

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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LOSE NOT COURAGE

If you are at all cast down, or if any of us is, then by just that much are our thoughts lessened in power. One could be confined in a prison and yet be a worker for the Cause. So I pray you to remove from your mind any distaste for present circumstances. If you can succeed in looking at it all as *just what you in fact desired*, then it will act not only as a strengthener of your good thoughts, but will reflexly act on your body and make it stronger.

—W. Q. JUDGE

Every tyro in Theosophy knows that individual happiness and progress depend upon the discipline of life which each adopts and follows. Yet all who have tried it know that the discipline in which the mind is made to follow the perceptions of the Soul, in which human emotions are made pure by correct knowledge and in which skill in action is attained, raises many difficulties.

The difficulties and obstacles increase in number and variety and affect every part of the human constitution as evolution advances. Through the process of reincarnation Karmic results produce one set of difficulties, but when the aspirant marches onward and makes progress on the Inner Path, which not only is long but also has depth, other sets of obstacles and unsuspected troubles, more complex in character, are encountered. By his own earnestness and sincerity the aspirant not only stirs up his own latent weaknesses but also arouses opposition from others who do not view life as he does. This is an experience common to all aspirants to Occultism.

One-pointed tenacity to hold grimly to the Line of Theosophical Action through all ups and downs which Karma precipitates, through good and evil report, through success and failure, is the only salvation of the aspirant. This Kali-Yuga civilization is not of any aid in his attempts to unfold the power of steadfastness which will hold him together and enable him never to lose hope or courage. Constancy and perseverance are not natural to our civilization, where speed is regarded as a great virtue and where, as an old Chinese sage has put it, “a man looks at an egg, and expects to hear it crow.” In the words of Marcus

Aurelius Antoninus, the philosopher-emperor,

Be not disgusted, nor discouraged, nor dissatisfied, if thou dost not succeed in doing everything according to right principles, but when thou hast failed, return back again, and be content if the greater part of what thou doest is consistent with man's nature, and love this to which thou returnest.

Pitfalls are inevitable; but they provide an impetus. To fall is not to fail, provided we rise quickly once again to give battle to the foe. To fall and remain prostrate is to fail. He who desires triumph is the one who has seen the failings over which triumph is desired. Perception of failings is the first step towards overcoming them.

The right motive for undertaking the discipline of self and for waging the War of Righteousness against the darkness of the world is the aspirant's best safeguard against failure. Not soul-liberation but soul-service through sacrifice — that is recommended as the basis for right motive. The yearning for personal soul emancipation is but an exalted form of selfishness. Energized and sustained by the sole motive of the salvation of humanity, we are, as it were, equipped with a protective shield that will help us not to be overthrown but to "fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again." There is nothing that we cannot survive; nothing that we cannot turn to beneficence. We must have faith in this.

Our widening and deepening knowledge of the Esoteric Philosophy is at once our bow and our arrow. What is needed is not only more knowledge but deepening insight into the knowledge already gained. To many a schoolboy learning is not a delight; it is irksome. Some would-be practitioners find themselves in a similar position. Where the urge of the Heart is lacking, devotion to the Wisdom cannot arise, and study and meditation upon its truths are neglected.

Mere study is not enough; we must study and remember. Remembering the appropriate teaching, we do not fall; or, if we do, remembrance or recollection enables us to rise quickly. Practice of what is studied aids in the process of remembrance.

Instead of allowing the impersonal philosophy to shed its light on our mistake or our failing, we are prone to seek personal comfort from friend or co-student when we are feeling miserable. We feel satisfied when in response to our repentant confession we are told, "Well, you have learnt the lesson and you will not do it again." This may comfort us for a time, but "men are not made into steel by comfort," writes Mr. Judge. In a short while the mistake is likely to be repeated, the difficult situation to be encountered once again.

A quiet passing through any unpleasant experience which comes to us as an effect enables us not only to pay the debt and close the account; we can also learn from it and so unfold a new capacity or virtue, or strengthen old ones. We often talk of paying our Karmic debts,

overlooking the method by which they are discharged. That method is passing through the experience in calmness, with the mind attentive to observe and learn. The debt is not paid when we are thrown off our balance by Karmic processes. We often add to the sum-total of our debt by newly-made Karmas; out of one effect several new causes spring. When we attend in quietude to the effect, soon we perceive the root-cause; we learn the lesson of the experience; the necessity of once again going through that experience ceases. This brings real comfort, and, what is more, we transform disabilities into abilities and unfold true perception.

Robert Crosbie offers sage advice in these words:

Are things going hard with you? If so, it is time to push harder along the way you know. That will inevitably destroy all obstacles, and if persisted in *during stress* generates and maintains greater powers of resistance. Everybody on the Path goes through similar obstacles; by having them and overcoming them, you become teachers with knowledge of how to help. If you had no obstacles, you would not know how. Thank Karma for "obstacles."

"Even this will pass away" is a good motto to keep in mind when things come up that are hard to stand. The "easy" and happy times are the periods of rest; the "hard" times are the periods of training — opportunities for gaining strength and knowledge. If we can look at both in this light, we shall not be overcome by either.

We should strive for calmness, patience, and fortitude, and also have full confidence that the tide is bound to turn, even at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour. "If the candidate has faith, patience and confidence, verily he will not have to wait too long." There is one thing that should be remembered in the midst of all difficulties; it is this — "When the lesson is learned the necessity ceases."

We did not start out expecting a "train de luxe" to heaven. We knew it was to be a fight every step of the way; and not only do we have to fight, but to meet and surmount all the obstacles that the enemy — this civilization — places in our way. But in view of the great prize — the uplift of humanity — these obstacles offer opportunity to get into fighting trim, and as such should be welcomed rather than decried or denied. We know all these things, yet we have to say them over and over again to ourselves and to each other for mutual encouragement. And it is right that it should be so. The comrades who are well support those who may be suffering from illness and disability from whatever cause, and they are right glad to do so, for our army is an army by reason of mutual support. Think what OUR ARMY is, and despair — if you can.

THE BLESSINGS OF PUBLICITY

[The following article by H. P. Blavatsky was first printed in *Lucifer*, Vol. VIII, pp. 441-44, for August 1891, and was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for January 1934. Though written more than 72 years ago, its arguments and reasoning are equally cogent now. Scientific knowledge is greater today than in 1891, but with increase of knowledge the curse which weapons of destruction carry with them has also grown in magnitude. Moral degradation has deepened and many fear that unless the trend towards accumulating more and more armaments is checked, it might spell the death of our civilization. The misuse of scientific knowledge has made scientists debate the question of their moral responsibility and the wisdom of giving out knowledge that the world is not ready for.

Unless vested interests are routed from their entrenched position whence they deal a death-blow to all carefully prepared schemes for disarmament and security; unless public opinion is educated to see that the noblest aspirations of the masses towards international peace and amity are thwarted by such self-seeking interests, the people will continue to be balked of their legitimate heritage — Universal Brotherhood.—Eds.]

A well-known public lecturer, a distinguished Egyptologist, said, in one of his lectures against the teachings of Theosophy, a few suggestive words, which are now quoted and must be answered:

It is a delusion to suppose there is anything in the experience or wisdom of the past, the ascertained results of which can only be communicated from beneath the cloak and mask of mystery. . . . Explanation is the Soul of Science. They will tell you *we cannot have their knowledge without living their life*. . . . Public experimental research, the printing press, and a free-thought platform, have abolished the need of mystery. It is no longer necessary for science to take the veil, as she was forced to do for security in times past, etc.

This is a very mistaken view in one aspect. "Secrets of the purer and profounder life" not only *may* but *must* be made universally known. But *there are secrets that kill* in the arcana of Occultism, and unless a man *lives the life* he cannot be entrusted with them.

The late Professor Faraday had very serious doubts whether it was quite wise and reasonable to give out to the public at large certain discoveries of modern science. Chemistry had led to the invention of too terrible means of destruction in our century to allow it to fall into the hands of the profane. What man of sense — in the face of such fiendish applications of dynamite and other explosive substances as are made by those incarnations of the Destroying Power, who glory in calling themselves Anarchists and Socialists — would not agree with us in say-

ing: Far better for mankind that it should never have blasted a rock by modern perfected means, than that it should have shattered the limbs of one per cent even of those who have been thus destroyed by the pitiless hand of Russian Nihilists, Irish Fenians and Anarchists. That such discoveries, and chiefly their murderous application, ought to have been withheld from public knowledge may be shown on the authority of statistics and commissions appointed to investigate and record the result of the evil done. The following information gathered from public papers gives an insight into what may be in store for wretched mankind.

England alone — the centre of civilization — has 21,268 firms fabricating and selling explosive substances.¹ But the centres of the dynamite trade, of infernal machines, and other such results of modern civilization, are chiefly at Philadelphia and New York. It is in the former city of "Brotherly Love" that the now most famous manufacturer of explosives flourishes. It is one of the well-known respectable citizens — the inventor and manufacturer of the most murderous "dynamite toys" — who, called before the Senate of the United States anxious to adopt means for the repression of a *too free trade* in such implements, found an argument that ought to become immortalized for its cynical sophistry: "My *machines*," that expert is reported to have said, "are quite *harmless to look at*; as they may be manufactured in the shape of oranges, hats, boats, and anything one likes. . . . Criminal is he who murders people by means of such machines, not he who manufactures them. The firm refuses to admit that were there no supply there would be no incentive for demand on the market; but insists that every demand should be satisfied by a supply ready at hand."

That "supply" is the fruit of civilization and of the publicity given to the discovery of every murderous property in matter. What is it? As found in the Report of the Commission appointed to investigate the variety and character of the so-called "infernal machines," so far the following implements of instantaneous human destruction are already on hand. The most fashionable of all among the many varieties fabricated by Mr. Holgate, are the "Ticker," the "Eight Day Machine," the "Little Exterminator," and the "Bottle Machines." The "Ticker" is in appearance like a piece of lead, a foot long and four inches thick. It contains an iron or steel tube, full of a kind of gunpowder invented by Holgate himself. That gunpowder, in appearance like any other common stuff of that name, has, however, an explosive power two hundred times stronger than common gunpowder; the "Ticker" containing thus a powder which equals in force two hundred pounds of the common gunpowder. At one end of the machine is fastened an invisible clockwork meant to regulate the time of the explosion, which time may be fixed from one minute to thirty-six hours. The spark is produced by means

¹ Nitro-glycerine has found its way even into medical compounds. Physicians and druggists are vying with the Anarchists in their endeavours to destroy the surplus of mankind. The famous chocolate tablets against dyspepsia are said to contain nitro-glycerine! They may save, but they can kill still more easily.

of a steel needle which gives a spark at the touch-hole, and communicates thereby the fire to the whole machine.

