

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. 42, No. 2

17th December 1971

## THE DAY OF THE BIRTH OF THE SUN

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT for December 1947.—Eds.]

THE ANCIENT WORLD, possessing the knowledge which our gross and sensuous materialistic civilization rejects, celebrated the Winter Solstice as a festival. Prithivi, the Earth, is the Mother of all beings who live on her wide surface, and in the Vedas she is invoked with Dyaus-Pitri, her Consort. The earth is a living intelligence, not as modern science understands “living” or even in the sense with which many a poet endows the word. The intelligent Being of the Earth is portrayed in myths but even these are nowadays misinterpreted.

Theosophy and Occultism look upon Mother Earth in a very different light. She is triple and sevenfold, and her real nature is as invisible as is the real man to the eyes of the profane.

H.P.B. has pointed out that the astronomical points which mark the annual seasons have their psychic and spiritual roots; the former the reflections of the latter. If “the earth doth like a snake renew her winter weeds outworn,” she does so by the powers of her psychic nature; and behind both physical and psychical is her spiritual being. New physical life in Spring is caused by the astral life of the Earth which is born at the Winter Solstice, grows in beauty at the Vernal Equinox and matures at the Summer Solstice, later to die. Between the 21st of September and the 21st of December the psychic life draws within itself; the autumnal forces turn inwards and life becomes subjective; and, like man after the death of his body, Earth turns inward to contemplate her past incarnation. The autumnal cycle is the gestation period with its two parts of death in life and life in birth again.

Desire for physical birth brings the human soul under the dominance of the pairs of opposites. "At the time of birth all beings fall into error by reason of the delusion of the opposites which springs from liking and disliking," says the *Gita*. A similar desire for the birth in Spirit or the Second Birth is necessary. That desire must stir the personality to die so that it may be born again. The Winter Solstice festival dramatized the profound facts of the Second Birth for the masses of the old world while it conveyed practical instruction to the aspiring soul who perceived the truth of the vibrant words — "Give up thy life if thou would'st live" and set out to apply them to himself.

What is this desire for death which results in Life Eternal? What should one desire in order to participate really in the Festival of the Winter Solstice? Real participation means an experience of the human mind-soul turning within by an effort to turn away from the life which swings between the pairs of opposites, and to be dominated in life by a single purpose. That dominating and domineering purpose is to attain conscious life in Spirit, to become a conscious part of the Divine Soul. If the aspirant to the Second Birth wishes to realize even a little of the power of the Earth-Being remanifesting at the Winter Solstice, he must understand the primary lesson — the Earth's desire for the Sun, her power to absorb and assimilate in the mystery of contemplation the psychic currents of the Sun, the renewal of which follows on the disintegration of the last life. The death of the old year begets the birth of the new.

What prevents the masses of men from experiencing spiritual birth — its joy and its peace and its power, all of which everyone wants? Ignorance. But even when knowledge is secured, even then most of the aspiring neophytes are overpowered by the congenital instinct of the personality which further develops in the years of incarnated life. This instinct always tries to avoid suffering, to seek protection from pain. In doing so it invites greater tribulations. Just as the Allies of 1914–1918, seeking to make sure and secure the peace of their own countries brought upon themselves the second world war, so do many, many aspirants. Similarly Indian leaders, hoping to secure peace in the land, agreed to the division of the country. Fear of bloodshed prompted them to this, and now security and safety, peace and order are weaker than before.

Death of the personality means casting out the fear of pain of body, mind and soul. Accustomed to life in and of matter, instinctually we

fear the death of the body, even while something within us whispers "Not all of me shall die." One of the natural intuitions of the race engenders the general feeling that the soul survives bodily death. And yet men and women are afraid to die and therefore fear disease and decay and pain. To avoid bodily pain some bodily pleasures are given up. But, as the connection between the psychic man and the physical body is not known, a legion of mistakes arises. What has to be given up is the life that swings between the numberless pairs of opposites.

Correspondentially, the student-aspirant feels that death of the lower personal nature must precede the Second Birth — his own Birth in Spirit. He needs to clear his mental consciousness to recognize that he has to free himself from the desire for personal security, free himself from the desire to avoid suffering. Not to feel pain implies not to run after pleasures. The aspiring neophyte sees this with the eyes of knowledge and reflection, but another fear insidiously creeps in, tempting him away from his path.

Human personality, full of doubts of Nature and her kingdoms and fearful about its own safety and security, builds for itself a hard shell. This gives a man the feeling of being distinct and different from his fellow-men and leads him to consolidate that separative existence in numerous directions. The aspirant-neophyte has this shell, built in the past, when he contacts Theosophy and its White Occultism. He is called upon to break this shell. The first acts which follow upon his resolve, made in the name of and before the bar of the Inner God, crack that shell. This beginning may be compared to the conception which results in the Second Birth.

The continuous effort to remain in touch with and under the guidance of the God within and to *act* accordingly culminates in an experience which corresponds to the phenomenon of the incoming of the lower *manas* into the embryo in antenatal life. It marks the development of the psychic being of the neophyte, more at home in the world of Spirit and less attached to that of matter. The cracking of the hard shell continues, the death of the ahankaric personality is proceeding, and the aspirant is getting more and more ready for the Second Birth.

Fear is the dominant note in the life of the lower personality which is separative in its functions and enforces a separative existence; it is the opposite of the quality born of the nature, function and fruition of the human personality which survives death and is born again. That quality is *Surety*. Living in Spirit, being a part of the Spirit, rooted in

Spirit, being that Spirit itself, man's growing sense of unity with Nature brings him the certainty that he can never be nought, that he is.

The separative personality needs clothes which separate himself from others. The freed personality is naked — he has nothing to hide from Nature; he is known as Digambara — clothed with Space which is Spirit. His home is the world of Air-*Vayu* and Ether-*Akasha*. He is not yet master of space and air and ether; he is born therein and will have to learn to master these, just as the infant once born learns to master the world of light and sound and smell and taste and touch.

The cycle of evolution for the aspiring neophyte corresponds to Autumn. Masses of men are not there yet. Some are enjoying their material Summer, others their material Spring. The true devotee is in the material Autumn which is progressing towards the Day of the Winter Solstice.

If the grand and glorious Sun is said to be reborn every year, so should the aspirant-neophyte be; he should live and labour so that a good report of his future Second Birth may be made to Nature and the Lords of Nature by himself and his companions. If he does not succeed in this incarnation to be born again, he cannot really experience the Festival of the Winter Solstice.

As the Sun moves northwards with precision, let us move upward also with precision. Steadfastness and regularity are the Sun's power consecrated to the service of Earth. Unwaveringly it proceeds, irrespective of war or peace on earth, shining on the just and the unjust alike. It does its duty. So must each devotee — TRY. Without any turning, and correcting oneself when a wrong turning has been taken; not daunted by circumstances which seem to deteriorate or which truly worsen, attempting to turn every power of evil to good; loving those we like but also those we do not like, with a heart-effort to transmute the dislike into like and then to love — thus will we spiral upwards.

Let us resolve to be born again. And in resolving let us remember these words, published in *Lucifer* of January 1888:

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.

---

## THE PILGRIMS AND THEIR PILGRIMAGE

The Teacher can but point the way. The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

PILGRIMAGES to be beneficial must be the result of an inner urge. The resolve to undertake must be voluntary; the motive, above personal gain; the effort, to some considerable extent ascetic. He who on a pilgrimage displays the shortness of his temper or who breaks the journey to meander into by-ways is not a "pilgrim." Such an one may in fact retard the progress of others. He remains a mere gazer of sights whose heart-strings do not vibrate in unison with those of the group of which he remains at best a disjointed unit. Though he may go through the same experiences as are gone through by his brother pilgrims, he earns no merit and makes no progress. There are pilgrims in reality and pilgrims in name. The two are different.

Even where pilgrimages are undertaken without much inner understanding, certain acts and behaviours are taboo. The hardships of the journey are of the essence of any pilgrimage. They cannot be cut across by modes of luxurious travel. The pilgrim is a beggar for spiritual grace. He goes as a supplicant. He need not parade in sackcloth and ashes, but there cannot be a gaudy ostentation of wealth or the making of provision for delectable food for the whole journey, nor for the matter of that the spending of leisure in sense-delighting pursuits. These are bars to solemnity and destroyers of an atmosphere of dedication. He who thirsts genuinely for divine wisdom can have neither eyes nor ears for the sensuous. The arduous journey is undertaken not for striking the same chords of desire as were struck prior to the pilgrimage. The aim of the journey is to obtain the alms of knowledge in the bowl of the chastened soul of man. To the true pilgrim there is no felicity higher than the acceptance of him by a Spiritual Teacher. Mind and heart are focused on this culmination of a long-formulated desire.

