

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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## THOUGHTS ON THE NEW YEAR

[Before our next issue is out, the new calendar year will have been ushered in. It is evident that H.P.B. regarded the Christmas-New-Year festival as of some importance from the point of view of the inner life, and she wrote on several occasions on this theme. The following article was published by her in *Lucifer*, Vol. I, pp. 337-38, for January 1888, under the title “1888.” It was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for December 1947. Some of her other articles on Christmas and the New Year are reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet Nos. 23 and 28.*—EDS.]

People usually wish that their friends shall have a happy New Year, and sometimes “prosperous” is added to “happy.” It is not likely that much happiness or prosperity can come to those who are living for the truth under such a dark number as 1888; but still the year is heralded by the glorious star Venus-Lucifer, shining so resplendently that it has been mistaken for that still rarer visitor, the star of Bethlehem. This, too, is at hand; and surely something of the Christos spirit must be born upon earth under such conditions. Even if happiness and prosperity are absent, it is possible to find something greater than either in this coming year. Venus-Lucifer is the sponsor of our magazine, and as we chose to come to light under its auspices, so do we desire to touch on its nobility. This is possible for us all personally, and instead of wishing our readers a happy or prosperous New Year, we feel more in the vein to pray them to make it one worthy of its brilliant herald. This can be effected by those who are courageous and resolute. Thoreau pointed out that there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those with whom they come in contact. We claim that there are adepts, masters in life who make it divine, as in all other arts. Is it not the greatest art of all, this which affects the very atmosphere in

which we live? That it is the most important is seen at once, when we remember that every person who draws the breath of life affects the mental and moral atmosphere of the world, and helps to colour the day for those about him. Those who do not help to elevate the thoughts and lives of others must of necessity either paralyse them by indifference, or actively drag them down. When this point is reached, then the art of life is converted into the science of death; we see the black magician at work. And no one can be quite inactive. Although many bad books and pictures are produced, still not everyone who is incapable of writing or painting well insists on doing so badly. Imagine the result if they were to! Yet so it is in life. Everyone lives, and thinks, and speaks. If all our readers who have any sympathy with *Lucifer* endeavoured to learn the art of making life not only beautiful but divine, and vowed no longer to be hampered by disbelief in the possibility of this miracle, but to commence the Herculean task at once, then 1888, however unlucky a year, would have been fitly ushered in by the gleaming star. Neither happiness nor prosperity are always the best of bedfellows for such undeveloped mortals as most of us are; they seldom bring with them peace, which is the only permanent joy. The idea of peace is usually connected with the close of life and a religious state of mind. That kind of peace will, however, generally be found to contain the element of expectation. The pleasures of this world have been surrendered, and the soul waits contentedly in expectation of the pleasures of the next. The peace of the philosophic mind is very different from this and can be attained to early in life when pleasure has scarcely been tasted, as well as when it has been fully drunk of. The American Transcendentalists discovered that life could be made a sublime thing without any assistance from circumstances or outside sources of pleasure and prosperity. Of course this had been discovered many times before, and Emerson only took up again the cry raised by Epictetus. But every man has to discover this fact freshly for himself, and when once he has realized it he knows that he would be a wretch if he did not endeavour to make the possibility a reality in his own life. The stoic became sublime because he recognized his own absolute responsibility and did not try to evade it; the Transcendentalist was even more, because he had faith in the unknown and untried possibilities which lay within himself. The occultist fully recognizes the responsibility and claims his title by having both tried and acquired knowledge of his own possibilities. The Theosophist who is at all in earnest sees his responsibility and endeavours to find knowledge, living, in the mean time, up to the highest standard of which he is aware. To

all such *Lucifer* gives greeting! Man's life is in his own hands, his fate is ordered by himself. Why then should not 1888 be a year of greater spiritual development than any we have lived through? It depends on ourselves to make it so. This is an actual fact, not a religious sentiment. In a garden of sunflowers every flower turns towards the light. Why not so with us?

And let no one imagine that it is a mere fancy, the attaching of importance to the birth of the year. The earth passes through its definite phases and man with it; and as a day can be coloured so can a year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Those who form their wishes now will have added strength to fulfil them consistently.

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The Masters have said that the great step is to learn how to get out of the rut each one has by nature and by training, and to fill up the old grooves. This has been misconstrued by some who have applied it to mere outer habits of life, and forgotten that its real application is to the mental grooves and the astral ones also. Each mind has a groove, and is not naturally willing to run in the natural groove of another mind. Hence comes often friction and wrangle. Illustrate it by the flanged wheel of the steam-engine running on a track. It cannot run off nor on a track of broader or narrower gauge, and so is confined to one. Take off the flange and make the face of the wheel broader, and then it can run on any road that is at all possible. General human nature is like the engine, it is flanged and run for a certain size of track, but the occultist or the would-be one should take off the flange and have a broad-faced wheel that will accommodate itself to the other mind and nature. Thus in one life even we might have the benefit of many, for the lives of other men are lived beside us unnoticed and unused because we are too broad and flanged in wheel, or too narrow and flanged also. This is not easy, it is true, to change, but there is no better opportunity than is hourly presented to you in the whole world, to make the alteration. I would gladly have such a chance, which Karma has denied me, and I see the loss I incur each day by not having it there or here. You have it, and from there should go out to all the earth soon or late, men and women who are broad and free and strong for the work of helping the world.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## THE POWER OF RESOLVES

Wishes, resolves, vows are closely connected with this cyclic season. Why is that so? Why should we make New Year resolutions? Is there any truly scientific or ethical reason for making resolves at this time of the year, a reason which satisfies our mind and soul?

This is the season when, as the sun moves northwards, the seeds underneath the earth begin to germinate and all Nature becomes active once again, silently and secretly. All the Saviours and Teachers of humanity pour their influence in certain directions and upon certain centres at this seasonal cycle when the occult forces in Nature have an upward and increasing tendency; and so it is with man, in whom is reflected what happens in Nature. This is a season of awakening; hearts and minds and souls are more open to spiritual influences at this time.

And so this festive season serves to remind us of something that is stirring within — within the heart of human nature as well as the heart of Mother Nature. Hearts and minds that are open may profit by the resurgence of life and energy, and receive added strength to keep a resolution after it is made.

A resolve implies a decision, a choice. To judge our ability to hold to a decision, let us always pause and think, and act coolly and deliberately. In business life, for instance, we have continually to make decisions. If they are wrong ones, we shall have to admit that our knowledge of business conditions was inadequate. If they prove to be the right decisions, then we generally find success attending our efforts. Similarly, in social life, in household and family life, as also in our inner life, we are continually called upon to act and to make decisions regarding our future actions; and in each instance if our decisions are based on knowledge, and if we hold to them, we shall have varying degrees of success.

If we would examine the kinds of decisions with which we are often confronted and the type of thinking and feeling that influences those decisions, we might gather more readily why it is that even though we continually make decisions and choices, we do not make any headway. It is the very law of life that we should be faced with decisions every moment of our lives. Why is this? Because act we must (and action includes thinking and feeling), and as we are free-willed beings we can act in a hundred different ways. We can see many different courses of action that we might take, and there arises the necessity of selecting and determining how we shall act in a particular circumstance. On

looking back at some of our decisions, we may wish we had not made them; there are also decisions we wish we could adhere to, but something prevents us. Why? It needs to be understood that conjoined with decisions and resolves is *search*. We as souls are at different stages of evolution and we know that some are searching, not for the real values of life, but for useless pursuits and paths. That sort of search will not bring us to the position where we can make wise decisions and resolves and adhere to them. But there are those who have begun to see that they are responsible beings, that they are souls, and that they must not only make a decision but must *act* in accordance with it.

At this season of the year, many of us find stirring within our hearts and minds noble desires, feelings, thoughts, and there is the strengthening of the wish to determine upon a more definite course of action. Does that mean that we are going to change in all our outside occupations? The change has to do with ourselves, our thoughts and feelings. To make a resolution and to hold it requires knowledge. For one thing, when we make a resolution and stick to it, we have to break others. We have to destroy old habits of thought and feeling, weaknesses, inefficiency, ineffectual and flaccid wills. That is the real difficulty in the way of making resolves and holding to them. The carrying through of a line of action is not as difficult as the breaking of old habits of thought, will, feeling based upon our previous knowledge, preconceptions, traditions.

The ability to stick to a resolution is rooted in the eternal and immortal aspect of our nature in which inheres the memory of our latent divinity, of the high estate from which we have descended, of great heroic and noble deeds performed by us in other bodies. Through those still halls of soul memory we search again for the Path that leads to Wisdom. What we do not always realize is that at this time of the year we are being influenced, stirred, awakened by the great Intelligences, the presiding deities of the season.

Theosophy teaches that the great Souls, Saviours, Teachers, who have achieved what they have by the power of a vow have impregnated the invisible atmosphere of the Universe with their ideas, thoughts and feelings, and because we are universal beings on the plane of spirit, they are *our* ideas, *our* thoughts, *our* feelings. And so when we read the ideas and words of Great Teachers as contained in the sacred Scriptures of the world, we read literature which is of the Soul and therefore speaks to our Souls. These ideas are deeply rooted in enlightened hearts, in compassionate heads, and may be translated into spiritual will, which is so little used and understood because we have pandered so long to

ignorance, to the lower nature and to sense life — because, in short, we have lost our way.

Each one has different ways of fulfilling his decisions and resolves, but if we would after making a resolve begin to control ourselves, to think of the highest thoughts that we have ever had, to recall the most sublime and spiritual feelings we have experienced and the noble deeds we have performed selflessly, forgetful of whether or not they pleased our personal nature, then if we would study the knowledge that all true teachers have given out in reference to the Path of Action, to the power of resolves and of vows and to the nature of the Soul, we would come upon a science of the fulfilment of decisions and vows and be freed from the thralldom, the turbulence and unceasing strife caused by ignorance. We would come to the realization that great Souls and High Beings were once erring mortals like ourselves; but, having determined to change their way of living, they stuck to their vows. The power of such a vow as that of Kwan-Yin — “Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but for ever and everywhere will I live and strive for the redemption of every creature throughout the world” — enables the Buddhas and the Christs of the race to make the supreme renunciation of the well-earned peace and bliss of Nirvana and say, “For others’ sake this great reward I yield.”

