

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (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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BEYOND THE PAIRS

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HERACLITUS has been called the “Dark Philosopher” or the “Weeping Philosopher” because he lived for the most part a lonely contemplative life and rated the things of the world very cheaply. The basic principle of his philosophy was this: “The law of things is a law of Reason Universal; but most men live as though they had a wisdom of their own.” And because he conformed his outer life to his inner perception of the Reason Universal, men and women of his generation dubbed him a pessimist. They gave him that name not because they understood him, but because they did not.

Democritus has been called the “Laughing Philosopher” because people did not grasp the inwardness of his philosophy—that the *summum bonum* is the maximum of pleasure with the minimum of pain. In accepting this teaching they conveniently overlooked the fact that according to Democritus “true pleasure is not sensual enjoyment; it has its principle in the Soul. It consists not in the possession of wealth or flocks and herds, but in good humour, in the just disposition and constant tranquillity of the Soul.” They gave him the title of the “Laughing Philosopher,” not because people understood his philosophy, but because they did not.

Pessimism and Optimism are extremes and in every generation the *hoi polloi* can be grouped in these compartments. People exploit even philosophical teachings to suit their purposes even as the devil quotes the scriptures. There are those who look to the right side, and choose to remain blind to the dark side in Nature; and there are those who see no good anywhere—there never can be a silver lining to the clouds of existence. Both are mistaken.

For the student of Theosophy both these attitudes—Pessimism and Optimism—have to coalesce. Why? Says *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 416):

In human nature, evil denotes only the polarity of matter and Spirit, a struggle for life between the two manifested Principles in Space and Time, which principles are one *per se*, inasmuch they are rooted in the Absolute. In Kosmos, the equilibrium must be preserved. The operations of the two contraries produce harmony, like the centripetal and centrifugal forces, which are necessary to each other—mutually interdependent—“in order that both should live.” If one is arrested, the action of the other will become immediately self-destructive.

How can this metaphysical doctrine be reduced to practice and application?

Robert Crosbie, the “Friendly Philosopher,” wrote that “there are always the ‘pairs of opposites’ in separative considerations, and these are effects. The One Reality sees both as reflections, as light and dark; if not seen, they do not exist.” In day-to-day living this is most difficult to accomplish, but the principle of application and practice is given by W. Q. Judge:

Before we can hope to prevent any particular state of mind or events reaching us in this or in another life, *we* must in fact be detached from these things. Now *we* are not our bodies or mere minds, but the *real* part of us in which Karma inheres.

Towards this end the student has to learn to assume a firm position, keeping the end in view. The position to be assumed is that we are embodied Spirit, and are here to learn to free ourselves from the necessity of earthly experience, having done our duty towards all the material beings who give us an opportunity to win that freedom. A reflection from the *Mirror of Magic* is this:

Keep the mind off the past, for the past entangles us in the web of errors effected.

Keep the mind off the future, for the future draws us to the errors to be caused.

Keep the mind dwelling on the Present—the Duty at hand.

LITTLE DEEDS OF KINDNESS, LITTLE DEEDS OF LOVE

Like threads of silver seen through crystal beads
Let love through good deeds show.

—*The Light of Asia*

ATTRIBUTES of the Universal Mind, Love and Kindness, have blessed the Earth and men by their expressions made manifest through the Avatars, Prophets, Saints and holy men of all times. They work their bounty on the hidden planes of mind and soul and effect a sea change in those who adore them and their exponents in the divine art. Their reflections through lesser men lose their quality of universality and get distorted in proportion as the unredeemed human mind is tarnished by rust or is covered over by layer upon layer of that dust which the selfish man attracts in abundant quantities. These blemishes on the reflecting surface present twisted and deformed images to one who, having lost discrimination, puts false interpretations on the laws of life. Thus, though the person is knit in close kinship with all beings, he, through ignorance, chooses to remain as an entity divided against itself, an entity moreover that assumes antagonistic postures towards other entities that have emanated from the same divine source from which it sprang.

Each human entity is an infinitesimal piece in the great jigsaw puzzle which when solved yields the entire panorama of life. Each individual piece has its own particular niche and therefore has its own importance. It just cannot be ignored or laid aside, Omit it, destroy it, and the puzzle remains unsolvable in parts, the panorama incomplete and the experience wasted. Men who choose to remain untutored in the ways of life have a glance at hardly one of its seven great primal aspects and are therefore unable to reconstruct even one facet of the grand panorama. Getting frustrated in the attempt, they act like recalcitrant children who, unable to construct something aesthetic out of their building bricks, upset the little they have built and vent their petulance on the blocks of wood. The man of today has not advanced very far from that irresponsible state of childhood in which he was in times long gone by. Though grown up, he is still in many respects a child. With all his experience he still has not the discrimination to separate the true from the false. The all-encompassing beneficence of true kindness and of an unalloyed impersonal love can dawn upon him only when he visualizes the evolutionary process in its vast and impartite unity—not otherwise.

Love and kindness being of the essence of universality cannot be made to serve the interest of fragmented personalities; they lose their true essence if they are dwarfed to cater to the mortal aspects of the one who gives as well as of the one who receives. The surgeon performing a delicate operation, if he be true to himself, will merge his consciousness entirely in the act of alleviating the suffering of his patient, and so vibrates rhythmically to the divine pulsations of love and kindness—not he who tailors his skill to match the remuneration offered. Viewed in this light, both life and karma remain free from the personal bias that attends on the numerous actions of men and nations. The seemingly cruel visitations of karma portray both kindness and love when, for instance, they steep a person in want and penury, dull his intellect and force on him limitations of capacity. But we rarely see the clemency in adversity. Every drawback in life, every boulder on the upward path can, if seen in their aspects of love and kindness, become stepping-stones to the acquisition of fortitude and valuable arousers of a keener appreciation of the difficulties of those who flounder and fail and who in their agony put the blame for their misfortunes and calamities on the shoulders of god and nature.

Love and kindness, even in their worldly and workaday aspects, may not be perceived nor may they be appreciated by those on whom they are bestowed. The parent who insists on a disciplined way of life, the unbending teacher who works on his pupil until the lesson is learnt, the head of government who refuses to sacrifice a principle to suit an expediency, are each in their own way the earthly outposts of the eternal governance of things. Traces of the existence of souls who work for others adhering to principles can be found in all civilizations as far back as the records of literature and history can take us. They exist even today, working in obscurity, refusing all honours, yet leaving plain theosophical traces on the men and events of their time. As in previous ages, the learned-ignorant of our age dub them cranks and eccentrics and anachronisms of the age. Human love and kindness manifest themselves in duties well done, in hours spent in holy striving. Milton, realizing both the puritanical and the benevolent aspects of duty, called it the "stern daughter of the Voice of God," and though this line is being endlessly repeated in schools of learning as well as by lovers of poetry, its intrinsic message is passed by as something inapplicable in this day and age.

Acts of love and kindness become truly benign when the best interest of another is ministered to, and that in strict accord with

the justice and the mercy that nature's universal laws provide. It has to be remembered that the difficulties and stresses through which an individual soul struggles may be the very circumstances and provide the very environment suited for its uplift and regeneration. In such cases, it is better to work slowly on the afflicted one and after winning his confidence—this is of great importance—to inject into him the ideas of fortitude and patience and the desirability to surmount obstacles oneself rather than leaning heavily on others to remove them from one's path. True, a mind that is tortured by pain and self-pity is not the ideal one for exposure to the sublime verities, and therefore it may become necessary in the initial stages to help actively in a lessening of the pressure. This rule is applicable in the case of one who has developed his inner vision to discriminate whether his action would not be violative of the decree of karma. For those who have not reached that stage, it is always better to err on the side of mercy. The very act of trying to discriminate as best one can will in itself be an exercise that will activate long discussed potentialities.

As one advances in spiritual knowledge, the realization comes that kindness and love have to be dissociated from their purely human emotional aspects. Experience teaches that reason alone will not suffice to help discriminate between the emotional and the divine. For this, the impersonal viewpoint, the universal outlook has to be cultivated. In other words, the fetters of all earthly desires have to be removed from the earth-bound soul. When the aspiring heart refuses to live on the love of others, it becomes the dispenser of the inexhaustible riches of love. When the individual sees all humanity reflected in himself and himself reflected in humanity, there wells up within him a fount of kindness bordering on compassion for the woes and tribulations of mankind in the mass.

