

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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CHRISTMAS—THE BIRTH

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CENTURIES before Jesus was born, the 25th of December was celebrated as the festival of the Winter Solstice. In Rome, exoteric Mithraism was already a distorted religion when the early Christ-adorers began to gather for secret worship. Esotericism connected with the Iranian Mithra, “Ruler of the Year,” and of the Chaldean Iao, was corrupted out of recognition by the Roman and other sectarians. St. Chrysostom, who lived about 390 A.D., wrote of the 25th December:

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.

Here we are not concerned with the fascinating story of how the Christmas of modern Christendom came to be what it is—a little understood festival of mixed notions, which passes off as the birthday of Jesus of Nazareth. Theosophy bids us go to the pristine pure ideas of the psycho-spiritual atmosphere of the ancient festival of the Winter Solstice. The day on which the sunlight first begins to lengthen is called the Birthday of the Sun. The day on which a Great Soul sacrifices itself and incarnates on earth for humanity is called the Birthday of the Spiritual Sun. The day on which the Divinity waiting in the Heart-shrine comes forth and acts in the cerebrum of man is the spiritual Birthday of the individual.

The Day and the Sun are the symbols of awakening, and Christmas is the festival of awakening.

Innumerable are the awakenings in human consciousness. They are all cyclic. Just as the rotation of the Earth causes the

diurnal awakening of the human body to active labour, so the revolution of the Earth round the Sun creates the yearly festival of the Winter Solstice, which is made to symbolize soul-awakening. Every awakening in consciousness is a birth. Most of these are taken as commonplaces because they relate to the routine of life and so we often miss out their purpose and meaning, which means the value of experience itself. Nature's actions are reflected in human actions, as our deeds cast their shadows on the screen of Time. We recognize that we affect Nature as Nature affects us. But the wide scope and the profound depth of the interrelationship are not recognized, even by Theosophical students, as fully as they should be.

Knowing what we have learnt from Theosophy, what shall we do in these coming days? Shall we not sincerely attempt to examine ourselves, note the cobwebs of prejudices, doubts and suspicions, and trace them to the creature whose name is Egotism and who has woven them into the lower mind? Shall we not say with Newman, "Pride ruled my will," and take to heart his advice and appeal to the God within: "Remember not past years!"

But merely to note our psychic cobwebs and their author will not bring to us a new awakening. Self-examination prepares us, but it is not enough. The pain of the psyche must be felt in the consciousness. As long as we remain satisfied with the achievements of our egotism, new awakening is impossible. When our pride pains us, when we see the utter ugliness of our Ahankaric-soul, then a glimpse is caught of the Sublime and the Beautiful. But even this will not necessarily lead to fresh awakening, for the glimpse passes and the drab remains to thrive. If we can remember the Gleam of the Sublime and the Beautiful and use our experience to colour the next words to be spoken or the next deed to be done, then only will we realize a new awakening. Between the Spirit that is Man, and its distorted shadow, egotism, there is a misunderstanding. The Sublime and the Beautiful belong to the Spirit, their shadows are taken to be realities by the proud and egotistic self so that frustrations result, and thus, on the verge of a fresh awakening, we are again entrapped by the devil of pride.

Theosophy advises us to take advantage of the psycho-spiritual aspects of this season and resolve to colour the coming year with the golden gleam of the Sublime and the Beautiful. So, neither waiting for special opportunities nor creating them; neither looking for special events nor planning to perform special

deeds, let us learn to use the daily round and the common task and draw out from them their hidden golden sheen of sublimity and beauty. Every deed, which under Karma is ours to perform, can be transmuted and thus made to yield these grand qualities. We miss out because the personal self and its machinations intervene. We look behind and we are lost. We look before and pine for what is not; while, by a little dispassion, some ingenuity and confident attempt, we could transform the rigid into the mellow, the dull into the bright.

Just as the great Moment of Choice is made up of many, many moments of small choices, so the real inner awakening follows numerous small awakenings, which result from deliberate effort. These small awakenings are like days—each of which is a manvantara in itself—every morning we are born to a new life. If we would but induce in ourselves the mood of soul-freshness at dawn and sustain it in thought and feeling and by word and deed throughout the day, we should soon experience the vision of the Dawn of the Soul. But there is another method. We are slaves of hours and days and die as such. When we work in a higher dimension, and not in the three-dimensional time—past, present, future—we learn to make each event a link in the chain of the Eternal Now. It is thus we live on through all changes, including the change called death. How many psychological dawns there are for us in a single day! But most of us sleep through them because heedless of the Soul within we remain heedless to the soul of those dawns. Beauty and sublimity repose in each event, but we need Charity and Harmony and Patience and Dispassion and Endurance to feel and to perceive them. The Divine Virtues, the Paramitas, can and should be applied—one, or several, or all of them—to the sweeping of the floor, to the cleaning of the desk, to the keeping of the accounts, to the wishing of good-day to friends and acquaintances, as well as to the study and the promulgation of Theosophy.

God blesses still the generous thought,
And still the fitting word He speeds,
And Truth, at His requiring taught,
He quickens into deeds.

Let us all reflect upon the truth that “as a day can be coloured, so can a year. The astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter.”

UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Karma and evolution have—

*“...centred in our make such strange extremes!
From different Natures marvellously mixed....”*

—The Secret Doctrine, I, 189

BECAUSE of past Karma generated during many lives on earth, we are born with a particular personality, with particular mental and psychic peculiarities, moral characteristics, aptitudes and behaviour. The five senses and the mind have been drawn together in a particular fashion as a result of past thoughts and actions for the working out of a certain line of events in the present incarnation. True it is that we come back as the summation of all our past lives, yet in any particular incarnation only those mental deposits manifest “which can come to fructification in the environment provided.” Hence only a part of our past accumulated Karma becomes patent in one life, while the rest remains latent. Only some aspects of our nature unfold in the present incarnation; others lie dormant and quiescent.

Just as no two blades of grass are similar, no two persons are alike. “There are no two people who look at life from the same viewpoint, who have the same likes and dislikes, whom the same things affect in exactly the same way.” Each of us has a particular temperament and peculiarities of his own because of the combination of the *gunas*; each of us brings his own *skandhas* from previous incarnations and with these as a basis the personality is built. Thus as personalities no two persons are the same, but we are all peculiar, and what is peculiar to one is as a rule not approved of by another. What is considered normal and ordinary by one person seems odd and queer to another.

Mr. Crosbie points out that it is “the tendency of minds in general to pride themselves upon not having the defects that others have.” But the defects of the race exist in all of us, if only in germ, and the germ will sprout, grow and fructify in this or a future life, according to our make-up or personal peculiarities and condition. What do we know of the hidden, unknown part of our being, of characteristics now concealed deep in our nature; of those mental deposits which have found no soil for precipitation, seeds which cannot come to fructification in our present environment? There may be dormant in our nature germs of tendencies which we dislike, such mental and psychic proclivities as, when found in another, make him appear “cranky” in our

eyes. The characteristics of one companion may be ours tomorrow!

Mr. Judge warns us in *Letters That Have Helped Me* (Book II, Letter 2): "Each one has a right to his or her particular 'crank' of course, but no one ought to think that anyone else is to be judged from not being of the same stripe of 'crank.'" And he goes on to say: "Each mind has a groove, and is not naturally willing to run in the natural groove of another mind. Hence comes often friction and wrangle." Suppose a fellow seems "peculiar" to us. Is that a reason why we should show coldness towards him, or be unfriendly to him, or have nothing to do with him, as is often the case? Why not learn from another's attitude instead of ignoring him or judging and condemning his ways and behaviour? "Thus in one life even we might have the benefit of many" by noticing and learning from the lives of other men. We should remember the words of Mr. Crosbie:

As to our fellow students: we are apt to be mistaken in regard to their real attitude towards us. It is so often *our* attitude towards them that presents to us a false conception of theirs. That we all have defects is quite certain, and a defect of one kind is no better than a defect of another kind. We notice defects in others, or what appear as such, in much the same way as they may notice defects in us, and then on both sides there is judgment of one another on the basis of the *defects* perceived. This is the opposite of that respect for our fellow students which we ought to have, because they *are* such, and all are working for a common purpose. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 122-3)

We are told in *Light on the Path* (p. 12): "Study the hearts of men, that you may know what is that world in which you live and of which you will to be a part." We must try to understand human nature and learn to look intelligently into the hearts of those we contact in life—not only those who are like unto ourselves, but also those of a different disposition. If we wish to grow and unfold our consciousness, so that we may be the better able to help and serve others, we must expand our sympathy and try to obtain real understanding of our fellow men. It is easy to love and serve those we like and revere, but we should endeavour to acquire the wisdom and power to give our love and service to all, especially to those whom we dislike or whose acts we do not approve of.