Such a vow is the result, not of a sudden impulse, but of decisions made and adhered to over many lives. We can all recall many of those paths we have erstwhile trodden, many of those ideas, aspirations, high hopes we have once held, many of those resolutions we have at one time made. All present decisions are based upon past decisions, and the power to adhere to them comes from performing little selfless acts until they accumulate and become one great symphony of thought and will and feeling.

Once this stage is reached, we have but one aim, one purpose; all others become subsidiary. This aim and this purpose persistently adhered to gives us the strength which comes from the chamber of the heart, and will bring us into the presence of those Great Souls who have similarly vowed to serve others from age to age, *yuge-yuge*.

Knowledge of Theosophy gives us the Head to think clearly, the Heart to help freely, and the Will to act righteously and to stick to our wishes, resolves, vows.

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## THE TRANSMUTATION OF WORK

“Work” is the act of using or guiding energy towards the achievement of a desired object. Men often delude themselves into thinking that they work for a living. Few do. Most men work to get that which satisfies their cravings. They often sacrifice food and leave their dependants hungry so that they can satisfy their own urges for gambling, drinking, or worse. The thief and the forger work as do the cheat and the pervert to achieve their ends. Each for his wicked purpose uses up energy to do incalculable harm. Most men understand this and register their sense of revulsion at such debased actions. Yet, these same men will extol a politician for untold miseries visited upon innocent persons on some other country’s territory. The conquering hero is feted. The values which the modern world gives to work are so topsy-turvy that nobody cares to ask whether we are not worshipping at the feet of false gods, or worse still, whether we are not reverencing the devil and extolling his works.

As in all human considerations, the evaluation of any work lies not merely in the assessing of efficiency but in the analysing of the motives for the work. That work alone becomes meritorious which tries to fulfil the great purpose which brings any soul into incarnation. The selfish motive, the harmful intent, the non-altruistic purpose frustrate the divine aim and fritter away that incarnation’s store of spiritual energy. The altruistic motive, the sincere endeavour are indispensable in all works which are intended to prosper and multiply. Judged by this standard, the work so far done by the scientists fails to qualify except in some rare cases where the discovery was intended to and has helped large sections of mankind. How rigid and deep the scrutiny has to be can be judged from a letter written by one of the Theosophical Mahatmas:

May I ask then . . . what have the laws of Faraday, Tyndall, or others to do with philanthropy in their abstract relations with humanity, viewed as an intelligent whole? . . . For us, poor unknown philanthropists, no fact of these sciences is interesting except in the degree of its potentiality of moral results, and in the ratio of its usefulness to mankind.

The potentiality of moral results, the ratio of the work’s usefulness to mankind, has to be injected into each stream of the student’s efforts, and unless he is united to the aim, purpose and teaching of Theosophy, he will not be able to achieve anything in the line of a universal effort.

Altruism in any work lifts it from out of the common run of human efforts. Of all human qualities, it is this which lays a claim to recogni-

tion by the diviner elements in nature. The altruistic motive leaves its indelible stamp and impress on the work motivated by it, though to our human blindness it may remain entirely hidden from view. It is for this reason that the true student approaches work from a completely different angle of vision. The performance of duties which formerly was mechanical and often monotonous ceases either to be drab or to be shorn of the lustre of splendid things. It now definitely ceases to be irksome; for the mind analyses it and on suitable occasions seeks to inject into it its concepts of altruism. The student's attention is now diverted from the results of his works to the quality of motive which impels those works. From the concrete and physical aspects of things, he has shifted the consciousness to the inner planes of being. He is at the threshold of magic and, with the help of newly awakened powers, is able deliberately to colour all action.

Work, be it ever so simple, implies the use of energy. We may by our actions scatter or conserve it, and in doing so, help or hinder Nature. Let us take an author at his work. He uses up vast amounts of energy to sort out his material. The process of acceptance of certain ideas and the rejection of others is itself "work" of a high order. As he writes, he uses the great force of concentration that shuts out all sights and sounds that pertain not to his work. His is indeed a great effort, and yet he may be writing that which would poison the human mind and lead it astray into the pleasure-grounds of senses. He may make out a case for an uninhibited expression of sense-life. He may defend invasion and genocide or the superiority of the white over the coloured races. He may bring "convincing" reasons to justify vivisection and even mass slaughters under the guise of "purges." And all the while he never has a thought of pity or tolerance or charity. He thinks he is doing good when all the while he is generating evil. The pity of it is that he gets a vast following. There is no doubt that he has "worked," but in so doing he has allied himself with the forces that throng the night-side of life.

Now let us take yet another example, that of an abstruse mathematician. He has hardly any motives of good or evil. He has, however, the keenest probing mentality. He wants to force Nature to give up her secrets. He prides himself on being a discoverer of hidden truths. Worse still, elated by success he gives out his discovery prematurely to a world not prepared to receive it. The secret which, if wrongly used, would visit misery, horror and death on thousands is now in the hands of the ungodly. In him also was the altruistic motive absent. True,

there was no active leaning towards evil; but his motives were diffused, and ambition and a suppressed love of fame were his undoing. He robbed Nature and enriched neither himself nor humanity. He gave out secrets indiscriminately, and his motives being alien to the spirit, his Karma cannot but impose a heavy burden.

Most students of Theosophy have not that eminence in politics or the sciences that would make them world-figures. Yet, just because they have imbibed the philosophy will their thoughts have a much enhanced potency for good or evil. Without knowing it, the young disciple wields energy which previously was not his to employ. He comes within the circumference of a Brotherhood which works ceaselessly under laws as rigid as any pertaining to the modern sciences. His new-found Brotherhood makes him do the same old work he was previously groaning under. His chores have not changed. His duties may have increased, but the old duties must still dog his footsteps. What he is taught is the new orientation. Before he acts, he has to try consciously to inject into his works and duty the great power of an all-embracing altruism. Does he attend office? Does he visit the sick? Does he promulgate his philosophy? In all spheres of action he borrows Nature's energy to do his work and must return it enriched by his contribution towards the general good.

Yet altruism comes not readily to the ordinary man. He becomes hesitant as his concept of charity turns out on mature reflection to be non-charity. Confusion results and too often the student tries to resolve the problem by rushing away from it. Does he but know it, he has the solution near at hand. The chief aim of any Lodge to which he may be affiliated is to spread broadcast the teachings of Theosophy. Now, Theosophy, if it be the ultimate end of knowledge, must contain within it the seeds of the true Altruism. By studying it, he plants the seeds in his mind. By applying it, he imports altruism in his own daily life. By promulgating Theosophy, he lives the altruistic life. As the disciple continues to follow the lines laid down, he draws nearer in consciousness to the Guru to whose bidding, sooner or later, he will surrender his whole life. This is altruism *in excelsis*. It is work which produces ambrosia. It is the act of giving which, instead of depleting wealth, enriches it.

The ordinary man labours at his work; the man of purpose transforms that same work; the disciple transmutes it.

# JULIUS CÆSAR

## A STUDY IN VIOLENCE AND BLOODSHED

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“The Adepts assert that Shakespeare was, unconsciously to himself, inspired by one of their own number.”

—*Echoes from the Orient*, by WM. Q. JUDGE

The carrying on of government is of far too much importance in human life for the problems of it not to attract the attention of a great dramatist, and the interest of the Adepts in those same problems would fuse with his own to increase his perceptions and intuitions. Political plays were not a new field for Shakespeare when he approached the story of Julius Cæsar. His long series of English chronicle plays were in essence political and governmental problems, and through his close following of history gave him a varied study of councillors and conspirators, mobs and armies, patriots and self-seekers, and good or poor queens and kings. Hence the play *Julius Cæsar* exhibits the treatment of an expert in dramatic effects and also in the intricacies of human nature.

For many generations Rome had had a republican form of government, the people having some voice in their concerns. But conditions now seriously threatened these popular rights; republican citizens were facing a great extension of monarchy and curtailment of the people's privileges. Cæsar had retained the preceding governmental forms, but had nearly emptied them of validity. Gradually he had enforced measures that gave him entire control of Roman affairs everywhere. His government had at first been regarded as a necessary but temporary dictatorship; he had been reappointed, however, and planned for permanency and greater importance. He used as the first in his list of titles the grand word *Imperator*; and most of the policies he introduced became foundation stones of the later Empire.

The pivot of this tragic drama is Brutus. A man of noble nature and unselfish motives, knowing that he was a chief traditional leader among republican citizens, and that they were out of sympathy with Cæsar's policies, he was led by his own sense of duty, and even more by the urging of his party, to assist a movement for change. How this should be made was the problem. He had been brooding over it long before Cassius suggested conspiracy and murder.

Neither of these men realized the prime fact that solution by murder must always meet ultimate failure, because of the inherent moral ignorance and injustice. In the Roman conditions of the time, that solution had little chance of succeeding even temporarily. For in truth most of the citizens had lost, ethically, their right to liberty through their neglect of their own responsibilities under liberal government. To Cæsar's political aggressions many people of the higher classes, though not desiring a king, were half blind; while the populace was little more than a mob, switching suddenly from one leader to another, from one policy to its opposite. Yet those who like Brutus stood for popular freedom did not realize the existing political weakness; they did not see that if as conspirators they should be successful, they could hardly expect lasting moral support for any government they might create.

There is no escaping the Karmic law that a government is the outcome of the people who make it and live under it, and that to cause a change by violence is certain to bring violence in reaction. The Romans of that period, having laid themselves open by their weakened moral fibre to a dictatorship, may be thought fortunate, so far, in having a ruler as prudent and moderate as Cæsar. His imperialistic tendencies were evident enough, but Brutus in condemning him seems to have forgotten that Rome was no longer a small city-state. It had acquired by war vast outlying colonies and provinces settled by peoples of varying civilizations. Cæsar was the only general who had shown capacity to handle problems arising from these conditions.

To murder such a leader was the poorest way possible to free the state from his policies without resulting anarchy. Lack of executive prudence in the conspirators is proved by the oversight of these facts. Besides, they were moved largely by personal resentments, Cassius being the chief spokesman of these. Brutus alone was free from selfish motives. He said: "I know no personal cause to spurn at him, but for the general." Yet Brutus's opposition to Cæsar and imperialism was partly due to custom and theory. It was sentiment as much as statesmanship. With republicanism representing to him the only political good, he had been considering heavy sacrifices. To Cassius he replied: "What you would work me to, I have some aim." Thus he showed that the thought of violence toward Cæsar had already roused his feelings for and against it — the two selves in him making the inner "war" and the "passions of some difference" that he declared had been troubling him.