The pilgrim does not burden himself with an abundance of baggage. There are no coolies or bearers where he goes. He has to be his own cook, servant and scavenger. He therefore sheds all that is cumbersome, frivolous and not of utility on the journey. Since he has to be his own porter, he must travel light. Hardships of terrain, inclemency of the weather, the dangers of camping in forests where snakes and wild beasts abound, the crossing of treacherous waters as of dangerous precipices

—all these are in the prospect. Will the thought of these dampen his ardour, induce rethinking and even a calling off of the endeavour? It all depends on the value he places on the pilgrimage. He is in all probability unaccustomed to deal with the imponderables where reasoning can be of no use. Will his faith stand the terrific strain? Probably he himself will be in no position to answer the question.

With the start of the pilgrimage, persons widely separated in rank, status, social environment, skills, knowledge, wisdom, sagacity and devotion are thrown together and will remain in the same company during the entire course of the pilgrimage. The humblest pilgrim as the poorest and the ailing becomes a brother with the rich and the robust and all must pull on jointly for the common purpose. Each to the other is a soul given in trust to love, to protect and to cherish. In such a group as this, there can be no small talk nor slander, for thought, eyes and ears are strained to the utmost in the direction of the great unfolding. The true pilgrim yearns for it and waits eagerly to open his soul to the eternal. It is thus that during the long and fatiguing trek the thoughts come to be fixed on the grand culmination and the mind develops a gnawing, hungering feeling which can be silenced only with the achieving of the desired orientation. To the boor and the profligate of nature's finer forces, the pilgrimage is an exercise in futility; the undertaking of hardships for a mirage; the abandoning of ease for a belief in that which the man has neither seen nor known. He can see only a rude awakening, a frustration at the end of the long, long trial, and therefore views the pilgrims as cranks who cannot put proper values on things and are more to be humoured than taunted.

If the pilgrim is sincere, the pilgrimage begins in hope and holiness. The pilgrim's robes are donned, the mind is oriented to the pilgrimage. One aspect of the pilgrimage stands out from among all others. Though the pilgrim may be in the company of other pilgrims, he has to travel on alone. His thoughts and aspirations are as secret as those of his copilgrims. Each remains inside his closet, an isolated unit capable of rendering help, charity and sacrifice; yet planning his approach to the grand culmination in a manner and mien entirely his. His obeisance and submission to the Law takes on individual tints and hues. His paeon is loud or low, humble or triumphant, even as his Soul bursts forth or remains subdued in its meek union with the True.

To the pilgrims who are earnest of Soul, their signposts are those who have gone before them; their solace, that the hardships they face

are in no way different from those undergone by their predecessors; their hope, that they will win the grace of their Guru. The ideal of the pilgrim is sacrifice, even unto the giving up of his pilgrimage, and the chance of meeting his master face to face if by that act he may help a stumbling, ailing Soul upon its upward way.

All this is perceptible even as the awakening Soul sees it. There are other pilgrimages with deeper significance where it is not the higher emotions but the Soul which initiates and continues the pilgrimage through life and lives till the longed-for sounds reach his glad imaginings. Such a pilgrimage is little known and as infrequently undertaken. Says an old, old teaching: "Whether one sets out to the bloom of the east, or to the chambers of the west, without moving . . . is the travelling in this road. In this path, to whatever place one would go, that place one's own self becomes." This is the true pilgrimage of which the earthly shadow is the travelling of the pilgrim who plods from one shrine to another. The austerity and the courage, the instant and spontaneous willingness to help a co-pilgrim in distress even at great peril to oneself are all brought out and tested by circumstances that Karma marshals and presents to the disciple. It is a terrible ordeal this, which requires the sore-beset pilgrim to pass through knowledge of all misery, conquer the assembled hordes of anthropomorphized desires, and destroy all sin. What the earthly pilgrimage symbolizes in harrowing darkness, death-dealing precipices, sloughs of despond, raging storms and tossing waters, these the spiritual mysteries create in the disciple's life. The test of an unflinching, unextinguishable resolve is there as is the test of a brotherliness which passes camaraderie or even the love of a mother for her only son when ten have died. This is pilgrimage *in excelsis* where the pathfinder Soul often feels itself isolated and left out in the cold to fend for itself.

What is the initial duty of the devoted soul that undertakes the grand pilgrimage which life offers? Say the scriptures:

Give light and comfort to the toiling pilgrim, and seek out him who knows still less than thou; who in his wretched desolation sits starving for the bread of Wisdom and the bread which feeds the shadow, without a Teacher, hope or consolation, and — let him hear the Law.

If this is the primary duty that is entrusted to his care, then has he first to learn how best to become an impersonal channel for dispensing the word of the Law — an act in which he takes up the difficult task

of an impersonal transmitter in whose message nothing from his personal life is allowed to percolate. In one sense and at his level, he has to become a small casement or window through which the Light comes without tint or distortion. Next follow injunctions which are sacred and dare not be bypassed. The pilgrim-missionary has first to imbibe and then transmit the following:

Tell him, O Candidate, that he who makes of pride and self-regard bond-maidens to devotion; that he, who cleaving to existence, still lays his patience and submission to the Law, as a sweet flower at the feet of Shakya-Thubpa [Buddha], becomes a Srotapatti [one who has entered the stream] in this birth. The Siddhis of perfection may loom far, far away; but the first step is taken, the stream is entered, and he may gain the eye-sight of the mountain eagle, the hearing of the timid doe....

Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom.

Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered....

Restrain by thy Divine thy lower Self.

Restrain by the Eternal the Divine.

These injunctions and rules are not the work of what the world calls philosophers and mystics. They have come down from across centuries which were long forgotten at a time when Greece and Rome were in their infancy. Pilgrimages have been undertaken from the time that humanity reached its manhood and Pilgrims have always walked the noble Path that leads them from out of the shadow into the shine. Sir Edwin Arnold describes this Path in his *Light of Asia*:

Manifold tracks lead to yon sister-peaks

Around whose snows the gilded clouds are curled;

By steep or gentle slopes the climber comes

Where breaks that other world.

Strong limbs may dare the rugged road which storms,

Soaring and perilous, the mountain's breast;

The weak must wind from slower ledge to ledge,

With many a place of rest.

So is the Eightfold Path which brings to peace;

By lower or by upper heights it goes.

The firm soul hastes, the feeble tarries. All

Will reach the sunlit snows.

# TRUTH AND ITS RELATION TO THEOSOPHY

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist* for September 1888.—Eds.]

THIS SUBJECT is a very comprehensive one, possessing a wide interest and embracing many abstruse questions. I shall give only the bare outline of my thoughts regarding the vast theme.

सत्यान्नास्ति परो धर्मः।

“There is no religion higher than truth” has been the motto of the Theosophical Society ever since its transplantation to Hindustan. This motto only gains definiteness when it is supplemented by its direct corollary — there is no apostasy lower than falsehood. Now if a motto is the concentrated essence of the broad principles and practices of an association, you will not have to go far in search of the relation between Theosophy and truth. In short, Theosophy is nothing but the science of truth, and the Theosophical Society is simply a shrine dedicated to that science.

Of truth itself I shall touch succinctly upon two different aspects:  
*First* — Truth as a subject of philosophical enquiry — *i.e.*, *verity*.  
*Secondly* — Truth as a moral quality — *i.e.*, *veracity*.

The very first question that suggests itself in connection with the former of these is, “What is the test of truth?” The *Bhagavad-Gita* furnishes a very simple and unmistakable reply to this, which runs thus: “The false never is, the true never ceases to be.” Eternity is thus laid down as the essence of truth, and non-entity as that of falsehood. This verse, however, treats of absolute truth and falsehood, whilst we have to deal in everyday life with comparative truth. This may sound strange to our ears, but it is nevertheless a fact; for, our own personal experiences being limited at both ends by time, would it not be idle to talk glibly of absolute truth or eternal entities with reference to matters of everyday concern? To us, then, all truth is comparative or relative, and the measure of it is durability. Thus there is nothing absolutely false within the field of our perception. The wildest vagaries of a lunatic and the most frantic hallucinations of a delirious patient have a momentary existence, and are therefore true to that extent. On the other hand, the intensest of our emotions, these tangible bodies of ours, nay, this solid earth and all the resplendent luminaries which begem the infinite azure over our head, being evidently subject to change and decay, are so far false.

This is why the Vedanta classes all manifestations under the category of Maya without making any distinction between the more and the less real. But this conclusion of the Vedanta is its loftiest philosophical generalization, viewing the universe from the standpoint of absolute truth. The blunder committed in ascribing the short-sightedness of the European school of idealists to the Vedanta arises from the inability of its critics to distinguish between the standpoint of the absolute and that of the relative. Hume and Mill have but one way of looking at the question, and represent in their philosophy but a single phase of the truth — and that phase the most uncommon one. The Vedanta on the other hand fully recognizes the conventional aspect of the world, and investigates the laws which regulate it, while it surpasses the subtlest idealist of the west in its abstraction, and is clearer and more emphatic in its declaration of the chimerical character not only of the cosmos perceived, but also of the perceptive. The Vedanta is Theosophy proper, and is the science of truth in all its phases. Thus by an elaborate though simple process of reasoning — and reason is the only discriminative faculty in us — it arrives at the exact logical inference that, considered absolutely, all phenomena physical and mental are alike false, and that Brahma alone, which is pure reason and is the cause of all phenomena, is really true. At the same time it takes a comparative view of the phenomena themselves and in this view formulates the maxim चक्षुर्वै सत्यम् — “What is seen is true.” A proper understanding of the Vedanta will make us not dreamers, as is apprehended by some, but truly practical men — supremely happy in the knowledge of the true nature of things, tracing all incidents to their primary causes, explaining them by the laws which govern their course, relegating to their proper sphere the unavoidable events of physical life, and thus remaining peaceful and contented amid all the storms and vicissitudes of fortune.

