

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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“REACH SELF-KNOWLEDGE”

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THE PERFECTIBILITY OF MAN need not be for anyone an insoluble problem. Along several lines of quiet reasoning one can gain the mental perception that the human soul must grow from power to Glory, from knowledge to Wisdom, from human love to Divine Compassion. The conviction comes to the sincere, earnest and persistent inquirer that the mortal animal-man can evolve into an immortal God-Man.

The Voice of the Silence teaches that “to reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge.” But what is implicit in this term? Each one of us lives by the force of what he regards as his own self-hood. Self-conscious man is a reflective intelligence: he reflects himself in the animal-man and has himself the latent power to reflect the Divine.

It is a truism that each man, each woman, has a dual nature—the lower, animal, egotistic and separative nature, and also the higher, divine, altruistic and unifying one. We are taught in the *Gita* to raise the self by the Self. When one is centred in the lower self he has but vague intimations of the Divinity within him.

Modern schooling and the ways of modern society atrophy the faculty which can catch the intimations of the heavenly. It is therefore necessary that at the very starting point each must

recognize that within his heart there is something higher and nobler—the seer of his own foibles and frailties, the speaker who warns and admonishes.

Once this is recognized a regular and steady examination of that lower self and its walk on the paths of this world should be undertaken. To pass this examination one needs knowledge: Whence this lower nature? Whither can it go? How can the right turns on the perilous ways of daily life be taken? To seek sincerely the answers to these questions naturally brings us in contact with knowledge, however preliminary and elementary of the nature of the Higher Self.

There are two processes taking place simultaneously in the earnest student who aspires to understand what the term “Self-Knowledge” stands for. As he gains perception of the Higher he is able to weaken the hold of the lower self. Self-Knowledge, we soon find, is the knowledge of what we must have been in the past, to create what we are today; our weaknesses and our merits in the present are the outcome of our past achievements and failures. And, further, both achievements and failures are clear-cut opportunities for becoming whatever we aspire to be in the future, what we are destined to be in the hereafter.

On earth we sow; on earth we reap. There has been an interplay between Self and self in the past, and the result is what we are in the present. There is now an interplay between Self and self and the directives we gain by our knowledge and endeavour enable us to raise the self by the Self, and thus build our own future.

Now, *The Voice of the Silence* further says: “Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child.” The Heavenly Self expresses itself in thoughts and feelings and speech. But the most complete expression, the consummation, is on the plane of actions. Loving deeds carry and convey the power of loving words, feelings and thoughts. But often loving deeds are mere appearances; for the inner force is not pure, unselfish, impersonal. Even a mother’s love for her son and her sacrifices on his behalf often do not bring forth truly loving deeds.

The technique is to develop the inner attitude of remembrance by which our “doings” hour by hour are actuated and energized

by the power of Love, Charity and Compassion. One cannot succeed in reaching Self-Knowledge by spasmodic deeds of love and charity. To do a loving deed is admirable, but it is necessary to sustain in our conscious mind the memory that all our deeds should have Love at their core.

In the early stages loss of memory occurs. We act without any remembrance that that particular act should carry and convey Love. We have to attempt to recall often the teaching that Love has to flow in the words we speak, or accompany the food we offer; to find expression through the feet which walk and the heart which throbs; through the tone of the voice and the gesture of the hand. This exercise of remembering establishes the psycho-mental habit till it becomes second nature.

Our attitude of pouring out love hour by hour, in the small, plain duties of life or the special acts which we are called upon to perform, comes naturally to us. Thus we learn to "sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests." The concomitant of this natural flow is that we do not need to make an effort to remember and to recall. Such Loving Deeds bring us Self-Knowledge.

We know that in the Heart is the Light of Knowledge which, passing through the many-coloured threads of impartite Love, enables us to unite ourselves with all the selves which surround us. This is the experience of Brotherhood Universal, which makes of man a Mahatma, a Great Brother. Only the true Brothers *know* what Universal Brotherhood is. Only Their acts are flawless Loving Deeds. Their precepts coupled with Their example inspire the devotee to rise to the Terrace of Light where Self-Knowledge is One's Own Self, Nirvana is One's Own Sublimated Consciousness.

WITHIN everything is the seed of everything.

—ALCHEMICAL AXIOM

CHRISTMAS—THE FESTIVAL OF BIRTH

CHRISTMAS, generally known as the festival of the nativity of Christ, is not exclusively a Christian festival. The festival of the Winter Solstice was observed by the entire Pagan world long before the era of Jesus.

When the question of celebrating the Birthday of Jesus came up for discussion in 245 A.D.—two and a half centuries after the starting of the Christian era—no less an authority than Origen repudiated the very idea of celebrating the Saviour's Birthday "as if he were a King Pharaoh." Another great authority, Clement of Alexandria, writing about 200 A.D.—again two centuries after the supposed day of birth—mentions several theories as to when Christ was born, and condemns them all as superstitions. Some, he says, give the 20th of May, others the 19th or 20th of April, while he himself, Clement of Alexandria, sets it on the 17th of November—a date of significance and interest to all students of Occultism and Theosophy. According to him, Christ was born on the 17th of November, 3 B.C. He also says that the Basilidians, one of the most philosophical Gnostic sects, fixed the 6th and the 10th of January as the day of Christ's Baptism, and that it was with the aid of the Egyptian Calendar they did so. As late as 350 A.D. the birth of Christ was fixed on the same day as the feast of Baptism, that is, on the 6th of January. Thus it is quite clear from historical and documentary evidence that before the fifth century there was no agreement as to the actual date of Christ's birth, and till then the calendars do not speak of it. While the Romans began to celebrate the day on the 25th of December, their Armenian and Syrian co-religionists stuck to the 6th of January and accused the Romans of sun-worship and idolatry. St. Chrysostom (390 A.D.) is reported to have said that "on this day also the birth of Christ was *lately* fixed at Rome, in order that whilst the heathen were busy with their *profane* ceremonies, the Christians might perform their holy rites undisturbed."

In the religious history and mythology of many peoples we become familiar with numerous Sun-Gods who are all said to be born at the time of the winter solstice, round about the 21st of December. Thus the Romans were celebrating the Rite of

Mithra which they had adopted from Persia, and the birth of this Sun-God was celebrated on the 25th of December. Gibbon in his *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* says:

The Roman Christians, ignorant of the real date of Christ's birth, fixed the solemn festival on the 25th of December, the *Brumalia*, or Winter Solstice, when the Pagans annually celebrated the Birth of Sol.

From Central America where civilization flourished in far distant times we have the examples of Mexican, Aztec and Yucatan Gods, all born of virgin mothers round about the 25th of December. Venerable Bede, the historian who lived in the eighth century, says:

The ancient peoples of the Angli began the year on the 25th December when we now celebrate the Birthday of the Lord; and the very night which is now so holy to us, they called in their tongue "modranecht," that is. the mother's night, by reason we suspect of the ceremonies which in that night-long vigil they performed.

Thus the ancient Britons before they were converted to Christianity worshipped a Sun-God born of a virgin mother.

The Christmas festival is the drama, the representation, of a divine and mysterious event—the Birth of Christos, the *Avatara*. But unfortunately its real significance is not understood by the masses of Christendom today, nor is it explained to them. Jesus was not born on this day; the early Christians incorporated this festival in their religion, feeling the need for it in a moral and spiritual way.

Christmas, then, is the festival of birth—the Birth of Divinity, of Christos, or the Christ principle. In the process of human evolution, in accordance with the great Law of Cycles, cosmically, Divinity manifests through special Incarnations, and, psychologically, in special ways. The doctrine of *Avataras* or Divine Incarnations has two phases or aspects: one cosmical, the second psychological. There are appearances of great cosmic *Avataras*, macrocosmic phenomena; secondly, in our own individual human unfoldment there are appearances, the afflatus of our own

Divinity, our own spiritual *Atma*, and such are microcosmic phenomena. Nothing takes place in Nature that does not also occur in the human kingdom; and the appearance of great *Avatars* has its counterpart in the life of men and women.