The "Eight Day Machine" is considered the most powerful, but at the same time the most complicated, of all those invented. One must be familiar with handling it before a full success can be secured. It is owing to this difficulty that the terrible fate intended for London Bridge and its neighbourhood was turned aside by the instantaneous killing instead of the two Fenian criminals. The size and appearance of that machine changes, Proteus-like, according to the necessity of smuggling it in, in one or another way, unperceived by the victims. It may be concealed in bread, in a basket of oranges, in a liquid, and so on. The Commission of Experts is said to have declared that its explosive power is such as to reduce to atoms instantly the largest edifice in the world.

The "Little Exterminator" is an innocent-looking, plain utensil having the shape of a modest jug. It contains neither dynamite nor powder, but secretes, nevertheless, a deadly gas, and has a hardly perceptible clockwork attached to its edge, the needle of which points to the time when that gas will effect its escape. In a shut-up room this new "vril" of lethal kind will *smother to death, nearly instantaneously*, every living being within a distance of a hundred feet, the radius of the murderous jug. With these three "latest novelties" in the high season of Christian civilization, the catalogue of the dynamiters is closed; all the rest belongs to the old "fashion" of the past years. It consists of hats, *porte cigars*, bottles of ordinary kind, and even *ladies' smelling bottles*, filled with dynamite, nitro-glycerine, etc., etc. — weapons, some of which, following unconsciously Karmic law, killed many of the dynamiters in the last Chicago *revolution*. Add to this the forthcoming long-promised Keely's vibratory force, capable of reducing in a few seconds a dead bullock to a heap of ashes, and then ask yourself if the *Inferno* of Dante as a locality can ever rival earth in the production of more hellish engines of destruction!

Thus, if purely material implements are capable of blowing up, from a few corners, the greatest cities of the globe, provided the murderous weapons are guided by expert hands — what terrible dangers might not arise from magical *occult* secrets being revealed, and allowed to fall into the possession of ill-meaning persons! A thousand times more dangerous and lethal are these, because, neither the criminal hand, nor the *immaterial*, invisible weapon used, can ever be detected.

The congenital *black* magicians — those who, to an innate propensity towards evil, unite highly-developed mediumistic natures — are but too numerous in our age. It is nigh time then that psychologists and believers, at least, should cease advocating the beauties of publicity and claiming knowledge of the secrets of nature for all. It is not in our age of "suggestion" and "explosives" that Occultism can open wide the doors of its laboratories except to those who *do* live the life.

NECESSARY QUALIFICATIONS FOR THE STUDY OF THEOSOPHY

There is a charge often laid against Theosophy that it is impractical, that its teachings are more of the nature of metaphysical abstractions than scientific facts which can be of practical use in this everyday world of ours. This is an accusation which Theosophists should face and prove either true or false. For, if Theosophy is impractical, the sooner we give up its study, the better for us. If Theosophy is not a demonstrable science which can be applied to our ordinary lives, which can teach us how to live and how to die, how to meet and deal intelligently with the numberless problems that daily confront us, of what use is it to Humanity? Any science or philosophy which has no practical application, which is incapable of making us good and useful and happy, is not worthy of our best efforts. But, on the other hand, a science or philosophy which does accomplish these results is bound to bring us upon a higher spiral of evolution, and consequently we cannot afford to ignore it.

Now Theosophy claims to be such a science, and those who have spent many years in its study give their testimony as to the practicality of its teachings in matters of everyday life. If we, therefore, have not had personal assurance and proof of its practical side, it may be well for us to examine our own attitude and see if the charge laid against Theosophy might not perhaps be traced to our own wrong ideas as to what Theosophy really is.

First of all, let us rid our minds of the thought that Theosophy is a new science, invented by some mind in our day and generation. Theosophy is an ancient and immemorial science, consistent in all its parts, and as exact and unchanging in its nature as the science of mathematics. Failure to realize this fact is the cause of the first difficulty experienced by people when they try to approach the study of Theosophy. Their next difficulty is in the method of approach to the study of this ancient and immemorial science.

If we take the scientific and the philosophical branches of knowledge we find that the approach to each is different. The same methods of investigation and research are not applied to the study of science as are applied to the study of philosophy or metaphysics. Scientific knowledge is gained by the help of the physical senses, aided by such instruments as the telescope, the microscope or test-tubes; on the other hand, philosophical knowledge is gained by the use of the intellect and mental faculties. The method of approach to both these branches of knowledge is taught in our schools and colleges, and can be understood even by the layman.

But when we approach the study of Theosophy, we come face to face with a new sort of science, that which is spoken of as the Science of the Soul. We find here a philosophy of a spiritual nature, the study

of the hidden side of the universe and of man. And at this point we become aware of the fact that the moment we come into the domain of invisible nature, we touch the borderland of mysticism, a realm to whose approach no rules are found in our educational systems.

And here, in this approach to superphysical or invisible matter, the scientists are in a somewhat analogous position to that of a savage in darkest Africa if he were to attempt the study of modern science. He would not know how to approach this study; his faculties and instruments for investigation would be untrained and consequently useless. Likewise, in the investigation of this subtler form of matter, the scientist finds his difficulty in training faculties or finding instruments which he can use for his experiments. For this new form of matter cannot be perceived by means of the instruments used in the investigation of other forms of matter. No telescope, however powerful, can perceive it; no microscope, however fine, can bring it to light. The physical senses as instruments of investigation have reached a wall which they cannot penetrate, and consequently new instruments have had to be evolved by the scientific investigator — human instruments, which are called mediums.

But, in this new kind of investigation, the scientist has been obliged to take up an unscientific position. If he were asked, for instance, to accept what another person saw through a telescope, he would be reluctant. Such second-hand testimony would not be acceptable; he would insist upon using the telescope himself and forming his own opinions and conclusions. Therefore, if the scientific man is to remain logical to the method consistently used by science, he must, in this new field of endeavour, also insist upon making his own investigations, and developing that faculty in himself which will enable him to do so.

Here Theosophy shows us that its claims to be called a science are most logical, for it tells us that in our approach to this science of the soul the scientific method may be followed; we can approach the science of the soul by means of our own soul, and with the aid of a faculty developed in ourselves by ourselves.

As the science of the soul is different from ordinary sciences, in that it deals with the soul, which may not be investigated by means of the senses or of the mind, therefore for the investigation of this science a new faculty is needed, a faculty which is higher than the senses and the reasoning mind.

But suppose this faculty is not developed in us; how then can we make the necessary investigations before such time as it is developed? What would we do if we were unable to investigate for ourselves the propositions of science or philosophy? First of all, we would study the conclusions reached by those people who have had the necessary qualifications for these investigations. And just as there are people who are considered competent to pass judgment upon matters scientific or philosophical, so are there persons competent to pass judgment upon matters

pertaining to the science of the soul; and it is to such persons that we should first turn for enlightenment. Next, realizing that the approach to the science of the soul is through the soul itself, we should turn to the development of the soul faculty in ourselves.

And here a word of caution. Let us beware of coming to the study of the science of the soul with our old predilections. Let us not come to this new subject trying to reconcile it with knowledge that we already possess. Our first rule should be to try to understand the science of the soul as it is put forward by the professors of that science, and not to pass judgment upon it before we have understood it.

In order to understand it, we must also come to the realization that, as it takes years of application to become a musician, a scientist or a philosopher, likewise, in order to become proficient in the science of the soul, a systematic course of quiet study, with its practical application, must be undertaken and adhered to.

The life of business, of art, of politics, of personal ambition in any of its phases, cannot help us to understand either ourselves or human nature. Our life cannot become co-ordinated until we acquire a science, a philosophy and a religion which will make of it a profound harmony.

Theosophy claims that it is this synthesis of religion, science and philosophy. But, when we approach its study, it makes upon us as students one powerful demand—that side by side with the study of its teachings shall go their practical application in our everyday lives.

It admits that to the Western world it is a new kind of science, to which even the approach is unknown. It admits the difficulties in the way of its comprehension and practice. But even with this admission it holds out this encouragement to us: Other students there have been down the ages who have understood and mastered this science; and what others have done, that also can we do. And so, if we approach the science without predilections or prejudices, determined to know for ourselves, then can we expect to see the fruit on the tree, nurtured and ripened by our own efforts and ready to be shared with the whole world.

You say that for three years you have been endeavouring to *study Theosophy*. Such being the case, you will meet with but little success. Divine Wisdom cannot be a subject for *study*, but it may be an object of *search*. With the love for this same wisdom uppermost in our hearts, we ask you if it would not be wiser to lay aside the study of so-called Theosophy, and study yourself. Knowing yourself you know all men, the worlds seen and occult, and find Theo-Sophia. One cannot absorb Theosophy as a sponge does water, to be expelled at the slightest touch.

—W. Q. JUDGE

A STUDY IN KARMA

[Based on *The Secret Doctrine*]

The exposition of a subject like "Karma — Law" in a short summary-article is a difficult task, as this is a very vast subject with wide and far-reaching ramifications in all directions. What will be attempted here, therefore, will be a presentation of only some of the most salient points of this doctrine, just the cream or concentrated essence, so to speak, of the great bulk of practical Theosophical knowledge that is available on this important subject in *The Secret Doctrine* of H. P. Blavatsky.

The ONE LIFE is closely related to *the one* law which governs the World of Being — KARMA. Exoterically, this is simply and literally "action," or rather an "effect-producing cause." Esoterically it is quite a different thing in its far-fetching moral effects. It is the unerring LAW OF RETRIBUTION. (I. 634)

So Karma — "the great Adjuster," as it is referred to in Occultism — is the law of cause and effect which ever tends to restore broken harmony in this world, whether on the physical, mental or moral planes of our being. It is a law which is unerring in its operations because it is impersonal, and it works ceaselessly and governs all beings — the whole of mankind, all below man, and all above man. In *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 30) we find a very beautiful reference to it:

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

Karma operates in our individual as well as in our collective national life, but whatever effects it brings upon us today are the direct resultant of causes set in motion by ourselves and ourselves alone. This is true even in reference to great and terrible natural calamities such as earthquakes, floods, etc., which, although they must have an immediate physical cause for their manifestation, are in the ultimate analysis all occasioned by and traceable to man's own doings. Therefore it is said that "there is a purpose in every important act of Nature, whose acts are all cyclic and periodical" (I. 640). This *purpose* is educative — to awaken us to a sense of our own responsibility and to the need of guiding our life and actions in conformity with the immutable and just Laws of Nature. Says Madame Blavatsky:

Verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life. . . . Karma-Nemesis is no more than the (spiritual) dynamical effect of causes produced and forces awakened into activity by our own actions. It is a law of occult

dynamics that "a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence."
(I. 643-44)

This has been put very aptly in the saying: "The hands that smite us are our own." Our destiny, individual as well as collective, is thus entirely of our own making. And yet, although we are reaping in the present the ill effects of our wrong and undesirable actions in the past, we can so act in the present as to modify to a great extent that past Karma already generated and to ensure a better harvest for ourselves in the future. Man is endowed with the power to think and choose for himself between the right and the wrong, and so it is strictly in accordance with his own actions that he goes on affecting and changing the Karmic currents of this world for better or for worse, from life to life.