That the Vedanta is the true solution of the mysteries of existence may be readily gathered from its wonderful combination and reconciliation of transcendental idealism and hard-and-fast utilitarianism. It is prevented by no Anglican sentimentalism from laying down, despite its theory of the illusional character of feelings, that happiness is the end of all activity — that all this restless energy, this feverish excitement, this torture of the body and soul together that we see around us, are simply due to the yearning after and expectation of perfect felicity somewhere. The Vedanta itself is the outcome of this quest for and hope of bliss; and it fulfils this hope and crowns that quest with success. And what does the Vedanta say? All our pain and misery proceed from

ignorance; and therefore knowledge — true wisdom — is the infallible cure for these — the only ambrosia which yields endless beatitude. And what again is true wisdom but knowledge of the truth, the whole truth and every point of it — truth both absolute and relative, real and conventional? Is there anything more certain, does anything stand more to reason than this doctrine of the Vedanta? Do we require any arguments to convince us of the transparent fact that all our trouble and agonies, our heart-breaking disappointments and anxieties, are owing merely to our ignorance of the truth about them, of the sources from which they spring and the law which controls them? If not, why should we hesitate to set up a temple to truth and consecrate all our possessions at its altar in the full confidence of an abundant return in never-failing blessedness?

All this, however, would be nothing if man were devoid of any faculty for the recognition of truth. Theosophy therefore correctly holds that, although our sense-perceptions are illusive, the intuitions of our reason,<sup>1</sup> which is a ray of the supreme intelligence in us, are actual. Wherefore as the foregoing fundamental tenets of the Vedanta are all the deductions of the highest reason unfettered by any bias and undisturbed by any passion, they may justly be cherished as the richest gems of truth. I have shown that truth is the solitary panacea for all evils, and I may add that its acquisition will lead to the highest optimism and invest the whole of this universe with a robe of goodness pleasing to the eye and soothing to the soul.

Now with regard to the second aspect of truth — *veracity*. In order to justify the ancients in their placing truth at the head of the ethical virtues, morality itself should be defined. The plainest and the most intelligible enunciation of ethics is that given by our Rishis, and adopted to a certain extent by modern utilitarians. That then which best promotes the permanent well-being of mankind in general is the loftiest morality. Let us glance then for a moment at the bearing of truth upon politics and sociology.

“Honesty is the best policy” is a trite and ancient proverb. Nevertheless in our own times the idea seems to have obtained currency, even among the foremost rank of our citizens and the educated community in general, that politics is synonymous with diplomacy, that the best of it consists in what we cannot help denominating moral masquerade

---

<sup>1</sup> Are reason and intuition then identical?

and intellectual jugglery. To this idea — pernicious as well to the temporal interests of mankind as to the spiritual — I feel it my duty to give an emphatic contradiction. A policy that has no truth for its basis and rests upon a cunning perversion and suppression of facts — a foundation more unsubstantial than even a dream — must necessarily fail. It contains the elements of its own ruin within itself, depending as it does for its success not upon any solid substratum that can defy the minutest scrutiny, but upon the art of dissimulation, which must give way before a careful examination. It also foolishly assumes intellectual supremacy for its own authors, and unwarrantably counts upon the stupidity of the rest of the world. Such a policy may answer its purpose for a time and under particular circumstances, but it contains no inherent guarantee of success and therefore ought to be discarded by all far-seeing individuals and nations. On the contrary, a course of honesty which is but a practical illustration of truth in conduct, if invariably pursued, breeds confidence and love, wins friends, and consequently strengthens its advocates.

Our political interests being closely allied to our social, it is needless to speak separately of the latter. The same reasons which show that truth is conducive to our political welfare hold with respect to our social concerns also. The happiness of a gregarious animal such as man can only be secured by mutual affection; and what can be more congenial to the growth of this feeling than kindness and straightforwardness in our dealings with one another? Obedience to the law of nature is a perpetual fountain of bliss, and misery results from opposition to it. The laws of nature are eternal; obedience to these therefore is devotion to truth, and hence truth is the highest moral quality. Veracity is moreover indispensable to the acquisition of truth, the knowledge of the real mystery of being; for nothing is within our reach which we do not love ardently and serve faithfully. Falsehood betrays an indifference to abstract truth, an absence of fidelity to it, which will always keep us away from it. Truth then is our greatest god; at its sacred shrine let us offer our soul's most devout worship; and as Brahma is very truth, pure and absolute, all glory be to him!

॥ ओं तत् सत् ॥

—UPENDRANATH BASU

---

# WORDS OF LIGHT

## THE MASTER

### 2. HEAR MY WORDS

IN My word is thy way.

My WORD, My creative WORD which sustains thee, is ever in thy heart.  
This is "the word" that thou must hear.

Thou knowest the things that I approve — purity, compassion, enlightenment.

Truth riseth within thee, as water riseth from the earth.

Meditate thereon.

Amid the hoard of memories seek the golden grains which I have scattered.

Fasten thy gaze upon Me, though thou seest Me not, for from Me shall light come upon thee.

Resolve all things into their relationship with Me.

*Warnings against impatience for spiritual progress.*

Is there not a time when the corn shall fitly ripen?  
Doth the rose-tree in spring know the bloom of midsummer?  
It awaiteth the coming of the sun.

Listen to thy heart; live in tune with thy heart. So shall thy life make music.

Find the master-key and it will vibrate in accord with the Eternal.  
The master-key is the moral law.

Thou art preoccupied with *things*, and each casteth a shadow.

Seek thou the highest. So shalt thou attain thereto.

By Me thou comest unto Me, and in Me is the place of thy rest.

Draw on the wells of the Spirit. They will never fail thee.

Not in ancient scrolls hidden in the temples, but in lives lived in Me is My truth made manifest.

In not knowing Me is all evil.

In the finding of Me thou shalt find bliss.

*Of austerities.*

It is not always that which is hard which pleaseth Me most.  
Am I not the seed of the harebell as well as the thistle, of the red rose  
as well as the thorn?

Around the tree of life spread the deserts of desire.  
Dig thou deep channels that the heavenly streams may flow about it.  
Such channels are devotion, meditation and service.

Thou doest well to kneel at My feet; better to incline thy heart towards  
Me; best of all when thou givest Me thyself.

When all asking ceaseth, thou hast.  
When all seeking endeth, thou art where thou would'st be.

To follow things deathly is death.  
To come to the knowledge of Truth is immortality.

Study well My word, that through it thou mayest see My light shine.  
Let there be an end of doing and a beginning of being.

I have given thee a torch in thy heart, and that torch is called "Discrimi-  
nation."

Trust all to Me, from whom all hath come. Am not I Lord of the whole?  
If it were not for thy darkness how should My light be known?

Too many words are a snare.  
There is the WORD.

*Of good works.*

These are but the activities of the outer ego.  
Devotion is in the core of the soul.

As fire runneth among coals, so the thought of Me runneth and springeth  
up amid these thy poor deeds.

*Of the sense of inadequacy.*

Like an unripe apple thou canst not wholly rejoice in the sun till thy  
growth is complete.

Thou shalt not attain Me by desire.  
Thou shalt find Me solely by devotion.

- How knowest thou the loved one in a world of multiplicity?  
Lo, at the time appointed the ONE is made plain to thee and standeth apart from all else.
- Thou must abide in darkness till thou canst bear the light.  
In darkness growth hath its beginning.
- Dwell in affirmations of My being, and in offerings of thyself unto Me.  
Why fear? Does any fear that he shall not find the way home?  
When all anxiety ceaseth on thy part, I will guide thee and bring thee to Myself.
- The secret of Truth is Unity.
- Seek Me by turning within. Dwell on Me in thought. Do that which I teach.
- As water gusheth forth from a rock, so shall knowledge of Me break through the hardness of thy heart.
- Despair not. Light shall come to thee. Only be patient.  
Seek thy way amid the thorns of self-will. The seeking is for thy salvation.
- Truly, I will not fail thee.
- Thou dost not trust Me wholly, but *I* have trusted *thee*, for lo, I have shown thee My truth.
- When thou hearest the sound of the stream of being, thine ears shall be deaf to all else.
- By Me shalt thou come to Me, and, finding Me, thou shalt lose thyself.  
My voice shall not be heard for the *asking* but for the *seeking*.
- In the breath is the life, in the eye is the light, in the heart is the knowledge of My WORD.