In the early stages of the aspirant's efforts, he may encounter discouragement where he thought he would find sympathy and encouragement. He sees that the world honours and respects deceit and cruelty much more than kindness, and glorifies the cult of self-aggrandizement to such an extent as to bring to ridicule any idea of sacrifice. The wise, the peace-loving, the kindly are not heard or heeded. They are dubbed as anachronisms and as deterrents to the progress of the community or the nation. In the midst of this explosive situation comes Theosophy with its message of charity and love immortal. Can it get a hearing? Experience of the last one hundred years and more shows that the message is not desired by the legions of the unfeeling and the untutor-

ed heart. And yet the student of the perennial philosophy knows and is convinced that the brightness of the day must inexorably follow upon the darkness of the night. Reasoning from this, he is convinced that a band of devoted workers has to be readied for that day when human beings seeing the enormity of the mischief wrought by their false beliefs will clamour for the True. Theosophy, in its quiet, unobtrusive way, is working for the brighter morrow and is preparing a band of workers who, if not in this then in their subsequent incarnations will be instruments ready to the Master's hand.

MOST of us think of ourselves as standing wearily and helplessly at the centre of a circle bristling with tasks, burdens, problems, annoyances, and responsibilities which are rushing in upon us. At every moment we have a dozen different things to do, a dozen problems to solve, a dozen strains to endure. We see ourselves as overdriven, overburdened, overtired.

This is a common mental picture—and it is totally false. No one of us, however crowded his life, has such an existence.

What is the true picture of your life? Imagine that there is an hourglass on your desk. Connecting the bowl at the top with the bowl at the bottom is a tube so thin that only one grain of sand can pass through it at a time.

That is the true picture of your life, even on a super-busy day. The crowded hours come to you always one moment at a time. That is the only way they *can* come. The day may bring many tasks, many problems, strains, but invariably they come in single file.

You want to gain emotional poise? Remember the hourglass, the grains of sand dropping one by one. . . .

—JAMES GORDON GILKEY

OCCULT AXIOMS AND THEIR SYMBOLS

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OUR religions are intoxicants to souls thirsty for pure ideal waters. As soon as you question them, they turn their backs, where is written the word Mystery. They affect shame to conceal their unattractiveness; to avoid giving explanations which they have not got, they say that it is profane to ask for them. They are responsible for the superficiality of modern minds, because for ages they have sold toys instead of distributing thoughts. Nowadays, one must excuse oneself after talking for five minutes on the problems of life; it bothers ladies, and gentlemen too. In vain does the philosopher seek for a man in public thoroughfares: people avoid his lantern.

The recognition of the principle of duality implies a number of consequences. Every accentuation of the distinction between opposites acts as a help to the forces producing universal illusion. The most potent of such forces is that egotism through which subsists the fundamental antagonism between ourselves and everybody or everything else. Individualism, upon which modern society is built, is one of the most nefarious aspects of this powerful agent, and its ever-growing momentum is calculated to plunge humanity deeper and deeper into the mire. Here is a sure criterion of conduct for those who wish to react against this evil, as well as a sound basis for a new morality.

We do not mean that such forces are evil in themselves; they are necessary factors in the world's history. But, as evolution advances to superior planes, these factors must yield to new ones of a different character. It is true enough that competition is one of the springs of material progress, but it is more true still that materiality only represents the lowest arc of the evolutionary circle: and even the recognition of universal opposition would suffice to suggest that individualism being the law of material evolution, altruism must be the law of spiritual growth. This, the sages know to be a fact; but it can be seen by the least far-sighted observer in the tendency to association which characterizes the ascending orders of beings, and which, after all, has alone rendered human progress possible. Competition itself is but an association of a peculiar kind; even on the material plane, the evil carries its own remedy. The savage struggle between isolated individuals has necessitated their association in tribes; the conflicts between tribes have induced some of them to ally and form nations, and

international wars will eventually result in the union of all humanity. Opposites are also correlatives, and virtue is only a progress upon certain vices. An organized family is a decided improvement upon unruléd animal passions; but there may come a day when our patriotism and heroism will be looked upon as vices. The exclusivism of sex will transform itself into unsexual love, the blossom will ripen into the fruit.

There is no conservatism in Nature: all must move or die. And this movement runs in a circle; we have to quicken and follow it, rather than oppose it and run backwards. Will anybody ask children or plants to stop growing? Will you say to a rough that he must cease drinking if he wants to reach Nirvana? He will laugh at you, and drink more. Show him that there are other springs of enthusiasm, initiate him into artistic enjoyment, supply opportunities to his admiration, tempt his power of reasoning by himself; make him feel first, then make him think: you will have awakened a soul, and this soul will spontaneously begin to struggle against the animal. But in presence of vice, disease, and misery, do not drop your hands in despair and ask what is to be done. Follow Nature, who spends vices in order to gain virtues, who boils matter to distil forces; believe Fourier, who said that passions ought not to be stifled, but canalized and utilized. Humanity is ignorant, and with ignorance we have to deal. Philosophers who build to themselves a world of their own are only egotists who cannot plead the excuse of illusion, while they work to strengthen it.

Truth can never be attained by anyone running along a particular line of thought, to the exclusion of all other lines, or hurrying along his own path, heedless of the distressed calls of fellow-men who travel other ways under difficulty. An ordinary respectable tradesman, versed in the art of drawing gold from other people's pockets into his own family-safe, will laugh at you if you argue that those who supply the money which he gives to his wife and children belong to his family also. A doctor knows all the names and habits of bacteria, and can even fight against diseases specially produced by them; but he will never think of destroying the moral bacteria of his patients, being often himself infested with them; and if you say that something ought to be done to remedy prostitution, he will call you a Utopian. A theologian can quote any verses from the Bible, with their commentaries; but if you enquire about the fate of people who never saw the book, or cannot believe it, he will send them altogether to eternal perdition; and if you protest, he will damn you too.

For centuries Christians have been accustomed to look upon humanity as divided into two classes: the good, that is to say the believers, destined to become saints on a sudden; to attain, by the one short step of death, a perfection after which they had only striven at leisure; to enjoy an everlasting happiness after a brief life devoid of unhappy circumstances and irresistible temptations; and the wicked, who did not know better, marked for an eternal and useless suffering without any hope of amendment. As if the wickedness of the most wicked, even of one who should have quenched his anger in the blood of a fellow-man, could equal that of a *father* who is not to be appeased by an eternal revenge, so great is his horror of sin! Oh! give us back the Greek gods and goddesses, who were only a little more virtuous at times, but never much more vicious, than ordinary mortals.

For ages, the device of humanity has been "Vae Victis"; and men were born free or slaves, lords or vassals, noble or vulgar, civilized or barbarians, believers or infidels, rich or poor, virtuous or vicious. In vain did Karma put slavish souls into bodies filled with blue blood, and elicit geniuses, nay, even redeemers, from the ranks of the toilers; in vain did Nature chastise all her children with impartial suffering, equal folly, similar diseases and chaotic corruption. Men took the hint only partially: they have begun to understand that they can improve and must help Nature; but while physical science is studying every fibre of our frames in order to secure health for all, while the newly-born social science is striving to establish equal rights and impartial laws, religion, which ought to console us for animal necessities by preaching spiritual liberation, has been, and is yet, the prostituted slave of might versus right; ready to quote Scripture in favour of slavery, to sing anthems after international slaughter, to sell its pews, in church or heaven, to the highest bidder; always prepared to proclaim the fatality of human curses, to attribute them to original sin, and to preach resignation to those who have nothing to resign, but ever impotent to direct men out of the mire and to prepare the reign of God upon earth.

Man has not yet understood that he has no business to meddle with destiny and to poison it for himself by making it worse for others. He is always ready to submit to *Kismet* and aggravate fatality, because he ignores the laws of *Karma* and doubts justice. Indeed, the only devil is ignorance, which makes man despair of his own nature. Evil-doers are exceptions, but wrong-doers are legion. We have a thousand good reasons to avoid condemning others beyond remission; for it is easy to see the acts of men, but

very difficult to know their motives; we can see plainly the undesirable results of the work of missionaries, for instance, yet their vocation was an impulse of devotion to humanity, corrupted by exclusive devotion to one God. We can see easily the rising tide of vice and crime amongst us, but few trace it to its real cause, the attraction of misery, that satellite of civilization. From distorted souls in emaciated bodies we can expect very little morality. Virtue is a luxury, and those possessed of so great a wealth ought to show it by a great charity.