Of course, we shall not question here the truth of the great Law of Reincarnation, which cannot be separated from its companion one of Karma, so closely interwoven and interdependent they are. "Intimately, or rather indissolubly, connected with Karma, then, is the law of re-birth, or of the re-incarnation of the same spiritual individuality in a long, almost interminable, series of personalities" (II. 306). We may only add here that

It is only the knowledge of the constant re-births of one and the same individuality throughout the life-cycle... that can explain to us the mysterious problem of Good and Evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and *apparent* injustice of life. (II. 303)

So we see that "there is one eternal Law in nature, one that always tends to adjust contraries and to produce final harmony" (II. 420). What we should do, then, is to understand that this Law reigns supreme on the inner planes of our being, emotional, mental and moral, just as surely as it does on the physical plane; and, recognizing this, we should try to live more and more in conformity with it, so that we always "help Nature and work on with her." For we are told that if only we acquired right knowledge and began "to work in union and harmony, instead of disunion and strife... two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air" (I. 643). Realizing that the purpose of life is to learn, we should ever endeavour to live up to our highest and noblest aspirations, always seeking guidance from, and faithfully following out the promptings of, our Higher Self, the Inner Ruler, the God within, and trying to suppress at every turn all that is bad and undesirable in us, knowing that "the suppression of one single bad *cause* will suppress not one, but a variety of bad effects" (I. 644). We must remember that the only way in which we can stop creating further bad Karma for ourselves is, to put it very briefly, by overcoming our selfishness and acting unselfishly, selflessly and altruistically for the good of all. This is clearly brought out by H.P.B. in a footnote on page 302 of the Second

Volume:

Karma is a word of many meanings, and has a special term for almost every one of its aspects. It means, as a synonym of sin, the performance of some action for the attainment of an object of *worldly*, hence *selfish*, desire, which cannot fail to be hurtful to somebody else. Karma is action, the Cause; and Karma again is "the law of ethical causation"; the *effect* of an act produced egotistically, when the great law of harmony depends on altruism.

Hence,

The closer the approach to one's *Prototype*, "in Heaven," the better for the mortal whose personality was chosen, by his own *personal deity* (the seventh principle), as its terrestrial abode. For, with every effort of will toward purification and unity with that "Self-god," one of the lower rays breaks and the spiritual entity of man is drawn higher and ever higher... until... the inner man is drawn into the one and highest beam of the Parent-SUN....

The closer the union between the mortal reflection MAN and his celestial PROTOTYPE, the less dangerous the external conditions and subsequent reincarnations. (I. 638-39)

Unfortunately, this noble doctrine of Karma has been grossly misunderstood by many, especially in our India, who identify it with Fatalism. But this Law

predestines nothing and no one... Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic law adjusts the effects... Karma has never sought to destroy intellectual and individual liberty, like the God invented by the Monotheists. It has not involved its decrees in darkness purposely to perplex man; nor shall it punish him who dares to scrutinize its mysteries. On the contrary, he who unveils through study and meditation its intricate paths, and throws light on those dark ways, in the windings of which so many men perish owing to their ignorance of the labyrinth of life, is working for the good of his fellow-men. (II. 305)

In connection with Karma, *The Secret Doctrine* mentions the Divine Beings called the Lipika who are said to be

the Recorders or Annalists who impress on the (to us) invisible tablets of the Astral Light, "the great picture gallery of eternity" — a faithful record of every act, and even thought, of man, of all that was, is, or ever will be, in the phenomenal Universe. (I. 104)

"The Lipika are concerned with Humanity's hereafter" (I. 126). They are "the spirits of the Universe" and

belong to the most occult portion of Cosmogogenesis, which cannot

be given here. Whether the Adepts (even the highest) know this angelic order in the completeness of its triple degrees, or only the lower one connected with the records of our world, is something which the writer is unprepared to say, and she would incline rather to the latter supposition. Of its highest grade one thing only is taught: the Lipika are connected with Karma — being its direct Recorders. (I. 128)

It is further said about these “Recorders of the Karmic ledger” that they “make an impassable barrier between the personal EGO and the impersonal SELF, the Noumenon and Parent-Source of the former” (I. 129) — a statement whose meaning it is difficult to comprehend.

In any case, Karma still remains the *impersonal* Law which it is, and it would be better for us to realize once and for all that we can never propitiate any Beings, however high, to change its divine decrees. Rather, we should keep in mind that “Karma is a mysterious law, and no respecter of persons” (II. 679).

In studying this subject, it is also necessary for us to understand clearly the ever existing correlation and interaction between individual and collective Karma. As man can never live or act in isolation from other men around him, he must share and reap whatever collective Karma to which he too has contributed, side by side with his own more intimate and predominant current of individual Karma. “No nation or nations can escape their Karmic fate any more than units and individuals do.” To be able to understand collective Karma, one has to examine “the esoteric bearing of the Karmic Cycles upon Universal Ethics” (I. 637). “But these cycles,” it is explained, “do not affect all mankind at one and the same time” (I. 641-42), for any individual has the power, if he so wills, to rise above the sway of the national tendencies of his times by following the wise injunction of Jesus — “Come out from among them, and be ye separate.”

It is not, therefore, Karma that rewards or punishes, but it is we, who reward or punish ourselves according to whether we work with, through and along with nature, abiding by the laws on which that Harmony depends, or — break them. (I. 643)

Hence it behooves us all, as conscientious human beings, at least to try always to be guided by our Higher Mind in everything that we do and to endeavour sincerely to co-operate more and more with Nature and Nature’s changeless Laws so that we may all hasten to some extent the advent of that Golden Age for Humanity to which Madame Blavatsky refers in *The Secret Doctrine* in a few encouraging words, exhorting us all

to sow the seeds for a forthcoming, grander, and far more glorious Race than any of those we know of at present. The Cycles of Matter will be succeeded by Cycles of Spirituality and a fully developed mind. On the law of parallel history and races, the

majority of the future mankind will be composed of glorious Adepts. (II. 446)

With regard to Racial Cycles, *The Secret Doctrine* says that

This system cannot be comprehended if the spiritual action of these periods — *pre-ordained*, so to say, by Karmic law — is separated from their physical course. The calculations of the best astrologers would fail, or at any rate remain imperfect, unless this dual action is thoroughly taken into consideration and dealt with upon these lines. And this mastery can be achieved only through INITIATION. (I. 642)

Yet in the prognostication of *such* future events, at any rate, all foretold on the authority of cyclic recurrences, there is no psychic phenomenon involved. It is neither *prevision*, nor *prophecy*; no more than is the signalling of a comet or star, several years before its appearance. It is simply knowledge and mathematically correct computations which enable the WISE MEN OF THE EAST to foretell, for instance, that England is on the eve of such or another catastrophe; France, nearing such a point of her cycle, and Europe in general threatened with, or rather, on the eve of, a cataclysm, which her own cycle of racial *Karma* has led her to. The reliability of the information depends, of course, on the acceptation or rejection of the claim for a tremendous period of historical observation. Eastern Initiates maintain that they have preserved records of the racial development and of events of universal import . . . for incalculable ages. (I. 646-47)

Thus a correct understanding of this doctrine of Karma will not only rid us once for all of the fear of fatalism, but will also enable us to perceive that nothing happens in Nature haphazardly, that there can be no accidents, no chance. H.P.B., after quoting what Coleridge has said about chance, "Chance is but the pseudonym of God (or Nature), for those particular cases which He does not choose to subscribe openly with His sign manual," goes on to show that the word God also is a pseudonym for Karma: "Replace the word 'God' by that of *Karma* and it will become an Eastern axiom." (I. 653)

No man is hurt but by himself.

—DIOGENES •

THEOSOPHICAL STOCK-TAKING

A proper evaluation of our circumstances, our assets and our liabilities, our possibilities and our limitations, our possessions and our responsibilities under Karma, is incumbent on us as serious students of Theosophy. It is an aspect of self-examination that should not be overlooked, but our attitude in undertaking it is important for others as well as for ourselves.

It is very easy to mistake assets for liabilities and *vice versa* in evaluating our circumstances other than material poverty or wealth, to equate prosperity and freedom from difficulties with success and happiness and to associate challenging situations and difficult surroundings with misfortune. And yet H.P.B. tells us that the Occultists "recognize in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever growing perfectibility," and she adds:

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death? (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 475)

Is it surprising, then, that the aspirant is warned on the first page of *Light on the Path* to "kill out desire of comfort"? How can divine love and charity for those who suffer and those who mourn and for the Great Orphan, Humanity, find room in our hearts as long as personal desires are strong and all our tears are only for ourselves?

When we sustain a material loss or have a painful accident, we are full of self-pity. Though we may counsel others to bear such Karmic precipitations with equanimity, only when a greater sorrow comes, like the loss of a loved one, do we realize how petty was the occasion for that former sadness. And if we recognize, as Theosophical students should be able to do, that the separation from the one we love is only apparent and is not felt as a sorrow by the departed one, who has his dear ones ever present in his thought in *Devachan*, then only can we realize that even our heartfelt grief was for ourselves, for our own loneliness and sense of loss, and is therefore selfish.

Sorrow and pain are often hard to bear, but for many of us it is easier to rise above these to a measure of peace and equanimity than to stand ease, comfort and prosperity without pluming ourselves on them or coming to depend on creature comforts in a measure unbecoming to ourselves as Souls.

A more serious effect of ease and plenty — one happily by no means universal — is to make a person indifferent to others' woes. The negative definition of a Theosophist is there to warn us:

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own — is no theosophist. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*, p. 12)

The Voice of the Silence enjoins positively:

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

How often is the tear of pain so much as noticed by the complacent and self-centred one?