(To be continued)

---

# SLEEP AND DREAMS—A SUBLUNAR MYSTERY

## VI.—BETWEEN TWO WORLDS

NOTHING is more striking in our dreams than the kaleidoscopic transformations, the new scene having no discernible relation to its predecessors, yet being confusedly identified with it in the jumble of nocturnal phantasmagoria. Neurologists attribute dreams to the physical basis of the condition of the brain, which is considered to be a hierarchy of centres, the higher and later evolved seeming to control and in a measure to repress the functional activities of the lower and earlier. Translated into psychological language, it means that which is instinctive, primitive, elemental in our mental life is being continually overborne by the fruit of experience and by the negative process of reflection. By throwing the higher centres out of the field, one can bring back the earlier state in which sensation, instinct and rudimentary animal intelligence have it all their own way.

Sleep is one means of stupefying the supreme controlling organs whereby one has a reversion to a more primitive type of experience, an upwelling in vigorous, pristine abundance of sensation and impulse. This unveiling during sleep of the more instinctive layers of our mental life may be seen in the leaping forth into full activity of some nascent and instantly inhibited impulse of thought or feeling of the waking hours.

Thus a new name through its similarity to a familiar one may happen during waking hours to start a new chain of ideas which we at once check as irrelevant; or the perception or imagination of a thing may arouse a momentary desire which we repress as foolish and wrong. The following night these half-formed psychical impulses, relieved of all restraint, work themselves out to their natural issue, and we dream irrationally or immorally, as the case may be.

Nor need the impulse thus attaining a complete fulfilment in sleep be a degrading one. The dream is only the expansion and complete development of a vague fugitive wish of the waking mind. It is a revelation stripping the ego of its artificial wrappings and exposing it in its native nudity. It brings up from the depths of our sub-conscious life the primal instinctive impulses, and discloses to us a side of ourselves which connects us with the great sentient world.

As engrossment in bodily life and activities is the characteristic of infancy, before the growing intelligence has been attracted and held by

the ever changing spectacle of the external world, so in our dreams there is a reversion to primitive infantile habits. This has a biological utility, as in the pressure of modern complex life one often has no time even to eat properly and the food is just gulped down. When the curtain is drawn over the multiplex distractions of the day during sleep, one gets an immediate awareness of what is going on in our interior organic structure.

It is, therefore, easy to note that the dream sometimes takes on a prophetic note when, owing to the close rapport between body and spirit during sleep, the initial stage of organic disturbance is disclosed, which otherwise may be overlooked. To the extent that dreams disclose any disequilibrium in our bodily system and also restore our bodily consciousness to its primitive supremacy, they are to be welcomed as revelations. James Sully in the *Fortnightly Review* (March 1893) observed:

Like some letter in cipher, the dream inscription when scrutinized closely loses its first look of balderdash and takes on the aspect of a serious, intelligible message. . . . Like some palimpsest, the dream discloses beneath its worthless surface-characters traces of an old and precious communication.

The prophetic nature of dreams is also emphasized by Maurice Maeterlinck in *The Unknown Guest*, where he affirms that every event, past, present or future, in any point in space, exists now somewhere in an eternal present, and being existent, it is possible for us in certain states to become conscious of events in what we term the future, that is to say, that which we in our passage through time have not yet arrived at. Maeterlinck gives a striking example that occurred to himself: at the commencement of an event that he had previously dreamed, he was able to tell a companion exactly what was going to happen next.

In spite of the fact that dreams, and remembered ones at that, constitute one-third of our sleep, which itself occupies one-third of our existence, and although they are nothing but outcroppings, the visible signs of an immense nocturnal activity, their importance is all the greater for the reason that this activity goes on during the day also, *pari passu* with the waking activities, but always remaining in the background. If only man wakes himself to the fact that dreams have an importance as valid as his daytime thoughts, there is every possibility of his life being enlarged by this second half of existence, hitherto confined to the dark dungeons of the night. Talking about the prodigious reser-

voir of energy locked up in our dreams which needs to be tapped, Raymond de Becker observes:

Do dreams overflow into reality, or is it that an osmosis takes place, an enriching experience between the two agencies of being? The dream poses the problem of the total man and it is for him that we must opt. Those who are ignorant of the machinations of the night, who disparage them, or are led by them without their realizing it and become their victims, are the true somnambulists.

During several conversations with Eckermann, Goethe too had expressed similar views about the remarkable nature of dreams, and once the great poet is reported to have said:

There are many such things in nature, though we have not the right key to them. We all walk in mysteries. We do not know what is stirring in the atmosphere that surrounds us, nor how it is connected with our own spirit. So much is certain: that at times we can put out the feelers of our soul beyond its bodily limits; and a presentiment, an actual insight into the immediate future, is accorded to it.

Advances in the theory of resurgence of racial memory in dreams have sometimes gone beyond Jung, as when it is put out by psychologists that all that our ancestors did, felt and suffered during countless ages of time, all that they converted into images, faculties and definite movements has been passed on to us, not indeed as such, but in the shape of instant capacities and possibilities inherent in our nervous cerebral system. Even as the mice are at play when the cat is away, during sleep when the personal consciousness is inactive, these latent characters of the psychic organism inherited from our remotest ancestors stir within us and fill our inner world with fantastic images and unforeseen desires. Strange and queer dreams appear, but they are not meaningless. All the tendencies transmitted by our farthest ancestors, which were latent in our waking consciousness, begin to revive. The more atavistic the character of the dream, the more paradoxical and strange it must appear to the man on awakening.

In consonance with the saying in the *Talmud*, "A dream which is not understood is like a letter which is not opened," if we do not understand the message conveyed by these dreams, we miss a great deal of what we know and tell to ourselves, when we are not busy with the traffickings of the outside mundane world. Erich Fromm refers to myths

and dreams as the "forgotten language," the study of which is still in its infancy. It suffers from various limitations. One would be deprived of the many-sidedness of symbolic language if one tried to force it into the Procrustean bed of one, and only one, kind of meaning, as the various psychoanalytic schools attempt to do. Erich Fromm writes:

Another limitation is that interpretation of dreams is still considered legitimate only when employed by the psychiatrist in the treatment of neurotic patients. On the contrary, I believe that symbolic language is the one foreign language that each of us must learn. Its understanding brings us in touch with one of the most significant sources of wisdom, that of the myth, and it brings us in touch with the deeper layers of our own personalities. In fact, it helps us to understand a level of experience that is specifically human because it is that level which is common to all humanity, in content as well as in style.

It is true that on waking we can with little difficulty reconstruct the texture of dreams from the confused medley of visions we have seen; but this is only possible for dreams that do not directly conflict with our personal consciousness, that is, those originating in the ideas and feelings of our own personal psychic world. But it is only with great difficulty that the consciousness can reconstruct the tissues of a dream formed of elements foreign to our personal consciousness and traceable to the elements that are latent during waking consciousness. These are important communications from ourselves to ourselves. Reminiscence is impeded, because of our ignorance, and our waking consciousness no longer recognizes itself in such dreams as it is unable to recognize and group the traces which seem to bring a dissonance into the psychic world.

Maudsley says of these dreams that they plunge us back into the long past period of the development of the general consciousness of the species and if they do not produce a sufficiently strong impression to cause at least a partial awakening of the sleeping consciousness, we retain no recollection of them and have no means of remembering the images and feelings of which they were formed.

Henri Bergson helps to lead us through the maze of this wild jungle, and his contributions to the subject of dreams are of great importance. According to him, the dream is not so unlike the ordinary process of perception as had been hitherto supposed. On the other hand the points of resemblance are many:

In the dream the same faculties are active as during the day, but they are in a state of tension in the one case, in a state of relaxation in the other. The dream is the whole of mental life minus the tension, effort and bodily movement. We still perceive, we still remember, we still reason.

In discussing the anatomy of dreams, Bergson, "the David destined to slay the Goliath of materialism," to use Will Durant's words about him, describes how memories and memories alone weave the web of our dreams and how our intelligence seeks an explanation of the bizarre assemblage of images presented before the mind during sleep. Many memories rush together to gain attention, but only those succeed which can assimilate themselves with the external and internal sensations that we catch, and which respond to the affective tone of our general sensibility. When this union is effected between the memory and the sensation, adds Bergson, we have a dream. One of the chief characteristics of the dreaming state is that although the senses are closed, the reasoning is functioning.

In a dream we become no doubt *indifferent* to logic, but not *incapable* of logic. There are dreams when we reason with correctness and even with subtlety.

Bergson calls dreams the result of "relaxed consciousness." They are hallucinations, visual, auditory, etc., or rather a series of images and sensations, presenting themselves to the subconscious mind, or the border-twilight region between unconsciousness and complete consciousness. Instead of being bogged by theories, let us go to facts, he says, and cites a personal experience describing a dream and what was accomplished on coming out of it:

Now the dreamer dreamed that he was speaking before an assembly, that he was making a political speech before a political assembly. Then in the midst of the auditorium a murmur rose. The murmur augmented; it became a muttering. Then it became a roar, a frightful tumult, and finally there resounded from all parts timed to a uniform rhythm the cries, "Out! Out!" At that moment he awakened. A dog was baying in a neighbouring garden and with each one of his "Wow-wows" one of the cries of "Out! Out!" seemed to be identical. Well, here was the infinitesimal moment which it is necessary to seize.