The habit of drawing hard and fast lines of distinction has permeated all our life, even to our art and literature. Our plays and romances are indebted to it for the types of the perfect traitor who never thinks but to plan poisonous designs, who never speaks but to blaspheme, who never moves but to strike; and of the perfect hero, always handsome and well-combed, always strong and courageous, always virtuous and successful. Our maidens dream about such princes, and when they awake by the side of an honest, plain fellow, full of the common mixture of good intentions and poor compromises, it is only to fancy that their just hopes have been deceived, and to waste a life in distrust and misery. The poor things do not perceive that the same combination exists in themselves and may be the cause of reciprocal disenchantment. Yet they might easily console themselves for imperfections which are perhaps one of their main charms. I cannot help thinking that we should not get on half so well with angels from Heaven as we can do with our earthly companions. We might feel inclined to follow the example of the man who hanged himself because he had a perfect wife. Truly has it been said that women are neither fools nor angels, but that whoever takes them for angels is a fool.

It has been argued that the devotion to humanity commended by Theosophy is incompatible with family feelings. Are those creeds then better calculated to strengthen bonds of love, which induce men to look upon death as a possibly eternal separation, after which an infinite bliss will fill their own hearts, shut for ever by some degrading and repulsive process to the agonies and torments of some of their kin? With this prospect of intensified and transcendental egotism, Theosophy, in truth, has nothing to compare. Let it be contented with teaching men actual brotherhood and mutual love. Let those build their stone houses upon interested partnership and momentary lust, who think the human heart too small to contain more than one love, more than one god. Meanwhile, let us cherish our present family, without forgetting that numberless have been our children, and numberless will be our

parents; that, born from one and the same light, we must strive all together towards final union; that the sacred books enjoin us to perform fully our duties to humanity, to our race, to our families, in one word to our *Selves*; and also tell us: "Verily, a wife is not dear, that you may love the wife; but that you may love *Atma*, therefore a wife is dear." If there is a people in the world who considered the family as a sacred and divine institution, it is the Chinese, who have written thousands of books upon filial duty, and who believe they hold part of their souls from their ancestors, upon whose altars they offer daily sacrifices. Yet this is what Confucius says in the Classic of Filial Piety: "The filial piety of the wise is a tribute of reverence to all fathers under Heaven, his reverence a tribute to all brothers, his submission a tribute to all rulers," and he recommends reverence towards Heaven and Earth, the father and mother of all creatures. "During the golden age," says the Book of Rites, "men did not pay reverence only to their own fathers, neither did they treat as sons only their own children. Thus egotism was crushed in the egg."

Under direction of this same philosopher was composed a little treatise, the name of which can be translated "Doctrine of the Mean," or "Invariability in the Middle," or again "Perfect Equilibrium." Curiously enough, the doctrine contained in it can be understood in three corresponding senses. Simple inspection of the cross will show us that there are three positions between the right and left extremities. First there is a passive equilibrium at the lowest point, representing the state of mind of the man who is unable to decide or even distinguish between the two seers of grain; who is always desirous to spare both parties, never able to satisfy anyone; always ready to follow the strongest, never able to know his own tendency; always anxious to ascertain other people's opinion, never able to form his own; not quite evil, scarcely good; prompt between affirmation and negation, stingy between riches and poverty, tepid between cold and heat: this is the man to whom Christ said: "I will spew thee out of my mouth!"

Next, there is the equilibrium at the centre of the cross, or that worldly wisdom expressed in the adage "*Virtus in medio*." Of this the book of Confucius treats more specially. He tries to show that wisdom consists in following the middle way, in keeping a perpetual adjustment between the opposite tendencies of life. "Few follow this way, because the learned go beyond, while the fools do not reach it." Yet it is not to be sought for very far, for it is "here and now," in the nature of man himself. Flying after the unknowable is useless; you may ride even the human passions, provided

you rein them into their normal course. For the saint is not so much the virtuous as the just; and the aim of nature seems to be rather the establishment of harmony than the prevalence of goodness.

Order is undoubtedly the way to a good social constitution and to earthly prosperity. But above the extreme, at the upper point of the cross, outside of Maya, in the absolute, stands perfect equilibrium. This can be attained only by those who have equalized the scales of Karma, who have reached again the neutral point from which they had been started into the swing of incarnation. Knowing that our past evolution has been mostly spent in animal passion and human egotism, in ignorance and sin, we cannot doubt that the balance of this enormous debt is to be struck only by a compulsory and hastened payment of altruistic actions and deeds of virtue. Karma cannot be put out of the way; it must be satisfied. Once this equilibrium has been obtained, and to him only who has reached it, virtue and vice become equally indifferent; good and evil, light and darkness, merge into each other and vanish, as, before the reality of dawn, dreams of love disappear together with nightmares. Then the saint can view the pairs of extremes from the standpoint of the great mystic Lao-tzu. "He regards people as children, and all creatures as the dogs of straw which are to be burnt when the sacrifice is over. Men who are virtuous and sincere, he treats as virtuous and sincere; men who are not virtuous nor sincere, he treats also as virtuous and sincere; and this is the acme of virtue and sincerity."

(To be continued)

A MAN can have no god that is not bounded by his own human conceptions. The wider the sweep of his spiritual vision, the mightier will be his deity. But where can we find a better demonstration of Him than in man himself; in the spiritual and divine powers lying dormant in every human being?

PSYCHIC PURITY

THE living of a clean life may not at first seem so difficult a task. There are millions who consider that virtuous living and moral rectitude, as the world knows them, constitute the clean life. Were this really the case, why are our cities in East and West places of such psychic pollution? Many a person leaving the towns for hill resorts, the countryside, or the seaside, has been known to comment on the change of air—not just physical air—at once noticeable, which indicates the oftentimes unconscious recognition of a great fact. For all our so-called clean lives, city and town, village and hamlet, nowadays, are abodes of psychic iniquity, because wherever men congregate, there flourishes the sense-life—not in the grossest meaning, although that, alas, is often true. Our cinemas, our theatres, our music-halls, our bookshops, our restaurants, etc., are designed to satisfy and to enhance our senses.

Moral attributes, it is quite clear, are very far from having first place in our civilization. But could they not be placed first in the lives of some of us? Think of the need in our social life, with its manners and customs, or our business life with its crooked ways accepted as altogether the thing to make money. The clean lips—“govern the lips as they were palace-doors, the King within”—clean hands never engaging in any task save that which serves the good of the whole, the clean mind without impure or illiberal thoughts, these make up a clean life. We see this to be a task of utmost difficulty. But that need not deter us from beginning.

The true spiritual life, which is a clean life, has been defined as “the perfect equilibrium of the *inner* nature of man, and the attainment of complete mastery over the body with all its passions and desires” (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 257-58). To be clean implies to be free from stain or spot or blemish, and at present “the soul is stained and distracted with the turmoil of passions and the terrestrial desires of the bodily senses, even of the ‘Astral Man.’” (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, p. 38)

In Theosophy, stress is laid on the purity of magnetism of the individual. It is said that the psychic “smell” is as distinct as the physical and is caused by many things. Reference was once made to evil effects of “the magnetism and invisible results proceeding from erroneous and sincere beliefs. Faith in the Gods and God, and other superstitions attract millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful agents around them.” These are the words of a great Adept.

How vast a subject true cleanliness is, is apparent, and since it

is that of the Inner Man as well as the outer man, we no more wonder why our towns, large and small, are places of psychic pollution. Is this why there are slums in all our cities, even those of most resplendent architecture, great refinements and splendid culture? The outward sign of an inward fact—for race-mind and race-feelings manifest themselves in strange ways.

To essay, then, the great task of self-purification, not each for himself, which is itself an unclean thought, but for the whole. A clean body and environment are not enough. Like is drawn to like by magnetic affinity. Suppose we filled our minds with the ethics of the ages, the purity and the nobility of what is impressed on pages and in print by the psychically clean and the magnetically pure. Such a mind would influence the senses, and our likes and dislikes.

