the Soul, the Self, the Lord, is enmeshed in our desires and passions, in our hate and anger, in our greed and selfishness. Let us call the spark of divine fire in our heart to our aid and thus we shall be able to transfer the beauty and grandeur of life of which we have had only a fleeting glimpse, into our own hearth and home.

An important philosophical principle emerges. We are not able to see the design of life because we live in watertight compartments; one day we are in an irritable mood and forget our divinity, and so fail to control ourselves. Another day we are in a good and virtuous mood of contentment, and we forget that only a short while ago we were hissing like a poisonous serpent. We suffer from two main blemishes and we suffer from them unconsciously to ourselves. When we are selfish and forget our divinity, we are overpowered by doubt; when we are unselfish and forget that in us lives a devil, we are overcome by hypocrisy. These two, doubt and hypocrisy, are called the unpardonable sins of the higher or spiritual life. Doubt does not proceed from our doubting of others; it is rooted in doubt of our own divinity. Similarly, hypocrisy starts within ourselves when we forget and become blind to our own defects and

weaknesses. If we stop doubting our own divinity and eradicate hypocrisy about our own demonic or satanic nature, we shall have reached the spiritual ridge from where our life not only looks grand and beautiful, but from which we have acquired the power and the faculty to transfer the beauty of our vision to our own home, to our own daily routine where grace and graciousness fill and envelop everything.

If doubt and hypocrisy are our enemies and blind us to the design of life, grace and graciousness are the friends who raise for us the curtain and show to us that design. These two are like soul and body—grace is a divine quality and is like the soul whose body is formed of gracious acts and gracious words. Religious people, not understanding the real nature of grace, pray to God. Christians in their churches, Hindus in their temples, ask for the grace of Christ or of Krishna and are often and often disappointed because no real response comes. Grace may be called “spiritual electricity” and it needs a form, a vehicle, to manifest itself. Therefore if we want to have divine grace permeate and surround us, we must speak words and perform deeds that are gracious. It is said that “words without thoughts never to heaven go”; it is equally true that grace does not flow from high heaven unless vessels and vehicles of holy words and noble deeds are prepared on earth.

How to cultivate graciousness and thus invite the divine flow of grace into our own lives? In the *Tao Te King* there is Lao Tzu's teaching about the “three precious truths.” The first is gentleness; the second is economy; the third is humble retirement. Lao Tzu says that with gentleness we can be bold, but he complains that nowadays people give up gentleness and are all for being bold. Then, with economy people can become liberal, but they are not economical and still want to be liberal. Thirdly, with humility and retirement people can become vessels of high honour, but he complains that they will not take the hindmost place and seek only to be in the front rank. So gentleness, economy and humility are the virtues that bring to us the vision of Tao-Te, the Way of Virtue. The design of life is perceived and known when the grace of our

own Spirit expresses itself as graciousness all around.

It is not just what we do or where we do it but *how* we do it that matters. *How* do we speak with others? When we speak, it is not only the words that matter but also the tone. Likewise it is the mode and the method of the performance of deeds that makes them gracious or otherwise. Words and acts are the channels through which the grace of our own Spirit, or the divinity within us, pours itself out and manifests as graciousness. It is the cultivation of this attitude in all we say and do that enables us to live true to the design of the Great Life of Spirit.

Within us is the source of divinity. It is futile to look for it outside. In our heart and mind are the seeds of grace; by effort we should make them sprout. All can do it. Whatever our station in life, whatever we may have to do, by paying attention to the *how*, to the tone of speech, the mode of action, we can attain the peace which is full of power, the wisdom which is full of love, the service which is full of sacrifice. Thus we shall be able to realize the vision seen from the mountain top and say: "Life is beautiful in spite of ugliness; life is strong in spite of weaknesses; life is one great rhythmic song in spite of the clatter and the din which surrounds us on every side."

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LET us remember that there is a creative force in this universe, working to pull down the gigantic mountain of evil, a power that is able to make a way out of no way and transform dark yesterdays into bright tomorrows. Let us realize the arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice.

—MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

## CHANGING VALUES

THE values in the world are fast changing. Some people are speaking of a "new pattern of behaviour" which ought to replace the present pattern which is causing chaos; some speak of the moral code as being changeable, and say that if the great Teachers of humanity were to come again today they would give a different set of morals for us to follow. All this bewilders people.

Much of this confusion of thought results from the decadence of orthodox religions and the growth of science. Old concepts are yielding place to new ones. No thinking person can any longer believe, for instance, that the Earth is just a few thousand years old, or that it is the most important of the planets in the Universe. Knowledge of the vast Universe, as also of the tiny atom, is constantly expanding. And archaeology is taking us further and further back into time and revealing the glories of the past, so that it is no longer possible to believe that our own civilization and achievements have reached a height of glory never reached before.