The Great Birth, the Supreme Birth, is that very rare phenomenon in Nature when in a human individual, evolving onwards and upwards, the *Uttama-Purusha*, the Heavenly Man, the Spiritual Self, enters and manifests Himself. Evolution in the human kingdom is a long process; age after age, man struggles; he sins and suffers and grows as he attempts to gain virtue and abandon vice; after many lives he frees himself from the enslavement of Nature, *Prakriti*; he becomes pure, *suddha*, and then he develops higher spiritual powers or *siddhis*, and becomes a *Siddha*—Proven-Soul, Perfected Soul. He is then fit to hold in the casket of his heart the living Image of *Uttama-Purusha*, the Supreme Man, call Him Krishna or call Him Christ, call Him Mithra or call Him Osiris, call Him Odin or call Him Apollo. This is the Great Mystery, the advent of the Divine Man into the Living Temple of the Human Heart. It is to this secret and sacred Mystery that the *Gita* refers when it says that “among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am.” This rare Being is described in the same chapter as the “Mahatma difficult to meet.”

Coming to the psychological aspect: Each one of us has a dual nature; it is not merely the duality of lower and higher, or evil and good; it is the duality of two distinct lines or pedigrees which mix and mingle in man. In one part of our nature each one of us is a lunar being—a *Chandra Vamshi*; in another part of our being we are solar—*Surya Vamshi*.

The Moon has one very striking characteristic: it changes in its phases every hour, every day. From crescent to half, from half to gibbous, from gibbous to full, then waning from full it becomes new and is invisible for a day or so. This is a good representation of our personal nature—ever changing.

Look at the Sun; it is ever full, “rises” and “sets” every day in the glory of fullness. This is our higher nature—the spiritual Individuality.

When the lunar or personal nature comes under the control and guidance of the solar or spiritual, it becomes full of radiance and light. We must make an effort to be born as the full moon, to live as the full moon and to die as the full moon. That is the message of the Buddha Festival. It is said that He was born at full moon. He attained *Nirvana* at full moon, He passed away when the moon was full.

Our problem now is, How shall we enhance the power of the Solar Pedigree in us so that here on earth we may shine like the moon when it is full? *The Voice of the Silence* says: "Destroy thy lunar body," that is, the *kama-rupa*, or body of desire, and "cleanse thy mind-body," that is, the *manasa-rupa*, the individuality, or the reincarnating Ego. These two forms of life have to be dealt with—the destruction of *kama*, passion; the cleansing of *manas*, mind. The two processes are simultaneous, must go together; mind-cleansing produces the death of *kama*. The final death of the lower passions brings to birth the Higher Man. Living as desire entities, we are familiar with the phenomenon of death. We say we are born to die. Every child who is born is sure only of one thing—that it is going to die.

The festival of Christmas brings to human attention the Miracle of Birth. Why not so live that life is a perpetual creation, a series of births? It is rightly said that death disappoints the Soul; then why not take precautions against the snare of death? We die perpetually because of delusion, *moha*, born of ignorance, *avidya*. The Birth of the Soul if perpetually brought about by *kriya-shakti*, creative activity, would take human beings not from death to death, but from one birth or awakening to another birth and awakening. Let us attempt always to awaken to new realities. The process of ever being born takes place because *Atma*, the Superior Luminous Self, has begun to create within the purified heart. That Superior Self is Krishna or Christos, the *Uttama Purusha*, the Divine Man, and His Birth is the real celebration of Christmas.

VIRGIN BIRTH

THE LEGEND of the Virgin Birth is not exclusively Christian, but is found in various religions widely separated in space and time. It was, in fact, universal, but what does the recurring tradition allegorize? Why do we find the theme so many times repeated? The answer must be sought in the cosmogonical and philosophical conceptions of the ancient world, remembering that the ancients turned naturally to symbol, myth and allegory to record their scientific no less than their philosophical truths. They knew that nothing—least of all teachings that transcend the ordinary powers of ratiocinative thought—could be preserved in human memory without some outward form.

All ancient myths have a deep philosophical meaning, and the older they are the more important and significant they are found to be. The first formulation of the Virgin Birth myth is lost in the night of time, but the first echoes from that distant past point to its having been a purely metaphysical concept in its origin.

Ex nihilo nihil fit was a self-evident proposition to the great minds of antiquity. They long anticipated modern thinkers in recognizing that visible and tangible matter is illusory. They held that its source was the Primordial Substance of which matter, as we know it, is the faint and blurred copy. This root of matter, they were taught, exists from all eternity, beginningless, endless and essentially changeless. Only its "Son," the periodically manifested universe, is subject to change. This substance-principle was named the "Mother-Goddess," whose terrestrial symbol is infinite and shoreless Space.

That Space is not only boundless but ever-existing, whether there are universes in manifestation or not. In a sense, Space is the pre-existent eternal root-substance itself. Holding these views, it is not surprising that the ancients recognized in Space before its periodical cosmic activity the mother of all manifestation. Fertility and productiveness inhered in the Immaculate Virgin Mother, the ever-youthful Nature, who generated and brought forth her son, the universe.

That drama was enacted on the plane of metaphysical abstrac-

tion. It was conceived as re-enacted on a lower plane. Numerous goddesses of antiquity were Virgin Mothers of an immaculately born Son—the Sun, the Day-Star. Our Earth was thought of, too, as Virgin Mother; her son—Humanity as a totality, past, present and future. Above, the Son was the whole Universe; below, he was Mankind. Likewise each successive personality, the ancients thought, is son of Virgin Mother; the latter, the immaculate root of its being, the immortal individual Soul.

The Secret Doctrine shows that such lofty concepts of the ancient world lie at the root, and form the origin, of all the "Sons of God" born of Immaculate Virgins. How infinitely grander, more poetical and more philosophical was the Immaculate Virgin of the ancient Pagans than the modern Papal materialization of the once metaphysical and spiritual nature myth!

THE SUMMONS

Return, return, oh foolish one,
 To Meditation and its path of peace,
 Where falls the light of that true Sun
 Which from all darkened wandering brings release
 Return! Why longer stray while time speeds on,
 And dark and ever darker grows the way?
 Let Meditation point thee to the dawn,
 And on life's journey be thy constant stay.

Return! Return! Does memory fail
 Of guidance on that ancient Path received,
 Than which none other can avail
 To guide thee to thy goal, oh self-deceived?
 Return! Hast thou forgot the Voiceless Voice?
 It speaks anew, as once in childhood's day;
 Return, and feel thine inmost Self rejoice
 To tread once more the ancient timeless Way.

DUTY—THE 'TALISMAN

Let, then, the motive for action be in the action itself, and not in the event. Do not be incited to actions by the hope of their reward, nor let thy life be spent in inaction. Firmly persisting in Yoga, perform thy duty, O Dhananjaya, and laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action, make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure. Equal-mindedness is called Yoga.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, II, 47-48

IT IS SAID that in the primordial state of creation the rudimentary universe, submerged in water, reposed in the bosom of Vishnu. Sprung from this chaos and darkness, Brahma, the architect of the world, poised on a lotus leaf, moved upon the waters, unable to discern anything but water and darkness. Perceiving such a dismal state of things, Brahma soliloquized in consternation: "Who am I? Whence came I?" Then from the surrounding occult potency a voice resounded: "Direct your thoughts to Bhagavat." Brahma then arose from his floating position and seated himself upon the lotus in an attitude of contemplation and reflected upon the Eternal, who, pleased with this evidence of piety, dispersed the primeval darkness and opened his understanding. After this, Brahma issued from the infinite chaos as light—for his understanding was now opened—and he set himself to work: he moved on the eternal waters with the spirit of God within himself; and in his capacity of mover of the waters he is Vishnu, or Narayana.¹

One of the interpretations that lends itself to this allegory is that the mind is liable to get confused when placed in unfamiliar surroundings, and that such confusion tends to result in loss of equilibrium and of calmness. Without the stability that is born of calmness, it is not possible to arrive at a dispassionate decision as to what would be the best course of action suited to any particular circumstance. At times when uncertainty beclouds the mind when modes of action are thought of on the instant and as instantly rejected, there remains only one way to stability and to

¹ *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 345.

a correct orientation. That way is: "Direct your thoughts to Bhagavat." How does one achieve this? The allegory gives the indication. Brahma changes position. He no longer chooses to recline and float upon the waters; he no longer submits to the rise and fall of the ocean's swell. He rises, takes his seat upon the lotus and assumes a position best suited for contemplation. There, for the soul's stability, he sits and meditates, focusing his thought on the Eternal. When his meditation attains such depths as are acceptable and pleasing to Bhagavan, then only does the light come.