We need to ponder also on this other verse from the same priceless little book:

Ere thou canst settle in Dhyana-Marga and call it thine, thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O Conqueror of Weal and Woe.

To how many does not the conquest of woe prove easier than the conquering of weal, with its insidious temptations to self-centredness? For such *The Voice of the Silence* has a challenge shattering complacency and shaking awake the conscience lulled to somnolence by comfort:

Compassion speaks and saith: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"

Those words were uttered to the Bodhisattva, who has fought the good fight and conquered and has the prize within his reach, but who renounces the Nirvana he has earned to stay with mankind and watch over and protect it, "unthanked and unperceived by men."

Even for ourselves there is a higher prosperity than that of material wealth which lays, moreover, on those who enjoy it, an obligation even more serious than that upon the man of means. Should we not, as "fortune's favoured soldiers," enjoying the inestimable privilege and inspiration of acquaintance with the teachings of genuine Theosophy, feel it our responsibility to share these and the help they give, to the extent of our ability and strength, with those who know them not? All around us people are groping in darkness, and the light is so near!

There was a thought-provoking article in our pages for March 1934, "Two Suicides and Theosophical Students," from which we quote the following pregnant passages:

...students themselves fail sometimes to remember the vital and urgent necessity of this work of changing the mind and the heart of the race. Who would not throw everything else aside to help in a matter of life and death on this physical plane? It is not so easy to see the dire straits of men and women on the plane of the human soul, on the plane of thought and feeling. It is only when the explosion point is reached with its visible cataclysm that we are forced to ask ourselves, "What state of mind could have brought about such a disaster?"....

...life has no meaning for the majority of mankind. Look at the men and women as they pass you in the street, in the train, in the bus. Look when their faces are without the false stimulus of so-called pleasure, when the mask they assume before the world has been unconsciously dropped. *Look* at them — from the point of view of the soul — and then, may divine Compassion enkindle you, O Seeker after Wisdom. What right have we to Theosophy if we do not spread out full hands to feed those other hungry souls with its inspiration and aid? What *can* we give? The divine metaphysics whose mightiness we dimly sense? Ay, but as the divine soul must be clothed in earthly garb to become potent on this plane, so must the metaphysics be clothed in language that can touch the common man. He needs "a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood," the knowledge of himself as the immortal Soul passing from life to life, verily sower and reaper, in one, of his own karmic destiny. He needs the scientific knowledge of his own dual nature, godlike and devilish, the knowledge of the after-death conditions, and he needs the inspiration of the living examples of those Great Ones who have reached the glorious state that is his goal also. How can this be given to the men and women around us? By the example of actions, by the activity of speech and pen, and still more by the power of thought, which can enter where speech and action may not.

We can scatter the thought-seeds of right ideas, of noble and courageous aspirations, seeds that will be received, albeit unconsciously, by those in whose minds the soil is in any way prepared. . . .

The earnest Irish Theosophist "Æ" (George William Russell) wrote in his inspiring pamphlet, *The Hero in Man*:

Once the soul has attained to any possession like love, or persistent will, or faith, or a power of thought, it comes into spiritual contact with others who are struggling for these very powers. The attainment of any of these means that the soul is able to absorb and radiate some of the diviner elements of being. The soul may or may not be aware of the position it is placed in or its new duties, but yet that Living Light, having found a way into the

being of any one person, does not rest there, but sends its rays and extends its influence on and on to illumine the darkness of another nature. So it comes that there are ties which bind us to people other than those whom we meet in our everyday life. I think they are most real ties, most important to understand, for if we let our lamp go out, some far away who had reached out in the dark and felt a steady will, a persistent hope, a compassionate love, may reach out once again in an hour of need, and finding no support may give way and fold the hands in despair. Often we allow gloom to overcome us and so hinder the bright rays in their passage; but would we do it so often if we thought that perhaps a sadness which besets us, we do not know why, was caused by someone drawing nigh to us for comfort, whom our lethargy might make feel still more his helplessness, while our courage, our faith, might cause "our light to shine in some other heart which as yet has no light of its own"?

In the same pamphlet he cited what he described as "that most noble of all meditations ordained by the Buddha":

He lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of Love far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure.

What Jasper Niemand wrote in comment on Mr. Judge's Letter VII in *Letters That Have Helped Me* bears directly on this question of the responsibility of each of us for the control of thought. In it she wrote:

The mind energizes and impels us to fresh action. The impulse lies within, in germ, and may be ripened by interior or exterior suggestion. Can we, then, be too careful to guard the ground of the mind, to keep close watch over our thoughts? These thoughts are dynamic. Each one as it leaves the mind has a *vis viva* of its own, proportionate to the intensity with which it was propelled. As the force or work done, of a moving body, is proportionate to the square of its velocity, so we may say that the force of thoughts is to be measured by the square or quadrupled power of their spirituality, so greatly do these finer forces increase by activity. The spiritual force, being impersonal, fluidic, not bound to any constricting centre, acts with unimaginable swiftness. A thought, on its departure from the mind, is said to associate itself with an elemental; it is attracted wherever there is a similar vibration, or, let us say, a suitable soil, just as the winged thistle-seed floats off and sows itself in this spot and not in that, in the soil of its natural selection. Thus the man of virtue, by admitting a material or sensual thought into his mind, even though he expel it, sends it forth to swell the evil impulses of the man of vice from whom he imagines himself separated by a wide gulf, and to whom he may

have just given a fresh impulse to sin. Many men are like sponges, porous and bibulous, ready to suck up every element of the order preferred by their nature. We all have more or less of this quality: we attract what we love, and we may derive a greater strength from the vitality of thoughts infused from without than from those self-reproduced within us at a time when our nervous vitality is exhausted. It is a solemn thought, this, of our responsibility for the impulse of another. We live in one another, and our widely different deeds have often a common source. The occultist cannot go far upon his way without realizing to what a great extent he is "his brother's keeper." Our affinities are ourselves, in whatever ground they may live and ripen.

Shall we not do well to take to heart the words addressed by Madame Blavatsky to the 1891 Convention of the American Theosophists, just over three weeks before her death?

In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.

All have doubtless made New Year's resolutions, and all, no doubt, have failed to keep them. There must be a reason for our failures, as well as for the fact that there comes a certain season in the year when we have the inclination to make resolutions. These reasons lie hidden in the depths of our own being. Unconsciously to ourselves, it may be, we have a natural perception of occult law in our observance of this particular period of the year. The ancients celebrated and understood what was called by them "the birth of the Sun," or the return of the Sun on its northern course, beginning the 21st of December. They knew that all the occult forces in nature have an upward and increasing tendency at the return of the Sun. When the Sun's rays become warmer and stronger, all the other forces behind the Sun itself, and behind ourselves, become stronger within us. In the rising wave of spiritual and psychic renewal, all that we desire to do has a greater impulsion than at some other time of the year.

The reason for our failures is that we do not understand our own natures. Consequently, we are not able to use the force and influence that lie within us, so far as we are physically concerned, and we have difficulty in endeavouring to carry out resolutions of any kind.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE ANCIENT WISDOM

Master, the First Item of *The Secret Doctrine* which we call "The Ancient Source" in our *Texts for Theosophical Meetings* puzzles me. It is more difficult to understand than even the First Fundamental Proposition.

Friend, why not try to find the key ideas in it? You will notice that H.P.B. always gives the actual statement of the teachings first; then she elaborates or explains it so as to make it easier for us to understand. To separate the central idea from the explanation or elaboration is the first step.

For example, let us note what she says in the First Item at the outset: "The Secret Doctrine is the accumulated Wisdom of the Ages." This she follows with the explanation that the gathering of this Knowledge "occupied countless generations of initiated seers and prophets." What did they do? She explains that they marshalled, set down and explained the facts gathered. How did they set them down? In geometrical signs and glyphs. Thus the stupendous volume of facts came to be recorded on a few pages.

Master, that is one of the things that worries me. Who were these "seers"? Did they just rely on the testimony of their sight and other senses and begin to analyse things scientifically as people do today in the laboratories? Why did it all occupy them for "countless generations"?

Friend, look at the phrase "accumulated Wisdom of the Ages" and then at the one used later on, "uninterrupted record." Ask yourself: "When did the record begin? What is the knowledge that was gathered? What is its purpose? What is a record?" Note that these teachings were originally in the possession of "higher and exalted beings, who watched over the childhood of Humanity." What they knew they taught by word of mouth, orally, and thus the teachings were passed from age to age and became "traditions." What are they? They deal with "the bewildering series of evolutionary progress." They deal with the "soul of things," not merely with the outer material body of the universe. They deal with the very core of knowledge pertaining to this universe and the beings in it.

But, Master, the traditions transmitted from one to another so often get altered, forgotten, lost. How, then, can we trust the traditions of old that have come down to us today?

Friend, remember that they form part of the uninterrupted record. What makes this record uninterrupted? The constant testing and verifying of the traditions by the individual experiences of those who were adepts in this task. Even today, does not Theosophy say that each

student must test and verify the statements before accepting them as facts?

But go further: Turn to the "Wise Men" of our Race, the Fifth. Who were they? What did they do? They were those who were "saved" from the downfall of Atlantis. Such a massive disturbance as the shifting of continents must alter minor details in the life of a universe. Hence these Wise Men spent their lives in learning the tradition, testing the knowledge in the new surroundings, and then they accepted only what was testified to by their independent visions.

But, Master, could not even a great Adept make a mistake? Even if many of them agreed, how are we to know that they had gathered and checked the knowledge in its entirety?

Friend, what do we mean by an Adept or a Seer? H.P.B. tells us in *The Theosophical Glossary* that they are "exalted beings who, having attained to the mastery over their lower principles are thus living unimpeded by the 'man of flesh,' and are in possession of knowledge and power commensurate with the stage they have reached in their spiritual evolution." And we learn from the First Item that they are men "who have developed and perfected their physical, mental, psychic and spiritual organizations to the utmost possible degree." Only after generations of such men had learnt, verified and recorded the Teachings did they begin to teach. Therefore, can we not agree that they knew at least much more than we do? True, we are taught not to "accept" any statement blindly, but we are also told to use such statements and prove them. As we verify them we add our testimony to this uninterrupted Secret Teaching.

Let us remember that the Teaching *in toto* includes the whole evolutionary process of our universe. What has been given out to us today is a mere portion of this knowledge.

Master, I thank you. Now will you please give me from your explanations one or two ideas for me to dwell upon?