Though our concepts change, is there not a body of Knowledge which is unchanging and a moral code which alters not with the passage of time? Towards the close of *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 794), Madame Blavatsky wrote:

It is only by bringing before the reader an abundance of proofs all tending to show that in every age, under every condition of civilization and knowledge, the educated classes of every nation made themselves the more or less faithful echoes of one identical system and its fundamental traditions—that he can be made to see that so many streams of the same water must have had a common source from which they started.

Thus today, by a study of this book or of the writings of old philosophers, everyone has an opportunity to see for himself that the moral code or ethics of all religions are fundamentally the same; it is their interpretation that differs. This must be so, as true moral law is the law of Life, irrespective of time and civilization.

Mankind is, therefore, in a maze. "Is God dead?" is the question

people are asking today. But few ask the question, “Did God as ordinarily understood ever exist at all?”

Even students of Theosophy sometimes find it difficult to get used to the idea that an anthropomorphic, extracosmic God, under whatever form or name—Jehovah, Father in Heaven, Allah, Ahura Mazda, Krishna, Shiva, Vishnu—never existed at all and does not exist today! Therefore prayers and gifts to such a “God” are in vain. As the Buddha said, the gods are helpless to give man what he asks of them. Rituals and ceremonies cannot help, though man is psychologized into believing that they do. The true nature and value of rituals is unknown today, for their inner significance is forgotten and the crude outer form remains.

As students of Theosophy, should we not take to heart these words: “No human-born doctrine, no creed, however sanctified by custom and antiquity, can compare in sacredness with the religion of Nature”? And a good deal of practical guidance is contained in the statement that Theosophy is in the world “to fell and uproot the deadly upas trees of superstitions, prejudices, and conceited ignorance.” Our duty consists in helping on with this task.

Our difficulty lies in differentiating man-made rules and customs from Nature's rules and customs. The cry down the ages has always been, “Choose ye this day whom ye will serve.” A study of Theosophical teachings will give us the reasons why certain things are right and certain things are wrong, for all times and in all places, and it is these *reasons* that we must seek to base our thinking and actions on.

The “new” pattern of behaviour must be one which recognizes the lawful character of the whole world, physical, mental and moral. Man feeds himself on the produce of the earth; so do the animals, birds and insects. But each has to give back to Nature in proportion as it takes. In Nature's economy there is nothing useless, there is no “waste” matter.

The “new” pattern of behaviour must be one which accepts the fundamental rights of man and of all creatures—to *live*, to act for the common good, to be responsible to oneself and to one's

community or nation for what one does. This sense of responsibility towards all is the only practical basis for a successful brotherhood of all men and of all creatures. But we fear this sense of responsibility and take the easy path of following science or what others tell us. We have lost fear of God, which is said to be the beginning of wisdom, and adopted faith in science. If we use the term “Law” for “God,” then we can see that there is good sense in fearing Law, until we realize that obedience to it makes it our ally.

An ecological journal once stated:

Our survival depends upon balancing science with the philosophical, artistic and religious reflections and activities that belong inherently to the nature of human consciousness and are intended as part of the human ecology.

Speaking of science and technology, it said:

Science, being pure *thought*, harms no one; therefore it need not be humanistic. But technology is *action*, and often potentially dangerous....Never before, in all his long life on earth, has man possessed such enormous power to injure his human fellows and his society as has been put into his hands by modern technology. That is why it is important to maintain a humanistic attitude towards technology; to recognize clearly that since it is a product of human effort, technology can have no *legitimate* purpose but to serve man—man in general...man in the totality of his humanity, encompassing all his manifold interests and needs, not merely one particular concern of his.

Is it not in this light that we should look upon all methods of medical science which are supposed to give us “immunity” from this or that disease, or to enable us to escape the due effects of our actions? Also, what should be the right attitude to the body, alive or dead, and to the use of animals for research work? Artificial hearts, someone else's liver or kidneys—perhaps of an executed criminal—another person's cornea, a collection of “spare parts” ready for use—where are our changing values leading us?

## FREEDOM FROM BONDAGE

ONE of the ills of our modern civilization, which is causing great concern, is that people, feeling the need to escape from, and forget for a time, the problems, responsibilities and frustrations of life, have “let go” too much. If they are not able to do this by reading sensational books or seeing exciting movies, there is always the recourse to drink, and lately drugs, too, are being used to aid the process, so that for a time all control vanishes, and the person is “free” from all care—often with tragedy as the result.

In Theosophy, we are advised to “let go,” to free ourselves from the bonds that bind us, so that on the surface at least modern civilization and Theosophy seem to be in agreement—but only on the surface.