So also in the case of Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Arjuna enters upon a war which circumstances have forced upon him. However, it is only on the battle-field that he starts envisaging what evils the war will entail, and so envisaging he stands bewildered and lost because the turmoil thus generated in himself has cut him off from his divine possibilities. He implores his Guru, Sri Krishna, in these words:

As I am of a disposition which is affected by compassion and the fear of doing wrong, I ask thee which is it better to do [slay his kinsmen or be slain by them]? Tell me that distinctly! I am thy disciple; wherefore instruct in my duty me who am under thy tuition; for my understanding is confounded by the dictates of my duty, and I see nothing that may assuage the grief which drieth up my faculties.²

In the chapters that follow, Sri Krishna takes the mind of Arjuna away from his immediate surroundings by indicating what man really is and the source from which alone true knowledge comes. He touches upon divinity and its powers as also on the diversity of desires and their illusions, and finally in the eighteenth chapter he gives the answer to Arjuna's entreaty of the second chapter. That answer, in the words of Sri Krishna, is:

There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master—*Ishwara*—who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him alone, O son of Bharata, with all thy

² *Bhagavad-Gita*, II, 7-8.

soul; by his grace thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, the eternal place.³

—which, in other words, implies again: “Direct thy thoughts to Bhagavat.”

All this gives an indication as to how each one has to find out where his true duty lies. There come from time to time occasions when one duty conflicts with another, as in the case of Arjuna, and it is no use going for advice to any mortal source. No one can with any certainty lay down the duty of another, except it be in the case of a Guru who can cast his vision on the spiritual needs of his Chela. The sole guide in this matter is the Inner Ruler, the Ishwara within. Yet, there can be generalizations, the laying down of guidelines which can help the inquirer in his search of the fundamental duties that must at all times remain inviolate, and the neglect of which may put serious impediments in the aspirant's path.

There are three basic propositions on which the entire philosophy of life and being rests. Each of these propositions requires a living of the life in conformity with the truth which it embodies. Thus arise specific duties, any violation or nonperformance of which inevitably draws an appropriate nemesis under the workings of a law which is inherent in the subjects which fall within the purview of any of these three fundamentals. It is from these categories of basic laws—each commanding a particular and primary duty—that all other duties branch out and proliferate. The first proposition deals with two concepts: the first concept is of the Infinite and the Absolute, and the second is of the lines of descent from the state of homogeneity to Spirit-Matter, Life, and to *Mahat*, which is the Universal World-Soul. The second proposition deals with those cycles in time which preside over both involution and evolution and have therefore to be respected at all stages of the manifested life. The third proposition deals with the evolution of the soul—its emanation from the Universal Over-Soul, its descent watched over by the Hierarchies, the *Dhyanis* and the *Pitris*, until man gets endowed with mind, from which time he struggles upwards through his own self-induced

³ *Ibid.*, XVIII, 61-62.

and self-devised efforts which either get helped or hindered by the moral or amoral quality of his actions spread over a long series of reincarnations.

To him who in all seriousness accepts the doctrine of emanations of the many from the one, the call to duty becomes startlingly stern and broad-based. He cannot segregate himself from the rest of creation. He knows that the firmament is full of divine Potencies that in their infinitude spread through all space. There are, for instance, Powers whose duty it is to impress the Divine Thought on Cosmic Substance as the "laws of nature." Now, man *qua* man appears only at a late stage in manifestation and therefore, prior to his appearance on the scene, space which includes the *Akasha* and the Astral Light is holy and pure because it contains nothing but divine thought in its amplitude. In the far distant times when man with mind emerged upon the earth, his mental eye had been opened to understanding and he felt himself one with the ever-present as the ever to be unknown and invisible ALL, the One Universal Deity. Endowed with divine powers, and feeling in himself his *inner* God, each felt he was a Man-God in his nature, though an animal in his physical self. With the struggle between the spiritual and the psychic, the psychic and the physical, man became either a Son of Light or a slave of matter.⁴ On a consideration of this, several duties emerge. Man has to regain the child-state he has lost; and for that the physical has to be subordinated to the psychic, and the latter in its turn to the spiritual. *The Voice of the Silence* gives an identical injunction when it says: "Restrain by thy Divine thy lower Self. Restrain by the Eternal the Divine." These steps in the living of the life become duties for him who would make his obeisance to the Powers and to the One Universal Deity.

The second proposition treats of the law of cycles. It has direct relationship with human behaviour and becomes in consequence the basis of certain duties. But this proposition has also to be understood in its broader application as affecting our earth and incidentally the people who inhabit it. *The Secret Doctrine* teaches that during the present fourth Round there must be seven

⁴ *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 272.

terrestrial *pralayas*, some of them occasioned by a change in the inclination of the Earth's axis. It is a law which acts, not blindly, but at its appointed time and in strict accordance and harmony with Karmic law. It is under this law that changes in the axial direction take place, which are then followed by climatic vicissitudes. It is affirmed that since Vaivasvata Manu's humanity appeared on this Earth, there have already been four such axial disturbances and the face of the Globe has completely changed each time. The survival of the fittest nations and races was secured through timely help, and the unfit ones—the failures—were disposed of by being swept off the face of the Earth.⁵ This shows that there are fixed times in the world's history—past and future—at which Nature undertakes the task of segregating the fit from the unfit.

The Voice of the Silence puts the same idea in this wise:

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the karmic heart.⁶

It is up to each man to ensure his performance of such duties as will remove the stigma of being a flotsam on the seas of life. All this in the wider perspective of man as an integral part of the Universe. But there are also other duties which cyclic laws require to be observed in daily living. It is common knowledge that with each cyclic change that takes place in us and around us, we are required to adapt our actions to harmonize with its predominant characteristics. The man of sixty has duties different from those of a youth of twenty. The farmer and the gardener have to observe the changes in the seasons and adapt their actions accordingly; they cannot do otherwise. The ebb and flow of the tides obey their own laws with the utmost punctuality and he is a poor navigator who ignores these laws. Further, experience teaches us that to render help it has to be given at the proper time lest it degenerate into mockery; and this applies in equal measure to gifts, sacrifices, austerities and almsgiving. It is of the essence that

⁵ *The Secret Doctrine*, II, 329-30.

⁶ *The Voice of the Silence*, p. 30.

the student correlate the performance of his duties with the time element and with cycles. The laws of periodicity have to be known and respected and the performance of our duties adjusted accordingly.

The third proposition states that one of the aspects of the Great Unknown is the Universal Oversoul. From this Oversoul, like sparks from a central Fire, there emerge souls who start their pilgrimage on earth through repeated reincarnations, and this pilgrimage is under the surveillance and governance of that *intelligent* law that is known as Karma. The pilgrimage accomplished, the souls return to and are reabsorbed by the same great Fire. In the context of this emergence and reabsorption, no man can segregate himself from kindred souls who have emerged along with him to undertake the same great pilgrimage. "No man is your enemy: no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers," says *Light on the Path*;⁷ for life is not a fragmented or disjointed something. It assumes variegated aspects, yet remains impartite. We arose from it; we will sink back into it. Separate units of the one vast whole, in time we will return to our primeval homogeneity, enriching it by the contribution which we as so many individualized units will have brought back from our experience. Our duty? To gather such possessions as can be shared by all pure souls equally so that these possessions lose their characteristic of a personal ownership and become the special property of the whole only when united.⁸ But in gathering these possessions our duty requires that we neither filch the possession of another nor put obstacles in the path of that other which will hinder him from acquiring those precious things which he strives to bring as his contribution to the common treasure-chest. The great oneness which binds men to all creation demands that we ourselves seek for that pearl of great price which we will obtain if fervent search and strife avail. We will not obtain it through deceit, nor taint its possession by using the forces of passion, anger and greed. Further, and more important still, we will not refuse to help a fellow pilgrim in his hour of distress, nor turn our back on him when we find him floundering in the morass. Help has to be

⁷ P. 24.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 4.

given, even though by our doing so we prolong the time of our own reabsorption into the great homogeneity.

Such, then, are the considerations which must move the individual to a discovery of his own true duty and its rightful performance. That performance can hardly reach to the ideal so long as man remains nothing more than man. Yet, the attempt has to be continued through repeated births till practice makes the result perfect. Humility and patience become duties and also aids to duties to him who would tread the high Nirvana way with stainless feet.