As our responsibilities grow in respect to our Theosophical work, it is of primary importance that we develop and acquire

absolute impartiality, for in our relations with our co-workers there must be no favouritism. We must learn to treat all according to their merits and not according to our capricious likes and dislikes, our emotions and personal fancy. Mr. Judge reminds us in one of his articles that "we come back in the company of those with whom we lived and acted in other lives," that "those who are now with us will be reincarnated in our company on our next rebirth" (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 12-13). Why then put off reconciliation? Why not try to smooth away our differences here and now? Instead of harbouring hostile feelings of criticism and condemnation, allowing the temperament of another to annoy and upset us, let us be charitable to his weaknesses, tolerant towards his peculiarities. Let us endeavour to increase the bond of friendship and to develop the spirit of brotherliness and unity, of give and take, so essential for effective team-work in Theosophical work. Instead of hurting, let us bless, help and serve our co-students. For, if we allow ill feelings to take root and grow, they will soon increase in size and power; and before we know it, a prejudice will be created which will raise a cloud on our mental horizon and colour all our thoughts and acts towards our fellow students.

At the very first inkling of ill feeling, therefore, we must nip that sentiment in the bud, drive it out of our hearts and replace it with feelings of tolerance, true universal sympathy, consideration and respect for the peculiarities of others. As members of one international Theosophical family—composed of all sorts of natures, men and women from all nations, of all races, with all kinds of habits and upbringing—the opportunity afforded us is unique. Our association with co-students should help us in our study of human nature and enable us by comparison to know our own nature as well as understand that of others. We thus learn to master and spiritualize our environment and transmute old antipathies into sympathy and love.

The Voice of the Silence says: "Give up the life of physical personality if you would live in spirit" (p. 6, fn.). If our aim is to subdue and mortify the personality, to overcome the tendencies of the lower self, we must begin to do so in our relations to and with our close companions. We must learn the great art of working in harmony with them, of co-operating in a friendly way with all our associates. And the necessary condition for bringing about such unity among the students of the Lodge does not lie in emphasizing the peculiarities, the differences in character and ability, which often develop tension and personal friction. It lies

in the effort of the different personalities to assimilate each other, to draw "closer together in mind and heart, soul and act," for "we are all links in the great chain of the Theosophical Movement. What affects one affects all, and in degree." Only by a real and deliberate psychic and mental assimilation between the co-workers is true progress possible. How to bring about such assimilation? Through studying our Philosophy, by work on ourselves with strict self-judgment and by surrendering the personality. "All must be ever careful," says Mr. Judge, "for the personal element is one that ever has a tendency to delude us as it hides behind various walls and clothes itself in the faults, real or imaginary, of *others*."

In our efforts towards spiritual culture and as Theosophical workers our aim should be to present to the world a united front. Let us then strive to be united, not only in purpose but also in feeling, forget our peculiarities and remember that in his true nature nobody is really unique. "There must be that in our natures which is peculiar to none, but common to all." Let us search for that!

We give below some further statements which, when dwelt upon and practised, may help us in our attempt to avoid friction and create among ourselves that power of unity by means of which we could move the world:

"To abstain from condemning others" is a course to be continually striven for; it is vital. No two really act from the same basis of perception; how then can anyone judge? (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 52)

The follies and the so-called sins of people are really things that are sure to come to nothing if we treat them right. We must not be so prone as the people of the day are, of whom we are some, to criticize others and forget the beam in our own eye. . . . Every time we think that someone else has done wrong we should ask ourselves two questions:

(1) Am I the judge in this matter who is entitled to try this person?

(2) Am I any better in my way, do I or do I not offend in some other way just, as much as they do in this? (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 126)

We are none of us ever in the right, there is always that in us that causes another to offend. (*Ibid.*, p. 105)

Our duty is not to rid our neighbours of their imperfections, but ourselves of our own. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 86)

He who is desirous to learn how to benefit humanity, and believes himself able to read the characters of other people, must begin, first of all, to *learn to know himself*, to appreciate his own character at its true value. (A Master of Wisdom)

Each has to learn, to know, and to control his own nature, if he is to acquire discrimination—the ability to help others. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 393)

“UNION IS STRENGTH”; and for every reason private differences must be sunk in united work for our Great Cause. (*Five Messages*, p. 17)

By our unity the smallest effort made by us will have tenfold the power of any obstacle before us or any opposition offered by the world. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 252)

MILLENARIANS and Adventists of robust faith may go on saying that “the coming of (the carnalized) Christ” is near at hand, and prepare themselves for “the end of the world.” Theosophists—at any rate, some of them—who understand the hidden meaning of the universally expected Avatars, Messiahs, Sosioshes, and Christs—know that it is no “end of the world,” but “the consummation of the age,” *i.e.*, the close of a cycle, which is now fast approaching.... Many and many a time the warning about the “false Christs” and prophets who shall lead people astray has been interpreted by charitable Christians, the worshippers of the dead-letter of their scripture, as applying to mystics generally, and Theosophists most especially. . . . Nevertheless, it seems very evident that the words in Matthew’s Gospel and others can hardly apply to Theosophists. For these were never found saying that Christ is “Here” or “There,” in wilderness or city, and least of all in the “inner chamber” behind the altar of any modern church. Whether Heathen or Christian by birth, they refuse to materialize and thus degrade that which is the purest and grandest ideal—the symbol of symbols—namely, the immortal Divine Spirit in man, whether it be called Horus, Krishna, Buddha, or Christ. None of them has ever yet said: “I am the Christ.”

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE THEOSOPHY OF IAMBlichUS OF SYRIA

An Early Mystic of the Neo-Platonic School

[The first of Dr. Margaret Smith's four essays, the one on Ammonius Saccas, appeared in our November issue. We reprint here the second one, on Iamblichus, from *The Aryan Path* for August 1936. *The Theosophical Glossary* states that "Correct biographies of him have never existed because of the hatred of the Christians; but that which has been gathered of his life in isolated fragments from works by impartial pagan and independent writers shows how excellent and holy was his moral character, and how great his learning."—EDS.]

IAMBlichUS (Jamblichus), the chief representative of Syrian Neo-Platonism, was born about A.D. 280, at Chalcis, in Coele-Syria, and died about A.D. 330. He belonged to a wealthy and illustrious family and studied under Anatolus, and afterwards under Porphyry, the pupil and editor of Plotinus, at Rome. He then settled down as a teacher at Chalcis and gathered round him a considerable group of disciples drawn from different countries and nationalities, who were attracted by his reputation for sanctity and for knowledge of the Divine mysteries. Of him one of his biographers writes:

Iamblichus shared in an eminent degree the Divine favour, on account of his cultivation of justice, and he obtained a numerous multitude of associates and disciples, who came from all parts of the world, for the purpose of participating in the streams of wisdom, which so plentifully flowed from the sacred fountain of his wonderful mind.

He was a man of genial disposition, socially accessible and living on familiar terms with his many disciples, in whose company he used to pay an annual visit to the baths of Gadara.

He lived the life of an ascetic, contenting himself with a diet of extreme frugality and simplicity, but during his repast, we are told, he "exhilarated those who were present by his behaviour and filled them, as with nectar, by the sweetness of his discourse." In his lifetime, he was accredited with miraculous powers, though he himself repudiated the suggestion.

His disciples included men who afterwards became famous as teachers of Neo-Platonism—Sopater of Syria, who succeeded Plotinus in his school of philosophy, Aedisius, Eustathius the Cappadocian, the Greeks Theodore and Euphrasius, Priscus and Sallust.

His influence upon those who came after him was great, and he was regarded with the greatest respect by such writers as Chrysanthius and Maximus, as well as Proclus (412-485). Of Proclus it was written:

He was illustrious as a mathematician and as an astronomer: he was the first among existing philologers; he had so comprehended all religions in his mind and paid them such equal reverence, that he was as it were the priest of the whole universe: nor was it wonderful that a man possessing such a high knowledge of nature and science should have this initiation into all sacred mysteries—such a man was Proclus in whom are combined and from whom shine forth in no irregular and uncertain rays all the philosophical lights which have illustrated Greece in various times; to wit, Orpheus, Pythagoras, Plato, Aristotle, Zeno, Plotinus, Porphyry and Iamblichus.¹

The famous Bulialdus speaks of Iamblichus as a man of the greatest genius, while the Platonists who succeeded him gave him the epithet of "divine." The Emperor Julian, who reigned from 361 to 363, went so far as to say of Iamblichus that "he was posterior indeed in time, but not in genius, to Plato."