While it is true that thoughtful thinkers and writers today are beginning to regard man as much more than just his physical body, there is still a long way to go before the Theosophical concept of man is approached. Very roughly, for purposes of this study, man may be divided into the personality, or the “*persona*,” the outer form and name, and the individuality, the real “I,” the dweller residing in the personality, the real chooser and thinker, the one who really needs to be “free”—but from what? and why?

The individuality needs to be freed from the bonds and the prison in which it has been encased by the personality. Though forgotten or unknown by the personality, the individuality or inner man has his own plane of action and life, and the responsibility of guiding the personal man to become more impersonal and unselfish; but his voice is unheard and unrecognized because the average person is unaware of his existence, and often even students of Theosophy forget that there is such a being.

Therefore, what is it that the personality needs to “let go” of, to be free from, so that it can be a fit instrument for the individuality to act through? Certainly not its problems and responsibilities; these are the very things that it cannot free itself from, because in many instances their causes have been sown in a previous existence, and

have been brought over by the real “I” for the personality to work through and rise above in this present life.

What really needs to be “let go” of is our pride, our vanity, the desire that others should think and feel as we do, the feeling that our methods are the only correct ones, that our way of life is the only true one—in short, our selfishness and self-centredness.

To test out just how “free” we are, we should take a look, for instance, at our first thoughts on waking, and our last thoughts on sleeping. Do they tend to be concerned with how others have dealt with us, with the mistakes of others, with how we have been mistreated, or are we able to see objectively where we have erred, how we have treated, or mistreated, others, leaving them to worry about their own mistakes? Another test is to notice our reaction to any plan or proposal brought forward for our consideration. Is our first and immediate reaction, “It is not my way of doing it, therefore it is no good,” or, is our reaction, “How will this affect others and the general pattern of work? Will it help or hinder?”

Mr. Judge, in his *Letters That Have Helped Me*, has given another test for us, and along with it very practical advice:

Begin by trying to conquer the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward. This arises from personality. Do not monopolize the conversation. Keep in the background. If someone begins to tell you about himself and his doings, do not take first chance to tell him about yourself, but listen to him and talk solely to bring him out. And when he has finished, suppress in yourself the desire to tell about yourself, your opinions and experiences. Do not ask a question unless you intend to listen to the answer and inquire into its value. Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent. Your only true greatness lies in your inner true self and it is not desirous of obtaining the applause of others. If you will follow these directions for one week you will find they will take considerable effort, and you will begin to discover a part of the meaning of the saying, “Man, know thyself.”

In this day and age, we see things in an upside-down manner.

The influences of the astral and psychic planes are much stronger than those of the spiritual plane; therefore we see things in a reversed fashion. We see these lower planes as the only reality, and from the standpoint of the personality they are so. But from the standpoint of the real “I” they are not.

If we could only realize that there is a plane where we are all alike, are bound together by a bond stronger than any family or community or legal bond! It is on this plane, the spiritual, that real Unity or Oneness exists. All have come from this source, and must eventually return to it. It can only be approached when we have “let go” on this physical plane, not of our responsibilities and problems, but of our pride and vanity and selfishness—the choice is ours. One way will take us deeper into the psychic plane, where there is “under every flower a serpent coiled”; the other, nearer to the real “I” within, the man who forever is. It is up to us, but “let go” we must, one way or the other.

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As gold purified in the furnace rids itself of dross and reaches the quality of its own self, so the mind ridding itself of the dross of substance, force, and darkness, through meditation, enters into reality.

Outward attachment arises through sensual objects; inward attachment, through personality. Only he who, resting in the Eternal, is free from passion, is able to give them up. Freedom from passion and awakening are the wings of the spirit. O wise man, understand these two wings! For without them you cannot rise to the crown of the tree of life.

—SHANKARACHARYA: *The Crest Jewel of Wisdom*

## WIDENING TOWARD THE UNIVERSAL

RABINDRANATH Tagore in his *Sadhana* states: “To the man who lives for an idea, for his country, for the good of humanity, life has an extensive meaning, and to that extent pain becomes less important to him.” This is a statement which becomes self-evident upon consideration. This is to state, a person is free of suffering to the extent he is unselfish. This is because he is not consumed by his own needs and desires. The selfish person demands the personal attention of others, often by calling upon them to do those things he is entirely able to do himself. He demands attention by reciting his pains and troubles to anyone who will listen. He calls attention to any area in which he may excel. In short, he lives but for his own pleasure.

Tagore observes: “Pleasure is for one's own self, but goodness is concerned with the happiness of all humanity and for all time.” He adds: “From the point of view of the good, pleasure and pain appear in a different meaning; so much so, that pleasure may be shunned, and pain courted in its place, and death itself be made welcome as giving a higher value to life.”