The waking ego, just reappearing, should turn to the dreaming ego, which is still there, and during some instants at least, hold it without letting it go. "I have caught you at it! You thought

it was a crowd shouting and it was a dog barking. Now I shall not let go of you until you tell me just what you were doing!" To which the dreaming ego would answer, "I was doing nothing; and this is just where you and I differ from one another. You imagine that in order to hear a dog barking and to know that it is a dog that barks, you have nothing to do. That is a great mistake. You accomplish, without suspecting it, a considerable effort. . . ."

This effort is described by Bergson as picking out of the entire stock of memory and experiences in the brain just one which would exactly fit in with the sound heard. There must not be the least discrepancy between the memory evoked and the crude sensation perceived; otherwise, one would be just dreaming. This adjustment is done by an effort of the memory and an effort of the perception, just as the tailor who is trying on a new coat pulls together the pieces of cloth that he adjusts to the shape of the body in order to pin them. This great effort the waking ego is exerting every minute of its life by the exercise of common sense. Bergson continues with the dreaming ego's version:

"... But all this keeps you in a state of uninterrupted tension. You do not feel it at the moment, any more than you feel the pressure of the atmosphere; but it fatigues you in the long run. Common sense is very fatiguing.

"So I repeat, I differ from you in that I do nothing. The effort that you give without cessation I simply abstain from giving. In place of attaching myself to life, I detach myself from it. Everything has become indifferent to me. I have become disinterested in everything. To sleep is to become disinterested. One sleeps to the exact extent to which he becomes disinterested. A mother who sleeps by the side of her child will not stir at the sound of thunder, but the sigh of the child will wake her. Does she really sleep in regard to her child? We do not sleep in regard to what continues to interest us. . . ."

After this detailed analysis of a dream, Bergson concludes that to be awake is to battle and to will. But sleep is the state in which one naturally falls when one lets oneself go, when one no longer has the power to concentrate upon a single point, when one has ceased to will. Willing and waking go together.

*(To be continued)*

---

## THE BRILLIANT LAMP OF SPIRITUAL DISCERNMENT

IN the Tenth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Sri Krishna makes this affirmation and promise:

I am the origin of all; all things proceed from me; believing me to be thus, the wise gifted with spiritual wisdom worship me; their very hearts and minds are in me; enlightening one another and constantly speaking of me, they are full of enjoyment and satisfaction. To them thus always devoted to me, who worship me with love, I give that mental devotion by which they come to me. For them do I out of my compassion, standing within their hearts, destroy the darkness which springs from ignorance by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment.

The world is plunged in spiritual darkness and only the light of the teachings of the Great Ones can dispel that darkness if humanity would have faith in them and their words of wisdom. The beacon light of Truth eternally shines for all, but those most benefited by it are the devoted aspirants who wish to cultivate the virtue of spiritual discernment. For all such, the cultivation of this virtue must be considered as a duty and a responsibility. In the conclusion to *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. stresses particularly the need for "unbiased and clear judgment" on the part of students of Theosophy if the message of Theosophy, which, in a wider sense, she equates with EVERLASTING TRUTH, would be kept alive in the world for the benefit of coming generations. In study, application, promulgation, in living the life of daily duties, Sri Krishna's words have to be remembered and practised so that we may not fall short of H.P.B.'s expectation.

The Light of Ahura Mazda, or the Nur of Allah, exists in all, but it needs to be expressed. Hence the exercise prescribed by Lord Krishna. The first fundamental proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* has to be thoroughly reflected upon in order to understand "the origin of all." One source, one root, one flame, of which each one of us is a ray, is to be worshipped, to be attuned to, keeping our minds and hearts upon it, serving and helping all other rays of that flame, establishing peace and harmony with all. This will prove to us the reality of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men. It enables us to understand the important clause of the U.L.T. Declaration, that "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," if followed in earnestness and with true devo-

tion, will bring about the true unity so much stressed by H.P.B. all through her writings.

What is spiritual discernment? It is intuitive perception, which does not require reasoning; it lies dormant in most individuals because of the activity of the lower mind which keeps the higher manasic faculty in bondage. It is to be awakened by constant practice by each aspirant on the spiritual path, for this alone can bring about that inner illumination sought by all mystics and philosophers. It is the inner vision, the voice of the silence, which always guides along right lines. As stated in *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*:

By rendering *Sanyama* — or the operation of fixed attention, contemplation, and meditation — natural and easy, an accurate discerning power is developed.

This “discerning power,” it is explained, “is a distinct faculty which this practice alone develops, and is not possessed by ordinary persons who have not pursued concentration.” The mind needs to be watched and controlled so that this daily and hourly exercise becomes natural and easy. It is a difficult task, but it has to be pursued diligently, not only at a set hour but throughout the daily duties of life at whatever level.

Why is spiritual discernment necessary? First and foremost because it is our own divine heritage which has been left slumbering for ages. It is the close union of higher Manas and Buddhi which transforms a human being into a super-man with the power of omniscience, a perfected man. It enables one to think, speak and act rightly, to understand the value of the law of necessity, the law of economy, the law of interdependence. It is lack of right ideas and right precepts that has brought so much of chaos and confusion in the world. This can be removed only by the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment. It is sometimes complained that *The Secret Doctrine* is beyond the grasp and understanding of ordinary individuals. It is purposely written to awaken the Buddhist faculty in students so that they may begin to read between the lines and within the words. Thus read with the higher mind, it becomes less and less perplexing and overwhelming. Daily study of this monumental work, the textbook of the 19th-20th century, is a means to the acquisition of inner illumination.

From ancient times, light has been considered a great symbol of the purest and highest type of consciousness. The one light, the pri-

mordial light, differentiates into seven rays corresponding to the seven colours representing the seven hierarchies, the essence of which is in every human being. It is "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world," says the New Testament. That light is not recognized, not followed. Therefore man remains in darkness from the cradle to the grave. Lord Buddha advised his disciples, "Be ye lamps unto yourselves," meaning that they should cultivate self-reliance and shape their lives according to the inner light of wisdom. Thus, enlightening one another and constantly meditating upon the one source, the disciples become united and work and live and love in a harmonious way. Light and darkness are the world's eternal ways, but man, because he is a thinking being, can always choose to follow the path of light and not succumb to the lower forces of darkness, which is the condition of most individuals at the present time. "By the middle of the Seventh Race, says an occult prophecy, the struggle of the two conflicting Powers (*Buddhi* and *Kama-Manas*) will have almost died out" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 7*, p. 5). Theosophy is in the world to change the *Manas* and the *Buddhi* of the race; therefore our evolutionary journey can be quickened with the help of its teachings, and the direction changed now and here from *Kama-Manas* to *Buddhi-Manas*. In the same pamphlet we are advised:

To accomplish this difficult task, two conditions are absolutely requisite: one must have thoroughly realized in practice the noble Zoroastrian precept: "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds," and must have impressed them indelibly on his soul and heart, not merely as a lip-utterance and form observance. Above all, one has to crush *personal vanity* beyond resurrection.

This exercise, if followed daily and steadfastly, will surely bring about the unfoldment of mental devotion, the inner light which brings us closer to the source of our being. Then only the darkness of ignorance can be dispelled, and the brilliant lamp of spiritual discernment can radiate its light for the benefit of all.

---

Become what thou art.

—ORPHIC SAYING

# CONSCIOUSNESS

[Reprinted from *Lucifer* for October 1888.—EDS.]

CONSCIOUSNESS is the seat of the real life of the human individual. The mere carrying on of his bodily functions is not his life. Those functions are the channels and avenues through which his real being has communion with the phenomenal world, and with other units of consciousness similar to his own. Through them his life is greatly affected; by their means his thoughts are fed, his feelings modified, his actions suggested. But let us consider the modes in which consciousness may work, and the specific forms in which it may manifest itself. Observation of human modes and objects of life indicates three classes of consciousness. In other words, there are three modes of existence which the consciousness of an individual may fall into, or work itself into, and the adoption of the particular mode, knowingly and deliberately, or the contrary, determines the character and intrinsic value of the consciousness.

The elementary or simplest mode of consciousness we designate as *lineal*. In this, the feelings, thoughts, and energies of the individual lie not only on one plane but merely in one direction on that plane.

The consciousness which belongs to this class is limited to the faculty of moving *backwards or forwards in a straight line*. It is bound like a railway-train to its special track. This form of consciousness is very common. It is the lot of those who have only one aim in life, and that a personal one. Whatever the chief aim of the life may be, whether that of the shopkeeper, merely to earn money, or of the professional man in his special sphere, or of society men and women, in their incessant flittings to and fro in the whirl of pleasure and excitement, it matters nothing; the consciousness, which is the essence of the individual, exercises itself and possesses power only in the limited sphere described. It is simply necessary to look around to observe many examples of this class. A very large number of men and women of the present day belong to it.

In the second class the consciousness enjoys a wider freedom.