There presents itself a different kind of asceticism from that of the mediaeval West or even of parts of modern India. The Westerner who reads for the first time the definitions of austerities of body, speech and mind in the seventeenth chapter of the *Gita* is amazed. He finds that austerities of the body mean "honouring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers, and the wise, purity, rectitude, chastity and harmlessness"; those of speech are "gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures"; those of the mind are "serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct." It is taught that the *Sattva* quality unfolds from the practice of this threefold mortification which makes for a clean life. Then comes peace which nothing can disturb and in which the Soul grows as does the holy flower upon the still lagoon.

RESPECTABILITY has become a joke; right and wrong, inextricably mingled. We are all so used to having "the facts of life" paraded before us in their ugliest possible aspect that we no longer become indignant. We can no longer be shocked at anything, because we have become used to everything. But we can still, some of us, be repelled by vulgarity and bad taste; and we can most of us be bored.

—LOUISE M. FIELD

THE PROGRESSIVE MARCH

SINCE the very dawn of human history and traditions, there have been from time to time, amongst all peoples, men who have taught of a life unknown to the majority, and the means by which that life might be realized. We have but to ask ourselves, and to look about us, to see that many human beings now as in all times have had the thirst for a higher life, and yet how few have realized that ideal life which alone makes our so-called practical life tolerable! Is it not a curious fact that while on the one hand there have always been beings bringing us the message of the higher life, telling us the way by which we may come within its light, yet, on the other hand, though mankind is seeking that very life, it finds it not!

What is the explanation of that strange paradox? If we were to take the two words, *religion* and *science*, not as typifying any particular religion or any particular scientific theory or doctrine, but as typifying ourselves, then we may perchance see from our side what the obstacles are. First, there is the attempt to convert the unknown into terms of the known, and yet the most elementary reflection will tell a person that if the unknown were the same as the known we would know it already, it would need no conversion. What science has so far concerned itself with has been matter, and that which moves matter, that which we name energy. What has always concerned religion has been that which is called Spirit, and that which moves Spirit, what they call the Soul.

Scientists cannot profess to know what matter is, or what energy is. They only study the effects visible to them, which effects they ascribe to an unknown something which they name matter, or force, or energy. And in the same way, no religionist has ever *seen* the Soul, or the Spirit. He no more knows what Spirit or Soul is in its ultimate analysis than the scientist knows what matter and energy are. The religionist, perceiving the effects experienced by himself and others, effects which cannot be attributed just to matter or to energy, names the source of these effects Spirit and Soul. That which the scientists call matter and force, and that which the religionists call Spirit and Soul, are one and the same. When a person is awake and acting on the physical plane, he is one being. When he is asleep and dreaming, is he not the same person? When he is thinking, whether his thoughts are high or low, whether his ideas are true or false, he is one and the same being who is passing through different states, different con-

ditions.

The so-called conflict between religion and science is the conflict that is within every person's heart. It is the conflict between life as he would like to live it and life as he finds it, and misunderstanding the nature of Life, he sees Spirit and Matter as different things—things in themselves. He sees God and man and nature as separate one from the other.

What the religionist calls God is Life, and it is recognized today that *all* is Life. If there are higher beings than man, they are Life. If there are lower beings than ourselves, are they any the less Life? Since matter can undergo that wonderful metempsychosis from atom to the form of man, it is clear that there must be, however dormant, a Life principle in matter which needs only to be deeply pricked to come to active life. Having the conception of the One Life as that which antedates and underlies all conditioned life or lives, it is clear that that Life includes our life. It is equally clear that our life, however we may live, is a part of that One Life. It puts us on a basis of relation; and through this relation, on the path of evolution pointed out by the Great Ones through the ages.

Theosophy posits that "the whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a higher life." All nature below the human stage is evolving just as much as we are, and that evolution is sentient, because all Life is sentient. It may be Life in the profound lethargy of a sleep from which we, for the moment, may not be able to awaken it, but it is Life. It shows also that man is not only evolving, but like the Life below him is a participant in evolution, and since our evolution is manifestly incomplete, and since there never could have been a time when there was no Life, it follows that in the infinite ages that have gone by there must have been beings evolved as much higher than man as man is higher than the infusoria.

This statement then, that all that is, no matter how we name it, is within the sphere of Life; that all things are fundamentally portions of the One Life, whatever the state or condition they may find themselves in; that all these conditioned existences are in evolution—this leads us to consider the fundamental proposition of Theosophy that each one of these beings, forms and conditions of Life, no matter what name we give to them, no matter whether good or evil, whether visible or invisible from the standpoint of our plane of human perception—every one of these beings is now a man, or was once a man, or will sooner or later become a man. If there are beings who have never passed through the human

stage, then there are vast areas of life's experiences that are to them a blank. If there were a being, no matter how high he might be imagined, who had never passed through human life, then he would not *know* life. If there were a divine being who had never been in Hell, how could we say of him that he knew all of life? If he had not passed through every form and state, every condition and circumstance possible in the whole of life—if there were such a being, no matter how high his stature, he would be incomplete, and there would still remain for him much to learn from life.

Misconceiving, then, both good and evil, both God and man, both Spirit and Matter, it is inevitable that a practical mistake should flow from that misconception: In every religion we find people looking for the source of their being—the arbitrament of their fate—to an outside power, and this power they name by many names—God, or what not. All religions ascribe all manner of goodness to their God, but since there is evil and sorrow and pain and suffering in the world, which by their very imagination of God they cannot attribute to him, they are compelled to invent a God of evil over against their God of good, and they see the God of good as one being and the God of evil as another being.

Certain practical-minded men, testing the unknown by the known, the imagined by the real, look about them and see the prevalence of evil in the world; in other words, they see the "children of God" getting the worst of it all the time. There is seemingly more of evil in the world of men than there is of good, and so religion develops beings who make it their business to get acquainted with the God of evil and his minions and exercise the same influence on the evil powers in nature that the religionist, so-called, seeks to exercise on the good powers in nature. There is not a religion that is not full of stories of prophets and seers on the one hand and on the other hand of witches and wizards and those who work for evil. Throughout the world today as always we find people worshipping the powers of evil. Are we not all afraid lest evil befall us and those we love? Is not that an admission of the suzerainty of evil in the world? And does not every one of us seek to make provision so that no matter what evil happens, it will hit the other man, not us? That the lightning will strike our neighbour and not ourselves?

So "the higher life" is a purely relative term. The animal seeks a higher life. If it did not have the lure of some object, the urge and pressure of something lacking, it would be as inert as the sleeping rock; men, in the same way. For most of us, our ideas of Spirit and Matter being what they are, our ideal of a higher life

is purely physical. Looking about us we see a world of sick people—sick physically and sick mentally and morally. Their ideal is to exchange that disease and sickness for health, physical, mental and moral. But is that truly the search for a higher life? Hardly, because, reverting to our first proposition, although the *whole* order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a higher life—not just man—we have but to study history to see that this same force is a great Sifter, incessantly sifting out the weak and unfit, so that only the strong survive even temporarily. And this same power that urges on the march of man, this same great Sifter that is forever separating the wheat from the tares, the strong from the weak, sets limits to the formative hand of nature in every direction, man included.

Turning from religion to science, we find that the same thing is true. Just as the good man in the church seeks to influence God so that the dispensation to him shall be all good, just as the evil man seeks to placate the powers of evil so the good may be plundered and the stolen goods delivered to the servants of evil, so the scientist is forever seeking to gain power over matter, over what he calls force or energy. Yet the worst periods of the world have always been those in which religion was triumphant and unquestioned, and the destruction of every civilization has been brought about by its science. The onward march of science shows that whatever may lie behind nature, science is more powerful than any God, any doctrine, any creed, until at last the whole world exchanges religion for materialism. In other words, people have turned from the worship of Spirit to the worship of matter, and then the whole of mankind become “wizards.” That word which was once exclusively in the vocabulary of religion is now applied to one who has power in any direction—to wizards in industry, in business, in movies, in this, that or the other direction.