The limiting nature of selfishness and separateness is centripetal, increasingly restricted, until the personal self's choice of movement is reduced to a minimum. The interest of the self-centred person is increasingly limited, the imagination failing and faulty, gradually losing its ability to respond to the creative impulse. The will becomes narrow and ineffective. Thought loses its elasticity and its ability to recognize Universals. The feelings become dejected and frustrated, suffering the torture of hopelessness and despair.

Our Individuality, by its nature, seeks the Universal. The more vigorous our Individuality, the more it widens toward the Universal. It seeks to embrace more and more of its environment. When inspired by “goodness,” when it seeks its own in others' good, when it realizes that all separateness brings pain and misery and that the feeling of Oneness brings happiness, then personal interests and accentuation of “me” and “mine” become abhorrent and

meaningless. This was the Message of Unity proclaimed by all those who have gone before. Then, gradually as we grow, we find a great change in our attitude: “Gradually the Conscious Will replaces the subconscious Desire.” This is the Way of Life, the Path, the Road to Greatness, for it arouses increasing awareness of the Universal Self, the true Individuality, and that is the essence of Greatness.

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### THE SCHEME OF THINGS

OF necessity our own limitations cloud the Truth. Our views are partial. Where facts of personal experience are lacking, our minds must make pictures and imaginings which we can check.

Pressing back and further back into the dim “beginnings,” we seek to probe the regions of the unmanifested—in search of that ONE SPIRIT from which *all* has emanated. From IT ensues the descent of “Spirit” into “Matter”—ITSELF in itself—the involution and the evolution of “soul” and its journey back to the Source through the manifested universe. The CAUSELESS CAUSE is the One Source of emanation and evolution in this manifested universe. It is everywhere and it is nowhere. It has no attributes, neither length, depth nor thickness. In terms of manifested time, it is TIMELESS. The First Cause may be given the symbol of the mathematical point. The regular periodic inbreathing and outbreathing of the Spirit in manifestation gives us the periodic “Nights” and “Days” of Brahma. Starting with the mathematical point as the apex of a metaphysical equilateral triangle, H.P.B. shows us how involution proceeds by the two divergent sides, representing “Spirit” and “Matter”—*wisdom* and *knowledge*; the base line that completes this trinity represents the Logos (Brahma, Avalokiteshwara, Ormazd, Osiris, Ophis, Odin, etc., according to the various systems of mythological theogonies—all being one and the same thing).

From this emanate seven Principles (seven Ameshaspendis, seven Archangels, seven primeval Rishis) or Logoi; and from each of these a further seven, making 49 in all. From these the archetypal basis for manifestation, the world as a plane of action, came into being. It is this seven times seven scale that we now deal with. Everything, without exception, contains within itself a portion or spark of the omnipresent Divine Consciousness. It is precisely this ray-spark, seeking return to its Source to obtain Absolute SELF-Consciousness, that evolves through the elemental, the mineral, the vegetable, the animal and finally the human “kingdoms.”

Self-consciousness begins at a certain stage after the human

form is developed. To obtain Absolute SELF-Consciousness, which is awareness of everything, it must pass through every form and state of existence, from the lowest to the highest, on all planes, visible and invisible, and master the whole range of knowledge available to it, transmuting this knowledge into WISDOM, active and beneficent. In other words, this individual ray must become one with the ABSOLUTE CONSCIOUSNESS through the experience garnered in manifestation.

The planes of experience are seven. Evolution passing through these stages exhibits seven aspects, called in Theosophy “Globes.” Through these the ray-monad evolves. Our own Earth now is the fourth in the series, the others being intangible to our present senses simply because they are on another plane of matter-perception which interpenetrates ours. Seven times around this system does the monad journey, spending millions of years on each globe and incarnating in human form again and again. It is brought back to incarnated life because of the unfulfilled desires and the Karmic causes set up in its past lives with other evolving ray-monads. Always in search of new experience, it pursues this apparently endless journey on its return to the ONE SOURCE. For how long? The wise custodians, evolved Men-Monads of past periods of evolution, accurately record the duration of the cycles, large and small: *Brahmandas*, *Kalpas*, *Manvantaras*, *Yugas*, years. From these Wise Ones comes the Secret Doctrine, set forth in mystic form and traced in the myths, legends and allegories of many a past race. This *secret* record is made accessible only to those who through many incarnations have pursued with devotion and absolute resolution the path that leads to the mastery of the *Occult*.