The dimensions of the realm over which it rules lie in two directions; for, in addition to backward and forward movement, the consciousness may traverse regions that lie to the right and to the left.

This form of consciousness we shall term the *superficial*; it has length and breadth, but no depth. It is the possession of those who, while

devoted to one special employment which absorbs their chief energies, also occupy themselves, as adjuncts of life, in other spheres having for them a particular interest. This consciousness predominates largely amongst men and women who, following a daily avocation to supply the main needs of life, have sufficient mental or emotional activity to lead them into secondary engagements that exercise thought or fulfil an aim. The persons possessing this form of consciousness are active and seem to follow a purpose, though the purpose may not be noble or of intrinsic value. Naturally, this consciousness enjoys much more of life than the form belonging to the class designated as lineal. Men of business, not wholly immersed in the getting of money, clergymen and ministers of wise sympathies, teachers not limited to one peculiar tendency of thought, and persons whose lives generally are useful and active, are those who belong to the second class of superficial consciousness.

The consciousness, the nature of which remains to be described, is of vastly greater extent than either of the two classes already discussed.

Its dimensions lie in three directions. Not only does it exist in all directions superficially, but it further penetrates below the surface in possessing the quality of *depth*. It is true that the superficial area may vary in extent. This may appear, to the observer, but limited, or it may seem to spread far and wide, but the circumstance of depth in its nature and extent will be recognized only by the few, and not even by them to its full extent. The territory below the surface can neither be seen nor gauged, except by the faculties of a consciousness of similar nature. In the depth of an object there is capacity for substance, and consciousness is of a nature so real that wherever it exists in depth it is as true substance. The objects with which the lineal and superficial forms of consciousness deal are but of temporal character and will pass away, but those that are the possession of the solid form are secure beyond possibility of removal.

Within that deep region, and corresponding to its intricacy and in the extent to which it penetrates, there are tracks of infinite variety and number.

In exploring these, the consciousness may find unending employment. This class of consciousness gives to the world those men from whom it learns, whose depth of nature is the abyss from which spring fountains and rills that irrigate life, and turn its wheels, and cause it to be fruitful.

Such men are the richest of earthly beings; their wealth is inexhaustible and imperishable. That depth, in which their consciousness revels, belongs to another world than that of ordinary human existence; it is the universe of eternal and infinite life, of which they are already subjects.

The first-named form of consciousness we should term sensuous, or that which operates merely through the senses and the nervous system; the second form we should call the intellectual or inner-sensuous; the third form is the spiritual or super-sensuous.

Sensuous consciousness delights merely in the external forms of objects and receives impressions only from those forms as they are found.

Intellectual consciousness finds its exciting cause not so much in the forms of external objects as in their movements and the effects of those movements upon the objects themselves.

The spiritual consciousness moves amidst the *hidden causes* of the sensuous and intellectual.

I.

---

THAT which resumes all under a unity is a Principle in which all things exist together and the single thing is All. From this Principle, which remains internally unmoved, particular things push forth as from a single root which never itself emerges. They are a branching into part, into multiplicity, each single outgrowth bearing its trace of the common source. Thus, phase by phase, there is finally the production into this world; some things close still to the root, others widely separate in the continuous progression until we have, in our metaphor, bough and crest, foliage and fruit. At the one side all is one point of unbroken rest, on the other is the ceaseless process — leaf and fruit. . . .

The things that act upon each other are branchings from a far-off beginning and so stand distinct; but they derive initially from the one source: all interaction is like that of brothers, resemblant as drawing life from the same parents.

—PLOTINUS

## TOWARDS A BETTER WORLD

IS IT POSSIBLE in a civilization such as we have brought into existence to succeed in any measure in building that better world which all men and women of good-will dream about and aspire to? What contribution can each individual, however humble, make towards the amelioration of the conditions in which humanity finds itself today?

Before the next issue of *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT* is out, the New Year will have been ushered in. Good wishes are generally exchanged at the beginning of a year, but, for many, this exchange of good wishes and greetings has lost its meaning; it has become a mechanical, conventional repetition, not backed by the vision that good wishes can be effective, that it is possible through our ideation and imagination and through the power of our spiritual will to endow our good wishes and greetings with a quality that will enable them to live on and produce beneficent results. Every one of us, without exception, is endowed with a magnetic quality, a quality which is communicated to the mental and moral atmosphere in which we live. It is most encouraging to know that we can help others through our ideation and feeling and through our expression in words, words which are living messengers — thus creating a better atmosphere in this world of ours.

Just as there are artists in life, persons who can change the colour of a day and make it beautiful to those around, so also there are master-souls who can impress the atmosphere of our earth with a quality which is divine. We are called upon to recognize the potential divinity within and, taking the firm position that we are gods in the making, to try to live every day as it comes on that basis. If we think of ourselves as poor miserable worms, we shall necessarily act as such. But if we sense, and later on come to realize, the divine potency enshrined in our own heart consciousness, then we shall act as divine beings and shall be able to make an effective contribution to the transformation of our world, which finds itself divided through lack of understanding of the oneness of life and the brotherhood of man. The resolve of each one of us at the dawning of the new year should be to kill out all sense of separateness.

At the close of a calendar year, many take stock of it and anticipate the future. As we lived that year we tried to learn the experiences, painful or joyful, that came our way, and if we are honest with ourselves we shall come to the conclusion that we learn more from the painful

and difficult experiences than from the joyous ones. Strange as it may seem, human souls who are learners in this school of life learn more through suffering than through joy, and therefore suffering has its own mission to fulfil. Wise is he who understands that mission, co-operates with nature and nature's great law of moral retribution and prepares himself to accept whatever it has in store for him. But to go back and fix our attention on those pages of the past which would show that we yielded to temptation, we did not live up to our highest soul possibilities, we committed mistakes, perhaps blunders, would be altogether unphilosophical and unwise. "Look not behind or thou art lost," says *The Voice of the Silence*. "Kill in thyself all memory of past experiences" — not the memory of the lessons learnt through those experiences, but the memory of the circumstances under which those lessons were learnt. This will give us deeper vision and greater understanding to deal with whatever may come.

Therefore the preparation of our inner attitude to meet whatever the new year may bring us is of the utmost importance. The destiny of man is in his own hands. We have been sowing causes, the effects of which we cannot obliterate and which must be met courageously. We are every one of us capable of preparing ourselves to meet those events which come our way under law, the law which represents both perfect justice and perfect mercy, and therefore we have nothing to fear. It would again be unwise to anticipate the future and daydream about what we should like to happen in 1972. Our task is to take care of the present, for the present alone is in our hands.

Let us reflect upon the three aspects of time — the past, the present and the future. What contains all three? What is back of all three? Eternal duration, sometimes referred to in mystic parlance as the Eternal Now. The past is gone; no amount of regrets will change the fact that the past is no longer within our reach. Nothing will undo the pages already written in the record of our lives. But all of the past is with us, in the present, and the present is building the future. We are to forget the past, to renounce the future, and to give our very best attention, all that we have and all that we are, to the present moment.

It is here that each of us can do a great deal towards the building of a better world. What is a better world? A world that is more advanced technologically and scientifically? A world where there are greater opportunities of enjoying the comforts of life and what wealth can buy? What endures? Man himself. And what determines whether the world

in which man lives and which he makes will be good or bad? Man's own character, the degree of his moral perception, the measure of his intellectual honesty and heart understanding. All things, whether good or bad, have their roots in human character. And that character is conditioned by the law of ethical causation, the very same moral law which governs the whole universe. Therefore, if we find ourselves today with characteristics that are mean, ugly, selfish, it is up to us, through the very power of our own will, to redeem ourselves, to improve those characteristics. They were built through our thoughts and feelings and words and actions in the past, the past of this birth and the longer past of many previous lives which we have lived as human learners on this earth, where our stay is a probationary one. All of us utilize the same essential powers. It is up to us to use those powers intelligently, on the basis of the knowledge of our own true nature, thereby making ourselves better men and women, and our world a better world.

There are so many problems that cast their dark shadow on the external world, and many of us feel that these problems are of an economic nature, or political, or social. All these have their legitimate places, but no amount of external change or of legislation will produce any lasting results if human beings remain what they are, if the same selfish men and women continue to be at the head of affairs as at present. To what avail all improvement of the environment if those who live in that environment are themselves corrupt, dishonest beings, beings within whom there is that conflict which can only be resolved by taking it to the forum of one's own conscience?

To resolve the problem, what is needed is the rehabilitation of man as an individual. That is an encouraging thought. Not many among us can occupy positions of power, and those who do, often lose their head. So there is danger in wielding so-called authority and power over others. But we can have complete power, if we so will, over our own lower nature, over our own personalities, over our own faculties and capacities, and ally ourselves with the forces that fight for the spiritual redemption of humanity, which naturally implies dissociation with the forces of evil and of disintegration.