Both our religion and science look *outside* for the secrets of life; yet we have but to regard ourselves to see that our whole conduct of the business of life is worked and guided from within outwards and not from outside in. We have but to observe nature, having observed ourselves, to see that the whole universe is worked and guided from within outward, and then we begin to look not to an outside God, to an outside power, or force, or energy, but we begin to study the nature of the different principles and powers and forces in Life itself, and how those principles, powers and forces operate and are operated. And then it becomes clear to us that everywhere, incessantly present in all nature—whether

we call it spiritual, or intellectual, or merely physical—is the standing proof to every doubter that there is but one indivisible and omniscient Intelligence, and that this thrills throughout every atom of the whole infinite Universe. We are in daily contact with that intelligence and we never question its action, external or internal to ourselves. Yet clearly, unless we postulate, first the divinity and omnipresence of Life itself, the identity of everything that is, with Life, the incessant evolutionary march of all beings, without beginning or end, but with periods of repose after periods of activity—unless we postulate these things, unless we take time to look within and observe without, surely, whatever our conduct of life, whatever the structure of thought, will, feeling and action that we may erect, we are building it upon a false foundation: and the parable of Jesus, of the house built on the sand as against the house built on the rock, becomes clear to us.

When we see, then, that what we call Law is omnipresent, eternal, boundless, unconditioned, and that it sets limits to all action, and then consider from our own standpoint what would be the nature of perfect Intelligence, we can see that Law is the manifestation throughout all nature of perfect Intelligence—not the intelligence of any being, but the Intelligence in Life as a whole. Having seen the working of nature—creation, preservation, destruction, recreation, another destruction, and so on endlessly—having seen the presence of perfect Intelligence in the operation of Law, we know by our own witness of the working of our own life and consciousness, by the perception of the working and consciousness of life in other forms, that not only is there perfect, infinite Intelligence, but there is finite Intelligence also. Just as Life is One, and when so regarded is infinite, boundless and unconditioned, yet that does not prevent the presence of life in every conceivable state or condition of finite forms, so the presence of infinite Intelligence does not preclude the incessant manifestation and development of finite intelligences.

To some, perhaps, that may be hard to conceive when their attention is drawn to it for the first time. To take a simple illustration: The ocean of matter has no form; it is the principle and the substance out of which *all* forms are created. Here, then, we have omnipresent matter with the infinite capacity for form, and within it any number of forms, finite and conditioned. Forms come and go, but matter has not ceased, is not disturbed. Applying this to the ocean of Life: Life is no form, no being; it is the principle of all beings, as matter is the principle of all forms. And then we can see in the ocean of Life, crores of beings; in the ocean of matter,

shoals of forms. Then we need to study how it is that Life not only operates from within outwardly but also operates from without inwardly, that is, *seems* to. There is but one Force, one Energy, and that is the Energy of Life itself. It is just as impossible to conceive of Life as static, rigid, motionless, as it is to conceive of a beginning or an end to Life.

We can see by the witness in ourselves that the highest imaginable form of being is in us, is in truth our real Self, our Self-Consciousness. Study of every scripture reveals that their God is Self-Consciousness, that is, that their God is capable of self-communion. So are we. There can be no higher form of Life than that which has reached the consciousness of Self. We have scant regard for the Divinity that is seated in the sanctuary of the human body and human mind, and yet our Self-Consciousness is a focus of universal Law, that is, of the omnipresent, infinite, boundless and unconditioned Intelligence of the whole of Life.

Consider what we call our will, our choice, our volition. There is in everyone the final authority, one's own will, one's own choice, one's own Self-Consciousness. There is in everyone the final power and the final direction of that power. That is what is meant by the phrase "seeking the higher life." The higher life is not a change in state, it is a change in attitude towards Life—towards Life in ourselves, towards Life in all other forms and states; towards Life in lower conditions just as much as Life in higher conditions. Then we cease to think of ourselves as *our* bodies, *our* feelings, *our* opinions; we are Intelligence incarnate, Spirit incarnate. The change, then, is a change in relation following upon a change in attitude. It is generally believed that the higher life may be achieved by changing the outer environment, or by some outside power making a change for us, whereas the whole secret of life is (a) its unbroken continuity; (b) the unbroken series of its manifestations.

There was a time when we were in a higher state than we are in now. Being in a higher state, we were like a man in a clear atmosphere as against a man in a fog. We participated to a far greater extent in the life of the beings about us; we participated in a far higher degree in the universal Intelligence, which only means the acquired experience of all beings. Our powers were infinitely greater than they are now; yet there are lessons in Hell that cannot be learned in Heaven, not because Hell is a state, but because Hell is where certain forms of Life dwell, and if we want to understand those beings we have to go where they are, they cannot come where we are. We did not fall because of Adam's

sin. From that higher state we saw the descending ladder of being. From the lofty summit of universal Self-Consciousness in which every form of Life is included, we saw our younger brothers. There was no other way for them to learn the lessons of life outside their own sphere of experience than either by being lifted to our state, in which case, universality not having been gained in an individual form, the being is lost when raised to the universal state—he is as if he had never been; or, the other way is for the universal being to descend to the lower states, and that is what we did. Having descended into the darkness of matter, into the darkness of the kingdoms of beings not yet arrived at self-consciousness, our condition was that of a man with seeing eyes hurled into jet darkness. We only could feel our way, and how many a great mariner, feeling his way in storm and stress, has come to wreck! How else could we learn the life of the beings in the state called matter except by coming here? How else can the physician heal except by going among his patients? How else can we learn save by study of the alternating manifestations of life? And that was our condition. Our light has dimmed, but the dimming is not in us. Every night of our lives when we go to sleep, as men say, we leave the darkness of matter and return to that high state whence we came, resuming our universal Self-Consciousness. Were it not for that, no man—because he is a God descended in flesh—could endure the Hell, the torment of existence as we live it. We cannot see until we have done our duty by the forms of Life below us as also above us. Above all! we can never see until we recognize the divinity in *all* Life.

So we are Life which has descended from a high state with a divine purpose. We are Life confused and entangled in matter, because however high our experience, we have not yet exhausted the learning of the lessons of Life. But we are not alone here. There come to our aid great beings who have learned all the lessons of life and who are, therefore, able to incarnate in the mind and body of the race, without ever losing their universal Self-Consciousness. But between the larger cycles in which the great Teachers and Saviours come, we find the smaller cycles during which the disciples of these Elder Brothers are at work. We find in every age men who believe in the higher life, who suspect that Life itself is divine. In former lives, in other forms, in other states, we chose, we thought, we acted, we set up good or bad causes in the ocean of Life, and the ships we set afloat, these argosies, come back laden with good or bad, according to our sowing and our sinning; and as it has been in the past so it will be in the future.

We have but to begin to sow upon the basis of the immortal Divine Life, of which we are a part, and that Universal Self-Consciousness which includes ourselves is able to make itself known to us directly. Not merely through Saviours who lived a thousand, two thousand or five thousand years ago, not merely through books and works, but just as we are able to make our will and purpose known to the farthest member of our body, so the enveloping Consciousness of Self, which is the true divinity, is able to make its presence in all mankind manifest in the individual man, and this is the law of the spiritual life.

So we may close by considering if we indeed are of the number to whom these words from *Light on the Path* apply:

Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life. But he is only so when he grasps his whole individuality firmly, and by the force of his awakened spiritual will recognizes this individuality as not himself, but that thing which he has with pain created for his own use, and by means of which he purposes, as his growth slowly develops his intelligence, to reach to the life beyond individuality.

That is the higher life that is open to every man, theoretically, and open to every Theosophist, practically.

THE LONELY ROSE

The last of autumn's glories fled,
The last leaf is shed;
Lone stands in thorn'ed sorrows
The last among the Rose.

Marauding Winter frowning stands,
Her icy death commands;
Though weeping, is her last bow,
She is the Hope of Tomorrow.

The dead rose, new-born
After ravages of winter gone,
While dying, is not slain,
But sleeping, wakes again.

THE SEEKER, THE STUDENT, THE SERVER

MOST persons trained in the modern school of thought have a tendency to self-opinionatedness that is hard to shake. They move complacently through life, accumulating mental deposits that becloud the intellect and hinder constructive thought. A contact with Theosophy is a novel experience to such. Having come to hear the echoes of their own opinion, they do not like the voice that contradicts them. Many "blow out" of the lecture hall as suddenly as they "blew in."

But a few continue—those who are seeking. Even for them it is a mental quake. And, however slight each shock, when it is felt at many, almost at all, points of belief, the cumulative effect is strong. It causes a disquietude about the prevailing values of this habit or that opinion. It acts as an awakener, and thus the spring of questioning previous beliefs and views starts on an eventful journey. Will it reach somewhere safe to sea?