Each one of us has the opportunity of making of himself that forged and true “key” that will unlock the mighty lock of the secrets of Nature. The hand that eventually turns our key will be our own. This is, however, not the highest goal, since it is still a selfish one. Casting our eyes around, we see a great community of beings of all degrees: at our own level of advancement, below ours and, certainly, above ours. What, then, is our responsibility? It is our

sense of responsibility and trustworthiness that is precisely being tested. It is in this subtle way that the process of evolution refines, by offering us opportunities, the compassion rooted in UNITY that emanates from the centre of our *Real* being—the evolving Ray on its way back to its SOURCE.

In our cycle we have H.P.B. and the present Theosophical Movement which she launched. The object was to establish, especially in the Western world, the nucleus of the brotherhood of man that should exist. Cyclically the time was ripe for the partial restatement of the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion, the Secret Doctrine, and for the formation of an organization through which this could be promulgated and to which individuals who were interested and in sympathy could be attracted. The idea of the WAY was repromulgated—that WAY which leads inward to the centre of the man-universe. H.P.B. thus came to lay the plans and the outlines for future growth, working with the mind of the race, promulgating great Universal Ideas and setting an example of complete and absolute dedication—of compassion and of wisdom-sacrifice. It is our opportunity and our responsibility to see that growth along the Lines she laid down continues and becomes that living power which will eventually permeate the minds of men and direct their thought to matters of real significance which have truly a long-range purview.

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HUMAN nature in general is the same now as it was a million years ago: Prejudice based upon selfishness; a general unwillingness to give up an established order of things for new modes of life and thought—and occult study requires all that and much more; pride and stubborn resistance to Truth if it but upsets their previous notions of things—such are the characteristics of your age.

—MASTER K.H.

## THE BASIS OF EFFORT

HOPE is a universal stimulant shared by all beings; it is the basis of all endeavour and effort.

Many are the objects human beings place their hearts and minds on, and hope is the stimulant that makes them strive progressively towards the achievement of the ends they have in view. Hope shapes the endeavours made towards the fulfilment of our desires and aspirations, for it is the constancy of hope that determines the persistency of effort in any direction.

Herein lies the secret of the achievement of the goal set before the mind's eye. Constancy of mind, persistency of effort, are concomitants that grow apace with hope, and this is so particularly when the goals set are pleasing to the spiritual pole of our inner nature. Seldom are such goals set in the world of today, yet there may come a time when we shall regain our lost spirituality.

Are there people in the world today who have acquired wealth, social position, political power, etc., from purely altruistic motives? There are, but it is the motive that makes the difference. Such altruistic people do not acquire wealth with the desire to hold it, but they seek the means of freely sharing it with those deserving, who, like themselves, are concerned not with the acquisition of wealth, but purely with its use in the service of others. Again, many get position, power, recognition in one or another sphere, not because they have set their hopes on the acquisition of these, but because they come as natural results from the service they so unselfishly render. The keynote of their hope is to be found in their endeavours and efforts to help others, and the results are the natural fruits under law of such endeavours.

The great difference that exists in the motives of different people in setting goals and objectives before their mind's eye may be perceived here. The observant mind will have noted at once the distinction between what Krishna calls in the *Gita* "action with a view to its results," and "action without any interest in the results"; or this may be considered from another viewpoint as the performance of one's duty with the hope of reward, and the

performance of duty because it is that which is due to others. Herein lies the key to understanding the difference between personal selfishness and unselfishness, personal service and impersonal service. (See the sub-section on "Duty" in *The Key to Theosophy*, Chapter XII.)

Motive may be considered as the prime factor determining the growth of our moral nature in the right performance of action, but knowledge is essential in determining what is right action to perform in order to render real service to others, or to fit ourselves to be the better able to help and teach others.

In order to teach we must learn, in order to learn we must study. Study and application are the two handmaidens that are the constant companions of the Goddess Vach, for, as *Light on the Path* tells us, "Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech."

In our hope is the seed for its growth. The goal of service is ever in front of us, and provides the avenues for the expansion of endeavour and effort along constructive, practical lines. Seeking in our present circumstances to perform our duty as that which is due to others, we find our hope of service becoming more and more assured and our capacities to render such service growing because of our earnestness and non-attachment to the results.

Such a form of hope, endeavour and effort is the challenge that only "fortune's favoured soldiers" will accept. What is expected of these "fortune's favoured soldiers"? This question is answered in *The Voice of the Silence* (p.50):

Which wilt thou choose, O thou of dauntless heart? The  
Samtan of "Eye Doctrine," fourfold Dhyana, or thread thy way  
through Paramitas, six in number, noble gates of virtue leading  
to Bodhi and to Prajna, seventh step of Wisdom?