Friend, meditate on the meaning of the expressions "the *accumulated* Wisdom of the Ages" and "uninterrupted record." Increase your knowledge of the "high and exalted beings" that are referred to, and think what is meant when it is said that they "watched over the childhood of Humanity." What are the qualifications of the Seers and Wise Men? What is our relationship here and now and in the distant future to these great Recorders and Teachers?

THE FOUNTAIN OF TRUTH

"The purpose of life is to learn — it is all made up of learning."

In the course of the brief space of time since Theosophy was re-established openly in the world by H. P. Blavastky, many battles have been fought. Essentially these battles have been for "self-responsibility and for "self-authority" under the guiding light of Truth and the Rules of practical Universal Ethics that derive from It.

The practical realization of the "general fellowship of mankind," called also "Universal Brotherhood," is the purpose for the manifestation of that focus of Truth which we call the Theosophical Movement. This Movement, in its wider sense, is as ancient as Theosophy (meaning, literally, Knowledge about God, universal and impersonal), or Truth itself. It represents the link between the pole of material evolution (physical nature) and the pole of "Spirit" (universal, transcendent Law).

Though the Theosophical Movement is age-old, we are naturally more aware of its history since it was launched into the public world by H.P.B., in 1875. Since then it has passed through many vicissitudes, as students of the history of the Movement know, and there have been and are today many groups and societies calling themselves Theosophical. Individuals are attracted to these foci—the organizations called "Theosophical" — those which strive, or merely claim, to teach and practise principles derived from the One Flame of Truth.

If the existence of so many different organizations seems confusing, consider that any problem in a science like mathematics can have only *one* solution that is true and universally correct (based on universal, self-evident, acceptable axioms and facts that are patent to all fair and free-thinking, unprejudiced inquirers and experimenters). There are innumerable false, or partially false, or partially true answers, but there can be only one true solution. Experimenters and investigators in the so-called "pure" and "applied" physical sciences all agree to this general statement. No textbook could ever be written or published for general use, nor could academic recognition be accorded round the world to graduates and proficients in any field unless this fact were tacitly accepted.

Applying this, then, to the present Theosophical Movement and to a centre for study and service like the United Lodge of Theosophists (which is a "name given to certain principles and ideas"), we might consider the following analogy:

Visualize Theosophy (a statement of Truth and Law in Universal Nature) as an enormous Flame, a fountain of pure Fire, for ever rushing onward and upward.

— Individuals who are responsive to the light and warmth of this Flame come close to It and ally themselves to one or another organization that springs up around It. Individuals, as mind-souls, are in their innermost natures sparks from and one with this One Universal Flame.

Outwardly, in body, feeling and personality, they appear separate — both from one another and from this great flaming Truth.

Organizations are composed of persons whose characters are made up of prejudices and blind acceptance of "authority," of enthusiasms and moods of dejection, of fanaticisms and liberalities, of aspirations and cunning, selfish motives, of dark desires and noble generousities, of miserliness and philanthropy, and so on almost infinitely, so that the confused record of modern investigation into the psychic and personal feeling-mind nature of humanity only attempts to sketch the almost illimitable confusion of that mysterious compound — the psychic soul of Man. All this bears close correspondence to the innumerable false, partly false and partly true views mentioned earlier.

Organizations thus come to have a character that mirrors the general character of those individuals who compose them, reflecting their psychic average. The one Flame of onrushing Truth, however, is for ever unaffected by the limited views and confused wanderings of individuals and of organizations.

Persons and organizations come and go, grow and strengthen or falter, hesitate, decay and die. Orthodoxy, prejudice and corruption lead to the inevitable end — death; the pages of history are full of examples. The myopic eye of the prejudiced mind forbids the consideration that "one might be wrong." Pride forbids the humble safety of mutual consultation. Degradation of the individual or of the organization results from the following of formalisms and rituals from which the inner spiritual spark of Truth has already been banished. Few see this. Fewer still know what to do about it. To rekindle fire from a burnt-out cinder is impossible. To develop the phoenix-like quality of regeneration and re-creation before complete decay has set in is difficult, but possible. The student of history can discern how this has been done again and again down the centuries. The same immortal life-giving Fountain of Truth is mirrored for a while in an individual here and an individual there; an organization of like-minded and sympathetic devotees arises. It remains coherent so long as the attracting power of sympathy is there. Sympathy is only one of the many aspects or powers of the psychic soul of Man; other faculties need equal attuning, otherwise only a partial alliance is formed, based on a limited understanding of Law and a restricted vision of the One Immutable Truth. This ultimately leads to distortion and to the degeneration of the organization and of the individual adherent, if he has not learned to develop the phoenix-like quality of self-regeneration through alliance, a direct self-made and self-sustained alliance, with the Spark of Truth *within himself*, independently of the views, opinions, suggestions, rules or regulations made by his companions and associates.

To continue the analogy: The great, pure flame of Truth for ever rushes on at the heart and source of all Nature. All beings, regardless of their degree of intelligence or evolution, carry a spark of It in their innermost, most secret centre — the *core* of their being. In the process

of the evolutionary development of intelligence, the being becomes aware of this spark within. The stage of Self-consciousness (Manhood) is reached.

Since the purpose of life is to learn (through self-effort), freedom of choice and of decision is concomitant with the realization that all Knowledge, all Wisdom, is attainable by and open to the Mind of Man — provided he makes his aspiration to this ideal a matter of continued, unrelaxed, strenuous effort, discipline and training. To hold the vision of the Ideal constantly before the eye of the mind and to work strenuously towards It; to do all actions and to perform all duties for Its sake, regardless of anticipated results or the precipitations of Karma in one's personal life, and to build this attitude into the character; to become the window through which the light of the Spark within may shine forth without; to achieve closer unity with the Flame of Truth in all things — all this may appear extremely repulsive to the false sense of "independence" (pride), but it is a fair statement of the attitude of the *true* disciple of Truth. And this attitude and work are to be persisted in for many lives, by learning and moulding one's own character, capacity and instruments.

As in all things, the process of training and of the formation of new habits is a slow one. Generally we are all impatient of results. Usually we desire quick and entire success in one short day, or one brief year, or within this life-span at the most. If we were endowed, somehow, with the gift of virtues and powers without working for them, we believe that we would enjoy a condition of continued pleasure and felicity, untroubled by worry or want. This is the greatest error that waylays aspirants and lures organizations away from the hard core of pure, burning Truth, one of the main principles of which is Fairness, *i.e.*, no one receives anything he does not work for or deserve.

Individuals attracted to the Central Flame of Truth band together through mutual sympathy and form brotherhoods and organizations, to achieve the aims and objects they adhere to and to realize the vision of Truth that they share and perceive individually and collectively. They approach the Central Flame, come within its influence, and are energized by it to the extent that the nature of their aspirations and ideals conforms to Its Nature. To the extent that It scorches and burns their natures that still retain prejudice, untruth, selfishness and the desire to achieve personal fame, position or attainments, they fall away from It in time; and, as drops of water in a fountain, or the cinders and sooty residue of a flame describe parabolas away and out from the centre, so these individuals and organizations, scorched and smarting in their personalities, describe parabolas of divergence away from the Central Flame of Truth. They descend again to earth and, permeating the place surrounding their descent with their natures and characters and the hurt of their scorching, create dogmas and rituals that no longer point directly to the Truth. Burnt and hurt in their personal and selfish natures by Its fiercely unprejudiced character, they develop the scar-tissue of

prejudice and ritual.

The student of history can thus see why certain persons have left the Fountain of Truth and formed cliques and factions and organizations, employing the language of idealism and promising results (for little effort), playing on the prejudices and desires of others (for their own ends), and eventually turning the organization into a money-making concern (to fill their own pockets). Thus a new sect or cult is formed and another path away from the Fountain of Truth comes into being.

Thus, in the Fire of Theosophy many persons have come and gone. It is interesting to see that among the individuals attracted to the original Theosophical Society founded by H.P.B. were those who later proved to be the most antagonistic to its purposes — so that the poles of construction and of destruction have always been in very close proximity. Individuals who contact the mighty Movement come into this concentrated field and place themselves consciously or unconsciously under the influence of these opposing influences.

Great Souls have so attuned their natures that they are completely consubstantial with that great Flame and live comfortably within It. They fear no hurt or suffering, as in their natures there is nothing left to be burnt or scorched by It. Students like ourselves need to strive constantly to make ourselves fit and pure enough to do likewise, in due time. We need patience and true resignation to the pain and the suffering that result from the working out of the errors made by ourselves in the past. The dross burns itself away and the pure gold of our real inner natures becomes all the more bright when it emerges from the fire of self-purification.

Without in any way lowering down the Christ system, or even the *ideal* Christ, we can say what is but too easy of proof, that, properly speaking, there is no "Esoteric Christianity," no more than there is Esoteric Hinduism, Buddhism or any other "ism." We know of one Esoteric doctrine — "the universal secret Wisdom-Religion" of old. The latter embraces every one of the great creeds of the antiquity, while none of these can boast of having it in its entirety. Our mission is to gather all these scattered rays, bring them back to one focus, and thus help those who will come after us to unveil some day the glorious sun of Truth. Only humanity must be prepared for it — lest it should be blinded by the unexpected splendour. The true Theosophist, he who works for the sake of truth — not for his own self and personal predilections — ought to respect every religious system — pander to none.

—THE THEOSOPHIST, March 1884

STUDIES IN "THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE"

II.—THE SLAYER OF THE REAL

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The asceticism which *The Voice of the Silence* advocates is that of the thinking principle — the withdrawal of the mind from its present position in which it is a slave. The mind is a victim of internal images composed of elemental-lives which form the desire-principle, and these awaken the senses to activity and make them the feeders of that principle. Man's objective world is but a reflection — a shadowy emanation — of this subjective plane of desire-images.

In the waking state of consciousness man does not live in the world of the mind but in that of the senses ensouled by desires within which the mind is captive. Man's so-called reasoning is not a pure activity engendered by the mind but is premised on sense-impressions which are permeated by desires. Even men of Science in using their minds proceed from sense-data to deductions, and, though in most of them personal desires in connection with the objects of observation are in abeyance, they yet suffer from their dependence on desire-shot senses. The eyes of a drunken man see things askew: the mind of one who in drawing his conclusions depends on the senses fraught with the desire-principle also sees askew. Sense-data to be true and sense-observations to be accurate must be devoid of the forces of the desire-principle. When Esoteric Philosophy calls the world of objects illusory it means that it is so not in the sense that the objects do not exist but in the sense that our valuation of them is false. The objective world may well be compared to a great bazaar in which desire-enslaved minds, not knowing the true prices of things, are taken in, have to bargain, to haggle and to wrangle for things needed and have to be tempted to want and to acquire other things. The mind thus exploited in the bazaar of the objective world gains experience and learns to evaluate each object at its proper worth, and then — and not before then — man begins to live in that world.