THE FACT that progress always remains precarious and "contingent" and cannot be formulated as a law, may be found to have some interesting implications. It may mean that we are not *forced* into progress against our will, though we *can* progress *if we will*. In other words, to effect progress our assent is really needed. So, then, we are not the helpless victims of a destiny that drags us to a predestined end; we can actually, to some extent, steer our course and that of history. This is a possibility which should not only enhance our responsibilities, but also encourage us to play a part that seems no longer negligible. Once we realize that our own action is an essential factor in our future, we can proceed to devise means for grappling with the evils which beset human life. They are many and serious enough, and largely inherent in our nature. But our faith in evolution, meaning thereby the possibility of change, justifies the hope that neither our nature nor that of the universe is irrevocably fixed, and if it is possible to change it at all, it can be changed for the better. It is with this hope in our hearts that we should face the future and survey our present anxieties.

—F. C. S. SCHILLER

ROSICRUCIAN LETTERS

III

TRUTH ABSOLUTE AND RELATIVE

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ALL worldly science is based upon the supposition that things actually are what they appear to be, and yet but little reflection is required to understand that this supposition is erroneous; for the appearance of things does not depend merely on what they actually are, but also on the conditions of our own organization and the constitution of our perceptive faculties. The greatest impediment in the way of progress for the student of occult science is that he has grown up in the erroneous belief that things are what they appear to him to be, and unless he can rise above this superstition and consider things—not from the mere relative standpoint of this limited self, but from that of the Infinite and Absolute, he will not be able to know absolute truth. Before we therefore proceed farther with our practical instructions for approaching the Light, it will be necessary to impress once more strongly upon your mind the illusive character of all external phenomena.

All that sensual man knows about the external world he has learned to know by means of the impressions which come to his consciousness through the avenues of the senses. By repeatedly or continually receiving such impressions, comparing them with each other and taking that which he believes he knows as a basis for speculation about things which he does not know, he may form certain opinions in regard to things which transcend his power of sensuous perception; but whether his opinions in regard to external or internal things are true or false, they can be true only relatively to him; and relatively to other beings who are constituted like him; in regard to all other beings whose organizations are entirely different from his own, his arguments and logical speculations find no application, and there may be untold millions of beings in the universe, of an organization superior or inferior to his own, but entirely different from it, to which the

world and everything in it appears in an entirely different aspect, and who see all things in an entirely different light. Such beings, although living in the same world in which we live, may know nothing whatever of that world which is the only conceivable one for us; and we may intellectually know nothing about their world, although the latter is one and identical with the one in which we live. To obtain a look into their world, we must have strength enough to tear ourselves away from inherited and acquired prejudice and misconception, to rise for the time being from the standpoint of self, which is attached to the sensual world by a thousand chains, and to occupy mentally the standpoint from which we can survey the world in a superior aspect; we must, so to say, die—that means become unconscious of our own existence as individual human beings—before we can become conscious of the higher life and look at the world from the standpoint of a god.

All our modern science is therefore merely relative science, that is to say, our scientific systems teach the relations which changeable and external things bear to that transient and illusive thing which we call a human being; but which in reality is nothing but an external apparition caused by some internal activity, of which external science knows nothing. All this much vaunted and praised knowledge is therefore merely superficial knowledge, relating to only one of the perhaps infinite number of aspects in which God may become manifest.

Learned ignorance believes its own special mode of regarding the world of phenomena as the only true one; it clings to these illusions, which it believes to be the only realities, and calls those, who recognize their illusive character, dreamers; but as long as it clings to these illusions it will not rise above them; it will remain an illusive science; it will not be able to realize the true character of nature, and in vain will such a science ask that God should be demonstrated to her, while she shuts her eyes to exclude the eternal light.

It is, however, by no means our intention to ask that modern science should attempt to put herself upon the standpoint of the Absolute, for in that case she would cease to be relative to ex-

ternal things and become useless in regard to them. It is admitted that colours are not self-existent realities, but that they are merely caused by certain numbers of undulations of light; but this fact is no impediment to the manufacture of colours and their useful employment. Similar arguments may be made in regard to all other external sciences, and the above statements are not intended to discourage external scientific pursuits, but to instruct those to whom a merely superficial and external knowledge is not sufficient, and also to moderate, if possible, the self-conceit of those who believe that they know all things, and who, chained to their illusions, lose sight of the Eternal and Real, and even go so far in their presumption and blind prejudice as to deny its existence.

It will be admitted that it is not the external body which sees, hears, smells, reasons and thinks; but the inner and to us invisible man who performs these functions through the instrumentality of the physical organs. There is no reason why we should believe that this inner man ceases to exist when the external body dies, for, on the contrary, as will be shown further on, such a supposition is contrary to reason. But, if this inner man loses through the death of the physical organism the power to receive sensual impressions from the outer world; if he by the loss of his brain loses the power to think, the relations in which he stood to the world will be entirely changed, and the conditions in which he exists will be entirely different from ours. His world will not be our world, although in the absolute sense both worlds will be one. Thus there will be a million different worlds within this one world, provided there are a million beings whose constitutions differ from one another; in other words, there is only one Nature, but it may appear under perhaps an infinite number of aspects. With each change in our organization the old world appears to us under a new aspect; by each death we enter into a new world, although it is not necessarily the world which changes, but only the relations which we bear to it that are changed by such an event.

What does the world know about absolute truth? For all that we really know, there may be no sun, no moon, no earth:

there may be neither fire, nor water, nor air; all these things exist relatively to us only as long as we are in a certain state of consciousness, during which we *believe* that they exist; there is no absolute truth in the realm of phenomena; there is not even any absolute truth in mathematics, for all mathematical rules are relative and based upon certain suppositions in regard to magnitude and extension, which are in themselves merely of a phenomenal character. Change the fundamental conceptions upon which our mathematics are based, and the whole system will require to be changed. The same may be said in regard to our conceptions of matter, motion and space. These words are merely expressions to indicate certain conceptions which we have formed of inconceivable things, in other words, they indicate certain states of our consciousness.

If we look at a tree, a certain image is formed in our mind; that is to say, we enter into a certain state of consciousness, which brings us into relation with some external phenomenon of whose real nature we know nothing, but which we call a tree. To an entirely differently organized being a tree may not be what we call a tree, but something entirely different, perhaps having no material solidity, being transparent; in fact to a thousand beings, whose constitutions differ from each other, it will appear in a thousand different variations. Thus we behold in the sun merely a fiery globe, but a being of a superior receptivity may see in that which we call "the Sun" something which we cannot describe; because having no faculty to perceive it, we cannot conceive it.

External man stands in a certain relation to the external world, and can as such know nothing of the world but this external relation. Some people may therefore argue that he should content himself with that knowledge and not attempt to seek deeper. To do so would at once cut him off from all further progress and condemn him to remain in error and ignorance; for a knowledge which is entirely dependent on external illusions is necessarily a merely illusive knowledge. Moreover, the external appearance of things is the outcome of an interior activity, and unless the true character of that interior activity is known, the true character of the external phenomena will not be properly understood. Moreover, the real and inner man who inhabits the

external form stands in certain relations to the inner activity of the cosmos, which are not less strict and defined than the relations existing between external man and external nature, and unless man knows the relations which he bears to that power, in other words to *God*, he will never understand his own divine nature; he will obtain no knowledge of self. To teach the true relation which man bears to the infinite All, and to elevate him to the exalted standpoint which he ought to occupy in nature, is and can be the only true object of true religion and science. The fact of a man being born in a certain house or town is not indicative that he should remain there all his life; the fact of a man being in a low physical, intellectual or moral condition does not force upon him the necessity of always remaining in such a state and to make no effort to rise higher.

The highest knowledge which can possibly exist is the one which has the highest object of knowledge; but there can be no higher object for knowledge than the universal cause of all good. God is therefore the highest object of human knowledge, and we can know nothing of God except its mode of activity within our own selves. To obtain a knowledge of self means to obtain a knowledge of the action of the divine principle within our own selves, in other words, a knowledge of our own self after that self has once become divine and awakened to a consciousness of its divinity. Then will the divine inner self—so to say—recognize the relations which exist between it and the divine principle in the universe, if we can speak of *relations* existing between two things, which are not two, but which are one and identical.