In such an inner "war" a man's Higher Self would ever be his guide

and literally his "guardian angel"; would prevent the lower self from becoming a demon of darkness; would ever reject violence, treachery and secret betrayals, such as easily lead to murder. But the lower self clings to its opinions, sees no solution of problems except those of its own desire, and thus becomes so blinded that it often through mere desperation or weariness of the conflict bursts into extreme irremediable actions. Brutus himself described this situation exactly:

Between the acting of a dreadful thing  
And the first motion, all the interim is  
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream:  
The genius and the mortal instruments  
Are then in council; and the state of man,  
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then  
The nature of an insurrection. (Act II, Scene 1)

But though within himself he saw this image, his lower mind did not follow the monition thereby conveyed. He remained theoretical. In such an experience, just before that point of outbreak, there is so much intervention by the lower self that the force of the Higher can hardly pass through; hence it cannot prevent the "insurrection."

So it was with Brutus. When he decided to enter the conspiracy, to lead the revolt, to share in the murder, he took his stand on the belief that noble ends, such as he thought his to be, could justify the ignoble murderous means. Indeed, as pictured in the play,<sup>1</sup> Brutus did not have the sagacity supposed to be his. Every time he and Cassius differed as to policies, Brutus insisted on a way that contributed to their final failure. And if there was little or no justification beforehand for the murder of Cæsar there proved to have been none afterward, when as a result the country passed into long civil war, the later conditions being worse than before the revolt.

From the standpoint of Theosophy, this story is overcrowded with brutality and grievous moral errors — treachery, conspiracy, murder, suicide — these are the great crimes; the lesser ones are many. But *the people whose history was therein recorded, as well as the people who were given the play, did not regard the events as indicating a special measure of depravity. Rather the contrary.* The narrative still forms one of the hero-stories of the "grandeur that was Rome."

The moral standards and practices of Roman civilization passed along with its political conquests throughout Europe, all the conquered coun-

<sup>1</sup> The drama is said to be based on North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*: "Julius Cæsar" and "Marcus Brutus."

tries adopting the habits and ideals of the Empire. By them they are still living — and dying. Romans for the most part were not studious or meditative; they lived a life greedy of sensation, luxury and excitement, full of self-will and self-glorification. They were of course unhumanitarian, ignorant of the life-principle and irreverent of it, being by long mental habit strong in the kill-impulse, weak in the mercy impulse; for they were a warring, blood-sodden people.

By men living under such dark lights, murder and suicide are neither understood nor deplored. Judged by Theosophy, both are among the worst crimes, because they attack the very foundation of Nature. The purpose of Life being a long development of soul into Spirit, by contact and experience with matter, these crimes throw effective and far-reaching barriers against further evolution upward. They check the progress of both the killer and the killed. The conditions of each after death are in general not known or even considered, death being thought of as “the end of all” or — by the more religious — as a means of “knowing all.”

The teachings of Theosophy are very definite on these subjects. Man in essence is a spiritual, bodiless, formless being. Entering Earth-life he assumes a body for the purpose of living, learning and evolving with other beings like and unlike himself, who have reached the Earth-stage of evolution. Only through such a body can a man do outward acts on this plane. Murder kills the physical body but nothing more. If mind and soul have been wicked, they remain just as wicked. They still form a mind-entity.

The Karma of such a murder as that of Cæsar could but be terrific — for the state, in the ensuing war; for the conspirators, varying in accordance with the unrighteousness of their individual motives. The drama shows only two of these.

After long uncertain strife, the conspirators had gathered their forces for a final effort. Evil omens had been frequent, even the sceptical Cassius feeling their genuineness. Brutus, dreading failure, was afflicted too by grief over his wife's desperate suicide and the torturing manner of it. On both men was the overwhelming weight of wasted struggle and lost cause. The conflict of the next day was only a fight against time — and a short time — a fight confused by blundering directions and misunderstandings, the broodings of Nemesis clouding the field like a pall. Cassius, straining to see the movement of the battle, said of his physical sight that it “was ever thick.” But had not his moral and political sight also been thick when he ensnared himself and Brutus in the conspiracy? In those

final moments these blindnesses led him to his self-inflicted death. Brutus too, moved by error, that shows "to the apt thoughts of men things that are not," became the victim of fear and of over-confidence. At the end both men killed themselves through ignorant pride. To them suicide was less terrible than to be taken as prisoners through Rome amid the jeers of their former friends and inferiors.

The Romans thought that suicide through loyalty to a friend or a cause, or to escape disgrace, was honourable. They prided themselves on this kind of honour. Three persons took that means in this case of escaping what they regarded as worse than death; a fourth did the same through desperation — a pitiful psychic exaggeration and weakness. There was no thought in any of them of a definite result afterward. Death seemed like a bare wall. They went up to it — jumped over — and all was ended; without accountability, without good or evil effects — mere blankness.

The laws of nature as stated by Theosophy — and physical science as well — declare that energies centred in a living form cannot meet destruction. They are only changed in their appearance. Having animated the form, they leave it again, thus breaking down that form; but the energies are themselves still busy at shaping other forms. Theosophy applies this also to the many and varied energies constituting a living man. Hence for a man there can be no blank wall of death with nothing on the farther side.

In the case of one who kills himself, as of one murdered, those energies — that is, those thoughts and feelings — which compose his mind and soul are as alive and as connected after expulsion from the physical body as before. They necessarily undergo a continued acting and reacting between themselves. Into thoughts such as murder and suicide men have put tremendous will-energy. Those thoughts have fused with and coloured all the other lines of thinking of the life-period. Together they all have formed a mental unit, joined by Nature's law of Cohesion. As the Cohesion making an individual man ceases, the opposite law of Dispersion breaks up the unit and sends the energies elsewhere. That time, for a being who has remained in his body, becomes his natural moment of death. But for an entity who has been thrust out of his body, the power of Cohesion between the mind-energies is not destroyed. The thinking goes on; and since it has now no new objective experiences, it is compelled to busy itself with those it has had; especially with those later and very powerful thoughts that brought on the suicide. Therefore one

who kills himself inevitably rehearses the lines of his thinking that led to his last Earth-act — his despairs, his wrongs, his fruitless desires, wicked deeds, and the sudden lawless taking-off. He does this till the time, whether months or years, when the Cohesion between his energies reaches its natural, lawful end.

That is what the suicides in the bit of history seen in this drama were obliged to face — Brutus and Cassius ever forming their conspiracy, conducting their winning or losing battles, and their final pushing themselves out of life; Portia, “true and honourable wife” of Brutus, forced to undergo over and over her impatience of his absence, her grief at his enemies’ success, and in distraction her torture of swallowing fire. And as also murderers, those suicides who were conspirators were compelled to be always repeating their stabbing of Cæsar. This is the special and otherwise unexperienced torment they brought on themselves by their suicide. They could not say, as Brutus thought he could, “Cæsar, now be still,” merely by going out of their physical bodies. Their gaining of quiet could not be so easy as that — for they had too greatly disturbed the equilibrium of the forces of Nature.

The pity is that Brutus knew better. On the morning of the last day, he and Cassius conferred (Act V, Scene 1):

*Cas.* If we do lose this battle . . .

What are you, then, determined to do?

*Bru.* Even by the rule of that philosophy  
By which I did blame Cato for the death  
Which he did give himself.—I know not how,  
But I do find it cowardly and vile,  
For fear of what might fall, so to prevent  
The time of life:—arming myself with patience  
To stay the providence of some high powers  
That govern us below.

*Cas.* Then, if we lose this battle,  
You are contented to be led in triumph  
Through the streets of Rome?

*Bru.* No, Cassius, no: think not, thou noble Roman,  
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome;  
He bears too great a mind.

Thus Brutus lacked the strength to obey the philosophy he knew, which would have led him to face his own results and actually to “stay the providence of the high governing powers.” He thereby proved himself to be as theoretical in his philosophy as he was in his statecraft.

## THE PSYCHISM OF THE PLAY

This play gives emphasis to some unusual psychic phenomena, mostly examples of prophecy. However little Romans in general knew or practised the ancient Eastern philosophy, they did retain some of the old beliefs that concerned forecasting of the future. In these were mixed much superstition and falsity. The fictitious exaggeration was perhaps exemplified in the accounts of the terrifying storm and the mysterious happenings of the night before Cæsar's death. A few of those incidents, however, may be recognized by theosophists as possible psychic occurrences.

The prophetic phenomena concerned not only individuals but bore directly on the most important political events — the death of Cæsar and the failure and death of Brutus. Theosophists know that Adepts, though neither mixing in particular temporary politics nor attempting to interfere with "the general drift of the world's cosmic relations," do watch and work for both individual and national benefit. Said one of Them: "There never was a time within or before the so-called historical period when our predecessors were not moulding events and 'making history.'" Genuine psychic phenomena are among the means used by Adepts for "moulding events" through the individuals who experience the phenomena. It may be that the disturbances of the "strange disposed time" just before Cæsar's death were used or even in part produced as advisory monitions by invisible Adepts acting at that time for the welfare of Rome. If then the people as a whole had recognized that the fearful events were indeed "portentous things unto the climate that they point upon," and if they had really taken to heart these warnings, they could have found a way even then to improve their political-ethical condition. If Adepts were at the time giving special attention to Rome, Cæsar as head of the Government would naturally be a chief focus for their observation. Foreseeing through their spiritual perception the coming dangers to him and knowing that his death would avail nothing, they could impress their guidance publicly by soothsayers' prophecy and more occultly by dreams. These means indeed may have been so used.

Soothsayers or truth-tellers were men possessed of some degree of natural clairvoyance, which they strengthened by various means of focusing their eyes and attention till their minds were closed to external matters and were open to conditions visible in the astral light. This light surrounds and interpenetrates the earth, and in it are impressions of past and future events which may be read by those who know how.

Whether used by Adepts or not, the Soothsayer in this story faithfully declared his message of danger for Cæsar on the Ides of March; but he met a frequent fate of truth-tellers, for he was called by Cæsar a dreamer and disregarded. On the morning of the Ides he warned again, but with no better result. Too many others were claiming Cæsar's attention. For Cæsar it was a time of display and self-gratification.

Soothsaying is as well known today, under other names, as in the past — and perhaps as much (and as little) credited. The difference is only in externals. So too with dreams. Great numbers of intelligent people believe that dreams have forecasting value, but do not confess the belief. Theosophy declares that these inner experiences have some validity and it gives a true explanation of them. That for soothsaying has just been indicated.