Conservatism hates to be disturbed; and it asserts itself trying to silence the voice of inquiry. It becomes malignant and tries to pick holes in the philosophy which challenges its cherished beliefs. It becomes cunning and uses reason to invent questions, not with a view to satisfying the mind, but with the desire to falsify any teaching that does not find favour with the one who questions. Theosophy is not for such. A few more retire at this stage. But for the earnest newcomer who loves truth, every avenue to understanding is open.

All this work is accomplished by the public lectures of the United Lodge of Theosophists. They challenge the listener who, if not earnest and sincere, stops coming; he who perseveres, becoming more and more regular, develops the power to question rightly. He soon becomes something more than an interested listener. He questions his past bases of thought and does not mind their stability crumbling. For the first time, perhaps, he tries to see reason in its true perspective. Reason, however, cannot arrive at correct solutions from false premises, so that correct premises have first to be discovered. The seeker, though interested and earnest, feels diffident and confused. He finds that, for his own satisfaction, the philosophy must be vigorously questioned. Not in any mood of scorn, but in the attitude of the explorer who but dimly senses the realm beyond. The listener has ripened into a questioner.

He now attends the question-answer meetings. He often is puzzled about the way to frame his question. He asks himself:

“With what attitude and motive? And about what topic shall I question?” Knowing that answers are given impersonally, it would be in the fitness of things if the personal element be absent from the question. The motive for asking is to get elucidation, which implies that the questioner prepares himself to receive the answer at its intrinsic value—as a light to be utilized to light up his own problems. The first public question is asked with diffidence and shyness; but the act means something more than it outwardly is. It means that the mind has come into its own.

To a mind that is out to ask the why and the wherefore of things, there is no lack of subjects for questions. The recondite and the abstruse loom large in the mind of the beginner; also, there is a tendency to go after interesting titbits. Thus one is apt to lose the substratum of the philosophy, the fundamentals that trace the pattern of life from the One to the many. The mind, then, requires training along new lines—a training that prevents it from flying off at a tangent at the slightest provocation. The questioning, both inner and outer, should cease to be sporadic and become systematic. It should be constructive—not brilliant and showy. It must therefore be directed to the elucidation of the basic propositions first, to the examination and assimilation of the vital principles that govern the laws of being, such as Karma and Reincarnation, and so on. One useful exercise is to reduce one’s own difficulties and life problems to impersonal questions so that the answers received may be reflected upon and used in a practical way.

This questioning stage helps to satisfy the intellect about the consistency and the worth of the philosophy. That satisfied, should the inquiring still be persisted in? Questions, like all good things, can be abused, if carried to an excess. If asking is the only trouble that a student will take, there will be little of enlightenment, and a setback may follow. This stage has proved dangerous to many. To overcome this tendency, the student learns not to ask a question until he has endeavoured to secure answers in the textbooks. If he learns anything, it is that the student on the platform does not answer the questioner; Theosophy answers questions. This dual impersonality is an awakener in itself. If, therefore, others in the Lodge know how to answer his questions, he himself can and should learn to do the same.

No more an inquirer, he has become a student, ready to derive real benefit from the study class. At this gathering he may become impatient if he does not quickly come upon those items and topics in which *he* is interested and with which *his* life problems are concerned. He learns patience, and if he is earnest, soon discerns

that at the class thoughts are presented and teachings are explained which are practical and touch his life intimately.

To make correct applications of the simple facts of his own Divinity, of the Law of Responsibility or Karma, of learning from life implicit in Reincarnation, and so on, he needs something more. He needs an intimacy with these fundamental ideas of Theosophy. Then he sees that to learn in a real sense he should begin to repeat intelligently what he studies, and so he volunteers to do platform work and willingly consents to perform what looks a simple exercise—reading from the devotional books. In accepting this task, the student, especially the very “learned” and the “more intelligent,” develops humility. To read aloud the grand words of Holy Writ is a sacred task, and if he is devoted and faithful and humble he performs a real magic act unbeknown to himself. Gradually he progresses to other exercises on the platform and learns the magic of “the pupil-teacher—one who has no right to dogmatize,” says H.P.B., but who serves Theosophy which is “the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets.”

Study and platform work produce their results in his own life; the Lodge has become his spiritual home; he has found a cause worth living for. He has become fortune’s favoured soldier. Will he join the Army?

REALITY is One. The levels are not so many drawers in a chest, or even so many skins of an onion; they are levels of experience, and each level is an experience of the whole but in a given manner or with a given emphasis of attention.

—SRI KRISHNA PREM

THE THEOSOPHIST'S TASK

THE fundamental difference between the proficient in ordinary science and the adept in esoteric science is one of kind. The occultist does not only possess more knowledge; his organs of cognition are not the physical senses and the trained mind which the scientist uses; in fact the occultist discards these as unreliable, substituting the higher mind and the superphysical senses in their place. In order to observe and to draw conclusions the modern scientist uses his mind and senses. The occultist is in possession of the spiritual counterparts of these, the very existence of which is not suspected by the man of modern knowledge. Objects of sense are shadows with which the scientist concerns himself; he trains his mind to focus itself on them. He does not know them as shadows but as realities, and while blaming him for being so unscientific as not to look into the propositions of the Esoteric Science, we cannot condemn him, for he is fulfilling his own *dharma* and much of his work has helped humanity. For example, the man of modern science has freed humanity from the tyranny of priestcraft. Again, he has introduced the concept of causation and of order in the visible universe and thereby has firmly assumed their existence in the moral sphere and the social world.

In these and similar ways the modern scientist is the ally of the occultist, while the orthodox theologian and the religionist are his enemies. But the scientist moves in grooves which are narrow, however wide these may appear to him. That his discoveries and inventions while enhancing physical comfort have increased moral turpitude, is beginning to be recognized. The church exploits the human soul by giving it false knowledge and thus weakens man's moral fibre; modern science offers opportunities to that weakened moral nature to indulge in that weakness; in this the modern scientist is the friend of the church.

Theosophy strikes at the root of religious orthodoxy by revealing the One Universal Source of Religion which proves that each and every claim to any unique position is false. Such claim of the Christian, or of the Jew, or of the Muslim, is shown to be erroneous. Theosophy also strikes at the materialistic and the mechanistic conception of man and the universe which modern science has hitherto presented. The student of Theosophy must learn to see why it is just as difficult for the confirmed materialist to perceive the absolute logic and reasonableness of the Esoteric Philosophy as it is for the confirmed orthodox religionist. Only in a little less degree is it difficult for the man

who has so impressed his mind with certain fixed and accepted views that these stand in his way of perceiving where and how they are wrong. H.P.B. wrote:

You forget one thing, which is that your much-boasted modern education is precisely that which makes it difficult for you to understand Theosophy. Your mind is so full of intellectual subtleties and preconceptions that your natural intuition and perception of the truth cannot act. It does not require metaphysics or education to make a man understand the broad truths of Karma and Reincarnation.

Applying this to the man whose mind lies firmly set in the frame of science, or of religion, or of any of the many particular "isms," the Theosophical promulgator will soon recognize that he must not look for such—the "high and mighty" of the world—to come to Theosophy. Further, he must remember what H.P.B. has said, that the Path is easier to the poor and the single of heart than to the cultured and the rich.

If the Theosophical promulgator has that lesson to learn and to remember, what has the Theosophical student to recognize? Not to expect that the findings of modern science will always "corroborate" the teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy or that the latter will always support his own religious beliefs and inclinations. By its aid, the findings of modern science, the dicta of organized religions, the speculations of philosophizing agnostics and others can and should be checked and verified. The reverse process frustrates itself.

In every sphere of knowledge, the senses and the lower mind are the instruments of research, save and except in the sphere of Esoteric Knowledge. The student of Theosophy finds in his texts doctrines which are the result of research carried on by the Higher Mind and the psycho-spiritual senses; in studying and meditating upon these doctrines, *as directed by the Teachers*, he develops, however slowly and meagrely, those inner senses and that Higher Mind. Many a student fails because, forgetting the directions, he tries to understand the Theosophical ideas and propositions by the aid of his brain on which the senses as well as the lower mind of *kama-manas* have left their shadowy impresses. The question then often recurs—How to develop the Eye of the Higher Mind?