All power, whether it belongs to the body, the soul, or to the intelligent principle in man, originates from the centre—the spirit. It is due to spiritual activity that man is able to see, to feel, to hear and perceive with his external senses. In the majority of men this internal spiritual activity has only called the intellectual power and the external senses into activity. But there are exceptional people in whom this spiritual activity has reached a higher state, and in whom higher or interior faculties of perception have been developed. Such persons may then perceive things which are imperceptible to others, and exercise powers

which other people do not possess. If such a case is occasionally met with, it is regarded by the would-be-wise as having been caused by some diseased state of the body, and then they call it the outcome of a "pathological condition"; for it is a fact based upon our daily experience that external and superficial science, knowing nothing whatever of the fundamental laws of nature, continually mistakes effects for causes and causes for effects. With the same show of logic might a crowd of horses, if one of them had obtained human speech, call their colleague diseased and talk about his "pathological" condition. Thus wisdom appears insanity to the insane, light as darkness to the blind, virtue as vice to the vicious, truth as falsehood to the false, and everywhere we perceive that man does not see things as they are, but as he imagines them to be.

Thus we see that all that men usually call good or evil, true or false, real or illusive, useful or useless, etc., etc., is at best only relatively so. It may be so relatively to one, and be entirely the contrary to another, who has other views, objects or aspirations. It is also a necessary consequence of this state of things, that wherever language commences, confusion begins: because each man's constitution is somewhat different from that of others, each one forms conceptions of things different from the conceptions of others. This is true in regard to ordinary affairs, but it is still more evident in regard to matters connected with occult things, of which most men have only erroneous conceptions, and it is doubtful whether a single sentence can be uttered which cannot give rise to misunderstandings and to disputes. The only truths which are beyond disputes are absolute truths, and they need not be uttered at all, because they are self-evident; to express them in language is to express only what everybody already knows, and which no one disputes; to say, for instance, that God is the cause of all good, is to say merely that we symbolize the unknown cause of all good by the expression "God."

All relative truth refers only to men's individual and changeable selves, and no one can know Truth in the Absolute except he who rises above the sphere of self and phenomena to the never-changing and eternal *Real*. To do so, is to die in a certain sense

of this word; that is, to give up entirely the conception of self, which is merely an illusion, and to become for the time being one with the Universal, wherein no sense of separateness exists. If you are thus ready to die, you may enter the door of the sanctuary of occult knowledge: but if the illusions of the external worlds, and above all the illusions of your own personal existence attract you, you will in vain seek for the knowledge of that which is self-existent and independent of all relations to things; the one eternal centre from which all things come and to which all things must return; the fiery centre—the *Father*—to whom no one can approach except through the *Son*, the *Light*, the *Life* and the supreme *Truth*.

—F.H.

(To be continued)

SOMEONE has said—Goethe I think—that the old pagan religions taught man to look up, to aspire continually toward the greatness which was really his to achieve, and thus led him to regard himself as but little less, potentially, than a God; while the attitude of man under the Christian system is one of humility, of bowed head and lowered eyes, in the presence of his God. In approaching the “jealous God” of the Mosaic dispensation, it is not permissible to assume an erect position. This change of attitude becomes necessary as soon as we postulate a Deity who is outside and beyond us. And yet it is not due to the Christian scriptures in themselves, but solely to the wrong interpretation given them by priests and churches, and easily believed by a weak humanity that needs a support beyond itself on which to lean.

The Aryans, holding that man in his essence is *God*, naturally looked up to Him and referred everything to Him. They, therefore, attributed to the material of the body no power of sight or feeling. And so Dhritarashtra, who is *material existence*, in which thirst for its renewal inheres, is blind.

—W. Q. JUDGE (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*)

PATANJALI AND THE WILL

"TAKING FOR GRANTED," writes Mr. Judge in his Preface to the *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, "taking for granted that the student believes in the existence of soul" (p. xi). A necessary condition indeed if the Aphorisms are to be read with any profit. They would make but little impression were it to be rejected even before reading began.

Mr. Judge states it plainly. "Without reincarnation, Patanjali's Aphorisms are worthless" (p. x). All through them this basis is tacitly admitted. We should be glad that it is so. With a prior acceptance we can learn a great deal more than by taking up the theory as something entirely new and strange with which we are only now about to acquaint ourselves.

Nor need we hesitate to do so. Assured of Mr. Judge's own acceptance of it we readily follow his exposition. All that he says goes to strengthen our belief in it as fact. No mere theory is it, but something as real as our birth itself. Upon this fact, from the moment we become aware of it—as *can* happen at a very early stage in childhood—we should unquestioningly study and develop our inner life, seeing ever more clearly throughout its course the effects of mental deposits made in previous lives.

Do not these flit at times involuntarily through our consciousness? Sooner or later, as we grow older, we come to see how wisely they have been interwoven for future use through our obtaining precisely the kind of bodily frame or mental basis, plus such an environment, as will bring them out to be of service in our present incarnation. (p. x)

So what ensues from this (shall we call it?) prearrangement? Do we live happy ever after like the prince and princess in the fairy tales? Not necessarily, by any means, in the sense of being prosperous and comfortable. Much that others esteem may be lacking. Our dearest desires may never be fulfilled. What, then, do we do? We must look deeper, and there is nothing to prevent us if our good Karma has led us in this our latest incarnation to become students of Theosophy. With the Aphorisms at hand the way is cleared for us, provided that we have the will to follow

them, for Patanjali's rules, says Mr. Judge, "compel the student to acquire a right knowledge"—no, not of occult mysteries but "of what is and what is not real." (p. xiii)

A first reality to accept is that *mind* is not the chief arbiter of our state of being. It is the soul in us that is the superior, able as it is to exercise control over the mind, but to aid it a third faculty must be employed, that vital one already mentioned, namely, the will.

Now come two interesting and invaluable pages devoted to a study of the will, what it is and what it is not, and what its relationship to the inner life generally. Its main character is activity. From dawn to dusk our will is tirelessly directing us. Mr. Judge makes a seemingly strange statement concerning this, namely that it (*i.e.*, the will) "is not wholly dependent on the mind, but is separable from it." This, although both will and mind equally "are only servants for the soul's use." (p. xiii)

In an invaluable sentence he puts this before us. "As the soul is held to be superior to mind, it has the power to grasp and hold the latter if we but use the will to aid it in the work, and then only the real end and purpose of mind is brought about." Mind, therefore, as already stated, is but a servant, though an invaluable one. "The real knower and only experienter is the soul." (*Ibid.*)

Over this section of the Preface students should linger. The mutual aid to the soul as rendered by will and mind calls for reflective study. It is easy to take their mechanical action for granted. But so long, says Mr. Judge, as we give them free range, paying little or no attention to them, just so long do these servants remain usurpers of the soul's sovereignty. (p. xiii)

Here now is a point for the student to note. Says Mr. Judge, "There is no reference in the Aphorisms to the will." And to account for what may strike us as a strange omission he makes the thoroughly occult suggestion that this may have come about through it (*i.e.*, the will) "being one of the powers of soul itself and not to be discussed" (p. xiv). Man, however, can misuse that power, and when he does so we see will grievously debased. At this point it is quite within our comprehension, no mystery, merely a capacity which we can direct for good or ill as we

choose. But when our desire moves it into action it has *this* power—to that desire it can make us a slave. Nor does its control end there, for, looking beyond the present, Mr. Judge foresees the dread ultimate fate of the one who may “commit such actions and have such thoughts as form the cause and mould for numerous reincarnations, enslaving him to a destiny against which he rebels, and that constantly destroys and re-creates his mortal body.” (p. xiv)

These are grave, impressive words. But Mr. Judge did not write his wonderful Preface in order to alarm us or to plunge us into blank despondency. Help and guidance are always the purpose of his teaching. He has simply presented us with facts, such facts as we could never deduce for ourselves. We are but students, are we not? Our part is to accept, absorb, and act upon what we learn from him. Fortunately, for this last we need not look far. Mr. Judge’s concluding words in his invaluable Preface leave us with “something” (his own modest term), which, by long descent from the ancient Sage, Patanjali, is now “to be found in the doctrines again brought forward by the Theosophical Society, relating to man as a Spirit; to a Spirit in nature; to the identity of all spiritual beings, and to all phenomena presented for our consideration.” (p. xx)

AND YET, my friend, I would rather that the whole world should be at odds with me, and oppose me, than that I myself should be at odds with myself, and contradict myself.