As to dreams, some come from physiological causes and have little value. Those that are important spring from the deeper Egoic nature. Said H. P. Blavatsky, "The Ego is the actor, the real man, the true human self." In egoic or "real dreams . . . something of what was seen, done or thought by the Ego impressed itself on the physical brain . . . our dreams are the waking state and actions of the true Self, the dim recollection of which at the moment of awakening becomes more or less distorted by our physical memory." Since dreams are true impressions of "things seen," "facts witnessed," they may and do convey to the physical brain happenings that for men are not yet present. Dreams of warning, such as Calphurnia's, are "real" and they require "the active co-operation of the inner Ego. . . . Prophetic dreams . . . are impressed on our memory by the Higher Self, and are generally plain and clear: either a voice heard or the coming event foreseen." There are also "warning dreams for others who are unable to be impressed themselves." Cæsar was one of those so "unable." It may be that keen intuition led Shakespeare to heighten Plutarch's account by making Cæsar's report of Calphurnia's dream, and the conspirators' later enacting of it, exactly correspond; for in this way could be intimated that "Egoic co-operation" needed for a warning dream. Also, the effort put forth by Calphurnia's Higher Self may have been indicated by Cæsar's saying that she "*thrice* in her sleep cried out, 'Help, ho! They murder Cæsar!'" The dream by another personage — Cinna the poet — of danger to him, and his inattention to it leading to his death, subtly though powerfully reinforces the occult values of Calphurnia's warning dream and Cæsar's disregard of it. There is no question that to Shakespeare and the people of his time dreams and other

modes of prophecy had the importance attributed to them in this drama. There is also no question that Theosophical teaching, while it would most carefully analyse specific examples, does recognize the actuality of such experiences.

The other important psychic phenomenon came to Brutus in his tent on the night before the last battle; Act IV, Scene 3. "A monstrous apparition, which made his blood cold and his hair to stare, and which named itself his evil spirit" (Plutarch's "Life of Brutus"); a "terrible and strange vision of a huge and frightful figure standing by him." It told him in the next battle he should see it again, "his evil genius," "his evil dæmon." This vision Brutus interpreted as the Ghost of Cæsar warning him that his "hour had come." The figure, however, never names itself the ghost of Cæsar, nor does Plutarch call it so. Theosophy states that a "ghost," technically regarded, is the astral double of a previously living man and as such must look like that man. The entity of Brutus's vision was undoubtedly of another order.

For an understanding it is necessary to consider the ancient belief that men have attendant spirits. Hastings' *Encyclopædia* gives valuable information. The statement is made that an "evil spirit was often conceived as a ghost," at times the ghost of a "hero," possibly one murdered; in some stories "the two terms are used without distinction." The vision of Brutus is cited as an example of an evil demon "specially attached to an individual." But not all demons (daimones) by any means were evil. Plato remarked in the *Phædo* (107D): "Every man has a distinct daimon which attends him during life and after death." Menander said: "By every man at birth a good daimon takes his stand, to initiate him in the mysteries of life." Likewise Hastings states that "an avenging daimon was thought to be appointed to punish the crimes of a particular family." Plutarch said of Cæsar: "The great genius which attended him through his lifetime, even after his death remained as the avenger of his murder." Hastings also remarks: "By the Pythagoreans a belief in demons was always fostered, especially . . . as representing the souls of the dead. . . . All the air, they said, was full of souls, and these are called demons and heroes."<sup>2</sup>

These beliefs are in general corroborated by H. P. Blavatsky, though of course expressed with stricter shades of occult meanings.

"Daimon was a name given by ancient peoples . . . to all kinds of spirits, whether good or bad."

<sup>2</sup> *Encyclopædia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. by James Hastings, IV, 590.

"...the word 'demon'...in the meaning given to it by the whole of antiquity, standing for the guardian Spirit, an 'Angel,' not a devil of Satanic descent. Satan...is simply the personification of the abstract evil, which is the weapon of karmic law and KARMA. It is our human nature and man himself, as it is said that 'Satan is always near and inextricably interwoven with man.' It is only a question of that Power being latent or active in us."

"Porphyry, speaking of evil spirits, said: 'Demons are invisible, but they know *how to clothe themselves* with forms.'"

"Destiny which...every man is weaving around himself...is guided either by the heavenly voice of the invisible *prototype* (the guardian Angel) outside of us, or by our more intimate astral, or inner man, who is but too often the evil genius of the embodied entity called man."

"The whole endless catalogue of bad spirits are not *devils* [as distinct from humanity] but *spiritually incarnated* sins, crimes and human thoughts."

These passages seem to indicate that the Apparition to Brutus was a form taken by that complex of thought-energies — it was the "spiritually incarnated sins and crimes" — his own and others', which caused those gigantic evils of the murder and the war. Coming at a late quiet hour, when Brutus was weary and troubled, his mind in a passive astral state, the Appearance shot into his inner vision a ghastly realization of his accountability. His hour indeed had come.

That "terrible appearance in the human form but of prodigious stature and the most hideous aspect" was also a close corresponding embodiment of what the conspirators' inhuman acts drew forth from Cæsar in his last moments. Just before stabbing him they had insidiously begged for the return in freedom of one whom he had exiled — their motive being to find in his denial a public excuse for the murder. Astonished and growing irritated, Cæsar had finally refused with a haughty magniloquent self-importance. Then with the stabs were roused in him fear, anger, burning resentment, and deep sadness at the deception and injustice practised on him. All these feelings were dominant in his mind at the moment of his bodily death. And it is certain that that mass of ambitions and conscious powers, of disappointments and desires, hatreds and fears, which constituted the mind of him who "bestrode the world like a Colossus," could not be shunted out of life by sudden treacherous stabs of supposed friends, without carrying into death a profound melancholy and a towering revengeful fury. This weight of feelings would

by its own fierce grisly nature image itself in a figure frightful to see.

There is, moreover, a special and subtle reason for its visit to Brutus as an evil genius and as representing Cæsar. This reason is in the blood-bath, pictured by Shakespeare with graphic hideousness. Brutus set the example as he shouted (Act III, Scene 1):

Stoop, Romans, stoop,  
And let us bathe our hands in Cæsar's blood  
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords...  
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads,  
Let's all cry, *Peace! freedom! and liberty!*

He thereby strengthened tenfold and poisoned the magnetic ties between Cæsar, himself, and the other murderers. For blood has most powerful magnetic qualities.

It was the magnetic life-bearing nature of blood that led to the beliefs in its mysterious power and caused such practices as are indicated in Shakespeare's line: "great men shall press for tinctures, stains, relics and cognizance." Various religions have taught veneration of blood and its sacramental power to unify into some strong and sacred bond those who shared in it, who were touched by it or "purified." Though these beliefs were of course easily degraded into savage excesses, nothing could destroy the peculiar qualities of blood. In this case these qualities acted not only to create a particularly close bond between Cæsar and his murderers, but they bound in stronger unity those terrible psychic forces sent out by Cæsar's mind at the time of his death. By bathing their hands in his blood and waving the stained metal of their swords, they called down upon themselves those strange forces in Nature that became united and visible in the monstrous figure which visited Brutus because of Cæsar's murder, and which, in Plutarch's words, was "the avenger" and pursued "through every land all those who were concerned in it, and suffering none to escape."

The old Chinese philosopher Lao Tse said quietly:

If a kingdom is governed according to the Tao the spirits of the departed will be as peaceful as are the people, and will molest no one, for they too are governed by the Tao. When this harmony prevails between the living and those who have left, their good influences are combined.

Besides the physical magnetism in Cæsar's blood, there was another bond, an even more occult reason for the visitation to Brutus. There was likewise soul-magnetism between the two men. They were friends,

attached by affection. Brutus had been rescued from political danger by Cæsar, had been given honours and dignities. Cæsar trusted him. All these magnetic ties of soul Brutus ruptured, tore into quivering shreds that dripped with the ethereal fluids of the unrecognized inner life.

Further, since Brutus was always the centre and chief mover of the unit of action constituting the drama, it may be that Shakespeare regarded him both ethically and dramatically as a synthetic symbol; a symbol representing himself, his fellow conspirators, the entire government and the state, broken into fragments by his treachery, unwisdom and political incompetence. When so regarded, and when his possible accomplishments are compared with his actual failures, Brutus and the drama depicting him tower up among the great tragic results of Shakespeare's creation — heart-moving images of nobility blinded by false ideas of what constitutes man's duty to himself and other individuals, as also to his country and its government.

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The young man or woman writing today has forgotten the problems of the human heart in conflict with itself, which alone can make good writing because only that is worth writing about, worth the agony and the sweat. He must learn them again. He must teach himself that the basest of all things is to be afraid; and, teaching himself that, forget it forever, leaving no room in his workshop for anything but the old verities and truths of the heart, the old universal truths, lacking which any story is ephemeral and doomed — love and honour and pity and pride and compassion and sacrifice. Until he does so, he labours under a curse. He writes not of love but of lust, of defeats in which nobody loses anything of value, of victories without hope and, worst of all, without pity or compassion. . . . Until he re-learns these things, he will write as though he stood among and watched the end of man. I decline to accept the end of man. I believe that man will not merely endure; he will prevail. He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance. The poet's, the writer's, duty is to write about these things. It is his privilege to help man endure by lifting his heart, by reminding him of the courage and honour and hope and pride and compassion and pity and sacrifice which have been the glory of his past. The poet's voice need not merely be the record of man, it can be one of the props, the pillars to help him endure and prevail.

—WILLIAM FAULKNER

## GROWTH THROUGH SELF-EFFORT

Some human beings call for help in times of difficulties, some struggle to overcome them, and some become apathetic and drift. The first turn to their fellow men or to some "god"; the last drift with the tide; between these two extremes is the middle course — self-help.

Only this middle course helps us in our soul evolution. We learn that the "Dhyān Chohans...refused to create, because they wanted Man to become his own creator and an immortal god (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 246). In order that man might achieve this goal, those great Dhyān Chohans "preferred the *curse of incarnation* and the long cycles of terrestrial existence and rebirths, to seeing the misery (even if *unconscious*) of the beings (evolved as shadows out of their Brethren) through the semi-passive energy of their *too spiritual* Creators" (*ibid.*).