Iamblichus was, in fact, a learned scholar and a considerable philosopher, though his bent lay rather in the direction of speculative and mystical theology than of philosophy proper, and he evolved a theosophy of the Gnostic type. He was the exponent of Platonic and Aristotelian conceptions, and his doctrines, in addition, show plainly the influence of Oriental ideas. He was a copious writer, his works including commentaries on the *Parmenides*, *Timaeus*, and *Phaedo* of Plato, and the *Analytica* of Aristotle, a treatise on the Chaldean theology, and treatises on the Soul and on Nature, all of which have been lost. Those of his writings which are extant originally formed part of a great work entitled, *Treatise on the Pythagorean Philosophy*, and include a life of Pythagoras, an exhortation to the study of Philosophy (the *Protrepticus*) and three mathematical treatises. To Iamblichus also was ascribed the celebrated book *De Mysteriis*, the Mysteries of the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Assyrians, which is the refutation by "Abammon" the Master, of the arguments contained in an epistle of Porphyry to the Egyptian priest Anebo. It is unlikely that this *Book of Mysteries* is the actual work of Iamblichus, though Proclus held it to be his, but it certainly

¹ Cf. F. D. Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*, I, p. 117.

emanated from his school and represents the views and aims which his disciples had derived from him, and may therefore be taken to represent the teaching and doctrine of Iamblichus.

The teaching of Iamblichus and his school on the nature of the Ultimate Reality, is based on that of Plotinus. That Reality is the One, transcendent and incommunicable, unmoved and immutable, alone in His Unicity, supremely perfect, Absolute Goodness, the Primordial Cause, the Sole Source of all things. But though God is thus transcendent and Absolute, and no limitations or divisions are consistent with the Divine Nature, yet He is also immanent. All things, says "Abammon," are full of divinity, for "God illuminates heaven and earth, holy cities and places, divine shrines, just as the sun illuminates all the corners of the universe which he looks upon."² The One is the Godhead, unlimited, infinite, above all principles of being and intelligence, and between the One and the many Iamblichus places a second super-existent unity, God manifest in action, the Demiurge or world-creating potency, the light communicating itself, "a monad from the One," which is prior to essence and the principle of essence, a Mediator between the Absolute Reality and the universe. From this God of gods, the King, entity and essence are derived, and He is the principle of intelligibles; below him, again, are many gods, intellectual, supramundane and mundane, and various orders of archangels, angels, demons and heroes, distinguished in nature, power and activity.

The human soul, in the teaching of Iamblichus, stands midway between the supernatural and the natural and has a twofold relation, one to God and one to the body. It is possessed of reason, a Divine attribute not possessed by the lower creatures, and it can therefore behold the Divine Beauty, and has within itself a consciousness of God and a desire to ascend unto Him. For the soul in itself is ingenerable and incorruptible; and though, when it is joined to a body, it must be involved in the suffering of existence, being "complicated with the indefiniteness and diversity of matter," yet the soul itself is immutable and essentially more excellent than that which suffers. The soul is the real Self, and therefore knowledge of the soul is knowledge of oneself. The highest part of the soul and the best is the intellectual principle, that part which is Divine and "for the sake of this and of the thoughts which it energizes, all else exists." Knowledge of the Self will enable man to make use of the good things in life which, without the wisdom to know how to use them, are not

² *Book of Mysteries*, Sect. I, Cap. 8.

goods but evils. So the body is to be cared for and controlled for the sake of the soul and its ruling powers.

In the *Book of Mysteries* the Master Abammon asserts that man has fallen from the Vision of God, that he can only be blessed by returning to that Vision, and therefore in this book he wishes to show the gradual steps by which man can be led onward and upward until the soul, freed from the complications and hindrances of matter, can enter into communion with the Divine. "The perfect good is God Himself: the good of man is unity with Him." That which is merely natural is determined, "bound by the indissoluble chains of necessity which men call Fate," as distinguished from the supernatural, the Divine, which is bound by no such laws. Yet even the natural, which has itself been ultimately derived from the supernatural, can be affected by it. So that Iamblichus maintains that from the supernatural "a continual stream of elevating influence flows" to the natural, interfering with the laws of necessity, and turning to good ends what is imperfect and evil. Evil he holds to have been generated accidentally, by a misdirected will.

The soul, in its unregenerate state, is subject to the law of necessity, by which it descends periodically into a body and reascends; and until it has reached complete purification, it is subject to rebirth in a new body, and descends wholly, becoming a composite nature once more. Being immortal, it can find no escape from ills and no salvation except by acquiring as much goodness and insight as possible, until it shall at last ascend in purity and escape from the necessity of rebirth.

The Way of Salvation, then, which leads to that union with the Divine which is the goal of the soul, is to be found in the soul's surrender to that which is Divine within itself. This can be attained by a twofold purification, that of discipline, which purifies from outward evil, and knowledge, that philosophy which purifies from the evil within. Iamblichus writes:

A temple, indeed, should be adorned with gifts, but the soul with discipline, and as the lesser mysteries are to be delivered before the greater, thus also discipline must precede philosophy.³

Pythagoras had said, "It is proper to sacrifice and to adore, unshod," and this exhortation Iamblichus holds is to be interpreted symbolically.

Sacrifice and adoration should be performed not only in the

³ *Protrepticus*.

body, but also in the energies of the soul: so that these energies may neither be detained by passion, nor by the imbecility of the body, nor by generation, with which we are externally surrounded. But everything pertaining to us should be properly liberated and prepared for our participation in the Divine.⁴

This is liberation from the oppressive power of Nature, for by this purification the soul withdraws from connection with the sensuous world and dependence on Nature and Destiny.

In addition to the discipline of body and its activities, there is also the discipline of mind and spirit which comes through philosophy, for philosophy has for its aim that insight which is gnosis, and enables the soul to attain to its final good. Philosophizing, says Iamblichus, is a kind of dying, in order to live, death being nothing but the separation of the soul from the body in order that it may live a life by itself. The soul can never perceive truth in all its purity until it has attained to this release. In order that the soul may be prepared for that perfect knowledge—when it shall know as it is known—and be prepared to approach as near as possible to that knowledge here and now, it must be purified from all that arises from the body, from common desires and fears, from all anxiety about earthly needs, from the hindrances to progress which arise from what is external and natural. It is by the insight reached through philosophic purification that the soul acquires the virtues of courage, temperance and justice.

Philosophy not only purifies the soul from the evils within, replacing the vices by virtues, but it thereby purifies its relations with other souls, for justice implies the giving to others of what is their due. Of all kinds of knowledge, Iamblichus holds, philosophy alone is free from envy and does not rejoice in the ills of others, for it shows that men are all akin and of like affections and all are subject alike to unforeseen changes of fortune. Therefore philosophy exhorts men to human fellowship and mutual love.⁵

Those who are truly "initiated" when they reascend, so that they are no longer under the law of necessity and rebirth, are those who have become purified thus, through philosophy. The special function, then, of philosophy, is to set the soul free from the evil accretions which are the result of birth and rebirth, and to liberate that energy within it which is Divine, that principle which is superior to all nature and generation, "through which we

⁴ *Ibid.*, Third Symbol.

⁵ *Protrepticus* 21.

are capable of being united to God, of transcending the mundane order and of participating in eternal life, and the energy of that which is supercelestial.”

Through this principle, therefore, we are able to liberate ourselves from Fate. For when the more excellent parts of us energize and the soul is elevated to that which is better than itself, then it is entirely separated from things which detain it in generation, departs from subordinate natures, exchanges the present for another life and gives itself to another order of things, entirely abandoning the former order with which it was connected.⁶

This indwelling of God imparts health of body, virtue of soul, purity of intellect, and elevates everything to its proper principle. It annihilates that within the soul which is cold and destructive; that which is hot it increases and renders more powerful and predominant, and causes all things to accord with soul and intellect and gives light and “intelligible harmony.”⁷ In connection with this latter idea, the Master Abammon holds that sounds as such can have no influence in bringing about a state which is so entirely Divine, but the soul, before it was combined with the body, was an auditor of divine harmony. The sounds of music indicate the inner harmony between the soul and God and in them it recognizes this harmony and recollects that heavenly music, and so by earthly music may be enabled to ascend towards that harmony and be prepared to receive full inspiration.⁸

In this ascent towards its Source, the soul is helped by prayer, not the prayer of supplication, but the prayer of contemplation, of which the writer of the *Book of Mysteries* states:

The continual exercise of prayer nourishes the vigour of our intellect and renders the receptacles of the soul far more capacious for the communications of God. It likewise is the divine key, which opens to men the Holy of Holies, accustoms us to the splendid rivers of supernal light, in a short time perfects our inmost selves and disposes them for the ineffable embrace and contact of the Divine, and does not desist until it raises us to the summit of all. It also gradually and silently draws up all that is within our soul, by divesting it of everything which is foreign to a Divine nature,

⁶ *Book of Mysteries*, VIII.