—PLATO

STUDY OR SOUL-GROWTH?

THE TYRO in Theosophy is apt to ask: "Where is the necessity for knowing and therefore studying all the metaphysical principles and details of Theosophy? All that is really needed by anyone is *good living*. Knowledge might make us great, but will it make us good?"

Real knowledge will. And without it no one can be actively good and virtuous. To begin with: *What* is a good life? A man lying on the roadside fully drunk and oblivious of all around him is doing no harm to anybody! His counterpart in society is the "religious" man, who is astrally intoxicated. Every organized religion encourages resignation, passivity and subtle pride in one shape or another. The priesthood sees to that. Such goodness as is displayed by the priest-propitiating "good man" is conservatism incarnate; his is *tamo-gunam*, inertia-nature. Such "goodness" is devitalizing and demoralizing to the man and causes national and racial degeneration.

Real goodness is *sattvic*, rhythmic: its acts are rooted in understanding. A really good man tries to conform himself to the Rhythm of Nature. The sectarian, even when tolerant, is self-righteous—a very different thing from being righteous. The man who says, "My God will look after me," and then tries to bargain with him through prayer, is not in rhythm with Nature whose whole procession is the result of Law, unerring and infallible. The perception of that Impersonal Law which cannot be propitiated or prayed to must be obtained. The self-righteous, conservative good man, sooner or later, meets with disappointments and is forced to admit that neither god nor priest matter. Then he swings to the other extreme and in dethroning his god and priest rejects everything and says, "Seeing is believing." Still caught up in the meshes of *belief*, self-righteousness gives way to sophistication.

God is Law, and its major operations, because invisible, are hardly understood. Theosophy as a philosophy offers details which inform and explain. That Universal Law in its relation to the human individual shows how we ourselves can and should be-

come good. Reincarnation and Karma are the main factors and their true understanding energizes us to mould our own lives to real goodness. The Law of Cycles reveals the practical method which we can utilize to cure moral and other ills. The Law of Unity and Brotherhood shows that waves of moral uplift as outbreaks of moral epidemics are caused by the collectivity of human actions, and individuals possessing knowledge can become contributory causes for the former and can check the latter.

Astronomical knowledge yields the calendar in daily use; Theosophical science offers to intelligent man rules and laws which enable him to guide himself to supreme virtue, without which real greatness does not exist. Day by day man toils and moils, complicating his existence, getting more and more entangled, and finds that "it is no easy job to be good." Virtue is born of the intelligent heart, and Theosophy is the power that brings it to birth.

And so, to the question, Why is so much stress laid on study, when after all the main object is soul-growth, Theosophy answers: Soul-growth, like all other growth, is a result of continuous and arduous effort and spiritual achievements do not descend upon us by the grace of God. "Look within: thou art Buddha," we quote, but in most cases we omit the various injunctions preceding this command. Yet in these injunctions we are given the steps that make this looking within possible.

Granting that the main object of spiritual effort is to plunge into the mysterious and glorious depths of our own inmost being, the problem remains: How are we to do this? Certainly not by merely wishing to do so or by recognizing this achievement as the supreme goal. We must desire this end and we cannot do so without recognizing the existence of the Inner Self, but to become capable of "plunging" means hard work—work in the form of study in its threefold form of learning, applying and teaching. Why this particular type of work is needed is easier to understand if we use another simile to indicate what it is we are really trying to accomplish.

Let us picture the process as one by which the spiritual waters of influence from our Inner Self suffuse our whole per-

onality. Now, to flood the personal consciousness, the Ego must find a field in the personal man through which it may express itself, and such a field is only offered it when all the "lives" composing the lower quaternary are "porous," as Mr. Judge puts it, to the higher influence. We are taught that these lives are all capable of responding to the impulses given them by our selfish, personal self, but also able to answer to impacts coming to them from our Egoic nature. When they respond to the higher impacts, their own Manasic aspect is awakened to activity and they are able to absorb the influence from within. Each time this occurs, the personality is brought nearer the point where the Inner Ruler can penetrate and effectually affect the lower man. How, then, can we bring to bear upon the lives the impacts that will awaken them Manasically? By training the mind to metaphysical study. Hence the stress laid on study; without it the necessary training cannot be achieved. Only after the habits which such study engenders have affected the lives can the Ego begin to make use of the personality and in time give it the experience which *Light on the Path* calls plunging into the mysterious and glorious depths of our own inmost being.

THE KNOWLEDGE of the existence of soul is impossible through the positive sciences. The religions as understood only assert but do not prove the existence of the soul, because as we ordinarily understand religions, they are simply bare skeletons; the study of Theosophy supplies us with the needed proofs. The bases of morality and virtue are weak so long as morality and the course of virtue are not shown to be the necessary means for soul development, spiritual immortality.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

EDUCATION FOR LEISURE

LEISURE, down the ages, has been the luxury—often the ruin—of the few, the El Dorado of the toiling crowd. Now it has been brought at least potentially within the reach of all. Actually though the ranks of those suffering from surfeit of leisure have been greatly augmented by the involuntarily unemployed, grinding toil for long hours daily is still the lot of countless millions more. To fit us for the age of leisure if and when we do enter it, education with a threefold object is required: to enable us to know our place in civilization; to give us creative skill to ensure joy in work; to kindle eagerness for the pursuit of truth.

Appreciation of the past, which the first object is to inculcate, should not stop, as is so often the case in the Western world, with Greek civilization. The Greeks themselves were not rootless men. Greek culture was firmly rooted in the older civilizations of Egypt and the ancient East. It is today that tap root stretching down into those culture strata of the past which alone can keep the tree of modern civilization from toppling to the earth before the present hurricane of stress and change. To paraphrase St. Paul, "The leaves cannot say to the root, we have no need of thee!" The open-minded study of the past alone can cure our modern arrogance that today's dictum is the final word.

To know where we stand in civilization is to recognize the place of the present moment in the temporal scheme. The present stands to past and future in the relation of a trusted friend, administrator of the past that has gone and guardian of its progeny, the years to come. We hold in trust for the future the bequest of past civilizations. We cannot render a good account of our stewardship if we disprize the legacy or undervalue it.

One or more of the above objects of education is given lip assent to by every modern pedagogue, and yet the schools turn out, year after year, an ever-growing host sure that their place is in the van of progress, equipped with no creative skill and blandly willing to take their views as they buy their clothes, ready-made, cut to conform with fashion's latest whim.

The reason is not far to seek. Strange as it may sound, sci-

ence stands in the way of real educational reform, though not so much, nor so directly, as organized religions do. We have science-run States, and yet their criminals and their underworld exist and will persist as those of other States. When not preaching mechanistic determinism, they talk about a universe of chance and accident. When Causation is on the throne, human will is declared a slave; when the tyrant is dethroned the rule is proclaimed, not of will, but of indeterminable caprice. Between such views of science and those of religions which worship a Personal God whose Machiavellian ways are shrouded in black mystery, what chance is there for men and women in their homes, shops or clubs to develop real initiative?

Ours is a race of blind believers. Man takes his knowledge of the universe from science, his religious beliefs from the priest, his politics from his party organ, his ethics from his social set. Conformity is his god. The weaker will is overpowered by the stronger. A truer scale of values would recognize such activity as little, if any, less antisocial than, say, thuggee.

The artificial stimulation of demand may be necessary to keep up our boasted high standard of living, but to what avail? That standard itself results largely from energy, deflected from independent mental effort, seeking an outlet in the feverish mechanical activity which characterizes our civilization. How can we set a proper value on leisure when *doing* is at such a premium, *being* at a discount? Faster and faster human feet turn the treadmill, and the power generated turns out unnecessary gadgets, enervating comforts, needless luxuries in ever-swelling volume. Something better! Something new!

Reformed education should make the youth of today recognize, for what it is, the mess of pottage for which the present generation has sold its birthright, so that, along with their effective demand for reasonable leisure, they may assert their own inalienable right to think and, thinking, grow.

To pursue truth, to enjoy labour, to find one's place in the scheme of things a philosophy of living is needed, other than the mechanistic one of science or the mystifying one of religions.

THE POWER OF PASSION

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As the flame is surrounded by smoke, and a mirror by rust, and as the womb envelops the foetus, so is the universe surrounded by passion.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, III, 38

THE MIGHTY MAGIC of prakriti or nature expresses itself in and by the law of contrast. Light and Darkness are the world's eternal ways. In us mortals also that duality works, and as a result we have two natures, the higher godlike and the lower demoniacal.