The Host that incarnated in a portion of humanity, though led to it by Karma or *Nemesis*, preferred free-will to passive slavery, intellectual self-conscious pain and even torture...to inane, imbecile, instinctual beatitude. Knowing that such an incarnation was premature and not in the programme of nature, the heavenly host...still sacrificed itself to benefit thereby, at least, one portion of mankind. (II. 421)

Do we not see here an analogy to our own Theosophical Movement, the launching of which in 1875 was considered to be premature by all save two of the Adepts, who decided to sacrifice themselves in a deliberate effort to help mankind in this way and at this time?

Also, do we not see why the Adepts did not interfere in times of crises within the Movement, as so many thought They should, for each man *has* to progress and judge for himself? Have They not said that all They can do is to *suggest*, for, if They forced us to any line of action, no benefit would accrue to us who obeyed Them mechanically and unthinkingly, and our progress as evolving souls would not be helped? Where there is no struggle, there is no merit. If "average humanity...has to acquire its intellectuality during the present Manvantaric evolution" (II. 167), man must "wake up" and by *personal exertion* win through all difficulties.

We owe each of the principles of our constitution to a "progenitor." "Each class of Creators endows man with what it has to give: the one builds his external form; the other gives him its essence, which later on

becomes the Human *Higher Self* owing to the *personal exertion of the individual.*"

It is the four orders or classes of Dhyan Chohans out of the seven, says the Commentary, "who were the progenitors of the *concealed man*," *i.e.*, the subtle inner man. The "Lha" of the Moon, the lunar spirits, were... only the *ancestors of his form*, *i.e.*, of the model according to which Nature began her external work upon him. (II. 102)

We should learn to separate in our mind these Creators, some of whom gave us our vehicles and others our self-consciousness. Between the Divine Ego and the vehicles we have the conscious unit in incarnation, having the power of progress and choice. We need to learn that it is this conscious unit — we speak of it as "I" — which has to control the vehicles on the one hand and to reach up to its Parent Ego on the other. If we could realize that we owe our vehicles to other higher entities or consciousnesses who were moved by the great evolutionary urge, and that our consciousness itself is a gift from a Dhyan Chohan, we might begin to see how we should think and act, keeping in mind the Oneness and interrelationship of the whole Universe.

The training of the vehicles by the Manas, the conscious unit or the "I" in incarnation, goes on side by side with the training of the conscious unit itself by the Higher Ego through the voice of conscience and the still, small voice. All life involves training towards one purpose — to reach the human stage; and, having reached that, to attain perfection.

In her article "Psychic and Noetic Action" H.P.B. helps us to see what our duty to the lower kingdoms of Nature is. We must not regard them as inanimate but as composed of "lives," sentient points of life, each point having its own goal to reach. We have to help and to guide those lives, without force. Working on with Nature in this way, we shall make her our ally, pupil and servant. Thus together we shall progress.

Evolution requires living in harmony, and therefore the disharmonious must go. The battle between harmony and disharmony, light and darkness, good and evil, must always rage, for all life is dual — spirit and matter. But without the action of spirit on matter — force, friction — there is no growth. Friction alone brings about a change of form — better and better, or worse and worse.

In trying to work out for ourselves our relationship to our Ego and to our vehicles, let us bear in mind also that the personal man has to cling to the Monad as a plank of salvation so that it may partake of that

Monad's divine nature and gain immortality. It is not through the destruction of vehicles (without vehicles the Monad cannot function on this earth) but through their purification that we reach that aspect of immortality which enables us to function on the earth for the sake of suffering humanity.

Nothing is achieved without personal exertion. True progress is gained when, keeping in mind the requirements of our own character, we find out those self-induced and self-devised methods of improvement which are essentially our own. Rules can be given, but it is their adaptation to special conditions that is our task. This is true self-help. This is making Theosophy a living power in our life.

If we begin our task in earnest we shall find that the first necessity is to develop the faculty of awareness of all things around us and within us. These include dirt, untidiness, slovenliness, inaccuracies, as well as anger and evil thoughts. We have to be aware of our physical surroundings as well as of our emotional and mental background, of our country and its needs, its right and wrong principles of action. How can we learn if we do not devote thought to these matters? We must put our understanding of the law of Karma into operation and refrain from judging others just as we do not like others to judge us. Though Karma brings us much that causes us sorrow, mere regret and acknowledgment of our own wrong actions is not enough; we must reason out the *why* of things and do what we can to counteract the evil effects.

Law and order, harmony and compassion towards all, are essential to growth. Our reactions to affairs and to people have to be watched, for only thus can we know our own character. The reactions of others to ourselves are also a mirror in which we can see our character and where we cause disharmony. Information-knowledge, for example about Karma as the law of action and reaction, has to become for us a proven fact by our awareness of all things.

That each man is his own saviour and the creator of his destiny must also become for us a fact. At our stage we are self-creative beings. In earlier ages the Dhyan Chohans and Nature's forces created our vehicles and endowed us with self-consciousness; but what use we shall make of our powers and vehicles now lies in our own hands. None can help us if we do not help ourselves and make use of the teachings and advice and examples before us. The effort is indeed worth while.

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## ANSWERS TO QUESTIONERS

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From L.

(1) What plan of life should a Theosophist adopt? Take one who does not aspire to chelaship, but who is anxious to live rightly. Should he give up literature, or music, or art; and ought he to give up thoughts of marriage?

*Answer.*—The plan of life should be that which shall appear to the student the best one under his lights; any sort of life may have as a plan under it the good of the race. It is not required that literature or art should be given up: Theosophy seeks to round men out and not to produce moral skeletons. As to marriage, we have nothing to say.

(2) Is *Light on the Path* written for chelas alone or for all?

*Answer.*—It is written for all who strive to understand the meaning *under* the language; its real sense is not that conveyed by the mere words in it.

(3) Why do so many warn against rashly attempting chelaship? If it is right, why not for all? Will it be easier in some future life, or will it be always a struggle? If the necessity for leaders makes it right for some to essay this, how is one to tell which is his duty, to try or not?

*Answer.*—The reason for the warning has been given over and over again. A chela calls upon himself awful possibilities of disaster, and voluntarily exposes himself to the most pitiless foes the race has — those within the mind's plane and in the astral world. These are not figments, and everyone who forces himself must meet the consequences, for the kingdom of heaven is surrounded by monsters, and the way to it is enveloped with the black cloud of the soul's despair at a place where knowledge, power, and faith are needed, and where sentiment plays no part.

The road winds uphill all the way, even to the very end; but in this life we may prepare ourselves to be ready to make a further advance in our next reincarnation.

Anyone who *is* to be a leader will easily find that out. We are not to try and discover that we are leaders, but to do our every duty; if they are performed, the Law of Karma will find those who are the real leaders, and all sham captains will disappear.

—A STUDENT

# REFLECTIONS ON "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"

## II

... neither as *akasha* nor as the one sacred Æther of the Greeks, is it [ether] to be found in any of the states of matter known to modern physics. It is MATTER on quite another plane of perception and being. . . . (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 487)

It is incorrect . . . to say . . . that "matter can no more be realized or conceived as mere spatial presence than as a concretion of forces." . . . It is true that pure force is *nothing* in the world of physics; it is ALL in the domain of Spirit. Says Stallo: "If we reduce the mass upon which a given force, however small, acts to its limit zero — or, mathematically expressed, until it becomes infinitely small — the consequence is that the velocity of the resulting motion is infinitely great, and that the 'thing' . . . is at any given moment neither here nor there, but everywhere. . . ." (*Ibid.*, I. 510)

Those physicists who hold the view that the atomic constitution of matter is consistent with its penetrability, need not go far out of their way to be able to account for the greatest phenomena of Occultism. . . . Cauchy's "material points without extension" are Leibnitz's monads, and at the same time the materials out of which the "Gods" and other invisible powers clothe themselves in bodies. . . . (*Ibid.*, I. 489)

Along a similar line of thought Plotinus has some interesting remarks regarding the nature of what he sometimes calls "Base":

There are no atoms; all body is divisible endlessly: besides, neither the continuity nor the ductility of corporeal things is explicable apart from Mind. . . .

What, then, is this . . . Matter, described as one stuff, continuous and without quality? Clearly since it is without quality it is incorporeal. . . . It must be the basic stuff of all the entities of the sense-world and not merely base to some. . . . Clay, for example, is matter to the potter but is not Matter pure and simple. Nothing of this sort is our object: we are seeking the stuff which underlies all alike. We must therefore refuse to it all that we find in things of sense. . . .

Are we asked to accept as the substratum some attribute or quality present to all the elements in common? . . . if the quality possesses determination, it is not Matter the undetermined; and anything without determination is not a quality but is the substratum — the very Matter we are seeking.

The distinctive character of Matter... is simply its manner of being — not something definite inserted in it, but rather a relation towards other things, the relation of being distinct from them.

Other things possess something besides this relation of Alienism: their form makes each an entity. Matter may with propriety be described as merely alien; perhaps, even, we might describe it as "The Aliens," for the singular suggests a certain definiteness while the plural would indicate the absence of any determination.

A quotation such as this serves to emphasize — and possibly clarify — H.P.B.'s remark that

Schelling, when saying that "It is a mere delusion of the phantasy that something, we know not what, remains after we have denuded an object of all the predicates belonging to it" — could never have applied the remark to the realm of transcendental metaphysics. (I. 510)

When Plotinus calls the matter which we see a "dead, decorated" thing, his meaning becomes more distinct as we read H.P.B.'s statement that such phenomena as light, heat, cohesion, etc., which we normally associate with the visible universe, actually emanate — not from visible matter — but from another state of matter, or as the discussion of pages 514-15 (Vol. I) says:

The Occultists are taken to task for calling the *Cause* of light, heat, sound, cohesion, magnetism, etc., etc., a *substance*... their explanation is proclaimed *unscientific*.

Science... errs in believing that, because it has detected in vibratory waves the *proximate* cause of these phenomena, it has, therefore, revealed ALL that lies beyond the threshold of Sense. It merely traces the sequence of phenomena on a plane of effects, illusory projections from the region that Occultism has long since penetrated. And the latter maintains that those etheric tremors are not, as asserted by Science, set up by the vibrations of the molecules of *known* bodies — the matter of our terrestrial objective consciousness — but that we must seek for the ultimate causes of light, heat, etc., etc., in MATTER existing in *super-sensuous* states — states, however, as fully objective to the spiritual eye of man, as a horse or a tree is to the ordinary mortal.