⁷ *Ibid.*, II, 6.

⁸ *Book of Mysteries*, III, 9. Cf. al-Ghazali speaking of those who live the unitive life in God, “if sweet music breaks upon their ears they pass from it to (the thought of) the Beloved—for from Him is all that they hear and He hath made them deaf to all words save His.”

and clothes it with the perfections of the Supremely Perfect. Besides this, it produces an indissoluble communion and friendship with the Divine, nourishes a Divine love and inflames the divine part of the soul. Whatever is of an opposing and contrary nature in the soul it expiates and purifies, expels whatever is prone to generation and retains anything of mortality in its ethereal and splendid spirit; and it perfects a good hope and faith concerning the reception of Divine light.

So this contemplative prayer becomes the seal of that ineffable union with God, whereby the soul is irradiated with the Divine Fire.⁹

Only thus can the soul attain to felicity, to salvation and release from the bonds of necessity and fate, to the essence and perfection of all good which is found only in God. Only so can the human soul hope to participate in the Divine life and become united with God, the Giver of all good. "There is a time," writes Abammon, "when we become wholly soul, are out of the body and sublimely revolve on high, in union with the immaterial Divinity." Such a soul has obtained the Divine life instead of a human life: it is wholly possessed by God. It has entered the ranks of the "initiated," those released from the law of Necessity, who are no more subject to rebirth. This is the end of the Path, of the ascent of the soul to God.

So the writer of the *Book of Mysteries* closes with the prayer that he and those for whom he writes may hold fast all right thoughts, that they may ever be granted a knowledge of the truth, may be vouchsafed a more perfect participation in that Divine gnosis wherein consists the blessed attainment of all good, and finally may be granted the enjoyment of sympathy and fellowship one with another.

The mode of thought represented by Iamblichus and his immediate disciples dominated Neo-Platonism from this time onwards and, after his death, his school dispersed itself over the whole Roman Empire. His followers were the associates and teachers of the Roman Emperors; it was under two of them, Maximus and Chrysanthius, that the Emperor Julian pursued his philosophical studies, and some of his disciples committed their teaching to writing, notably Sallust and Theodore. In the revival of Neo-Platonism in the fifth century at the Alexandrian School, of which the authorized exponent was Hypatia, it was the tradition of Iamblichus which she followed and expounded, until her brilliant

⁹ *Book of Mysteries*, V, 26.

career was brought to an end by the fanaticism of the Alexandrian mob in A.D. 415. It was by means of the teaching of Iamblichus and its dissemination in such a Christian centre as Alexandria, as well as in his own native land of Syria, that the Christian church became indoctrinated with Neo-Platonic mysticism, and this was conspicuously so in the writings of the famous mystic of the end of the fifth century, Dionysius, the pseudo-Areopagite, probably a monk of Syria. His works contain a doctrine of gnosis based on the teachings of Iamblichus and Proclus, so that through him Iamblichus may be said to have had a profound influence on later Christian thought in the direction of mysticism and pantheism.¹⁰

—MARGARET SMITH

MAKE yourselves nests of pleasant thoughts. None of us know what fairy palaces we may build of beautiful thought—proof against all adversity. Bright fancies, satisfied memories, noble histories, faithful sayings, treasure houses of precious and restful thoughts, which care cannot disturb, nor pain make gloomy, nor poverty take away from us—houses built without hands, for our souls to live in.

—JOHN RUSKIN

¹⁰ For the life of Iamblichus, Cf. *Eunapius*; F. D. Maurice, *Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy*; J. E. Sandys, *History of Classical Scholarship*; T. Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*.

For his teaching, Cf. *On the Pythagorean Life*, Greek Text, edited by A. Nauck, translated by T. Taylor; *The Book of Mysteries*, Greek Text, and Latin Trans., edited by T. Gale, translated by T. Taylor; *The Exhortation to Philosophy*, Greek Text, edited by T. Kiessling.

COLLECTING THE MIND

THE humblest of men can reverence the reality of that in him he calls his "self." Wherever there is man, be he an outcast or a Buddha, there we find one capable of Self-knowledge, capable of action, capable of envisioning an objective to his actions. True, the Buddha has realized his potentialities, but he is no more at root than the suffering outcast, for Fire is Fire, whether it sputter tremulously at a splinter's end, or roar in the holocaust of a mighty furnace.

Thus the evolution of form out of pre-existing material is in every case the result of thought. Forms evolved consciously are the work of an Adept; other men throw them off unconsciously. Adepts do not become involved in their creations because they act as the One Self, never becoming identified with the forms deliberately produced, although using them. The tendency of matter to run to forms is the reflection of this creative power. The limited creative faculties of man are the result of his partial awareness of inner spiritual powers, now circumscribed by the laws of the phenomenal plane. The entire universe is the result of this power of thought called *Kriyasakti*. Among the lower forms, we see its operation in Memory of Nature—the endless repetition of creative impulses imparted by higher beings in this and former periods of evolution. Spirit is Life working intelligently—purposively; Matter, the irrational reflection of spiritual processes. The subtler the grade of matter, the more perfectly does it mirror the creative intelligence from which its forms are derived.

A remarkable illustration of the power of becoming that which is dwelt upon as manifested in the lower kingdoms, appears in *The Theosophist*, February 1885:

The fact of an insect assuming the form of a fly is known in Sanskrit as *Bhramarakitanyayam*. This law is known to every schoolboy in India and abroad. Hindoo boys have very often tried this experiment and succeeded. The process is simple. Make a paper box or a tube; put a bee and a green caterpillar with some tender leaves in the box; and close the box. Then the bee begins its operation. It sits to look steadily into the face of the insect; whenever the latter moves a little, the bee stings it. This punitory discipline, continued for a week or so, creates such terror and fright in the insect that it entirely forgets everything, nay its self-existence, but the form of its terrible master—bee; till by the end of nearly a fortnight the insect gradually assumes through this dreadful active

meditation and devotion the very form of the bee with wings; and flies off as a bee when the lid is opened. This is both practically and scientifically true. This explains also the law of Affinity or Molecular attraction or Integration of homogeneous particles and the molecular repulsion or disintegration of heterogeneous ones.

It is by the attraction of homogeneous particles and the repulsion or disintegration of heterogeneous ones that a human being may consciously undertake his re-formation; for, as the musician to the piano, it is the nature and condition of the instrument which determines the manifestation on this plane. Taking up the duty and privilege of remaking our Mind-Instrument, it will in turn by affinity call into its service an improved organism. In this connection we might paraphrase from pages 58-60, Vol. II, of *The Secret Doctrine*:

When Brahma wants to create the world anew and construct progeny *through his will*, in the fourfold condition termed Gods, Spirits, Pitris and men, "he collects Yoga-like his mind." He begins by creating Spirits, or Demons, or Asuras, as they represent the "first Cosmic aspect of Parabrahm or the esoteric SAT," and are the very "root of SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS." They are the Self-asserting and intellectually active Principle: the "positive poles of creation," so to say; hence, the first produced from the supreme unknown—the body of night.

Continuing to create, Brahma assumes another form, that of the Day, and creates from his breath the gods, who are endowed with the quality of goodness (passivity). In his next body the quality of great passivity prevailed, which is also (negative) goodness, and from the side of that personage issued the Pitris, the progenitors of men, because, as the text explains, "Brahma thought of himself (during the process) as the father of the world." This is *Kriyasakti*—the mysterious *Yoga* power of creation.

This *thinking of oneself* as this, that, or the other, is the chief factor in the production of every kind of psychic or even physical phenomena.

As aspects of the One Life, none of us escapes this process. At any moment we are the standing embodiment of how we have answered Life's three questions:

Who are you?

Where are you going?

How are you going?

No one can tell another these three secrets, because each of us

is himself the mystery, the veil, and the holy of holies.