There is only one fight that is legitimate — the fight against our own lower self. It is a false idea that by increasing territorial power we can overcome the forces of evil. It is not physical might that rules the world; it is ideas, and what we have to see to is that we ourselves follow right principles and right ideas. The world thinks in terms of

“might is right.” No victory gained through human slaughter has ever brought a solution of the very problem for which the war was fought. Instead of the principle “might is right,” let us adopt the principle which is in consonance with the law of the universe, the law wrought within the immortal fabric of our own being, and that is the law of love supreme. We have united might with power and brought the world to the present position. Let us now unite love with understanding and usher in an era of peace and brotherliness. Difficulties and obstacles there will be, and Karma will have to be faced, but we shall have that great strength that comes from the united spirit of life. And we shall all assist one another in overcoming the obstacles and in resolving the difficulties, and in that spirit of brotherliness we shall be able to achieve considerably.

A paradise on earth cannot be attained within a decade or two, but if we live up to our own moral responsibilities and aim at doing our level best, then it *is* possible to transform this civilization of ours into one where true concepts of duty and philanthropy and religion will be restored to their pristine purity. It is possible through the needed self-reform, the needed inner transformation, to become fit instruments in the service of our fellow beings.

So we have to look to the present more than to the past or to the future, and in looking to the present we have to consider our own inner attitude. We have absolute control over that attitude. Can anyone make us think against our will? Can any power compel a person to feel in a particular manner if he himself does not choose to feel in that way? Each one of us has paramount control over his own personality, and if he but assumes the position of the Higher Self he can work miracles and bring about the needed transformation. In the words of Mr. Judge:

The future then, for each, will come from each present moment. As we use the moment so we shift the future up or down for good or ill; for the future being only a word for the present — not yet come — we have to see to the present more than all. If the present is full of doubt or vacillation, so will be the future; if full of confidence, calmness, hope, courage and intelligence, thus also will be the future. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, pp. 75-76)

That gives us a prescription for making ourselves ready for every day during the year that is to follow; if we have confidence, calmness, hope, courage, intelligence, as the permanent background of our consciousness, then we shall have the necessary strength to face whatever

may come and to put forth our best effort, dedicating it upon the altar of human service and human brotherhood. In another place, also in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (p. 21), Mr. Judge deals with this question in fuller detail:

The Past! What is it? Nothing. Gone! Dismiss it. You are the past of yourself. Therefore it concerns you not as such. It only concerns you as you now are. In you, as now you exist, lies *all* the past. So follow the Hindu maxim: "Regret nothing; never be sorry; and cut all doubts with the sword of spiritual knowledge." Regret is productive only of error. I care not what I *was*, or what anyone *was*. I only look for what I am each moment. For as each moment is and at once is not, it must follow that if we think of the past we forget the present, and while we forget, the moments fly by us, making more past. Then regret nothing, not even the greatest follies of your life, for they are gone, and you are to work in the present which is both past and future at once. So then, with that absolute knowledge that all your limitations are due to Karma, past or in this life, and with a firm reliance ever now upon Karma as the only judge, who will be good or bad as you make it yourself, you can stand anything that may happen and feel serene despite the occasional despondencies which all feel, but which the light of Truth always dispels. This verse always settles everything:

"In him who knows that all spiritual beings are the same in kind with the Supreme Being, what room can there be for delusion and what room for sorrow when he reflects upon the unity of spirit?"

If the central truth of "the unity of spirit" is acknowledged, reflected upon, acted up to, we know that all things are taken care of and that, in the larger context, even the mistakes of today will serve as stepping-stones to greater heights. One of the factors that brings despondency and undermines courage, one of the greatest enemies to be overcome, is the sense of our imperfections. That is why Mr. Judge is emphasizing the need to remove regret for our errors. Recognizing the error and learning its lesson is one thing, but brooding over it only lends added strength, through our ideation, to that error. There is only one thing to do — to face every day and every moment as it comes, without allowing ourselves to be ruffled. As the *Bhagavad-Gita* says, even the man of most evil ways if he resolves righteously must be accounted righteous. This principle is applicable not only to others but also to

ourselves. It is a sense of discouragement that must be guarded against. We must have patience and perseverance and not allow the shadows of the past to paralyse the efforts of the present.

That is a wonderful message when we begin a new year. A new beginning always brings fresh opportunities. The past is gone; the present is in our hands with its hopes and its possibilities. Relying on the law of our own being, on the supreme law of love and compassion, and on the reality of the existence of the unknown and unseen leaders of the world who are always ready to extend their help to every sincere and unselfish man and woman, we can face every day and make of it a fresh opportunity for fulfilment, for service, for co-operation. One of those invisible helpers who stood and still stand behind our present Theosophical Movement, writing to one who had through a wrong philosophy of life based on a wrong understanding of religion committed mistakes, said:

Your acts in the past have been the natural fruit of an unworthy religious ideal, the result of ignorant misconception. They cannot be obliterated, for they are indelibly stamped upon the record of Karma, and neither tears nor repentance can blot the page. But you have the power to more than redeem and balance them by future acts. Around you are acquaintances, friends and associates . . . who have committed the same and even more grievous faults, through the same ignorance. Show them the dreadful consequences of it, point them to the *Light*, lead them to the Path, teach them, be a missionary of love and charity, thus in helping others win your own salvation. There are innumerable pages of your life-record still to be written up; fair and blank they are as yet. Child of your race and of your age, seize the diamond-pen and inscribe them with the history of noble deeds, days well-spent, years of holy striving. So will you win your way ever upward to the higher planes of spiritual consciousness. Fear not, faint not, be faithful to the ideal you can now dimly see. . . . Try, child, HOPE, and accept my blessings.

---

My father had brought me up never when at school to think of the future or of any practical result. I have even known him to say, "When I was young, the definition of a gentleman was a man not wholly occupied in getting on."

—W. B. YEATS

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

One of the characteristics of *Kali Yuga*, which we are now in, is the rapidity with which all things come to pass in it. Our age in particular has been called the transition age when every system of thought, science, religion, government and society is changing, and in recent years the pace of change has become increasingly rapid. As pointed out by Edward S. Cornish in his article "The Futurists: Explorers of Tomorrow's World" (*Span*, November 1971):

A century or two ago, a man could live his whole life in a community that remained substantially the same. Today a community may change almost totally in the space of 10 or 20 years: There are new people, new activities, new mores, and new surroundings.

We are experiencing a kind of time compression. What used to take a century now is done in a few years. Symbolic of the time compression is the ever-shortening interval between a scientific discovery and its practical application. Photography, based on an 18th-century discovery, required 112 years before it was used to make pictures. The telephone, based on a 19th-century advance, required only 56 years. In the 20th century, television leaped from discovery to application in only 12 years, the atomic bomb in five, and the transistor in three.

Technological change brings social change, though the effects are delayed. . . . What is happening is that social change touched off by technological changes made years ago is now racing through our society. What once was unthinkable becomes an everyday reality. . . .

Some social scientists estimate that the changes in society during the next 10 years will amount to three or four times as many as in the past 10. This means that the world of the 1980s could be as different from the 1970s' world as our present world is from the world of the 1930s.

We are in an historic transition, though we do not know what the nature of this transition really is. It may result in a change in human life that will be even greater than the change from savagery to civilization.

Mr. Cornish cites Alvin Toffler who in his best-selling book, *Future Shock*, notes some of the characteristics of this revolutionary period. One is transience — the temporariness of everything. Another is novelty: we are constantly confronted with new things, new experiences, new

life styles. Rapid change may result in what Toffler calls "future shock."

Though not much is known about the effects that this rapid change is having on people, there is evidence that change does have a very real psychic impact. Researchers at the University of Washington have found that people who have experienced a great deal of change in their lives are much more likely to become physically ill than those who have not.

In view of the powerful forces for change that have been set loose, there is today a movement by scientists, businessmen, government officials and others to forecast the kinds of things that may happen to us in the future. This growing interest in the future has arisen because, though man's increasing technological capabilities are being used to transform the entire earth, the long-range consequences of what is done are largely unknown. Those interested in looking seriously at future possibilities are known as futurists. This new class of professional people point out that the world will never again be what it was and that the value of studying possible futures is that we can shape tomorrow more wisely. The main task for the world, as some of them see it, is to institute policies that will permit an orderly transition to equilibrium.

---

It is estimated that the population of our planet earth has of late been growing at the rate of 2% a year, and many population experts are of the view that if we do not do something to check this trend, there is little hope that civilization will persist. But, despite their cries of alarm, they are not clear as to just what the problem is, how grave it is, and what should be done about it. "It does seem safe to say, though," states an essay in *Time* magazine (September 13), "that the great famine is by no means inevitable." We are told further:

Parts of the world—the slums of great cities like New York, London and Tokyo—are obviously overcrowded. But this does not mean that the entire planet is running out of room. Although India has a major population problem, with about 570 million people crammed into 1.1 million sq. mi., Australia has more than twice that much land and only 1/40 the population. Canada, Brazil and Russia all have vast empty spaces. And although much of this space is jungle or steppe or desert, the Israelis have demonstrated in the Negev that technology and hard work can make the most inhospitable land support new settlers.

Obviously, international migrations are not a likely prospect,

but even within any one nation, crowding is generally a result of drift from rural areas to the city. . . .