The necessity of recognizing a supersensuous state of matter for which the visible was "dead" and, at best, only "decorated" by "effects" is emphasized earlier by H.P.B. when she says:

...it is not enough for the men of Science, or their defenders, to say that *they do not deny dynamic power to light and heat...* If they would fathom the ultimate nature of these Forces, they have first to admit their *substantial* nature, however *supersensuous*. Neither do the Occultists deny the correctness of the vibratory theory. Only they limit its functions to our Earth — declaring its inadequacy on other planes than ours, since “Masters” in the Occult Sciences perceive the CAUSES that produce ethereal vibrations. (I. 514)

The inability of scientists to regard the phenomenon of light “as matter in any conceivable state” might well be attributed to their inverted methods of thought which make the invisible and transcendental subservient to the visible. This inversion divorced them from

the Occult teaching which maintains the reality of a supersubstantial and supersensible essence of... *Akasa* (not ether, which is only an aspect of the latter), the nature of which cannot be inferred from its remoter manifestations — *its merely phenomenal phalanx of effects* — on this terrene plane. (I. 515)

And what, we might ask, does all this have to do with brotherhood? How does it lead us to the act of aiding our neighbour? If all these bodies and things we see arising within our terrestrial consciousness are like bubbles or whirls in a great ocean of *immaterial substance*, then our radical unity as ONE THING should come more and more to dominate our thoughts and deeds.

If we are one, then the ignorance and stupidity of our “enemy” is *our* ignorance and stupidity. We and he are one Spirit, one Substance. No matter how much our study and efforts may help the work of the Theosophical Movement, this is not real progress unless the Movement is made more altruistic. We are THAT. Our progress is interwoven with that of our fellows. If the Theosophical Movement does not spread these ideas and philosophy in the mundane world in a convincing, practical way, then it fails to uphold the theory of UNITY which it teaches.

We do not fail only when we make a mistake, or succeed when we as incarnated beings have helped another. These are not the measures of man, for he is more than so many pounds of flesh; he is more than a little brain consciousness that does or does not do certain good or bad deeds.

Is it not possible that we are this earth as a whole, *i.e.*, that each one of us represents the planet as a being, and that in some way he has

arrived within a body with a certain name, etc., which he uses on this particular plane in order to work for the whole body of humanity? Could we not get used to the idea that this body is ours to be used, to be worn out (albeit judiciously) in service to the whole body of the race, because that race is our real body? In other and plainer words: the most realistic route to our own self-interest is to improve the environment, and to do that we work through the controlling element which is man.

On what plane of the "human condition" in general would we concentrate our efforts in order to be most *effective*? If there were a pivotal plane for man's degradation or enlightenment, then we would probably concentrate our efforts there, wouldn't we? And is this the visible condition of the planet, or is it rather the mental condition? To improve this last is to move in the direction of cause; it is to recognize that tyrannies arise in the mind before they can be acted upon and can become visible, and that starvation would not be possible if our mental attitude toward possessions, especially such crucial possessions as the physical body itself, were changed. We might recognize that there is a substratum of Mind that underlies the visible like the froth upon a wave.

Maybe it is for such reasons as these that a Theosophist is often not so much interested in soup kitchens, enlightened politics, etc., etc., as he is in an improvement of the way in which man lives out his unseen mental life, the way man unwinds his 70 years of THOUGHT, so to speak. It is not that those other activities are not worth while, but that this last is the best way to accomplish ultimately what the others seek to accomplish immediately. Maybe it is something like the difference between improving a cake by putting icing on it and improving it by changing the mixing itself. The last is more trouble, takes more time, and its results do not mature into visibility so fast as the former, yet is it not a more real method of change?

Would a man who identified his life with all Life be able to watch his neighbour starve? Would he resort to the needless destruction of life in any kingdom of Nature? If we recognized this visible universe as OURSELF, would it not radically change our relationship with it? Man does not have a reckless disregard for that which he considers himself. So, if the universe, for us, were to become ONE, with ourselves as integral parts of it, would this not make a drastic difference in the way our moment-to-moment life is lived?

One might object to this and say: "No, it would not, for you are asking that very imperfect beings suddenly take up a stance of perfection.

You are giving us a 'counsel of perfection' and therefore *are not* really showing us how to improve our life in a way that lies within the scope of our capacity. You are asking us to become saints before we have learned well to become men!"

The point missed out in such an argument as this is that no matter how limiting the situation, we can always express our unity with another, not by suddenly becoming perfect, but by being a little better than we were a moment ago. We can always change the drift of our mind from that sentimental altruism which uses the enormity of the gap between what we are and what we should be as a reason for inaction, into an altruism of the here and now, one that does each moment whatever our *capacity* and *willingness* permit.

Despite the apparent bleakness of a situation, we can always say to ourselves: "How can I, as an *acting, thinking* being, cause this 'here-and-now' that confronts me to become a little less terrible? Since I cannot make it as I would 'wish,' what can I do by my act and attitude of mind to help — even a little bit?"

Would a swimmer who found himself far from shore and in desperate straits be likely to save himself if he believed that it was hopeless to make further effort? Or would he reach a successful conclusion if he decided that the shore was much too far away, and that therefore he would try only for the half-way mark? It is in this last sense that counsels of perfection are useful as navigational points, yet these visions of the *ultimate* which we hold as the substratum of the immediate act seem to have a private nature and vary with the condition of each individual. When we try to treat another as if he were ourself, this is a decision we work out from within — *in our own particular way*.

By ourselves learning to swim we might indirectly aid another to decide inside his mind, "I too can learn; I too can help." This force of example that brings about an inner transformation in others involves no compulsion; like sunlight, it emanates from the quality of our effort and sheds its radiance all around.

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## THOUGHTS ON BROTHERHOOD

If we were to ask ourselves what is the highest ideal to be entertained in our hearts, we would perhaps answer by quoting the first of the Three Objects of the Theosophical Movement, *i.e.*, participation in the formation of the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. The formulation and acceptance of such an ideal are easy enough, too easy perhaps; its actual realization, however, is another matter, and it must remain our constant aim. In other words, if we are to be true to the ideal we should begin at the very core of our being, never acting, or even thinking or feeling, in a way that would impede the great aim to which we have dedicated our lives. It is a fact that there can be no world improvement without individual improvement.

It is by making universal brotherhood a living power in our lives that we can be kept spiritually, mentally and psychically "alive," for it is a matter of practical observation that real wholeness and sanity are brought about through the inner realization and daily practice of brotherliness in thoughts, words and deeds. Selfishness sows the seeds of insanity, which bear fruits either later in this life or in future ones. Has not the world gone mad today because of lack of recognition that human beings are all really brothers? This is at the root of all ills. The fact of our essential oneness has been emphasized by all the great sages and mystics, and yet men all over the world fail again and again to recognize it. Why? It is most important that we should know it, and understand it, now, for this is the only way in which the world can survive as a sound and sane body.

It is impossible to practise universal brotherhood in its real spirit unless man is happy and contented within himself. Even ordinary selfish human happiness should have taught us this. When a man is happy, radiant with joy, he is generous, kind-hearted, optimistic. Saints and mystics have been known for their radiant joy and serenity. *Ananda*, or real joy and bliss, is a *sine qua non* of the spiritual life. That joy which uplifts, soothes and heals is rooted in equanimity. It is not a personal joy; it is a state of being in which neither pain nor pleasure has any power over the personal man. It is a state of high indifference. Here we strike a paradoxical note, for how can we have real love for our fellow men in our hearts when we have reached that high degree of indifference which keeps us unmoved in the face of the greatest of all griefs?

The problem of suffering, as rightly pointed out by the Buddha, is the first great mystery which each human being has to solve

for himself. It is not to be considered apart from happiness. To query the nature of one leads us sooner or later to discover the transient nature of both. The Buddha exhorted his disciples to meditate on the various transient aspects of life, *i.e.*, birth, death, old age, sickness, etc., and called the whole manifested universe an illusion, a *Maya*. To have conquered illusion is to be armed with the fourth Key, the middle one, on the Paramita Path. To stand above the pairs of opposites implies moral and mental equipoise. It is obvious that we must be able to keep our balance under every possible pressure and to maintain equanimity in all circumstances if we are to be helpful to the world. Furthermore, calmness is needed to exercise to the full our faculties and to use wisely our powers. It needs an industrious mind, a willing heart and keen imagination to plan and to do whatever is useful at the right time.

To meditate on the transient and illusionary aspect of the opposites of pleasure and pain helps us to transcend both, first mentally and philosophically, then emotionally and practically. Yet this is only the first step. We appreciate and enjoy the beauties of Nature in their short-lived and transient loveliness; but when a precious pleasure is taken away from us we rebel and weep. Why? Because mere mental recognition of the transient and illusionary aspect of life is not enough to instil strength into human hearts. It is soul courage that is needed. The mind must turn for strength to the Eternal and Everlasting. The first step is to accept the transient and perishable nature of the external; the second, to seek for what is eternal.

Real joy or bliss is not found in the world of changing forms, but is to be sought in the egoic realm of Soul-life. A ray from the soul-ego will dispel the shadows of fear and anxiety and from the depths of the real heart will come the power that comforts and heals. We must make it our aim to *create* happiness around us, and if we are to be skilled workmen we must add to it the touch of beauty.

The world needs the few who are training themselves to become impersonal channels for the Universal spirit of Truth, of Goodness and of Eternal Light so that it may percolate through the thick clouds of misery, ignorance and doubt, thus helping others to realize their own divinity, their own true nature. Consciousness must be centred on the higher, be attuned to the music of the spheres, and our souls saturated with the pure bright essence of *Alaya*. To practise universal brotherhood is, in fact, to become the co-workers of our egoic self. In unison and harmony with It we can have clear vision and can perform

right actions. In that way we do not lose touch with life but increase the radius of our affinities and friendships, and learn how to partake of the pains and joys of others.

The true path of brotherhood is the path of friendship to *all*; the milestones on it are made of little, unknown, unasked for loving deeds, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child.

Failure to act as brothers to others lies in the tendency we all have to rush out "*to do, to do,*" while the first step is to turn inward and rely on the Eternal and Everlasting, thus giving the personal mind breadth and depth which alone can enable it to act in a fair and judicious way. Let us also remember that time is of little account, for time belongs to the plane of fantasy and illusion; duration, to the plane of Reality.

Is the ideal before us somewhat remote and vague? No, it is a way of life, an attitude of mind, an opening of the heart more and more to the pangs and secret miseries of the whole world. But the Radiant and Shining Ones are the real Physicians of Humanity. Let us, therefore, be among those who help them, and let us fill our hearts and souls with joy and happiness in readiness for the mighty work.