Those of us who are courageous enough to face our own minds know that every time in such a process we are made aware of the existence of our *asuric* or devilish disposition; the more vigorous the examination, the more appalling the vision of ourselves as embodied devils. This begets despondency.

We muster courage and gird up our loins to fight, taking a solemn resolve not to err in the sphere of passion, not to lapse into anger, not to slide down into avarice. Then real troubles begin and we say with St. Paul: "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." (*Romans*, VII, 15)

This is the state of Arjuna, the strong-armed striver after perfection, when he asks of his Guru, Krishna: "By what, O Varshneya, is man propelled to commit offences, seemingly against his will and as if constrained by some secret force?" This secret force, he is told by his Master, is Kama-Passion—the enemy of man on earth, the first of the three gates to Hell.

Our knowledge and discrimination are most of the time vitiated by this passion. On the other hand it is the energizer of our senses and organs of bodily action. Its subtle influence reaches far and deep, and clouds and deludes the Lord in the body. All these considerations make men well-nigh hopeless and they often give up the good fight. Who can blame them for wanting to retreat from this Kurukshetra, the field of Holy War? It is easier to kill the tiger in the jungle, or overthrow the tyrant of the state, than to defeat this subtle enemy of the God within our hearts.

But Krishna says that knowing the nature of our Higher Self, the Lord Ishvara, in the heart of each of us, and invoking His aid, and strengthening the lower self by the Higher Self, this we may be slain. This is the final summation of His discourse on Karma Yoga, the right performance of action. In a single verse the profound answer is given. Its understanding requires meditation, while its application and practice is a question of years of sustained effort.

According to our *Shastras*, Kamadeva is the son of Dharma and Shraddha—Duty is the father and Faith the mother—and yet he is the tormentor of the Atman in us! Such is his magic and its *maya*.

Will is born of Kamadeva, it is said. The old Hermetists asserted, "Behind will stands desire"; and the *Rig-Veda* Hymn refers to the primal arising of Desire in the unknown First Cause. Translating these metaphysical ideas into terms of the human plane, we may say that all our thoughts and feelings, all our resolves and actions proceed from the principle of Passion-Kama: some are of the nature of lust and low passion, others of love and compassion. Lust and love, passion and compassion, all stream forth from but one source. In our delusion we seek for different sources and trace the one to a god, the other to a devil, both outside of us. The source is single, the human heart: one stream goes upwards and compassion, knowledge and thoughtful action result; the other downwards to manufacture lust, gluttony and avarice. Our past thoughts and feelings and will-resolves produce in us the manifestation of Ahura-Mazda as also of Ahri-man: Suras and Asuras are both produced *in* us and *by* us.

There are two kinds of desires in us, the higher and the lower. Who is not familiar with the lower? Not many know the nature and working of the higher.

The passion-principle of Kama is the central one in the human constitution. The Higher Self with its discriminating and linking faculties is the spiritual triad in man; the personal man with his body and the energy or vitality—*prana*—is the second triad. Between these two is Kama: there is desire in and of the higher, as there is desire in and of the lower triad. The senses

and sense-organs are the instruments of the lower desires; the discerning intuition and the thinking mind are the instruments of the higher.

When an individual has more of the lower desires than the higher, and when he gives way to them, he is seen as an evil man; when the higher desires show themselves we have a good and noble person. In most people there is the mixture of good and evil, and it is so persistent that it is taken as natural and therefore unalterable. This is because of lack of knowledge about ourselves, about the seat of both kinds of desires in us, and about how these desires go round unceasingly until the laws of our nature and their being are in some measure understood.

It is said that the higher passions are three: (1) Desire for the Wisdom about the Divine Self in each; (2) Desire for the company of Holy Men, that is, those who are the possessors of such Wisdom; and (3) Desire to apply the Teachings of that Wisdom to ourselves in daily living. The starting point in reforming ourselves lies in arousing one or more of these higher passions. We need not wait for them to come to birth naturally; we must strive to awaken them.

Without knowledge no warfare can be carried on successfully; this greatest of all wars, the one in which we want to fight and demolish our moral and mental pravity, requires precise knowledge. The *Gita* gives that knowledge, and so its study is necessary.

—B.M.

FATALISM implies a blind course of some still blinder power, and man is a free agent during his stay on earth. He cannot escape his ruling Destiny, but he has the choice of two paths... there are external and internal conditions which affect the determination of our will upon our actions, and it is in our power to follow either of the two.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 639

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

“That a microbe, which is at the low end of the living spectrum, has a “mind” might have seemed a strange concept not too long ago, yet this is precisely what present-day experiments are proving. Bacteria, with a primitive cell for an entire body and with a life span measured in minutes, can think; they remember and make decisions.

Paul Pietsch’s article in the October *Science Digest* deals with the rigorously controlled experiments in bacterial behaviour, using strains of *E. coli*, the denizens of our bowels. The investigators found that bacteria are attracted to specific sensory stimuli and repelled by others, that they can “perceive” the concentration gradient of stimuli, can analyze and compare and then make a positive choice about what to do. Experiments reveal, further, that bacteria have memory. The author, who is a neuroanatomy professor at Indiana University, U.S.A., writes:

Though they possess not a single neuron, their “thought processes” may have much in common with your thought processes and mine For deciding, choosing, judging, data processing and discriminating add up to thinking. Indeed, it is much easier to document certain types of thought in microbes than it is in human beings

The demonstration of bacterial memory is one of the true gems of present-day research. Why? Look up *mind* in a dictionary, and you’ll see *memory* at the top of the list of synonyms. Memory is to the function of a brain what heat is to a fire: the *sine qua non*, that without which a brain ceases to be a brain

Simplifying complicated problems is one of the hallmarks of intelligent behaviour. Intelligence has other features, one of which is the capacity to learn. Certain molecules act as sensory stimuli for all cells of a particular strain and can trigger behaviour the very first time the cell encounters them. But that’s only part of the story. Some molecules become stimuli only if present while the cell is maturing. If a young bacterium does not encounter these molecules at a tender age, it will never develop the mechanisms to perceive them. Thus, bacteria operate by learning as well as by instinct

Despite identical genes, in spite of the same environment, individual *E. coli* acquire individual quirks and continue to dis-

play them for the rest of their lives. Bacteria exhibit rudimentary personalities. They exhibit traits that are determined by neither heredity nor environment but by chance. A zone of uncertainty—of individuality, if you will—surrounds the neighbourhood of intelligence in even the lowliest form. And when we start to talk of individuality, that brings a microbial mind very, very close to the realm of human experience.

It's not a question of people and bacteria being the same thing. Nor does it seem likely that genetic engineers can exploit the phase lag in the bacteria's flagellar motor to manufacture human minds in the test tube. But the meek and the mighty perform similar tricks and display common *principles*. The utter simplicity of the microbial mind brings us nearer to the *meaning* of our own rub.

What modern science is rediscovering, Occultism has always maintained, that every atom of matter is conscious in its own degree, on its own plane of development, and is endowed with its own peculiar discrimination, instinct, and, speaking relatively, with intelligence. As Mr. Judge stated in his article "The Synthesis of Occult Science":

The "atoms" and "monads" of the Secret Doctrine are very different from the molecules of modern science. To the latter these are mere particles of matter endowed with blind force; to the former, they are the "dark nucleoles," and potentially "Gods," conscious and intelligent from their primeval embodiment at the beginning of differentiation in the dawn of the Manvantara

The complex structure that we call "Man" is made up of a congeries of almost innumerable "Lives." Not only every microscopic cell of which the tissues are composed, but the molecules and atoms of which these cells are composed, are permeated with the essence of the "One Life." Every so-called organic cell is known to have its nucleus, a centre of finer or more sensitive matter. The nutritive, all the formative and functional processes consist of flux and re-flux, of inspiration and expiration, to and from the nucleus.

The nucleus is therefore in its own degree and after its kind a "monad" imprisoned in a "form." Every microscopic cell, therefore, has a consciousness and an intelligence of its own, and . . . typifies and epitomizes man, as man is an epitome of the Universe. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*, pp. 15-16)

Biophysics, the science that concerns itself with how life learned to live—the mechanical laws that make it work—has as its nub, its central article of faith, the principle that all life obeys the same physical rules as everything else in the universe. Life does not break any physical laws. Biological structures have not evolved haphazardly but have been designed with great precision for their specific purpose.