When a man knows the first answer, he forgets himself. When he learns the second, he sees one Unity in what are called "his origin, his path, his destination." And then he needs no more to find out the way, for wherever the path extends, he is there, Now.

Yet, before these questions can be answered, they must be heard. Only as Meditation arises from the Tomb of Analysis and discord into the Harmony and Brotherhood of First Principles, can the Soul read them aloud to the wondering mind.

Hermes can say, there are three questions. Theosophia may repeat to us that each man must ask and find the answers for himself. The ancient Gupta Vidya might whisper to our heart that there are indeed those who Know. But to hear the Song of Life is not enough. It is not even a beginning. *We have to sing.* Then can we declare truly with Zoroaster that "One moment in eternity is of as great consequence as another," or with the ancient Stanzas:

LISTEN, YE SONS OF THE EARTH, TO YOUR INSTRUCTORS—THE
SONS OF THE FIRE. LEARN WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM OUR
FATHERS. THERE IS NEITHER FIRST NOR LAST, FOR ALL IS ONE
NUMBER, ISSUED FROM NO NUMBER.

WE are members of a world team, we are partners in a grand adventure. We are offered the most challenging opportunity of all history: the chance to help create a new society in which men and women the world around can live and grow invigorated by independence and freedom. . . . Our thinking must be world-wide. There can be no peace for any part of the world unless the foundations of peace are made secure throughout all parts of the world.

—WENDELL WILLKIE

KARMA-YOGA

He who having subdued all his passions performeth with his active faculties all the duties of life, unconcerned as to their result, is to be esteemed. Do thou perform the proper actions: action is superior to inaction. The journey of thy mortal frame cannot be accomplished by inaction. All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action. Abandon, then, O son of Kunti, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

THE *Bhagavad-Gita* not only constitutes an epitome of Indian philosophy, but serves as a guide for daily conduct. Every individual has his lessons to learn and his duties to perform, and these are in terms of the religion of caste and condition known as *Varnasrama Dharma*. In the *Gita*, this is based not only on a horizontal division of the obligations to be discharged (*Karma*) pertinent to the four castes of the Soul (*Varna*), and four states of body and its environment (*Ashrama*), but on a vertical classification of their characteristic qualities (*Guna*—IV, 13, 18). The *Gita* teaches the necessity of the life of *Brahmacharya* (Student) followed by that of *Grahastha* (Householder), then of *Vanaprastha* (as one detached in the forest of life), and lastly of *Sannyasa* (spiritual servant of the All-Self). Throughout, the duties of each stage have to be performed with detachment (*Vairagya*) as practice (*abhyasa*) in soul-unfoldment (*Gita*, VI, 35).

Activity is the essence of being; and duties appropriate to one's station in life ought to be performed (III, 5). Of no avail is wailing over disease and death from which there is no escape (II, 27), but it is possible to avoid wrongdoing (*vikarma*). "Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise" (XVIII, 5). Everyone has his place in the cosmic scheme and must fulfil his duties in the proper spirit (*Dharma*), for the bonds of *Karma* break only by such fulfilment; otherwise the voyage of life will be impossible (III, 8). There is nothing nobler for a Kshatriya than righteous warfare; and Arjuna is asked to behave like a brave warrior, not to desert his post (II, 31); for the spiritual end is not achieved by severing oneself from the world (III, 4). To flee the body and its obligations, unmindful of its proper place in the life of goodness, is false asceticism. Even in the *Arthasastra*

of Kautilya we are told, "If any person unwilling to brave the battle of life embraces asceticism without providing for the maintenance of his family, he is punished for his offence."

These duties must be done in a spirit of faith, devotion and humility and with a view to pleasing Ishwara, the Lord within. The entire offering should be made in the name of Brahman, for the sake of Brahman, in the spirit of Brahman and with a view to reaching Brahman (IV, 24). The Self does not exist for the sake of its bodily members which, on the contrary, must work for its progress. If Arjuna says, "I will not fight," his resolution will be vain, for the universal law will bring him to his duty and compel him to act (XVIII, 59).

Besides this devotion to duty, the first quality of a *Karma-Yogi*, there must be unconcern about results (II, 47). For, from attachment arises lust; from lust, anger; from anger, self-delusion, which results in perturbation; then follow dementia and death (II, 62 ff.). Genuine sacrifice (*Tyaga*) lies in the surrender of the results of actions (*Karmaphalatyaga*—XVIII, 1).

This loyalty to one's obligations and attitudes of non-attachment will eventually reveal the worthlessness of worldly possessions (*Bhoga, Aisvarya*). The base instincts of *tamas* and *rajas* that enslave the mind will be burned away in the fire of wisdom and the golden *Sattva* alone will remain, resulting in concentration on the Supreme and its realization (*Sthitaprajna*—II, 56 ff.). The Yogi will be unaffected by *dvandva* or pairs of opposites (IV, 2) and imbued with *sambuddhi* or equanimity towards all.

A still higher stage is self-renunciation (*Sannyasa*) which Arjuna is taught in the last chapter. When the Teacher says that *Jnana* is the end of all *Karma* (IV, 33) and places (*Jnana-Yoga*) as the supreme step in the realization of Spirit, Arjuna might feel, "Why not, then, follow that path at once and leave off karma?" But Sri Krishna says, "It is possible of achievement only by one who has fully controlled his senses," and *Karma-Yoga* or unattached action is verily of greater efficacy than *Karma-sannyasa* or renunciation of action (V, 2). *Sannyasa* cannot come through avoidance of rational existence, but by overcoming deep-seated, defiling desires (III, 43). It consists in the surrender of all cancerous conditions of mind and heart, the cessation of love for the world and its belongings (*Kamyakarma-sannyasa*); not in breaking the covenant with one's fellows (*karmanam anarambha*), but in relinquishing the self (III, 4; V, 2; XVIII, 1 ff.). He is the real *Sannyasi* who does not hate, who has no desires (V, 3) and who has given up the tendencies of the self (*sarvasankalpa*—VI, 4).

Briefly, the instruction to Arjuna on Karma-Yoga may be put thus: First, to overcome delusion and doubt, the concomitants of sorrow and suffering (*dukkha, soka*). "The wise do not grieve or repent" (II, 11). Secondly, to fulfil his duty, to fight on the battlefield as a valiant Kshatriya and not degrade himself in the eyes of the world, for that is worse than death (II, 34). Thirdly, in discharging duty to remain disinterested, as the lotus leaf is unaffected by the water (V, 10). Then he may know of *Tyaga* and *Sannyasa*, resignation of all motives for action. "For knowledge is better than constant practice, meditation is superior to knowledge, renunciation of the fruit of action to meditation; final emancipation immediately results from such renunciation" (XII, 12).

TRADITIONAL wisdom teaches that the function of work is at heart threefold: (1) to give a person a chance to utilize and develop his faculties; (2) to enable him to overcome his inborn egocentricity by joining with other people in a common task; and (3) to bring forth the goods and services needed by all of us for a decent existence.

The question is raised: How do we prepare young people for the future world of work, and the first answer, I think, must be: We should prepare them to be able to distinguish between good work and bad work and encourage them *not to accept* the latter. They should be taught that work is the joy of life and is *needed* for our development, but that meaningless work, in which a person is made the servant of a machine or a system, is an abomination.

Education for good work could then begin with a systematic study of traditional wisdom, where answers are to be found to the questions: What is man? Where does he come from? What is the purpose of his life? It would then emerge that there is indeed a goal to be reached and that there is also a path to the goal—in fact, that there are many paths to the same summit. The goal can be described as "perfection"—be ye therefore as perfect as your father in heaven is perfect—or as "the kingdom," "salvation," "nirvana," "liberation," "enlightenment," and so forth. And the path to the goal? *Good work*. "Work out your salvation with diligence." Don't bury your talents and don't let anybody else bury them. He who has been given much, of him much will be demanded. In short, life is some sort of school, and in this school nothing counts but good work, work that ennobles the product as it ennobles the producer. . . .

—E. F. SCHUMACHER

DISCRIMINATION OF SPIRIT AND NOT-SPIRIT

[The following, translated by Mohini M. Chatterji from the original Sanskrit of Sankara Acharya, is reprinted from *The Theosophist* for November 1882. The concluding portion of the treatise will appear in our next issue.—EDS.]