Fortunate indeed is the one who learns to centre his Hope, Endeavour and Effort on discovering the "Golden Keys" that unlock within his own mind and heart the "Seven Portals," because thereby he learns how to "render gentle service to all that lives."

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## MORAL SUPPORTS

EVERYONE is aware of the importance of the support of a pillar in any construction, whether of an arcade or a balcony, a bridge or a building. Such support is needed at every stage of the work, until the very end. If this is true of any construction on the objective plane, how much more true should it be on the inner planes of being, when making resolves to reach the desired spiritual goal, to steer the barge of life successfully through the ocean of *samsara* to the other shore.

The great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion are known as the Pillars of Peace because they have become embodiments of peace to such an extent that even by reading and reflecting upon their teachings one gets real peace and solace and inner strength. Many a candidate yearns to tread the path indicated by them, but it is necessary to make prior preparations, just as a mountaineer does before determining to scale the heights, with full awareness of his own strength and stamina. To live the spiritual life is an uphill task; it is a difficult climb all the way, from the dark valley of mire to the summit of the glorious light Nirvanic. Hence the need to gauge one's spiritual strength and moral stamina. Madame Blavatsky has given us sound advice worth pondering over before taking the first step:

Every pledge or promise unless built upon four pillars—absolute sincerity, unflinching determination, unselfishness of purpose, and *moral power*, which makes the fourth support and equipoises the three other pillars—is an insecure building. The pledges of those who are sure of the strength of the fourth alone are recorded. (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, p.11)

Though these four requisites are interdependent and interrelated, it is necessary to recognize the importance of moral power, which supports and equipoises the three other pillars. The moral nature being the most important aspect of man's constitution, without its support one is not able to achieve anything from the spiritual point

of view. Just as physical stamina is necessary on the physical plane—otherwise one would collapse at a critical period—so also on the spiritual plane. To face every crisis, to overcome every difficulty, to go through the ups and downs of life, to meet every situation skilfully, to gain wisdom and unfold compassion, in short, to live to benefit mankind and practise the six glorious virtues, one needs moral stamina.

One of the Masters of Wisdom has said: “You should learn that you may teach, acquire spiritual knowledge and strength that the weak may lean on you, and the sorrowing victims of ignorance learn from you the cause and remedy of their pain.” This shows the great necessity of moral power, of steadfastness and willingness to learn because men need knowledge to remove their ignorance. They are not aware of their own real nature and its source; they are bound down by customs and conventions; they do not understand the cause of their own sorrow and suffering; they have not the right precepts to follow; they do not know the twin doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, the doctrines of responsibility and hope: and so they naturally need solace and comfort which can only be given by those possessing moral power, those who can take the responsibility of supporting the weak and the downcast. Lord Buddha has made an emphatic statement that *sorrow is*; the cause of all sorrow lies in our passions and desires; therefore the remedy lies in the control of the lower self by the Higher Self, for which moral power, with its accompanying three pillars of absolute sincerity, unflinching determination and unselfishness of purpose, has to be acquired.

From the very beginning of the journey one must develop the virtue of absolute sincerity, the first pillar. An insincere person deceives himself and others, therefore insincerity would be fatal on the path of truth and wisdom. To be sincere, one must practise the second Paramita of *Shila*, “the key of Harmony in word and act, the key that counterbalances the cause and the effect, and leaves no further room for Karmic action.” This means obedience and submission to the great Law. Thoughts, words and deeds are in

perfect harmony, and therefore there is no conflict. One has to be honest with oneself and with others in order to be sincere. When man is in search of truth, he has to be true to his higher Self, the God within, the divine parent. Absolute sincerity is the way to self-reliance. When he has learnt to rely upon himself, others also will rely upon him. He has to free himself from the bondage of personal Karma, and therefore *absolute sincerity* is essential. One needs to be true to the teachings and loyal to the teachers, adhering to one's conviction to continue with the self-chosen task.

Unflinching determination is the second pillar of support and strength in spiritual life. One must determine first what one wishes to do and why, and make due preparations for the great journey, just as it is necessary to prepare for any journey on the physical plane. One must be firm-footed and must have the courage to sustain one's determination. There will be pitfalls on the way, threatening clouds that frighten, dark shadows that oppose; so naturally one will be tempted by Mara to waver and doubt and hesitate. On the spiritual path there is no standstill; one goes forward or backward; therefore, in order to continue on the journey one must have unflinching determination. To practise the fifth key of *Virya*, "the dauntless energy that fights its way to the supernal TRUTH, out of the mire of lies terrestrial," it is necessary to have unflinching determination. To assume a firm position as self-conscious thinkers, immortal Egos, and to work deliberately, making of the personality a refined instrument and a devoted friend, is our task.