FAITH AND THE TESTS OF FAITH

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All are shaped according to their *Sraddha* or Faith, O Bharata; man is faith-formed; what his faith is, that verily is he.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, XVII, 3

FIVEFOLD is the expression of *Sraddha*-faith. Whether it is blind, intelligent or illumined, this expression is seen.

Within, a man is formed of his faith; without, through its expression, he is known by it. The *Gita* takes the truth of Reincarnation as an axiom, from the very beginning, in the second chapter. Here, when it says that faith forms a man, it is implied that his faith clings to the immortal part of his being. It changes, but never leaves him. At birth, the soul finds its body and therefore all else, by this faith. When people speak of the heart-quality of a person, it is to this faith that reference is made. As it becomes more spiritual, the man grows. After death, the Soul dreams and ideates according to this heart-energy, other now than at birth, because of the experiences of mundane existence.

A man never dies in the faith in which he is born. If it were so, there would be no progress, and progress is the very law of our being.

Thus the *Gita* takes a radically different view of what constitutes faith, from that of the religious creeds. With most men faith means the religion in which they die, and according to which they are supposed to have lived. The *Gita* cuts across all such narrow classifications. As there are righteous and wicked ones in all religions, in all countries and in all strata of society, the *Gita* defines the faiths of mankind according to self-evident principles. It says that the faith of each is born of his inherent disposition, *svabhava*. It may be blind because of ignorance, or intelligent because based on observation, or illumined because fructifying from contemplation; or, transcending all three, it may be inspired because of spiritual realization, and then it energizes the man to do that which is needed for the spiritual good of corporate humanity, hour by hour, for millennia. Evil men, good men, spiritual men and perfected men, all live and labour according to their faith—the energy residing in the heart.

Whatever the quality of faith, in each its expression is fivefold:

I. To whom does a man pray? Whom does he propitiate? What practices does he undertake for the sake of his soul? There is the

man of demoniac disposition who tortures body and soul; the Spiritualist who invokes the ghosts of dead men and whose faith is dark; the religious man who prays to the devas, yazatas, angels, in the hope of worldly reward; the seeker after heavenly happiness, here and hereafter. The faiths of all these are described in the *Gita*, and the most pure of them all is the faith of the Rishis, the perfected men who, knowing that effort never fails, live in the service of all.

II. What kind of food do we eat? What tastes attract us? What motive underlies our eating?—these are made the test of faith. There is the man who lives to eat; then the man of dark faith fond of high game or strong cheese, who prefers rotting to fresh food, putrid meat to ripe fruit; and the man whose rajasic nature inclines him to pungent and hot curries, to savoury dishes, to exciting salts and spices; and the man of sattvic faith who takes nourishment necessary for honest labour, requiring clear thinking and a calm disposition; and lastly the sage who eats to live so that he may serve, and whose food is Sacrifice. All this is described in the *Gita*.

III. Do we perform sacrifices? Why and how?—these tell a man's faith. There is the man of dark knowledge who sacrifices others for his own gain; and the man of tamasic faith who is devoid of knowledge of the Laws of Nature, recorded by the sages in Holy Writ; and the man of rajas who sacrifices for the sake of show and with an eye to reward; and the man of light, convinced of the necessity of service-sacrifices, indifferent to the fruits thereof; above all are Those whose compassion has made them the conscious and living channels of Adhiyajna—the Great Sacrifice. The *Gita* deals with all these.

IV. Charity is expressive of faith—what gifts do we bestow? On whom? And why? And how? There is selfishness incarnate, the man who recognizes nought in nature, who takes all and gives nothing; then there is the man who is enveloped in ignorance and gives out of place and season to the unworthy, slave to his own arrogance and scorn; and the good man who gives with hopes of reward—titles on earth or recognition in heaven; and the man of light who knows when, how, and to whom to give, and looks not for a recompense; and the Wise One whose compassion compels him to give and in which he joyously acquiesces, and who can and does give to everyone he meets just what the person deserves. All this the *Gita* explains.

V. Lastly, Tapas, austerity or mortification, is indicative of our faith—do we practise self-control? How do we train our body?

How do we use our speech? How do we control our mind? And why? The evil one is self-indulgent, and lives in and for the lower; then the misguided man, whose false judgment practises control for the hurting of another or of his own organs of sense or of action; then the man who controls outwardly, *i.e.*, hypocritically, for show and ostentation, and spasmodically, and in the hope of gaining power; and the true man who is chaste and reverential, who practises ahimsa, harmlessness, and is clean in body, gentle and accurate in speech, studious to learn the Science of the Soul, serene in mind, whose intellectual honesty is persistent; above them all is the Sage who, having transcended His lower nature, uses His body, speech and mind to co-operate with Nature and do her will. All this the *Gita* expounds.

Now, whatever the stage of our evolution, the marks of faith are on us. They are not indelible, for we ourselves fabricate them and so can transform them. With this discourse as our guide we can take the next step, and as faith and will are allies, in labouring to purify the expression of one we strengthen the other; until at last we generate within the breast the faith that moves mountains.

—B.M.

WHEN you get into a tight place and everything goes against you, till it seems as though you could not hold on a minute longer, never give up then, for that is just the place and time that the tide will turn.

—HARRIET BEECHER STOWE

THE lowest ebb is the turn of the tide.

—HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In *The American Review* for Autumn 1984, T. S. Ananthu, a systems engineer now working as a research fellow at the Gandhi Peace Foundation in New Delhi, writes about the “invisible bonds” that link India and the United States. The author refers to a “very significant development wherein a new generation of Americans is beginning to appreciate the wealth contained in the Indian heritage, perhaps even more than Indians themselves do.” His principal area of research is an investigation of developments in 20th-century science that indicate a world-view consistent with the spiritual and mystic traditions of India.

At present [the author states] there are two important forces that are working to strengthen the invisible bond. One is the movement towards “voluntary simplicity.” The other is a new world-view emerging on the basis of recent discoveries in science.

The term “voluntary simplicity” was coined in 1936 by Richard Gregg, an American disciple of Mahatma Gandhi. Its basic premise is that as man does not live by bread alone, real happiness results when we make ourselves inwardly rich, rather than just rich in material terms. An adherent of voluntary simplicity attempts to reduce or eliminate needless consumption, especially those articles of consumption that stand in the way of inner growth—not that material wealth is regarded as taboo, but it is not an end in itself. The end is moral and spiritual growth. . . . Over the last decade or so, the idea has captured the imagination of a significant portion of America’s population. In 1976, the prestigious Stanford Research Institute conducted a study of this newly emerging trend. . . .

It is a most interesting coincidence (or is it more than just a coincidence?) that, hand-in-hand with the rise in voluntary simplicity, there is arising a new picture of the universe in science that is in consonance with that world-view from which flows the idea of voluntary simplicity. . . . It all began with two developments that took place in that most fundamental of sciences, theoretical physics, in the first quarter of this century: relativity theory and quantum mechanics. These two theories represented the first serious challenge to the mechanistic world-view that had reigned supreme in science. In its place, there began to emerge a world-view which was much more in consonance with the world-view of ancient India. . . .

Even though all the pioneers in theoretical physics made

pointed references to the new world-view implied by quantum and relativity theories, not much attention was paid to this until very recently. Now, all of a sudden, a new awakening seems to be taking place in this regard, as indicated by the popularity of a new wave of books on this subject, such as *The Tao of Physics* by Fritjof Capra, *The Dancing Wu Li Masters* by Gary Zukav, *Time, Space and Beyond* by Bob Toben, *God and the New Physics* by Paul Davies, *Taking the Quantum Leap* by Fred Wolf and *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* by David Bohm. In addition, scientists from several other disciplines are investigating new ideas and new phenomena that go hand-in-hand with the new world-view implied in physics. In medicine, research in the area of body/mind interaction has led to a new conception of health and healing. . . . Several medical professionals have done pioneering work leading to a new approach to basic questions relating to human health and existence, an approach that is essentially the same as existed in ancient India. Similarly, in biology, Dr. Rupert Sheldrake has caused a storm with his hypothesis of "morphogenetic fields," a concept that is compatible with the new physics on the one hand and ancient Indian ideas on the other. In brain research, a similar trend can be seen in the "holographic paradigm" put forward by Stanford neurophysiologist Karl Pribram and also in the functions of the left hemisphere and right hemisphere of the brain as enunciated by Dr. Robert Ornstein of the University of California Medical Center. The revolutionary new theory of evolution put forward by the inventor of the Bell helicopter, Arthur Young, in his recently published book, *The Reflexive Universe*, also falls in this category.