Our difficulty, then, as will be readily seen, does not inhere in the objects but in our ignorance of the true values of those objects, due to our desires in which the mind is imprisoned. Desires by themselves, unaided by the power of thought, would be innocuous; energized by it they make man the worst of the animal kingdom. Therefore our textbook calls this mind the Slayer of the Real and at the very outset gives the injunction to the Disciple to slay the Slayer. It also states the method — "become indifferent to objects of perception." This mind, captivated by desire, which courses in the nervous system of the body, is called the chief of the senses, and it is this mind-sense which makes man different from the animal — capable of becoming superior to it as also of developing into the most cunning and the most carnal of beasts.

Having become indifferent to objects of perception, the pupil must seek out the Rajah of the senses, the Thought-Producer, he who awakes illusion. The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer.

It is the activity of this mind in the objective world which has first to be handled by the aspirant-chela. Unless we see that these objects become channels, offer food to internal images and help to satisfy our cravings we shall not be able to evaluate them correctly. We value an object in terms of the satisfaction or the delight which it gives to our desire-fraught senses. This is the cause of illusion which is ignorance — not total absence of knowledge but the false evaluation of objects, mistaking lust for love.

If thou would'st cross the first Hall safely, let not thy mind mistake the fires of lust that burn therein for the sunlight of life.

The Thought-Producer makes love out of lust and when this is seen in actual life-experience a real step forward is taken by the practitioner. When this is seen the weakness of the world of objects compared to the strength of the world of images is recognized. It is this seeing, when not understood, which tempts the aspirant to run away from the world to the jungle.

When a seeker after the Light within sees the activity of the outer world of objects he naturally attempts to close the windows through which the objects attack him. In that retreat, psychological or physical, a short respite from that attack is all that he obtains. Very soon he locates the root of his trouble: the attraction or the aversion which the objects exert over him are not in the external objects but in the internal images — memory pictures of the past, not only of this life but also of previous incarnations.

Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights.
Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they should cast.

This is the formidable work compared to which retreating from the objects of the senses is easy. If in the first exercise the chela learns the illusory nature of the objective world, now he encounters the delusive nature of his own subjective world. Looking for the God within he comes upon the devil; seeking soul-light, he finds darkness — so thick that he does not realize that it is a shadow. "O dark, dark, dark, amid the blaze of noon." It is in that dark that we meet our fancy-created idols, our thought-created images, our desire-created phantoms. But that darkness has the peculiar power of deluding our consciousness. Very soon the sphere of darkness looks to us the region of pearly light — of soothing, restful, twilight sleep. The Maya of the objective world is but an effect caused by the Moha-delusion of this sphere of self-created subjectivity, lighted up by human passions. This is the world of Probationary Learning, which the Chela has to abandon,

and he cannot do so till he understands it. The real first pitched battle of the greatest of all wars is in this region, called the Astral Light. When the Power of his Vow, made in the objective world, stirs in him, the fighter in the Astral Light feels that he is in a place where he ought not to be; that he must not listen to the sounds of these images, but to the word of the Soul within.

Theoretically every student knows that Lower Manas is different from Higher Manas, that Kama-Manas is demoniac and Buddhi-Manas divine. But the truth has to be experienced and we know the nature of the Soul's mind when we overthrow some of the enemy troops, *i.e.*, when we destroy some of our thought-created images. The great temptation for the Probationary Chela issues forth from the enhanced sense-delight when the plasticity of astral light is handled and absorbed; it is like the exhilarated state of the person who has just taken strong drink. Often, instead of fighting right away the already created images, he falls prey to the temptation of creating new ones. In the objective world we have to control the wandering mind, but here we have to fight the creative mind. Thus comes a period of intense fight, and victory ensues when the soldier-soul has grasped this truth:

Ere thy Soul's mind can understand, the bud of personality
must be crushed out; the worm of sense destroyed past resurrection.

The grasping of this truth means that the Probationer has seen that he is other than the Personality, that the worm which early and late feeds upon the senses, once crushed, would lead to the death of the separative and ever-separating self which makes the Personality the supreme enemy. The glimpse of the Soul which uncovers the inimical nature of the Personality makes the fighting Probationer take refuge in that Inner Soul. And this implies some knowledge of the nature and the powers of that Soul.

Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master,
whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest.

Thyself and mind, like twins upon a line, the star which is
thy goal burns overhead.

The Master is the Higher Self, "the equivalent of *Avalokitesvara*, and the same as *Adi-Budha* . . . CHRISTOS with the ancient Gnostics." Unless this Master is felt as a Presence in Hall the second, that of Probationary Learning, entrance into the third, the Hall of Wisdom, remains closed. It is through the mind of the Soul that we touch the radiance of the God within, and it is through contact with the great Gurus that we touch the radiance of the God within Nature — Compassion Absolute.

When the mind-activity is silenced, the soul, aided by the Light of the Spirit, perceives itself as distinct and separate from the mind. Freed from Kama, it sees the possibility, nay, the certainty of a perfect unison with its Star — its Father in Heaven. In the translucent lake of the pure mind the star in high heaven reflects itself, and even that reflected

influence stirs the mind to behold the glory that is — the greater glory to be. It is not sufficient to silence the thoughts; it is necessary to perceive the Star of Hope — the Parent Star, the Dhyani-Buddhic Source of our existence.

The obliterating of the internal images is the same as crushing the craving for sensuous existence. The process demands that we centre our attention on the inner Light. But turning away from internal images is not to be accompanied by turning away from the objective world. To be in the midst of objects but not to be their slave makes the fight a long one; for, in the long past we have created a whole army of personal thought-images; by our moods we have given birth to a brood of vices; by our mental indulgence we have committed many sins. One by one we have to slay them.

Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind. . . . Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. . . . His sins will raise their voices like as the jackal's laugh and sob after the sun goes down; his thoughts become an army, and bear him off a captive slave.

This does not mean that the Probationer is expected to be flawless ere he starts, but he has to learn and attain purity ere he passes through the Golden Gate into the Hall of Wisdom, and has won the right to abide therein permanently. As a Probationer he has his day when he basks in the radiance of the Spiritual Sun, and then his night — the dark night of the Soul, during which his mind-sins laugh the jackal's laugh which is the cry of agony, terrifying to him, tempting him to his fall, nay, to his very doom. The jackals move in packs and therefore are able to hunt down sheep and even antelopes. When unable to obtain living prey they feed on carrion, and cunningly they follow cheetahs and even lions in order to finish the carcass after the latter have eaten their fill. The comparison of our lower thoughts to jackals is most apt, for they attack in packs our high thoughts and our noble aspirations, and when they cannot prey upon these living images they sniff out slumbering and dying ones and gorge on the latter — a phenomenon which is related to precipitation of Karma and the like. Also, like the jackal, our lower thought-images have an offensive odour, for they, too, like the jackal, secrete foulness from the base of their tails.

Now, we are told how we should deal with these our past creations:

One single thought about the past that thou hast left behind will drag thee down and thou wilt have to start the climb anew. Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences. Look not behind or thou art lost.

If we do not choke off the memory of the past, if we dwell in it, we re-live the past *subjectively* and rejuvenate the thought-images. But now we have increased our power of thought and so those images express themselves more strongly. All students of Theosophy know that a store-

house of past Karma exists, but all do not know that in the subjective realm ghosts and elementaries of dead objective actions often work havoc.

The last quotation of the first Fragment of our textbook that we should consider is this:

Before the path is entered, thou must destroy thy lunar body, cleanse thy mind-body, and make clean thy heart.

In a footnote H.P.B. explains that the astral form produced by Kama has to be destroyed. The Kama-rupa, ordinarily, is formed after the death of the body and ere the Ego goes into Devachan, freeing itself from that form. But in the life of the Probationer, as he enters the kingdom of the quickened, leaving behind that of the dead, there is the Kama-rupa phenomenon related to that of the Dweller on the Threshold. The quickened soul becomes consciously alive when, by chasing away from the field of the mind all Kama-fed thought-images, he begins to live by the power of the clean heart, *i.e.*, by the influence of Buddhi. For this dual process — dispersing the Kama-rupa and awakening Buddhi so that it can ensoul Manas, the objective world proves of great benefit.

The objective world of actions is not only valuable for enabling us to compare, to contrast and discriminatively to learn to concentrate, but it also proves a most helpful sphere when the strife of the subjective kind is on, of which mention is made above. The way the Probationer has to learn to make use of the objective world is through the right performance of duty. Duty is the axis round which his objective world rotates: mistakes made about Duty, neglect of or dilatoriness in that which should be done, undertaking that which is not our business, etc., all become sins of omission and of commission. If a Probationer is rightly busy with real duty he finds no time for "mischief" — unconsciously done. Furthermore when attacks come from the subjective side of his lower nature, a wise engagement of the senses and the brain in objective functioning weakens the attack. Occultism advocates that we do not strengthen the enemy by brooding about him, nor by directly fighting him. Take no particular notice of the enemy, but keep the consciousness busy with protective and profitable mental and physical work. No Probationer can meditate and study hours on end and therefore calls of mundane duty like the earning of livelihood, etc., are highly beneficial and very necessary. Not the invention of special work but the doing of what there is to do expands the field of duty till humanity becomes our family and the world our country. Duty is the Divinity that shapes our objective world to perfection: Duty is the God of the objective world — that is the Truth: OM TAT SAT.

EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

When difficulties overtake us we grumble, but in and through them there is self-revelment, and there cannot be Self-realization without that. We have to proceed, curbing the animal tendencies and then transmuting the human tendencies, so that the divine may show forth. Our capacity to take pains with our tasks and even chores becomes an encouraging adventure as our "pots and pans" shine because cooking and cleaning are attentively done.

Of course you are right — we cannot disregard difficulties and such a course often develops cynicism. A courageous facing of them is the only course. But what is that? Facing implies perception, attentive seeing, and we need courage, which again implies dispassion, *Vairagya*. Without dispassion we are apt to make mountains out of molehills or to go to the other extreme and generate cynicism. Then, in overcoming them we must learn the art of turning the forces of evil to good. And how very correct is your estimate regarding our good fortune to be in the company of the knowledge of Theosophy!