The third pillar is unselfishness of purpose. Purity of motive, not thinking of one's own gain or glory, is an absolutely necessary requisite. One cannot serve humanity and look to one's own interests at the same time. A clear conscience and a firm desire to benefit humanity would bring an end to all conflicts. Throughout the eighteen discourses of the *Bhagavad-Gita* Krishna stresses the necessity to perform one's duty without any self-interest. It is necessary to examine the motive at the outset, because an impure motive would tarnish both mind and heart. Soul-wisdom cannot

be bought or sold. Unselfishness of purpose means a consecrated and dedicated life, and here the first key of *Dana*, charity and immortal love, would be most valuable. The purpose is so high and pure that personal likes and dislikes would be obstacles on the way. Charity, not only almsgiving but also altruism of mind and heart, has to be practised daily, to fulfil the purpose and serve the great Cause. The slightest tinge of selfishness would be an obstacle, as it would disturb the harmony within and around, and go against the great Law.

In our dealings in life, we are expected to fulfil our promises and carry them out to the best of our ability. Does not spiritual life demand as much? When the human ego, the self-conscious thinker, through his own awakening and yearning makes a promise to his own Divine Parent, the Higher Self, a sacred covenant is entered into. The very act brings precipitations from the storehouse of Karma in a greater mass or with a stronger force; hence the need for the fourfold qualifications. It is necessary to cultivate them day after day, so as to be well-equipped with a moral power which can be used as it is required. If our ideal is to reach the goal of peace and bliss, let us carefully construct the four pillars on a firm foundation so that they may withstand a thousand storms and remain unshaken.

Lift up thy light, O man, arise and shine,  
Steadfast while loud the storms of life assail;  
Immortal ray of that great Light divine,  
'Gainst whose all-power no tempest shall prevail.

Hold high thy lamp above earth's restless tides,  
Beacon of hope to those who watch afar.  
Falsehood and fear shall pass, but Truth abides;  
Thine be the splendour of her deathless star.

Should the world's sin and sorrow round thee rave,  
Pierce thou the dark with Truth's undaunted ray,  
Send out its light of joy to help and save,  
That more and more shine to the perfect day.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Although the moon has enthralled observers for aeons, its origin still remains a mystery. Of the many theories advanced, the so-called “giant impact theory” is today the most popular. Planetary scientists now believe that the moon was born when a planetary object hit the Earth over four billion years ago. Karen Wright writes in *Discover* magazine (February 2003):

In fact, the story of the moon's origin is still slim on details...For now, the story scientists tell about the origin of the moon goes something like this. It's 4.5 billion years ago. The very young Earth comes hurtling in at several miles per second. The mega-meteor is so huge it takes half an hour to plow fully into the planet. In the heat of the collision, much of the impactor and a good portion of Earth melt and vaporize into surrounding space. Then all that atomized rock begins to recondense as dust in the primitive heavens. Within a month, a year, or a century, Earth's significant other emerges from the detritus of disaster. The two have been inseparable ever since.

Although planetary scientists claim that knowledge about the origin of the earth's moon has undergone a revolution since the first Apollo landing on the lunar surface, old beliefs die hard and it is still held that the earth is older than the moon. Scientists admit that the increasing failure of former theories to explain how the moon was formed has given rise to the new “large-impact” theory. It is probable that the latter in turn will ultimately suffer the fate of the earlier exploded hypotheses.

“Had our wise men of science known as much of the mysteries of nature as the ancient Aryans did,” states *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 398), “they would surely never have imagined that the moon was projected from the earth.” The Occult teaching is that the moon is far older than the earth, and that it is the latter which owes its being to the former. Mr. Judge sums up the *Secret Doctrine* teaching on the mystery of the moon when he states:

H. P. Blavatsky is our sole originator of a theory regarding the satellite which one could not have invented with the most wonderful imagination....The first mystery which she claimed to reveal—and, indeed, she first of every one states it—is that in a remote period, when there was no earth, the moon existed as an inhabited globe, died, and at once threw out into space all her energies leaving nothing but the physical vehicle. Those energies revolved and condensed the matter in space nearby and produced our earth; the moon, its parent, proceeding towards disintegration but compelled to revolve around her child, this earth. This gives us a use and history for the moon.

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Everything in the universe is interconnected, and science today admits this. “It is not insane to believe that all matter on Earth could be linked to the stars, including people....The connection between the atoms in our bodies and the atoms in a distant star could have a fundamental part to play in our final description of how the Universe works,” says Paul Wesson, professor of physics at the University of Waterloo, Canada (*New Scientist*, May 17). There is a “theory of everything” being talked of by scientists these days.