The crowded parts of the world are, no doubt, destined to get somewhat more crowded. Nonetheless, statistics on the population explosion are something less than scientific. They are based largely on estimated birth rates in underdeveloped nations, where record keeping remains an underdeveloped art. . . . "Projections of future populations are admittedly fictions," says one of the more moderate prophets, Philip Hauser of the University of Chicago. "No one can actually predict future population, and anyone who claims he can is either a fool or a charlatan. . . . The fact that man is able to consider the implications is one reason why the projected numbers will never be reached."

Although population density is an element in the pollution problem, it is hardly the only one. "Our life-style must change," Harvard population expert Arthur J. Dyck is quoted as saying. "If we stayed at 200 million, would air pollution decrease? Would other problems ease off? No. We have to change our values, our behaviour." And in the opinion of Ben Wattenberg, a demography expert, "There is no optimum population as such." How many people there are in any particular country or in the world as a whole is less important than what the people, however many they be, decide to do about their problems. On a global scale, food is not a real problem at all, for "it is estimated that the world's farmers can theoretically feed a population 40 times as large as today's."

Commenting on the family-planning drives in many countries, the *Time* article continues:

After all, children are not just transients in the world's boardinghouse, to be welcomed or turned away at the convenience of the older boarders. And if it is true that every new-born child should have a right to its share of food, it is also true that those who control the food supply should think twice before declaring that they no longer have enough for strangers and newcomers. In other words, the essence of the population problem — so far, at least — is not that mankind has propagated too many children but that it has failed to organize a world in which they can grow in peace and prosperity. Rich nations and poor alike have grossly misused the world's resources, both material and intellectual; neglected them, wasted them, and fought each other over how to share them. Thus the basic question is not how many people can share the earth, but whether they can devise the means of sharing it at all.

How account for the increase in the world's population if reincarnation is a fact? — is a question often raised. Answering it Mr. Judge wrote in *The Ocean of Theosophy*:

This assumes that we know surely that its population has increased and are keeping informed of its fluctuations. But it is not certain that the inhabitants of the globe have increased, and, further, vast numbers of people are annually destroyed of whom we know nothing. . . . The objection . . . also assumes that there are fewer Egos out of incarnation and waiting to come in than the number of those inhabiting bodies, and this is incorrect. Annie Besant has put this well in her "Reincarnation" by saying that the inhabited globe resembles a hall in a town which is filled from the much greater population of the town outside; the number in the hall may vary, but there is a constant source of supply from the town. It is true that so far as concerns this globe the number of Egos belonging to it is definite; but no one knows what that quantity is nor what is the total capacity of the earth for sustaining them. The statisticians of the day are chiefly in the West, and their tables embrace but a small section of the history of man. They cannot say how many persons were incarnated on the earth at any prior date when the globe was full in all parts, hence the quantity of egos willing or waiting to be reborn is unknown to the men of today. The Masters of theosophical knowledge say that the total number of such egos is vast, and for that reason the supply of those for the occupation of bodies to be born over and above the number that die is sufficient. Then, too, it must be borne in mind that each ego for itself varies the length of stay in the *post-mortem* states. They do not reincarnate at the same interval, but come out of the state after death at different rates, and whenever there occurs a great number of deaths by war, pestilence, or famine, there is at once a rush of souls to incarnation, either in the same place or in some other place or race.

---

The current wave of interest, particularly in the West, in the pseudo-occult — in "magic," "mysticism," witchcraft and the like — is interpreted by Dr. Jan Ehrenwald, consulting psychiatrist and author of several books, as a reflection of the malaise and "spiritual vacuum" of the times. Writing under the title "The Occult" in *Today's Education* for September, he examines the reasons why the confused, alienated "now generation" "tends to ally itself with the witches":

We live at a time when theologians have pronounced — somewhat prematurely, I believe — the death of God. We live at a time when Bible scholars, followed by historians and sociologists, have proceeded to demythologize myths and when large segments of American youth are resorting to mysticism, drugs, and the occult in order to escape the malaise of what can be described as the myth-deprivation of modern man. The numbers of these young people are difficult to estimate. Some are found among the hippies or “street people.” Others are merely the alienated and disenchanted of our time, moving in and out of one or another cultist group. . . .

This group of problem children and young adults have lost their illusions on virtually all fronts. Sex has been stripped of its mystery. . . . Radical criticism from the left and right, aided by recurrent exposés by the mass media, have led many young people to believe that big business, financial institutions, the police, the military, the churches and synagogues are all enemies of the people. Indeed, large numbers of young people hold the same view regarding schools, colleges and universities. Teachers, high-school principals, deans, and college presidents are assigned the roles of evil parent figures and turned into scapegoats upon whom the rebellious young can vent their hostility. . . .

It is at this point that those despairing of their ability to cope with reality by revolutionary action, social engineering, or some other pragmatic means, are turning to untried, unorthodox, faddist expedients. Like primitive man of a past era, they proceed by trial and error, and it is anyone’s guess whether or not they will learn from experience. Some hope that an exotic cult, esoteric doctrine, eccentric diet, or outlandish costume will do the trick. . . .

Others resort to magic — or at least make-believe magic practices. They play at reviving a new, dehydrated twentieth-century brand of witchcraft to make up for their failure in coping with the outside world. Those who have reached the limits of their capacity to deal with the pressures of their instinctual drives — especially their repressed violence — turn to drugs. Through chemical means these people hope to obtain relief from their frustrations. . . .

The recent re-emergence of spiritualism and astrology and the faddist use of Yoga practices, palmistry, and the I Ching (oracular sayings of Chinese wisdom) are more innocuous features of the contemporary scene. They too express youths’ groping attempts to escape frustrations and existential anxieties by essentially magic

means. They are resorted to by the helpless and perplexed, who hope to attain superior knowledge, mystic enlightenment, omnipotence and omniscience "without even trying..."

That none of these devices is likely to live up to one's expectations is another matter. You cannot use ready-made metaphysical nostrums loaned from a foreign culture or a different age to solve your present-day existential problems. Nor can new methods be expected to grow on the barren soil of frustration and alienation.

If this is true, has modern man manoeuvred himself into a blind alley? Are we bent to continue on our course of trial and error in matters moral and spiritual, while managing our technological juggernaut according to the most up-to-date principles of computerized engineering and cost accounting? Is it the return of magic and myth that threatens our survival or does the threat lie in a malignant growth of rationalism, of a soulless, demythologized science and technology? The question is too big to go into in the present context. But who says that it must be viewed in terms of mutually exclusive alternatives?

---

Among the keenly felt needs today is that of revising our system of education. Inquiry into the aims and achievements of students at school or university level would reveal that many of them seek admission to the university without clear aims, and if they have any aims they fail to achieve them. In an article in *The Times of India* for November 21, Pawan Chaudhary quotes from the writings on education of past Indian leaders and suggests that the principles they propounded need to be revived. Swami Vivekananda, for instance, observed: "Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-making assimilation of ideas." And Gandhiji said: "That education is of value which draws out the faculties of a student so as to enable him or her to solve correctly the problems of life in every department."

Judged from these standards, education must inculcate in the young a sense of responsibility towards all — their families and friends, the nation and the human race.

The essence of education, according to the article, lies in five aims:

- (i) preparing students to face the struggle of life; (ii) helping

to inculcate in them a sense of responsibility, duty, service and sacrifice for themselves as well as others; (iii) assisting in acquiring the cherished virtues of good behaviour, firmness, humility and discipline; (iv) building up the personality of students according to their natural inclinations; and (v) developing in them the qualities of leadership and teamwork.

The task is gigantic. It calls for dedication on the part of those responsible for the educational system. The teachers have, therefore, not only to be competent in providing knowledge, but have also to set an example to the students. Rabindranath Tagore aptly summarised this: "The teacher is a lamp which has to light other lamps. A lamp cannot put light into other lamps unless it burns itself and sheds light. The atmosphere of a school should be open and free, wherein the teachers and the pupils mix together like members of a family."

---

Some of the physical traits of man, like the colour of his skin, the shape of his face and the length and breadth of his body, are so strikingly different among people in different parts of the world that they were and are used to classify man into broad groups — the human races. In recent times, there have been attempts to understand the mechanics of transmission of these traits. A geneticist's view of the human race is presented by Dr. Italo Barrai (Chief, Human Genetics, WHO), in the October *World Health* (the magazine of the World Health Organization). His conclusion is that racism has no genetic support:

Our main point is that racial traits at present seem to be irrelevant for the survival of man; that we cannot assess their selective advantage; that we cannot attach to them a judgment of value in a rational way. Yet an arbitrary judgment of value is often attached to racial traits, and this constitutes racism.

Since racism has no genetic support, it is difficult for the geneticist to speak rigorously on this attitude of some human groups. Some groups have codified their racism into rules or laws, for the advantage of some and disadvantage of others. This attitude seems to depend on such environmental factors as ignorance, fear, isolation, disease and poverty. There are innumerable reasons to remove these factors from the human environment; one of them is that racism, too, might disappear from our species.

---