I am sure things will be all right for you in due course. The worst thing you can do is to feel a sense of hopelessness. You are passing through the interim stage before settling down in your new inner life which Theosophy has opened for you. But it is no use worrying and feeling despondent if you are not yet able to adjust your life in terms of your inner aspirations. What you need is a firm reliance on the Law and a doing of your duty as it comes along from day to day, cheerfully, and putting your whole heart into it. All your difficulties and inner conflicts are bound to resolve themselves if you will only do what you see before you and trust Karma for the rest. Above all you need to have calmness and patience, and that can be reached by taking the firm position that nothing can possibly overwhelm you, that you are brave and strong enough to endure anything that comes to you and that it is all a necessary part of your training. "If the candidate has faith, patience and confidence, verily he will not have to wait too long."

If life seems to you vague and somewhat like a dream it is because you have not yet found a proper footing. I am sorry to know that things are not moving forward to your satisfaction in your own life and that as a result you find yourself getting very irritable and feel frustrated. Difficulties need not deject you. We are all Arjunas and like that great warrior we have to rouse ourselves from our mood of despondency and fight our battles. Obstacles and difficulties are bound to arise, are in fact necessary to some extent, for without them we would stagnate. But if we persevere, always keeping in mind the true purpose of our life, and putting forth the necessary effort to fulfil that purpose, we shall surmount all obstacles. Have you ever tried to look into the true purpose

of life? Whence do we come and why have we come here? Men have asked these questions down the ages, and on their solution depend the moulding and shaping of each one's life.

You will find it a great help to you in the living of the life if you take up the study of Mr. Judge's and Mr. Crosbie's writings. Some of Mr. Judge's articles are reprinted in *Vernal Blooms* and *The Heart Doctrine*; but above all his *Letters That Have Helped Me* is full of practical guidance and instruction. Mr. Crosbie's *Friendly Philosopher* is also a very useful book. Daily reading of these books and reflection on what you have read will prove beneficial to you.

You have within you great potencies. Correspondentially, you will find numerous obstacles. With patience, tact and calmness, you will be able to conquer them all. Patiently search our scriptures; tactfully make use of the knowledge in helping others; retain your calmness as much as you can manage. Above all have love in your mind, which purifies that mind of all dirt, especially violence.

Do not fear anybody; have strength and courage; have a calm mind and an energetic heart. Our Karma is ours to learn from; Karma compels us to go to *Dharma* — we study it as Law, we apply it as Religion, we act it all out as Duty. Let us face difficulties and they will not seem such if we go to the lessons they can impart and so prove them to be beneficent opportunities. Grow in Goodness, Truth and Beauty like a flower. May you be sustained hour by hour!

Purge yourself of the pair of opposites of love and hate. Let your love be dispassionate and pure compassion. Do not allow yourself to be caught in the web of details. Make your inner Centre a citadel which is strong and the calmness of which is unattackable. A study of Judge's letters — the first volume — especially Nos. 7, 8, 9, 10 and 11, will help. There is nothing to be worried about, or even to be concerned about. When others see that in you personal feelings are transcended and only soul-affection and soul-aid remain, they will themselves be benefited. You must, you have to, "kill" in your mind and consciousness personal attachment, but that is only one aspect; that is negative and less than half the requirement. You have to unfold detached affection and impersonal attachment. I repeat — the best weapon is the sword of knowledge which is compassion.

Our philosophy has the *consolation of KNOWLEDGE* to offer — the greatest consolation. Once we understand the nature and cause of our troubles and woes, they cease to be troubles and woes and become experiences from and through which we learn and grow strong. . . .

Living the life implies quiet study and then reflection; also work for others — *Dana, Tapas, Yagna*; Krishna's special acts of *Dharma*, Karma

or no Karma. So it seems to me your very first task is not to allow yourself to be disturbed within yourself, whatever others say and do. Do not answer, and then you will not retaliate. Listen — it entails only a loss of time — and then go on the Right Way which is self-chosen. Inner living is your most pressing need. Without that you will be caught in the maze of irritation, depression and defeatism; you will be lost. So it is imperative that you deepen your present effort at living the Life. Go to the Inner Ruler more and more; even a few minutes of repeated inner retirements will prove a source of strength.

When your Inner Centre becomes strong and streams forth Light and Peace more and more, those who criticize you are bound to weaken by observation of your example. Our bow and arrows are gifts from the Blessed Lords of Light and Peace whose grand Philosophy is our nourishment for mind and heart. "Great man is he who is strongest in the exercise of patience," one of Them has said. What we need is this third *Paramita* sprouting from *Vairagya*. Of course you have to be true to your own self, and your solemn duty to the Higher Self which is you must be performed according to "Masters' Programme" as H.P.B. told Judge.

Let us do our duty, guard our plane of speech, and let the Law work. Of course it is trying not to retaliate and it is hard to "resist not evil," but it is our *Dharma*, our Way, and we have to walk that Way. To be true to our own Inner Self is the highest *Dharma*; if we observe that we will learn how to walk the way of non-resistance and of active compassion.

Saddening, is it not, that ——— should keep themselves at this boiling temperature! It is injurious to their health. You will not help them and may harm yourself by becoming moody and irritable. Take it as a test for yourself. You might see in their moody and tarnished consciousnesses your own lower self, but you should not come down to their level. Let us understand what happens; look at it from the point of view of elementals. Theirs pounce upon you and then go back with your strength to them. These elementals enjoy the vibrations of irritability; it is food for them. If continuity of such exchange persists a common "dweller" will spring into existence. The demolishing of that "dweller" is ten times harder than stopping the present situation. But let us follow the "dweller" to its end. Strengthened, it will become the home for an "elementary," and the "dweller" will become, so to speak, self-conscious. Next, one of the parties will become obsessed by that "elementary." Now I don't think that all this will happen. But *you* must learn from the situation. You take the higher viewpoint.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

President Radhakrishnan, addressing the Kannada Sahitya Parishath in Bangalore on October 9th, declared the essential function of literature to be the humanizing of man (*Deccan Herald*, October 10th). Mere knowledge would not take us very far. We may know the truth, but often we are unable to put it into practice. In spite of knowing what is right and what is wrong, we cannot always do the right and avoid the wrong. It is a common human failing, this gap between knowledge and its practice. As Dr. Radhakrishnan pointed out, it is the function of literature to transform knowledge into a love of the right and to render men psychologically dead to what is wrong.

Sahitya (literature), the President went on to say, meant, literally, the bringing together of individuals, the achievement of fellowship between different people. But all writers could not become *Sahitis* (*littérateurs*). Creative literature was possible only when the writer had undergone an intense spiritual experience. Writers should not be satisfied with producing literature of an impressionistic character, or literature that was merely intellectual in nature. They should strive for the elevation of the human mind. Dr. Radhakrishnan hoped that these ideals would be kept in view by young writers and that they would aid in the cross-fertilization of ideas.

On the role of literature and the moral responsibility of the writer much can be said. Creative and intuitive writers, "in whom Higher *Manas* now and then sheds a bright ray on the man below," as Mr. Judge has said, "appear to be one form of the many and diverse instrumentalities chosen to lift the souls of the race on to higher levels of thought, fitting them for the reception of more truth." Literature should awaken and keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions; it should enable the mind of the reader to transcend the personality and personal concerns and to awaken to the reality of something higher and deeper. At this hour the world needs the unifying influence of great literature, literature that makes the mind rise above the barriers of all divisive forces.

Dr. John Tuzo Wilson, professor of geophysics and director of the Institute of Earth Sciences at the University of Toronto, in his article, "Are the Continents Drifting?" (*The Unesco Courier*, October 1963), reveals how little is known by modern scientists about our earth. It is, however, a hopeful sign that some of the old orthodox ideas are being given up and a new way of thinking is gaining popularity. The early concept of a rigid earth, with permanent continents and ocean basins, in which mountains were built as a consequence of cooling and contraction, while still considered valid by some, has increasingly been replaced by three new hypotheses, each of which Dr. Wilson considers to be incomplete by itself.

The first of these new theories is that continents have moved to their present positions under the impulsion of convection currents welling up

from deep in the earth's white-hot mantle, like the currents which rise and sink in a pan heated on a stove. This mantle, it is held, stretches from the earth's crust to the outer core of white-hot liquid iron; it is believed to be solid but slightly plastic and formed of different and denser rocks than the crust. It is thought that within the liquid outer core there may be a solid central inner core. According to this theory, mountains might be formed by the movement of such convection currents.

Another theory advanced as an alternative to the contraction hypothesis is that of continental drift. Some geologists are of the opinion that continents form dry land because they are lighter and float higher than the ocean floors; that a sudden warming of the climate about 10,000 years ago melted enormous loads of ice which had been depressing the land in Canada and Scandinavia, enabling it to rise or float very slowly upwards; that, moreover, the addition of so much melt-water raised the sea level in places which had not been glaciated, and must have flooded many former land masses. It seems probable, says Dr. Wilson, that memories and traditions of this great flood have been handed down to us, and that this inundation is a possible source of the story of Atlantis.

It has been suggested that if land can move up and down, it might also be able to move slowly sideways. Some scientists support the idea that the Atlantic Ocean is the result of the separation of Europe from North America and of Africa from South America. Once one accepts that the continents can move, it follows that there are infinite ways in which they might have done so. Geologists in India, Africa and Australia, especially, who support this idea, have noticed many striking similarities between the fossils and strata of their continents. The amazing number of affinities of fossils, rocks and structures on opposite sides of the Atlantic are also considered significant.

Yet another hypothesis is that the continents have been growing. It was first advanced by geologists who noticed that mountain ranges are often peripheral to continents.

There is as yet no general agreement among the supporters of these different theories, but Dr. Wilson suggests that some of the discoveries of the last few years go to show that it may be possible to integrate all of them.