Occult Science goes further and says that it is not just physical atoms that link the myriad objects in our vast and ancient Universe. “Humanity and the stars are bound together indissolubly, because of the *intelligences* that rule the latter.”(*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 352)

The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyana Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds—this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science. (S.D., I, 120)

A Master of Wisdom has said: “Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and,

there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man.”

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Anthropoid apes are heading toward extinction, and this is a matter of grave concern not only to animal conservationists but also to Theosophists. *New Scientist* (April 12) reports:

Our closest relatives, the great apes, could soon become a zoological curiosity confined to wildlife parks, zoos and animal sanctuaries. Population surveys have revealed that the effects of the bushmeat trade and Ebola virus are combining to decimate gorilla and chimpanzee populations in western equatorial Africa, their last major refuge.

Peter Walsh of Princeton University in a study published by the science journal *Nature* warns that “this could push the apes to the brink of extinction in just a decade.” If these apes are wiped out, says Sandy Harcourt of the University of California at Davis, “we’ve lost a very, very direct connection to the rest of the animal world.” But though he agrees the problem is grave, he believes recovery is possible if the animals can be protected.

Apart from natural calamities, the role played by bushmeat hunters in decimating the great ape population is truly deplorable; for the apes “have a spark of the purely human essence in them” (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 193). The egos imprisoned in ape forms are known in Theosophy as the Delayed Race, compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms.

The ape we know is not the product of natural evolution but an *accident*, a cross-breed between an animal being, or form, and man... Thus, it is most important to remember that the Egos of the apes are entities compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms, which resulted from the bestiality of the *latest* Third and the earliest Fourth Race men. They are entities who had already reached the “human stage” before this Round. Consequently, they form an exception to the general rule... the present apes... are truly “speechless men” and will become

speaking animals (or men of a lower order) in the Fifth Round while the adepts of a certain school hope that some of the Egos of the apes of a higher intelligence will reappear at the close of the Sixth Root-race. (*S.D.*, II, 262)

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Archaeological discoveries are continuing apace and are yielding fresh evidence of ancient civilizations. Rock carvings and remains of a previously unknown prehistoric society have now been found deep in the Nicaraguan rainforest. Evidence uncovered by archaeologists suggests that the culture lasted longer than the Roman empire, but may have been destroyed by a cataclysmic fire around 400 A.D. The settlement, which predates Mayan cities found further north in Latin America, lies in a remote area known as Kukra Hill, on the Atlantic coast. It was discovered by engineers who were planting palm trees in a development project. Over the last year, archaeologists have discovered raised platforms, nearly 20ft high, on which the society built houses, and religious and civic buildings. The platforms, some of which extend to 100 square yards, are laid out around a square. Besides those living in the town, archaeologists believe that smaller satellite villages existed nearby. (*The Times of India*, May 26)

These manifold discoveries challenge the belief that our knowledge of the past is complete. Faced with fresh evidences, modern-day investigators are baffled and fail to construct from their discoveries and knowledge the grand panorama of human unfoldment under cyclic law and what it implies.

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Most people admit the value of compassion. But what exactly does the word “compassion” mean to us? Is our compassion all-inclusive, or discriminatory in nature? Khenchen Thrangu Rinpoche, an eminent teacher of the Kagyu lineage of Tibetan Buddhism, who travels and teaches extensively in Asia, Europe

and North America, elucidates the implications of “compassion” (*Dignity Dialogue*, May 2003):

Generally, our compassion is flawed. We draw a line somewhere. We feel compassion for those on one side of the line but not for those on the other side of the line. We feel compassion for one group but not for another....

The compassion taught by the Buddha has no measure. It is to be extended to all sentient beings. Compassion is a wish to free sentient beings from suffering. However, it is not possible to free others from suffering immediately. Initially, it is necessary to free others from the causes of suffering....

We begin by cultivating equanimity. To cultivate equanimity means to consider the ways in which all sentient beings are the same...From the compassion that wishes to free all sentient beings from suffering, the love that wishes all sentient beings to enjoy happiness will arise....

The roots of our suffering grow within our own minds, rather than externally. When strong desire arises and we are able neither to quell it nor to fulfil it, we suffer. At other times, hatred arises in us. Sometimes we feel proud or jealous, and those afflictions bring us suffering too. Sometimes suffering comes to us because of our ignorance, which is to say, because we do not understand something. Therefore, the roots of our suffering grow within us, not outside of us. To put it simply, we can say that our suffering comes from how we think about things. If we correct our mistaken way of thinking, our suffering will end.

Compassion is the sustaining power in life. Without the compassionate and anonymous efforts of countless men and women over several generations, where would our social order be? Without their unrequited acts of self-sacrifice, each of us would be little more than a vegetable. Each is his brother's keeper in a very real sense.

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