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I close my eyes to other people's imperfections. I see in them the Omnipresent God. Within them dwells the Infinite Love and Perfection, and when I cast the beam out of my eye, I shall see more clearly, not my brother's faults, but his perfections. In all my fellows is the Infinite Love; henceforth I shall see it, and help to draw it forth. In everyone I shall see something to admire and reverence — something to love.

And I shall not stop with people; I will look also for the good in every circumstance, in every difficulty, in every temporary so-called failure. I will look for the good in every blade of grass and every opening flower; in the wind which blows and the sun that burns my cheek. Rain or sunshine, fair weather or foul, I will see good in everything, see perfection underlying all. Out of these will grow a new sympathy, a more extensive and embracing love, a larger and wider consciousness: for everyone and everything are my brothers; each forms a part of the Infinite Whole; we are one with one another and Universal Life and Mind of which we form a part.

—HENRY THOMAS HAMBLIN

## GRATITUDE

True gratitude is a rare virtue in our civilization when constant demands are made for one or another type of rights and privileges, without any consideration as to how much we owe others and what our responsibility towards them is. It is a reverential feeling of the human heart which should flow out spontaneously in every direction, to the visible and the invisible worlds and to great Mother Nature for all the bountiful gifts that she bestows freely. Usually, people are grateful for some help or kind treatment received from others, or for mercy shown towards them in their hour of stress and difficulty. It would be ungracious not to feel so, but it is not enough. True gratitude has no boundary; it expands more and more as we come to recognize the Law of Interdependence to an ever greater extent. Not only are human beings dependent on one another; all beings, high or low, great or small, to get along in this evolutionary march have to aid and be aided by others.

This universe is alive and vibrant with different powers and forces. It is guided by divine intelligences and is not a mechanical and fortuitous concurrence of atoms. Therefore, first and foremost, our whole-hearted gratitude should go out to the One Divine Principle of Life, which is also the One Law. It is the source and origin of everything, from the starry firmament above to the dust below our feet. Each human being as a Divine Ray has emanated from the Eternal Source, is one with it and with all other emanations from the same Source, the Divine Principle. It is universal in scope, and, being the Law itself, is impersonal. It is omnipotent — all-powerful; omnipresent — all-pervasive; omniscient — all-knowing. Usually, petitions are made to a Personal God for some kind of favours and boons, and, when these are not responded to, people get disappointed and annoyed, not understanding the Law of Karma, just and immutable. All the great Teachers have taught time and again that one should meditate and reflect on that Source, the Self of all creatures, and work in harmony with it so as to reach the nature, stature and dignity of conscious godhood, the goal of every human being. When man considers himself to be a miserable sinner, or believes that he has descended from the apes, how can he put forth effort to rise to the Divine origin, above all limitations, and how can true gratitude overflow the heart? It is the recognition of unity with the One and with all that enables man to express his heartfelt gratitude.

A Ray of Divine Life and Light is the Eternal Pilgrim going the rounds of his pilgrimage on earth, gaining wisdom, experience and power.

It always needs a bodily vehicle to work through, to contact the objective world and objective things, to adjust the Karmic balance and to step onward and forward on the great journey. That vehicle is provided by one's parents in terms of past affinities, and they guard and protect one through the years of childhood and beyond. We can only realize the deep debt of gratitude we owe them as we reflect upon and try to understand the words of Lord Buddha:

Difficult it is to obtain birth as a human being. Difficult it is to live the life of a man. Difficult it is to get to hear the True Law. Difficult it is to attain to Enlightenment. (*The Dhammapada*, Verse 182)

These days, are there many who realize this truth and pay their respectful homage to their parents? Everything is taken for granted and life has become such a mechanical process that children forget their responsibilities to them!

The body provided by the parents is not a solid mass of matter but is made up of different kinds of lives, constantly coming in and going out, human, animal, vegetable, mineral, fiery, watery, airy, earthy. To keep them all working harmoniously is the duty of the Inner Ruler. They belong to different hierarchies, each working according to the law of its own being. The body is considered as something to enjoy life with, and is not generally looked upon with reverence. It is pampered by most people, tortured by a few, and is no longer the appropriate instrument it ought to be. Through self-control and self-discipline it can become a living temple for a living god.

The Inner Ruler has under its command 33 crores of Devas. It is a vast kingdom, vast as a universe in miniature, which has to be ruled efficiently. In reference to this, there is an instructive story: Once upon a time the great God Shiva-Mahadeva had to perform a sacrifice at which he wanted all the 33 crores of gods. So he made his son Kartikeya go round and invite all of them. Kartikeya's vehicle was a peacock, on which he set out to do his errand. The day was approaching and he had been able to do very little; so he wanted his work to be entrusted to a wiser god, and Ganesha, God of Wisdom, was selected. Ganesha had a reputation for performing the maximum work with the minimum of labour. His vehicle was only a mouse and he had very little time to do the work. He reflected upon the task ahead, went round his father, Shiva, three times, and prostrated himself before him. He thus invoked all the 33 crores of gods and gave them the invitation, and all of them came on

the appointed day. People are generally in the habit of looking outside when every power and force is within them. Beings of various degrees do so much for us and it is the duty of each one to give them the right impress through deliberate choice, so that they may not be degraded but through gentle help may be ever uplifted.

The connecting link between man's body formed of different lives and the Divine Ray, the Eternal Pilgrim, is Manas, the thinker endowed with self-consciousness, the great prerogative of mankind only. At a certain stage in our pilgrimage the divine intelligences actually incarnated on earth to light up the mind of man, turning consciousness into self-consciousness. Theosophically, they are known as the Solar *Pitris*, the mind-born sons of Brahma, a hierarchy by itself. This is how the three lines of evolution have converged together and brought a human being on the scene so that through self-choice and self-determination he may reach the destined goal of human perfection. The mind is the instrument of the self-conscious thinker, who, like the body, has to be nourished well and kept clear of all dross. The human mind has to be raised to the plane of divinity, and that task is to be done reverentially and gratefully, day after day, till man the thinker attains conscious union with his divine parent, Atma-Buddhi.

What about gratitude to our fellow pilgrims, who consciously or unconsciously do so much for us unasked — the millions of workers in the fields, the factories and the mines; the big bosses and the petty peons, all those who serve us along different lines? Only through our loving thoughts and feelings can we show our gratitude to them. Were it not for these unknown millions, how would we get the wherewithals of life?

Are we not indebted to great Mother Nature at every step and at every turn? Her beauties and utilities are too many to be mentioned! She is ever ready to serve us. Are we as ready to help her with right knowledge and right love? The majestic mountains, the flowing rivers, the green fields and multicoloured flowers, the vast oceans, the deep forests, the sun, the moon, the stars, all provide us with necessities, never for a moment considering their benefit or reward. Hidden in the bosom of Mother Nature are deep secrets to be unveiled, but she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit. Therefore, it is only when through self-purification the Spiritual Vision, the Divine Eye, is opened that she becomes the friend and ally of man, grateful for having an opportunity to help and serve.

What homage shall we pay, out of the heart's gratitude, to the Elder Brothers, the great Masters of Wisdom and Compassion, the Custodians

of the sacred lore, who out of their compassion sacrificed the peace and bliss of *Nirvana* to help suffering humanity? It is only through the study of their philosophy and service of their humanity that we may express, in however small and insignificant a measure, our gratitude.

Again, Thou God! again  
 A thousand thousand times be magnified!  
 Honour and worship be—  
 Glory and praise,—to Thee  
*Namo, Namaste*, cried on every side;  
 Cried here, above, below,  
 Uttered when Thou dost go,  
 Uttered where Thou dost come! *Namo!* we call;  
*Namostu!* God adored!  
*Namostu!* Nameless Lord!  
 Hail to Thee! Praise to Thee! Thou One in all;  
 For Thou art All! . . .

(*The Song Celestial*, Chapter XI)

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Some pluck the fruits of the tree of knowledge to crown themselves therewith, instead of plucking them to eat.

The glamour of Time conceals from the weak souls of men the dark abysses around them, the terrible and mighty laws which incessantly direct their lives.

If we were convinced that we could never make our crooked ways straight, we should for ever continue in our errors.

Where there are not virtue and discrimination, learning is not to be sown there, no more than good seed in barren soil.

You cannot build a temple of truth by hammering dead stones. Its foundations must precipitate themselves like crystals from the solution of life.

—*Eastern Proverbs*

## EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

In silence, in study, in inner effort, much of nourishment to the Soul can be gained. The manifestations of the lower nature are many and they have to be controlled. For this, silence is needed. But silence has to be real. Merely abstaining from verbal activity is not real silence if sensuous enjoyment and indulgence in fancy are going on within. Real silence is the controlling of the ebullitions of our mind and of the feelings of the lower psychic nature.

To be silent is not to become dumb; it means to speak (*a*) deliberately, (*b*) manasically, (*c*) composedly. We are not evolved enough to do so every day and hour by hour. Therefore, we have to learn the art of true speaking through the study of Nature which always speaks and sings. The Esoteric Philosophy insists that we remain silent and give Nature a chance to speak to us. There is a motive and a method in the practice of both silence and secrecy. Narada, the Deva-Muni, talks plenty! Secrecy and silence are faculties which can be wrongly used, but so can any faculty. *Light on the Path* has numerous valuable hints. We have to lose the power to wound; we have to acquire knowledge, for speech comes with knowledge. Expand your circle of friends, says Crosbie. How? By speech, of course, situated as we are. But what type of speech?

Think what an effort silence is for so many of our friends! Small talk, shop talk, deteriorates into base and worse talk. Secrecy covers a wider field, as outer environment is involved. We are not able to get away from our environment, but Karma opens the door when we are ready or have made ourselves ready. The principle of that procedure is in *Light on the Path* — the seclusion of the Adept. As you labour persistently in this you will win your own seclusion.

There never has been in my mind any question as to whether to speak falsehood or truth; that issue is as clear as daylight. It is the speaking of unnecessary truth which might harm; to my mind an *unnecessary* truth is as wrong as what people call a necessary falsehood. As for the main issue — there can be no question on that at all and ever, but for the truly accurate a way always opens.

The less you talk about it, the easier you will find it to carry out your plans. Otherwise you will have from all and sundry a hundred

questions of why, how and what. From the start keep to your discretion. It is none of other people's business as to where you go and what you do or why it is done. All this is a good discipline for you in observing silence and secrecy.