Having seen briefly what modern science has to say about the changing geography of the earth, we give the following few quotations which present the viewpoint of ancient science, which modern Theosophy reiterates:

It is absolutely *false*, and but an additional demonstration of the great conceit of our age, to assert (as men of science do) that all the great geological changes and terrible convulsions have been produced *by ordinary and known physical forces*. For these forces were but the tools and final means for the accomplishment of certain purposes, acting periodically, and apparently mechanically, through an inward impulse mixed up with, but beyond their

material nature. There is a purpose in every important act of Nature, whose acts are all cyclic and periodical. But spiritual Forces having been usually confused with the purely physical, the former are denied by, and therefore, have to remain unknown to Science, because left unexamined. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 640)

As we are assured by Archaic Scientists that all such geological cataclysms — from the upheaval of oceans, deluges, and shifting of continents, down to the present year's cyclones, hurricanes, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, tidal waves, and even the extraordinary weather and seeming shifting of seasons which perplexes all European and American meteorologists — are due to, and depend on the moon and planets; aye, that even modest and neglected constellations have the greatest influence on the meteorological and cosmical changes, over, and within our earth, let us give one moment's attention to our sidereal despots and rulers of our globe and men. Modern Science denies any such influences; archaic Science affirms it. (*S.D.*, II. 699)

In regard to great cataclysms occurring at the beginning and ending of the great cycles, the main laws governing the effects are those of Karma and Re-embodiment, or Reincarnation, proceeding under cyclic rule. Not only is man ruled by these laws, but every atom of matter as well, and the mass of matter is constantly undergoing a change at the same time with man. It must therefore exhibit alterations corresponding to those through which the thinker is going. On the physical plane effects are brought out through the electrical and other fluids acting with the gases on the solids of the globe. At the change of a great cycle they reach what may be termed the exploding point and cause violent convulsions of the following classes: (a) Earthquakes, (b) Floods, (c) Fire, (d) Ice. (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 131, Indian ed.)

Why not admit... that our *present* continents have — like "Lemuria" and "Atlantis" — been *several times already*, submerged and had the time to reappear again, and bear their new groups of mankind and civilization; and that, at the first great geological upheaval, at the next cataclysm — in the series of periodical cataclysms that occur from the beginning to the end of every Round — our already *autopsized* continents will go down, and the Lemurias and Atlantises come up again. (A MASTER OF WISDOM)

The findings of a Seminar on "The Techniques of Resolving Conflicts," organized by the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, Bengal Branch, at Barrackpore, are published in *Bhoodan* for October 5th and 12th. Welcoming the participants to the Seminar, Shri R. R. Diwakar, the Chairman of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi, said that of all the different types of conflicts those which arose in the minds of men were most important. They arose

because men were selfish, and could be eased with a greater upliftment of the human mind. The answer to egoism, he said, was altruism.

Dr. J. N. Mahanty, who introduced the theme of the Seminar, divided conflicts into three groups: conflicts of man with nature, with fellow human beings and with himself.

There were three different ways prescribed by the ancients to meet these conflicts: *Yajna*, *Dana*, and *Tapas*. In order to resolve the conflicts between man and nature, man must perform *yajna*; for resolving conflicts with other human beings, there must be *dana* and one must perform *tapas* for resolving conflicts within oneself. Human personality was a complex of various factors and forces. It was composed of a body, mind and a superconscious self. Often the demand of one clashed with another: often reason came in conflict with impulses or faith or belief.

The conflicts of man with man were in essence a problem of selfishness *versus* love or self-sacrifice. The solution lay in extending self-sacrifice and narrowing selfishness. Yet certain philosophies taught that man was essentially selfish and aggressive. According to them the tension could be eliminated by carrying the conflicts to the extreme. Finally, out of these conflicts there would emerge an era in which there would be no conflicts. These philosophies were based on incorrect premises. Man was not essentially selfish. There was an element of love and co-operation in each individual. Man was capable of self-sacrifice. Our task, therefore, consisted in extending the technique of self-sacrifice beyond the frontiers of small units like family and community.

The theme of the Seminar was divided into three broad sections: political conflicts, economic conflicts and cultural conflicts. The discussions and speeches brought out that orthodox, conventional methods could not really resolve these conflicts. The technique of non-violence had come to be accepted as an effective technique since Gandhiji used it for solving some of the pressing problems and conflicts which confronted our country. This technique, based on love, is, in fact, age-old. All the Great Ones who have come down among us from time to time have urged mankind to adopt non-violence and to discard violence.

In line with the above is Dr. E. James Lieberman's article, "Non-Violence as an Aggressive Force," printed in *Peace News* for October 4th. His basic premises are that aggression (whose original components mean "to approach" or "go toward") is not exclusively destructive, and that non-violence, like any effort to initiate or resist social change, requires aggression. Modern organized non-violence, he states,

holds that the informed controlled resolve of ordinary citizens is the ultimate arbiter of social conflict, not superior force of arms.

Organized non-violence has recently emerged as a formidable psychological and political force in certain societies for particular goals: with Gandhi in India for independence, with Lutuli in South Africa for an end to apartheid, with King in the United States for integration and civil rights, and with Dolci in Italy for full employment and better living conditions. In each of these cases substantial numbers of ordinary people have joined together under an outstanding leader for a disciplined, non-violent aggressive struggle toward a common goal. . . .

Non-violence is predicated on a particular psychological outlook. Very basic is the assumption that every human being has at least a potential spark of compassion that can be kindled by another person. The surest way to prevent violence is to win the respect and confidence of the one who is about to strike — to make him lose or control his own destructive anger. One writer has described this process as moral ju-jitsu; an attempt to mobilize the values of one's opponent on behalf of his own self-control. In other words, we can say that the non-violent person relies upon the internal controls of his opponent (as he does of himself) and attempts to enhance these within the conflict process. . . .

Here we enter upon the difficult task of evaluating non-violent action from within. Gandhi himself was well aware of the false, hypocritical non-violence resulting either from fear and weakness or from repressed, unrecognized hostility. Neurotic inhibition does not qualify as non-violence. Gandhi maintained that only one who is capable of striking can be non-violent, and that it is better to be violent if the only alternative is cowardice. "It is not that I am incapable of anger . . . but I succeed on almost all occasions to keep my feelings under control. . . . Non-violence is a weapon of the strong. With the weak it might easily be hypocrisy. Fear and love are contrary terms. . . ."

We are aware that most participants in the outstanding non-violent movements have not been pacifists. The converse of this fact warrants attention, *i.e.*, that not all pacifists are non-violent: unconscious impulses to violence can operate behind a pacifist façade. . . .

The peace movement will seek its equivalent to Gandhi's Salt March, or the sit-ins and freedom rides — some focus for the widespread longing for peace upon which a solid minority can begin persuasively to act. As long as destructive weapons are accepted as the measure of potency in society, most people will feel helpless, cynical, or apathetic, abdicating social responsibility in favour of passivity or escape. Non-violent aggression seems to mobilize another source of real power, psychological and political, for the pursuit of important social goals in which the struggle has a value of its own. Besides its utility as a technique, non-violence provides a means for self-actualization in a period of history when the very

meaning of life is threatened with extinction.

What is race from the viewpoint of science? Are some races inherently superior? Are others doomed by nature to continuing inferiority? These are the questions answered by Andrew Hamilton in his article, "The Negro: How He's Different," in the October *Science Digest*.

Science recognizes three great families of man — the Caucasoids, the Mongoloids and the Negroids. Anthropologists have compared many features and decided that it is impossible to grade races in terms of the "highest" and the "lowest."

It might seem peculiar reasoning to many, but it has been claimed that the Negro's facial features and his dark skin indicate that he is closely related to the anthropoid apes, and that he is therefore racially inferior. This theory is easily dismissible, for even if physical characteristics alone are taken into consideration, there is little resemblance between the two.

It is also sometimes claimed that Caucasoids have larger brains and with more convolutions than those of the Negroids. But students of the brain have found no racial distinctions in the brain's size and convolutions. A famous physical anthropologist, Le Gros Clark, has declared that "there is no microscopic or macroscopic difference by which it is possible for the anatomist to distinguish the brain in a single individual or different races."

There are those, however, to whom such scientific determinations are beside the point. It is self-evident, they say, that primitive peoples are members of "inferior" races. But, according to Dr. Clement Meighan, the well-known anthropologist of the University of California, Los Angeles, whom Mr. Hamilton quotes in his article, "the cultural anthropologist has found much to indicate that achievement is more likely to depend upon opportunity than upon race."

Another approach to the question is to examine what each race has contributed to the development of the world's civilization. Those who consider today's predominantly Caucasoid Western civilization to be mightier than any the world has ever known, overlook that the past few hundred years during which this civilization has risen and flourished are, as Dr. Meighan says, "but a moment in the world's history." Many former civilizations were non-Caucasoid or only part-Caucasoid. The ancient Egyptian civilization had strong strains of Negroid blood. The Maya and the Aztec civilizations were Mongoloid.

Dr. Meighan considers it to be "a grave scientific mistake to underestimate the vitality and potential of other races. . . . It is impractical as well as morally unjust to keep any race in the status of second-class citizens," on the basis of outmoded prejudices.

An important warning to medical men, whose duty it often becomes to certify the death of their patients, is sounded by Alain Hervé in the French magazine *Réalités* for May 1963. In an article entitled "*Vers une Nouvelle Conception de la Mort*" ("Towards a New Conception of Death"), he maintains that even the best of physicians cannot be certain as to when a person is really dead. It is now being accepted by many that "there exists an unknown borderland between apparent death and real death." A person may *appear* to be dead, but it cannot therefore be safely concluded that he is *really* dead; for there have been many instances, through the ages, of seemingly dead persons returning to life.

Till lately, the stoppage of the beating of the heart had been taken as a sign of death; but, as Alain Harvé points out, in recent medical history there have been many instances where the "dead" have been resuscitated by massaging the heart. In all such cases death is only apparent and not real. When real death has taken place, resuscitation is impossible.

What medical men are now finding out, H. P. Blavatsky drew attention to in her *Isis Unveiled* (I. 475-85) as far back as 1877. She wrote there:

... in the case of what physiologists would call "real death," but which is not actually so, the astral body has withdrawn; perhaps local decomposition has set in. How shall the man be brought to life again? The answer is, the interior body must be forced back into the exterior one, and vitality reawakened in the latter. The clock has run down, it must be wound. If death is absolute; if the organs have not only ceased to act, but have lost the susceptibility of renewed action, then the whole universe would have to be thrown into chaos to resuscitate the corpse — a miracle would be demanded. But, as we said before, the man is not dead when he is cold, stiff, pulseless, breathless, and even showing signs of decomposition; he is not dead when buried, nor afterward, until a certain point is reached. That point is, *when the vital organs have become so decomposed, that if reanimated, they could not perform their customary functions*; when the mainspring and cogs of the machine, so to speak, are so eaten away by rust, that they would snap upon the turning of the key. Until that point is reached, the astral body may be caused, without miracle, to re-enter its former tabernacle, either by an effort of its own will, or under the resistless impulse of the will of one who knows the potencies of nature and how to direct them. The spark is not extinguished, but only latent — latent as the fire in the flint, or the heat in the cold iron. (I. 483-84)