[An apology is scarcely needed for undertaking a translation of Sankara Acharya's celebrated Synopsis of Vedantism entitled *Atmanatma Vivekah*. This little treatise within a small compass, fully sets forth the scope and purpose of the Vedanta philosophy. It has been a matter of no little wonder, considering the authorship of this pamphlet and its own intrinsic merits, that a translation of it has not already been executed by some competent scholar. The present translation, though pretending to no scholarship, is dutifully literal except, however, the omission of a few lines relating to the etymology of the words शरीर (Sarira) and देह (Deha) and one or two other things which, though interesting in themselves, have no direct bearing on the main subject of treatment. Some other passages in the text have also, for the convenience of readers, been removed to an appendix at the end.—TR.]

NOTHING is Spirit which can be perceived by the senses. To one possessed of right discrimination, the Spirit is like a thing perceptible. This right discrimination of Spirit and Not-spirit is set forth in millions of treatises.

The discrimination of Spirit and Not-spirit is given below:

Q. Whence comes pain to the Spirit?

A. By reason of its taking a body. It is said in the *Sruti*¹: "Not in this (state of existence) is there cessation of pleasure and pain of a living thing possessed of a body."

Q. By what is produced this taking of a body?

A. By *Karma*.²

Q. Why does it become so by *Karma*?

A. By desire and the rest (*i.e.*, the passions).

Q. By what are desire and the rest produced?

A. By egoism (अभिमान).

Q. By what again is egoism produced?

A. By want of right discrimination.

Q. By what is this want of right discrimination produced?

A. By ignorance (अज्ञानं).

Q. Is ignorance produced by anything?

¹ *Chandogya Upanishad*.—TR.

² This word, it is impossible to translate. It means the doing of a thing for the attainment of an object of worldly desire.—TR.

A. No, by nothing. Ignorance is without beginning and ineffable by reason of its being the intermingling of the real (सत्) and the unreal (असत्).³ It is a something embodying the three qualities⁴ and is said to be opposed to Wisdom inasmuch as it produces the concept "I am ignorant." The *Sruti* says, "(Ignorance) is the power of the Deity and is enshrouded by its own qualities."⁵

The origin of pain can thus be traced to ignorance and it will not cease until ignorance is entirely dispelled, which will be only when the identity of the Self with Brahma (the Universal Spirit) is fully realized.⁶ Anticipating the contention that the eternal acts (*i.e.*, those enjoined by the Vedas) are proper and would therefore lead to the destruction of ignorance, it is said that ignorance cannot be dispelled by *Karma*. Then—

Q. What comes of such acts?

A. Conflict of Wisdom and *Karma*. Therefore it is clear that Ignorance can only be removed by Wisdom.

Q. How can this Wisdom be acquired?

A. By discussion—by discussing as to the nature of Spirit and Not-spirit.

Q. Who are worthy of engaging in such discussion?

A. Those who have acquired the four qualifications.

Q. What are the four qualifications?

A. (1) True discrimination of permanent and impermanent things. (2) Indifference to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions, both here and hereafter. (3) Possession of *Sama* and the other five qualities. (4) An intense desire of becoming liberated (from material existence).

(1) Q. What is the right discrimination of permanent and impermanent things?

A. Certainty as to the Material Universe being false and illusive, and Brahma being the only reality.

(2) Indifference to the enjoyment of the fruits of one's actions in this world is to have the same amount of disinclination for the enjoyment of worldly objects of desire (such as garland of flowers, sandalwood paste, women and the like), beyond those absolutely necessary for the preservation of life, as one has for vomited food, etc.; the same amount of disinclination to enjoyment in the society

³ This word, as used in *Vaidantic* works, is generally misunderstood. It does not mean the negation of everything; it means "that which does not exhibit the Truth," the "illusory."—TR.

⁴ *Satva* (goodness), *Rajas* (foulness) and *Tamas* (darkness) are the three qualities.

⁵ *Chandogya Upanishad*.—TR.

⁶ This portion has been condensed from the original.—TR.

of Rambha, Urvasi and other celestial nymphs in the higher spheres of life beginning with *Svarga loka* and ending with *Brahma loka*.⁷

(3) Q. What are the six qualities beginning with *Sama*?

A. *Sama, dama, uparati, titiksha, samadhana* and *sraddha*.

Sama is the repression of the inward sense called *Manas*, i.e., not allowing it to engage in any other thing but *Sravana* (listening to what the sages say about the spirit), *Manana* (reflecting on it), *Nididhyasana* (meditating on the same). *Dama* is the repression of the external senses.

Q. What are the external senses?

A. The five organs of perception and the five bodily organs for the performance of external acts. Restraining these from all other things but *sravana* and the rest—is *dama*.

Uparati is the abstaining on principle from engaging in any of the acts and ceremonies enjoined by the *shastras*. Otherwise, it is the state of the mind which is always engaged in *Sravana* and the rest, without ever diverging from them.

Titiksha (literally the desire to leave) is the bearing with indifference all opposites (such as pleasure and pain, heat and cold, etc.). Otherwise, it is the showing of forbearance to a person one is capable of punishing.

Whenever a mind, engaged in *Sravana* and the rest, wanders to any worldly object of desire, and, finding it worthless, returns to the performance of the three exercises—such returning is called *samadhana*.

Sraddha is an intensely strong faith in the utterances of one's *guru* and of the Vedanta philosophy.

(4) An intense desire for liberation is called *mumukshatvam*.

Those who possess these four qualifications, are worthy of engaging in discussions as to the nature of Spirit and Not-spirit, and, like Brahmacharins, they have no other duty (but such discussion). It is not, however, at all improper for householders to engage in such discussions; but, on the contrary, such a course is highly meritorious. For, it is said: Whoever, with due reverence, engages in the discussion of subjects treated of in *Vedanta* philosophy and does proper service to his *guru*, reaps happy fruits.

(To be concluded)

⁷ These, it is supposed, include the whole range of *Rupa loka* (the world of forms) in Buddhistic esoteric philosophy.—Tr.

THE BASIS OF CONDUCT

IT is a commonplace of life today to observe a steady deterioration of moral values. The phenomenon is not new. What is novel is its widespread nature. The fact that the decline is not confined to one country, but is perceptible in East and West alike and affects all classes, is matter for comment on all sides. Most prevalent, perhaps, is the readiness to ignore the sanctity of agreements, and to resort to violence in the pursuit of selfish national or ideological ambitions. No verbal or written agreement can any longer be trusted, and self-interest has become of paramount importance. In the field of international relationships "Might is Right" is a cardinal doctrine, just as, within the boundaries of some Sovereign States, the accepted method of silencing criticism is too often by terrorism and massacre. We are being driven to ask if there be any standards of conduct whose acceptance and application would result in a less hypocritical and savage world. The old sanctions have passed away. What are the measurements that we should apply to human behaviour generally? Is Truth—if only relative Truth—to be found anywhere?

These are pertinent questions, and answers to them must come from ourselves individually even more than be demanded of others. If we long for a "Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour," we must do some hard thinking about the basis of our conduct. Is Universal Brotherhood to be apprehended by a mind filled with thoughts of fear and distrust? Is it to be practised by one whose every feeling is for comfort and security? Or have we (as H. P. Blavatsky once said was imperative for the would-be student of *Gupta-Vidya*) to learn a new alphabet on the lap of Mother Nature?

The type of violent aggression with which we are all familiar today is not new. Twenty-four hundred years ago, similar troubles in Corfu led Thucydides to write (iii, 82):

The cause of all these evils was the love of power originating in avarice and ambition and the party-spirit engendered by them when men are fairly embarked on a contest. For the leaders on either side used specious names, the one party professing to uphold civic institutions and the quality of the many, the other the wisdom of the aristocracy, while they made public interest to which in name they were devoted really their prize. Striving in every way to overcome each other, they committed the most atrocious crimes.

Where shall we turn for a guide as to the path we must follow

in our search for ethical foundations? Or must we be content to build our house upon the shifting sands of scientific and theological opinion?

If Universal Brotherhood be a fact in Nature, we must pay heed to Those who are the embodiment of that Brotherhood, and who have laid down the conditions necessary for the perception of Truth in this as in other matters. In a letter from the Mahatma K.H. to Mr. A. P. Sinnett, we find the following words:

Look around you, my friend: see the "three poisons" raging within the heart of man—anger, greed, delusion; and the five obscurities—envy, passion, vacillation, sloth, and unbelief—ever preventing their seeing truth.

Are we trying to get rid of these poisons and obscurities? If not, what hope is there of perceiving the truth of Brotherhood or the spiritual value of the consequences that would flow from its practice in daily life? The practical working of the rule of Brotherhood has been explained by the Rishis in words quoted by Their Messenger, H. P. Blavatsky:

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

—and, therefore, is not one whose ethical values are based upon Truth.