Kenneth Jon Rose writes in the October *Science Digest* that life's blueprints are suggesting to observant scientists many technical innovations. While some biophysicists are more interested in why life's creations do what they do, others are trying to apply their research to human technology. Architecture, for example, can learn from organisms moulded to cope with excess stress the art of grappling successfully with a host of technical problems that require simultaneous optimal solutions. Another instance is that of a recently designed aircraft landing gear that uses mechanical limbs that work like the legs of a grasshopper, providing shock-absorbing bounce and agility. Some biophysicists believe that in many disciplines and walks of life nature may prove to be the ultimate mechanic.

Perhaps the most arresting aspect of biophysics [Kenneth Jon Rose states] is the humbling effect it has on human inventors and engineers. It often turns out that an idea some bright, enterprising engineer recently thought up was in fact first discovered by a reptile or a slime mould millions of years ago.

Take Styropor, for example. Shipping companies use this lightweight synthetic because it has enclosed air bubbles that make it both shockproof and insulating. Yet for thousands of years the Javanese flying frog has been producing a slimy liquid that it beats into foam in order to protect its eggs. Plant life, too, has done some impressive inventing. Both cardboard and the wings of some planes are produced by placing two flat outer layers of material around a wavy inner layer, making the resulting product both light and strong. But many algae came up with this idea millions of years ago and feature this very construction in their strands. The design protects them from being torn or crushed by rolling waves and jagged rocks...

Biophysics has its fingers in a great many pies. It is involved in medicine, genetic engineering, agriculture, cattle ranching,

defense, space science, sports and recreation. Choose nearly any aspect of life, and if there isn't a group of biophysicists peering into it and picking it apart, there soon will be. Biophysics is that powerful.

There is much more that man can learn from nature. What enthusiasts of biophysics are discovering is only the tip of the iceberg.

For modern science, the origin of agriculture on our plane Earth is shrouded in mystery. It is still believed that early man depended for his sustenance on hunting animals and collecting wild roots and plants, and that it was only seven to eight thousand years ago that he began to cultivate plants, first in a haphazard manner, and then by establishing regular agricultural fields. This, according to the accepted view, marked a turning point in man's history as he turned from the nomadic to a settled way of life.

Dr. B. B. Lal, former Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India and present Director of the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, writes in the October-November *Science Age* (Bombay) of the excavations conducted by him and his colleagues at Kalibangan, Rajasthan, that have brought to light a settlement belonging to pre-Indus Civilization, going back to *circa* 2900-2700 B.C. The excavators found, among other things, evidence of what is believed to be the earliest ploughed field discovered anywhere in the world. The criss-cross patterning of the furrows of this ancient agricultural field goes to show that even in minor details a tradition of ploughing has been carried down over the millennia. What is more, there is evidence that the cultivators of five thousand years ago had keen observation of the phenomenon of natural light and shade and devised ploughing patterns accordingly to get the best results.

The occult teaching is completely at variance with modern science on the issue of how and when agriculture originated. Every ancient tradition speaks of what *The Secret Doctrine* calls "our Divine Instructors," the benefactors of mankind in its infancy, who are credited with having given the first impulse to

civilizations and directed the mind with which they had imbued men to the invention and perfection of all the arts and sciences.

Our races—they all show—have sprung from divine races, by whatever name they are called. Whether we deal with the Indian Rishis or Pitris; with the Chinese *Chim-nang* and *Tchan-gy*—their “divine man” and demi-gods; with the Akkadian *Dingir* and *Mul-lil*—the creative god and the “Gods of the ghost-world”; with the Egyptian Isis-Osiris and Thot; with the Hebrew Elohim, or again with Manco Capac and his Peruvian progeny—the story varies nowhere. Every nation has either the *seven* and *ten* Rishis-Manus and Prajapatis; the *seven* and *ten* Ki-y; or *ten* and *seven* Amshaspends (six exoterically), *ten* and *seven* Chaldean Anedo's, *ten* and *seven* Sephiroth, etc., etc. One and all have been derived from the primitive Dhyan-Chchans of the Esoteric doctrine, or the “Builders” of the Stanzas (Book I). From Manu, Thot-Hermes, Oannes-Dagon, and Edris-Enoch, down to Plato and Panadores, all tell us of *seven* *divine* Dynasties, of *seven* Lemurian, and *seven* Atlatean divisions of the Earth; of the *seven* primitive and dual gods who descend from their celestial abode and reign on Earth, teaching mankind Astronomy, Architecture, and all the other sciences that have come down to us. These Beings appear first as “gods” and Creators; then they merge in nascent man, to finally emerge as “divine-Kings and Rulers.” But this fact has been gradually forgotten. As Bosuage shows, the Egyptians themselves confessed that science flourished in their country only since Isis-Osiris, whom they continue to adore as gods, “though they had become Princes in human form.” And he adds of Osiris-Isis (the divine androgyne): “It is said that this Prince (Isis-Osiris) built cities in Egypt, stopped the overflowing of the Nile; invented agriculture, the use of the vine, music, astronomy, and geometry.” (S.D., II, 365-66)

“Fruits and grain, unknown to Earth to that day, were brought by the ‘Lords of Wisdom’ for the benefit of those they ruled—from other lokas (spheres) . . .” say the Commentaries . . . This will be doubted and denied in our proud generation. But if it is asserted that there are no grains and fruits *unknown to earth*, then we may remind the reader *that wheat has never been found in the wild state; it is not a product of the earth.* (II, 373)

In research laboratories, medical schools, colleges, and drug and chemical companies around the world, millions of animals are killed or used every year for experimental purposes. There is, however, a growing body of anti-vivisectionists, including some scientists, who believe that many of the experiments are at best redundant and at worst frivolous. During the past two decades, methods such as the use of tissue cultures or bacteria have proved efficacious for the carrying out of scientific tests. Now other methods are being explored. Scientists are designing computer models of biological systems, and of compounds with complex molecules, that can be used to get answers once thought to be unobtainable save by sacrificing laboratory animals. Most of these computer programmes are still under development, but several have already been tapped by industrial and pharmaceutical companies. An article in the September *Discover*, entitled "The Electronic Guinea Pig," gives an idea of what these computer programmes can do:

One programme can flag a possibly dangerous chemical at the earliest stages of testing, thereby cutting down the number of animal tests required. Another, more sophisticated simulation analyzes a chemical atom by atom, allowing the computer to spot a toxic structure that may look perfectly harmless in a simpler analysis. The same programme can work backwards, using information about an observed side effect... to determine which chemical could be responsible.

On a more fantastic note, several researchers have created Frankenstein's-monster systems that mimic on a video display screen the heart rate, nerve impulses, body temperature, brain waves, and other vital signs of a living animal....

Scientists are convinced that the number of animal experiments eventually can be cut to a fraction of its present size, and that the computer may some day be an excellent substitute for those tests.

It is gratifying to note that there is widespread concern over the cruelty to which laboratory animals are subjected, and that humane alternatives are being sought.

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS

By H. P. Blavatsky:

ISIS UNVEILED. A photographic facsimile of the original edition of 1877.
THE SECRET DOCTRINE. A facsimile of the original edition of 1888.
INDEX TO THE SECRET DOCTRINE
THE THEOSOPHICAL GLOSSARY
TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE
THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE
FIVE MESSAGES TO THE AMERICAN THEOSOPHISTS
RAJA-YOGA OR OCCULTISM
SHE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH
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By William Q. Judge:

THE OCEAN OF THEOSOPHY
LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME
THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI
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AN EPITOME OF THEOSOPHY AND THEOSOPHY GENERALLY STATED
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"THUS HAVE I HEARD"
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THE U.L.T.—ITS MISSION AND ITS FUTURE
TEXTS FOR THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDY OF "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"
U.L.T. PAMPHLET SERIES, NOS 1-36
H. P. BLAVATSKY AND WILLIAM Q. JUDGE PAMPHLET SERIES

Magazines:

THE ARYAN PATH (BOMBAY)
THEOSOPHY (LOS ANGELES)

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissension or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable Basis for Union among Theosophists, wherever however situated, is "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching," and therefore has no Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that of sympathy. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Union.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to understand and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Forms for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished to Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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