These new ideas are beginning to have a profound effect on both the theory and practice of science. They are leading to a holistic view of the universe in place of the earlier reductionist, mechanistic one.

The following two quotes from eminent thinkers illustrate how this new view represents a confluence of modern Western thinking with ancient Indian insights:

So, approaching the question in different ways, relativity and quantum theory agree, in that they both imply the need to look on the world as an *undivided whole*, in which all parts of the universe, including the observer and his instruments, merge and unite in one totality. In this totality, the atomistic form of insight is a simplification and an abstraction, valid only in some limited

context. (David Bohm in *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*)

This life of yours which you are living is not merely a piece of this entire existence, but is in a certain sense the "whole"; only this whole is not so constituted that it can be surveyed in one single glance. This, as we know, is what the Brahmins express in that sacred, mystic formula which is yet really so simple and so clear: *Tat Tvam Asi*, this is you. Or, again, in such words as "I am in the east and in the west, I am below and above, *I am this whole world.*" (Schroedinger in *My View of the World*)

Impact of Science on Society (No. 134/135), published from Paris by Unesco, is devoted to the subject of creativity and innovation. One of the contributors to the issue is Dr. Reinout Willem van Bemmelen, who has formulated the principle that he calls "dynamic harmony in the process of creation." He writes:

Human evolution is characterized by the capacity for creative reasoning and innovation. This results in an accelerated and purposeful evolution of society. Creativity and innovation thus become of crucial importance in the solving of ever-accumulating problems concerning the existence and eventual survival of mankind. . . .

During his lifetime, the individual acquires, under the cultural umbrella, what K. C. Jung has called the "persona mask." The persona is defined as the individual as he would like others to see him. There is a great number of persona masks, having to do with power, wealth, wisdom and so on. The umbrellas and masks devolve, therefore, from the cumulative experience of ethnic, social, religious, scientific and, thus, historical character. Resorting to the use of such protective methods is more or less a defensive reflex, resulting from vague or obscure fears—fear of the unknown, fear of comparison, fear of contamination. Staying under the umbrella indicates, however, a not fully developed and non-rational way of life, one suffering from lack of creativity and innovation.

The individual inevitably faces the moment of truth when he must decide between right and wrong, the definitions of which are of course moot. Ultimately, we need to choose between co-operation (or symbiosis) and pursuit of a course catering more to the opportunism of the ego. It is the first choice, that of co-operation and its implied altruism, which has been the grand theme of wise men and prophets. The alternative, implying self-reliance and con-

tentment with the self, debouches on random, solitary ways; it is exploited by persons, groups, nations and entire races governed by a selfish striving for dominance and possession. The latter remains a malignant tendency in the social evolution of man.

Most human beings have an ability to know what to do in complicated situations without being able to explain exactly how they know. According to psychologist Arthur Reber of Brooklyn College, U.S.A., this ability is unconscious and enables us to perform enormously complicated tasks, from reading and writing to composing music and inventing scientific theories. Reber's research also indicates that when faced with exceptionally subtle tasks, people who "feel," or intuit, their way through them have a competitive edge over those who consciously try to *think* their way through. *Psychology Today* for August 1984 states:

This is not to say that an unconscious effort will always beat out a conscious one. Reber has found that, in principle, our faculties for acquiring implicit and explicit knowledge are like two different camera lenses in the way they complement one another. However, it appears as though the operation of our explicit knowledge faculty is capable of inhibiting the operation of the implicit one. . . . Inhibiting effects or no, Reber has found that in actual practice, "a blending of the two modes of learning. . . is still preferable to the use of only one or the other." . . .

In light of these results, it is regrettable that among today's myriad educational reform movements there appear to be precious few programmes designed to develop a student's implicit as well as explicit learning faculties. . . .

Historically, many creative achievements appear to have been the result of seemingly unconscious thoughts suddenly finding conscious expression. After struggling for years to prove a theorem, for instance, the 19th-century German mathematician Karl Fredrich Gauss recalls that "finally, two days ago, I succeeded, [but] not on account of my painful efforts. . . . Like a sudden flash of lightning, the riddle happened to be solved."

Considering Reber's thesis, Gauss's intuitive edge over others might have had something to do with his ability to make explicit some bit of implicit knowledge. That is, perhaps creativity is the outcome of a successful collaboration between our conscious and unconscious minds. If that is so, then by preparing ourselves to

“feel” as well as to think our way through the world, we might find that our most important discovery is the unplumbed depths of our creative potential.

This may seem new and surprising to those who discuss it today, but is ancient knowledge—along with its rationale—to the Theosophist who knows something of man’s hidden potential. As a matter of fact, if scientists would analyze the exact method of their discoveries, they would find that “inductive reasoning” has little to do with their finds. Studious concentration upon a set of facts opens up a channel, an *antaskarana*, to *That* in man which knows all explanations—that is, the continuity of apparently dissociated facts—as seen from the plane of mental, moral and physical unity. In other words, the “hunch” that is being studied now is just our old faculty of “intuition” till recently derided by the very scientist whose discoveries were made by it.

True knowledge, wrote Plato, “must come rather after a long period of attendance on instruction in the subject itself and of close companionship, when, suddenly, like a blaze kindled by a leaping spark, it is generated in the soul and at once becomes self-sustaining.” To which may be added one of Blaise Pascal’s “Thoughts”: “We know the truth not only by reasoning but by feeling and by a vivid and luminous power of direct comprehension and only by this last faculty do we really discern first principles.”

The relevance of Pythagoras’ teachings today is stressed in Michael Howard’s article, “Master of Harmony,” in the April *Prediction*. The Pythagorean concept of the universe based on mathematical harmony is as important now as it was 25 centuries ago.

The teachings of Pythagoras indicate [states the author] that he was conversant with most of the Mystery schools which existed in the classical world. He had been instructed in the secrets of the Jewish Cabbala and received initiation into the Chaldean, Babylonian and Egyptian Mysteries. During his early life he travelled extensively—Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, Chaldea and Asia—and sat at the feet of many spiritual masters, versing himself in the secret doctrines of the myriad religions available for study. . . .

The central tenet of Pythagorean philosophy is a model of the universe vibrating to the cosmic rhythm of celestial harmony. His concept of God was as a *monad* or “One that is Everything.” He described this as a “supreme mind” or life energy that per-

meates the universe and which is the cause of all things; the intelligence within all things and the power within all things.

Universal harmony or inner perfection is the ethereal sinew which binds the cosmos together and this, argued Pythagoras, could only be understood in terms of geometry and the hidden meaning of numbers as the keys to unlock the secret nature of creation. . . . According to Pythagorean teachings, everything in the universe has its special numerical value and musical note which vibrates in accordance with its relationship to everything else.

Students of the university at Crotona progressed through three degrees or stages of initiation. The trinity was a powerful symbol to the Pythagoreans and was usually represented as a triangle or the Three-in-One, the synthesis of mind, body and spirit which created the enlightened man (or woman). Pythagoras even divided the universe into three realms: the Supreme World, the Superior World and the Inferior World. According to Pythagoras the second and third world co-exist within the first because the Divine and the earthly are united as one. . . .

It is evident that the Greek philosopher was the heir to a system of ancient wisdom which, quite logically, would have included the primary belief in the immortality of the human soul and its rebirth in renewed physical bodies. . . .

Considering the current research of experimental physicists into the nature of matter, the mysteries of time and space and the origin of the universe, it is surely time we took a new look at Pythagoras and his ideas. It is possible that the patterns of cosmic order which the master of harmony revealed could lead to a new vision of the universe and humanity's role in it. A new vision integrating the positive aspects of science, spirituality and the arts which would be applicable to the 21st century and the inner aspirations of humanity.

In spite of covered meanings, students of Theosophy can find in the teachings of Pythagoras the various doctrines of the Ancient Wisdom. The basic principles are the same, though there is much in the present civilization, as there was in the Greek one, to confuse men's perceptions. The Greeks were in sad need of the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, as we are of *Theosophy*, and the solutions of the problems remain the same for us as for them. This is why it is practical to look back to the Greeks to see their philosophers' pronouncements, and even further back to the origins of all true philosophy.

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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 too important to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end are the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and whenever situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. It aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

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 help and to help 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. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished 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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