The forces at work in the world today will, sooner or later, compel all thinking men and women to turn their attention to the Aryan Path which was trodden of old by Those who watch with deepest compassion the faltering footsteps of humanity. Under the cloak of "enlightened self-interest," nations and individuals still pursue their selfish aims, thus adopting what they cynically call "a realistic policy," which is supposed to be practical, even though history proves that it has never "worked" in the long run! Misery and suffering are the bitter fruit of such an attitude. If peace and good-will are to be sought, we must retrace our steps and drink again at the well of ancient truth. "Selfishness," wrote H. P. Blavatsky, "whether it breeds desire for aggrandisement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one's

neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue.”

The work before us, in a world given over to greed and violence, is clear:

The same causes that are materializing the Hindu mind are equally affecting all Western thought. Education enthrones skepticism, but imprisons spirituality. You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this, and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. The era of blind faith is gone; that of inquiry is here. Inquiry that only unmasks error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. Iconoclasm, from its very destructiveness, can give nothing; it can only raze. But man cannot rest satisfied with bare negation. Agnosticism is but a temporary halt. This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans. (“A Master’s Letter,” *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 29*)

LIFE and literature need the inspiration which idealism quickens and promotes. The history of thought shows that a people given to sensationalism and the lower forms of materialism have run to ruin. Only that which inspires life and nobility of thought can maintain and preserve itself from speedy and ignoble decay. And we have too palpable evidences of corruption, public and private, to leave us in doubt as to the tendency of not a little of the cultivation and teachings in our times. . . . The idealists have given deeper insight into life and nature than other schools of thought. If inclined to visionariness, and seemingly sometimes on the verge of lunacy even, they have revealed depths of being, a devotion to the spirit of universality, that render their works most edifying. They, more than any other, hold the balance between mind and matter, and illuminate literature, while they furthered the science, art and religion of all times. An age deficient in idealism has ever been one of immorality and superficial attainment, since without the sense of ideas, nobility of character becomes of rare attainment, if possible.

—AMOS BRONSON ALCOTT

THE ENDLESS CYCLE

TO those unacquainted with the Wisdom teachings the thought of death must bring, if not a kind of fear, at least a great awe. Even to students and disciples death and birth are mysteries which are not wholly revealed, nor will they be till we are able to see them without illusion. "There is no death for that which exists, nor is there any existence for that which is not." In *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 221), it is said: "Being is an endless cycle within the one absolute eternity, wherein move numberless inner cycles finite and conditioned." In that absolute eternity all things come and go and come again. Beings, worlds, systems—each one the result of its predecessor, the cause of its successor; "the physical, according to esoteric teachings, evolving gradually from the spiritual, mental and psychic" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 219), now subjective and passive, again objective and active. And as we learn in our study of the Fundamentals that there is "that" which links spirit to matter, subject to object, so in human incarnation there is "that" which links the uncreate Spirit to the manifested Matter which is its vehicle in any life, its contact with Nature, its instrument for obtaining knowledge. That is the human mind. It is the bridge between two worlds, by which the ideas ever present in the Divine Mind, which corresponds to the Higher Self, are carried over, transmitted to the vehicles that Self has chosen to work in. Those "numberless inner cycles, finite and conditioned," are our human incarnations, and within them, too, come cycles, return of impressions, certain high and low tides to which the being has to adjust himself, learning from experience that which shall serve his further growth on all planes.

We study the seven principles of man: we divide him into the threefold higher—spirit, soul, mind; and the fourfold lower—desire, life, the astral and physical bodies. We are taught that the former is permanent, eternal; the other, transitory; and that the purpose is to transmute the lower and set it on the path to obtaining conscious immortality. Therefore it is the middle principle, that link between the two which we call the reincarnating principle or Ego, that is our chief concern. There lies the fulcrum of the balance, "the world of Karmic scales, the Hall of Justice, where the balance is struck which determines the future course of the Monad during the remainder of its incarnations in the cycle." (*S.D.*, I, 182)

Just think of it—in that one principle of Kama-Manas lies our destiny. See the occult significance of Christ's "O woman, great is

your faith; as you desire be it unto you." *As you desire.* Her faith compelled him to heal.

It is at first thought a strange thing that everything grows by dying. "The seed is not quickened except it die," says St. Paul. The lower principles are not "quickened" except by dying in themselves; the coal is not quickened except by fire. It is the sacrificial flame which feeds the gods; "gods" are the higher principles, whether in life or death, *i.e.*, incarnate or discarnate, actively working in earthlife or assimilating experience in Devachan, where, denuded of all their grosser elements, they can digest the gleanings of the lower field of experience. For it is still the personal Ego in Devachan, but beautified, purified, holy, which can

. . . in far Elysian fields

Dream without sorrow of the days that were.

It has cast off and left behind on another plane of nature all that marred the incarnation.

Around a deathbed we should be very still, for the soul is withdrawing gradually from all its contacts, beginning to leave its various vehicles to disintegrate on their different planes, according to their attractions to one or another form of matter.

The Life passes on its purifying path, binding to itself for ever all the higher attributes, all the efflorescence of the incarnation just closed, which the soaring soul can assimilate and retain. They have always belonged to it. For, during earth-life, unselfish loves, pure thoughts, noble aspirations are projections from the higher into the lower ego; therefore at death he but takes them to himself again, as sun-rays return to their source, the Sun. And they return again to the *personal I* when later he comes again to incarnation. They are part of the ego's essence and can never fade out. They are the regenerated part of him, assimilated through many lives and deaths and Devachans. They stamp the personality that is to be. They are the result in each new life of old earth-gleanings, husbanded by the Soul and accompanying him on his return to birth.

So, it is with the middle principle, Kama-Manas, that our work lies; to keep the desires ever turned upward, that the channel may be pure for the descent of the holy Spirit, the redeemer, to come into flesh and transform it. Voluntarily and consciously the higher egos have taken upon themselves that task, assumed responsibility for all the personalities in which they incarnate. It is for the personality seated in that middle principle to help the incarnation by furnishing it with a purified vehicle. One of the most touching of

all prayers is quoted by H.P.B. from the *Book of the Dead*, where the defunct, addressing the reincarnating principle, the permanent Ego, says:

O my heart, my ancestral heart necessary for my transformations, do not separate thyself from me before the guardian of the Scales. Thou art my personality within my breast, divine companion watching over my fleshs (bodies).

That divine companion, the very central point of the heart, will never leave nor forsake us while we cling to it. Real life is conscious existence in it, in Spirit. Real death is limited perception of life, or inability to perceive it outside of some form of matter. It is for us to dwell in thought upon this Life which is without form yet supports all forms, to sense intuitively the great ideas which are the laws of Kosmos, not as abstractions, far away and unreal, but as living spiritual powers, to name which ever brings them, to some extent, into being, as when we say: "Love, Joy, Peace be with you." These powers can regenerate and raise all matter, much more the plastic minds of men. It is for the disciple to try to see all things, not in their separate being but in the Atman by whose power all This is pervaded. Each type of being on this earth is what it is by the reflection of some aspect of the Divine.

What makes our constituents sacred? It is the light of the One. They are stairs to be climbed up the pathway of being to that One. What makes our work holy? It is the Wisdom of the One in it. What is it that gives us joy in Nature—the trees, the night, the sun, flowing rivers, grand mountains, the mighty sea? What but the varying powers of the One? So to see it in all, to feel it in all, to serve it in all, to develop and transcend the power which is in each principle through the right use of it—of the senses, the passions, the mind, the soul. Then we see a wonderful meaning to the word Transfiguration—as if one carried a light from the lowest dungeon of a dark tower, up the winding stairs, with it shining forth from every window on the way, till it flamed from the very top, a beacon-light to all the other weary climbers. Such are the Great Masters, those who have united and harmonized all the constituents of their Being, and who see Life and Death as but two aspects of the One in its eternal rhythm.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

WHAT made a small number of people during World War II risk their lives to save the Jews in European nations under Nazi control, while others turned away? What qualities and characteristics did they have that others lacked? In *Psychology Today* for August 1985, Eva Fogelman and Valerie Lewis Wiener write about an international study involving interviews with non-Jewish rescuers and the Jewish survivors who probably would have died without their help. Some hid the Jews in their homes; some smuggled food and other essentials to those in hiding; still others who had particular skills or contacts used these advantages to help out in various ways. Thousands of Jews were helped to escape from Nazi occupied countries by people who had useful connections and opportunities, although to be caught meant arrest and death. The authors write of their findings:

Although the rescuers had diverse personalities, they shared one characteristic: They did not view themselves as heroes or heroines. Their behaviour under the Nazis, they told us, was only natural. . . . The motivations of rescuers cannot be reduced to a formula or explained by any single personality characteristic or type. However, there were some common trends.