Indulgence in phantasy may be due to wrong mental habits from the past and the elementals in the present, which implies influence of and from the Astral Light. Phantasy has numerous aspects. You have to take into account that Item of the Ten Items which deals with the Astral Light and its two aspects — the lower separative astral and the higher divine *Akasha*. As for the purification of the elementals and their handling, Judge has many wise things to say in his "Conversations" (see *Vernal Blooms*).

There is something useful in the *Transactions* about our two brains — cerebrum and cerebellum. As above, so below, and the very process of emanations reveals the Law of Correspondence. One has to keep the mind busy with useful and constructive work; thus we gain some concentration and overcome the habit of fancy. Imagination is the image-making faculty. There is an important footnote in the *S.D.*, Vol. II, p. 59, which points to the use of this faculty, and Judge's article in *Vernal Blooms* (p. 111) has some good things. Shall we say that false imagination is phantasy and right phantasy is imagination? It is what and why we image forth that counts.

The imagination and visualization faculty (the reverse of fancy and daydreaming) is the master-power. Will, thought, aspiration or higher feelings, are all involved. Works can be endowed with sacramental values and auras by Imagination. The doctrine of transubstantiation is not wholly inaccurate. The leaf, flower, fruit, of the ninth chapter of the *Gita* are but examples. They point to the fact that small trifles are usable; next, that by imagination such objects become holy, because our powers go into them — *e.g.*, the flower of Karma which fades after giving the sense pleasure of fragrance and colour; there are flowers without scent; there are flowers with different scents, etc. Fragrance-aroma is the assimilation aspect of Karma. Similarly, a fruit is nourishment with its properties and tastes, curative or laxative; water is a purifier; and so on. Imagination is a power and we develop it harmoniously by this exercise. Attention and perseverance are also called for.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A complaint frequently made by people in peace organizations is that there is not enough public discussion or agitation on the problem of eliminating war. In a forceful article, "The Truth Alone Is Not Enough" (*Peace News*, November 6, 1964), Dr. Lester Grinspoon argues that telling the "truth" about war, and making this a focus of activity, is at best ineffective and at worst downright dangerous. Dr. Grinspoon is senior research psychiatrist at the Massachusetts Mental Health Centre, Boston, and instructor in psychiatry at Harvard Medical School.

It does not require a great deal of intelligence to grasp the truth about the nature and risks of a nuclear war; yet it is a fact — and Dr. Grinspoon brings forward instances to prove it — that merely sounding the alarm often arouses no response from the people. This is so, he suggests, because the truth is often unacceptable.

People cannot risk being overwhelmed by the anxiety which might accompany a full cognitive and affective grasp of the present world situation and its implications for the future. It serves a man no useful purpose to accept this truth if doing so leads only to very disquieting feelings, feelings which interfere with his capacity to be productive, to enjoy life, and to maintain his mental equilibrium.

Of the psychological mechanisms which protect men from anxiety, denial is one of the most primitive and at the same time one of the most important. People are using this mechanism when they manage to ignore or dismiss internal or external events, the perception of which is painful. Common examples are the avoidance of contemplating one's inevitable death or the reluctance to acknowledge the presence of a fatal disease. . . .

Among the other mental mechanisms that people use to defend themselves against distressing facts, Dr. Grinspoon mentions rationalization ("It's so terrible it'll never be used!"), intellectualization (the grasping of technical details), isolation (the separation of fact from feeling), and displacement (the unconscious transference of feelings from their real object, in this case the threat of nuclear war, to substitute objects).

According to Dr. Grinspoon, the consequences of an endeavour to make whole populations really appreciate the nature of the present risks might be disastrous. People would be burdened with feelings with which they might have no way of coping constructively, and fear might drive them to activities which could result in increased world tension.

People living in the thermonuclear age [he writes] cannot really accept the facts of this moment in history *without a concomitant means or hope of altering them for the next*. The truth alone is not enough. . . .

What happens when people's means of keeping these facts at bay have been suddenly destroyed? For a while they may suffer anxious depressed feelings, feelings which may be incapacitating. For some these feelings may precipitate serious mental illness. . . .

If people believe there is something they can do about an otherwise intolerable situation, they can come closer to a fuller appreciation of that situation.

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Another article, one by Adam Roberts, in the same issue of *Peace News* continues Dr. Grinspoon's argument and in its title poses the question: "Are Peace Groups on the Right Road?" Peace organizations generally outline and describe their ideal in negative terms — as an absence of weapons and an absence of war. "I renounce war" and "Ban the bomb" are their characteristic slogans.

The article suggests that one cannot simply "say no" to war; it is necessary to propose alternative means of dealing with international problems.

Even in the event of disarmament — unilateral or multilateral — international dangers would not entirely disappear, nor would the possibility of the recurrence of dictatorship or arms build-ups. And it will almost certainly prove impossible to get disarmament until alternative means of dealing with these dangers are developed. There is a need to give people the confidence to disarm. . . . It might be more profitable . . . to accompany explanation of the disquieting facts about war with the provision of ideas about how, in practical terms, the present situation could be changed for the better. Such ideas cannot simply be produced out of a hat, and half-baked ideas which failed to take into account real problems and genuine fears would be of no more use than no ideas at all. Peace must be seen as a way of solving problems rather than as simply an absence of war. . . .

"Non-violence" is itself a rather negative term. There is a need to think in far more concrete terms — to consider in a practical way forms of action such as strikes, go-slows, boycotts, or physical obstruction, if a civilian defence policy, based on the technique of

non-violent action, is to give people a sense of confidence that they can defend their societies effectively. Indeed, it has been suggested that instead of talking about "disarmament," we should use the term "trans-armament" to civilian defence.

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A problem requiring an early solution in the world today is the so-called "information explosion." Scientific activity throughout the world has increased at such a momentous pace in recent years that scientists are feeling overwhelmed by it. R. Weller, an American aircraft engineering executive, told colleagues at a meeting at the University of California that the flood of information threatens to drown mankind (*Science Horizons*, No. 44). The situation, he said, calls to mind

the calculation made years ago that oysters, if left unmolested by natural enemies, would, in 18 years, cover the earth to a depth of about a mile. Fortunately, their natural enemies abound. However, we have no natural enemies for information. On the contrary, we cherish and protect it with fire-proof storage, laws forbidding arson, and any number of other unnatural constraints.

New findings are being reported at a rate that makes it impossible for the human mind to assimilate all of them. Lack of efficient communication of the information that researchers are gathering results in duplication and a stupendous waste of time and energy.

The magnitude of the problem was recently illustrated by the U.S. National Bureau of Standards. The Bureau counted 35,000 recognized science and engineering journals in the world publishing about a million research papers each year in the physical sciences and engineering. Scientists in every field, from those who explore the far reaches of the infinite universe to those who study the infinitesimal nucleus of the atom, if they want to be up to date, are faced with digesting thousands of pages of journals and abstracts each month.

In the mad rush to gain more knowledge and information, scientists seldom pause and ask, "Where does it all ultimately lead us to? Does it in any way make us better human beings — or lead us any nearer to our goal as evolving souls?" The more science progresses, the less does it promise us a theory of the ultimate nature of the universe, still less of the meaning of life. One good thing, however, that has resulted from all this scientific activity is that it has made scientists aware of how much they yet do not know. It is hoped that from the mass of knowledge that

is being gained will in time be distilled an ever more comprehensive picture of the universe and man's place in it. It needs to be realized more and more that the important thing is to make of science a unified system. Some scientists are already acknowledging that "old-fashioned" metaphysics, far from being irrelevant to an age of science, is science's indispensable complement for a full view of life. "To make of Science an integral *whole*," wrote H.P.B., "necessitates, indeed, the study of spiritual and psychic, as well as physical Nature" (*S.D.*, I. 588). And again:

It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence, until finally they phenomenalize in the form of the material Universe, by a process of conversion of metaphysics into physics. . . . (*S.D.*, I. 44-45)

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An article on "Superbrain" by Jeffrey Blyth (*The English Digest*, October 1964) poses the question: "Can man invent a machine that is more brilliant than Einstein, wiser than Socrates, more creative than Picasso?" Two experts, Dr. Norbert Wiener, of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and Professor Herbert Simon, of the Carnegie Institute of Technology, believe that it is possible to build "superbrains." In fact, Professor Simon has already demonstrated that computers can solve problems which are not "programmed," but are like problems in real life which require "thinking out."

There are now computer machines which can not only "think" but also "see"; they can visually identify optical patterns and even letters of the alphabet. There is a computer which composes symphonies; another, which translates Chinese into English. Machines are used by lawyers and doctors to diagnose cases. Airlines use them to co-ordinate their bookings. And in the United States they are used to decide Government problems. Scientists consider these to be "kindergarten stuff." The new "superbrains" they are working on will, they claim, be able to reason for themselves, form judgments, take decisions. "They may even have a will of their own." These "superbrains" will consist of chemicals, nucleic

acids, the same sort of physical matter which makes up the human brain; and it is believed that they will be able to perform the same function.

In many ways it is frightening. Many scientists in America are hesitant to discuss the subject. Those who will talk say that the age of the computer is in its infancy. Its potentials, they claim, are greater even than atomic energy. . . .

But the men working on the superbrains that may, a decade from now, rule our lives, consider the present models crude. "They are basically stupid. They cannot add two and two together unless they are told how," says Dr. Weiner. He believes, though, that the machines can ultimately become smarter than man. He believes that eventually machines will have "memory genes" — the same sort of mechanism that controls the human mind. And some scientists envisage the "immortal brain" whose memory can be expanded indefinitely until it includes all the wisdom of the ages.

It would, they conceive, be able to relate all its stored intelligence accurately, able to reason without being corrupted by emotion, able to solve more of the world's problems than anyone before — and even to create works of art.

Dr. Weiner, who coined the word "cybernetics" to describe the art of computerism, is seriously afraid that computers will be improved to the point where they will get out of man's control. There is only one consoling thought: man, we are assured, will always be superior as long as he can pull out the plug or throw the switch. Presuming the machines don't get there first!

Whatever the robots of the future may be able to do, man need fear no encroachment by them on his prerogatives of self-consciousness and freedom of choice. Regardless of mechanical and chemical developments, the higher powers of the mind will remain the undisputed prerogative of man — and of those Beings who have transcended the stage of ordinary humanity — intuition and imagination, compassion and the will to create and to sacrifice and serve. Let us develop these.

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