We found that the rescuers fell into two groups, those motivated chiefly by deeply-held moral values and those whose motivation was mainly emotional and based on personal attachments or identification with the victim. . . .

With time, boundaries between moral and emotional motivation often blurred, and the relationship between rescuer and rescued became the sustaining element, whatever the original motivation. Years of long days and nights living under constant threat of exposure required something beyond moral conviction. This "something more" is best described in terms such as love, compassion and caring. . . .

Although the rescuers' motivations were different, they often shared certain characteristics. A family tradition of concern for others showed up in many rescuers. . . . Many rescuers said their behaviour was strongly influenced by values exhibited by their parents. These parents not only talked about the importance of helping others and accepting human differences, but did things that exemplified these beliefs and encouraged their children to follow their example. . . .

Our findings contradict those of Freud and his followers, who claimed that those who undertake intensely dangerous acts are

masochistic, seeking to fulfil neurotic needs or acting out grandiose fantasies. The rescuers we interviewed were not neurotic daredevils, although they all had an uncommon high tolerance for risk that allowed them to transcend the fear and anxiety inherent in life-and-death situations. . . .

There are many others who remain almost unknown. Those who took the refugees in immediately endangered their own lives and the lives of their families. By the time we finished our interviews, we were filled with a great sense of admiration for these lesser-known heroes. Their willingness to risk their lives, to endure, to adhere to a higher principle in the midst of chaos and destruction inspired in us a renewed faith in humanity.

Bel Mooney's reflections on death, and its profound, positive and lasting effect on life, appear in *The Listener* for November 14, 1985, under the title "The Spirit Cannot Die":

Though each death will be different and experienced in raw freshness each time (the death of a child, the death of a friend, the death of a beloved parent), the first response is usually anger—a railing against the heavens for allowing this to happen. . . . Close cousin to pity for the dead is the understandable self-pitying question of those left behind: "Why *me*? What have *I* done to deserve this?" There is no answer to either cry. Yet we can stumble towards a "hint half understood" by means of one simple, yet devastating and demanding exercise. Instead, of "Why?", turn the question on its head, and ask "Why not?" That is the essence of the mystery.

For although you may hate the fact of death, you can still, simultaneously, accept that it has to be; it is also possible to take this a step further—going beyond mere passive acceptance, and seeking instead to discover what results from the pain. . . .

A familiar and over-quoted phrase is perturbing: "Any man's death diminishes me." Donne's great meditation still reaches out across centuries with its plea for fellowship, for compassion. Yet it, too, may be questioned. Why should any man's death necessarily diminish? To witness a death borne courageously, to read of heroism and death in the face of persecution. . . . does that not *enhance*? There is a serious case for saying that every man's death adds to me, if I allow it; and far from being a violation, death may be a consummation—although not devoutly wished. To put it another way: it is life that we diminish by turning away in such horror from its ending, for (in Jung's phrase) waxing and waning

are part of the same curve. . . .

Coming to terms with the idea of one's own death is hard but essential; only then is it possible to contemplate with any equanimity the death of those one loves. . . . It involves a willingness to love the dead for what they are—the souls of the departed, for whom we go on living, doing all the things they could not do, and allowing them to add to the whole of what *we* are. . . .

All of us—angry, demented, guilty, bitter, released, disappointed or however we may respond—have this in common: we are placed permanently on the interface between suffering and acceptance, and weighed with the knowledge that death is simultaneously an individual agony and the most unarguable testimony to ordinary, sublime humanity. The grief goes on—and there is a very good reason for this permanence. In the words of Franz Marc: “The spirit cannot die—in no circumstances, under no torment, despite whatever calumnies, in no bleak place.”

And nor can it ever be forgotten amid the mundanity of everyday life, and of ambition, achievement and age.

At a symposium arranged by the Atlanta Historical Society, scholars and businessmen debated the legacy of Confucius on what is held to be the 2,536th anniversary of the sage's birth. The scholars declared that Confucian ethical principles had underpinned East Asian society for over two millennia, but what the businessmen wanted to know was, did Confucius' philosophy have any relevance to business practices in Japan and China today? Yes, said the scholars, indirectly.

One instance is the Japanese preference for group achievement over personal glory. An excessive display of ego by foreigners doing business in Japan “is the kind of thing that sinks businessmen, and they'll never know why they failed in Japan,” a senior executive at the symposium contributed. The Japanese decision-by-consensus methods have proved their worth. A report in *Sunday Mid-day* (Bombay) for November 17 states:

Coco Cola Co. senior vice-president John Georgas recalled a meeting of Japanese executives when after hours of discussion, the Japanese adjourned without a vote, putting off the matter under discussion. “I asked my assistant what had happened, and he replied, ‘There were two in the room who were opposed.’ It is fascinating to me that the item could have stayed on the agenda for

years without approval if they had not reached a consensus." Months later the Japanese executives met again, quickly approving the action discussed in the earlier meeting.

"Apparently in the interim, and quite privately, the two dissenters were convinced to change their minds, and therefore there was a consensus," Georgas said. "Once decided, the agreed action was implemented quickly, with precision, and successfully."

In a similar situation, Western businessmen would have argued among themselves and then quickly put the matter to a vote. But James Balloun, manager of McKinsey & Co., said consensus decisions "tend to be bolder" than those made quickly.

As Harvard professor Wei-Ming Tu explained it, the Confucian ethic "stresses consensus formation," and "operates on a long-term perspective, rather than on an exclusive concern for short-term gain." . . .

Although East Asian peoples tend to base their behaviour on Confucian ethics, they generally are not aware of the specific philosophy, University of Chicago scholar Tetsuo Najita said.

"The Confucian tradition had been suspended for a long time in China," said Jizhong Huang, associate professor of English at Beijing University, now a visiting Lecturer on Confucianism at Bennington College in Vermont. "The only encouragement for us Chinese intellectuals was to learn how in other parts of the world people were still honouring the Sage and cherishing his wisdom." Not until last year was Confucius officially rehabilitated in China, with research institutes established at Beijing and Chu Fu, Confucius' birthplace, Huang said. . . .

One Confucian virtue that needs to be applied all over the modern world is filial piety, Huang said. "Confucius places filial piety and respect for one's elders above all other virtues. In the West, so many parents are left to drag out their old age in nursing homes, and hence in solitude and misery."

Hindu thought and spiritual practices as a means of promoting harmonious living is finding increasing acceptance among the people of Western Europe. The second European Hindu Conference held in Copenhagen, Denmark, for three days was attended by 450 delegates from 16 countries. The conference was inaugurated by Ole Esperson, a member of the Danish Parliament and a former Justice Royal of Denmark.

The main theme of the meet was "*Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*,"

the concept of one international family believing in "unity in diversity." The topics discussed at various sessions included the problems faced by humanity and how Eastern thought could promote world harmony, as also practical ways to develop physical and mental health, such as yoga, meditation and stress management. (*The Times of India*, October 9)

A paper read at the conference which drew much attention was by Anandshankar Pandya from Bombay who dwelt on the Vedas and the Upanishads as the basic sources of Hindu thought, this knowledge representing the harmony pervading the whole universe. The aim of the Upanishads is to impress that man, nature and divine power are bound together in mystic harmony. A philosophy of "unity in diversity" can alone hold together the world with diverse faiths, creeds, languages and customs. Mr. Pandya stressed that the precepts of the scriptures were conducive to creating harmony in the world. And they had percolated Indian thought and life through its arts, literature and music. Classical Hindu art, literature and music all emitted a message of harmony.

Converting others to its own religion and destroying their places of worship was against Hindu thought. One of its basic principles was "*Sarva dharma samabhav*" (equal respect for all religions). The modern message of ecology was in complete consonance with Hindu thought, Mr. Pandya said. Indians for thousands of years had lived in harmony with Nature.

The message of Mr. Cuomo, Governor of New York, to the 1984 Hindu Conference was recalled by Mr. Pandya. He had appreciated the "harmony of the Hindu family which is the basis of harmony in the world family. It was because of the injunctions of the Hindu scriptures that family ties, as between parents and children, wife and husband, sister and brother, were considered binding, not to be broken easily.

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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 great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty 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 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 and how ever 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*. And 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 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. 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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