

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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THE SIN AND THE GLORY

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The Demon of Pride, Lust, Rebellion, and Hatred, has never had *any being before* the appearance of physical conscious man. It is man who has begotten, nurtured, and allowed the fiend to develop in his heart; he, again, who has contaminated the indwelling god in himself, by linking the pure spirit with the impure demon of matter. And, if the Kabalistic saying, “*Demon est Deus inversus*” finds its metaphysical and theoretical corroboration in dual manifested nature, its practical application is found in Mankind alone.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 274

THE sin and the glory, the devil and the deity, darkness and light, evil and good, are closely linked with each other. The one is the antithesis of the other, and yet they are not independent powers; we call them self and Self. “Satan is always near and inextricably interwoven with man.” (*S.D.*, II, 478)

The origin of evil is a fascinating chapter in the story of Man; it is intimately related to the gift made to us by the Powers called *Asuras*. No earnest student of the Esoteric Philosophy can afford to neglect the study of the birth of Self-consciousness in man.

The *Gita* instructs us to help the self to grow by precept and example, just as a son should grow according to the pattern of the good life of the good father. Otherwise the self will experience a sinking feeling, a depression. The Self is the only friend of the self; and alas! the self only becomes the enemy of the Self. The unruly and obstinate son, going astray and abandoning his good father, loses his only friend and kin, and, pursuing his wrong track, becomes his own enemy. Then the constant enemy of man on

earth issues forth and dominates the poor son. Therefore the lower self creates its own enemies.

Knowledge—the sciences, the religions, the arts, the philosophies—which helps the growth of the lower self is misleading when not false. Any force which imparts a separative tendency to us is dangerous—it may come from desires or from specious knowledge.

To sin against the Holy Ghost is to overlook the existence, to misunderstand the nature and to undervalue the power of the Self. This triple neglect of the Self—the Father—leads to insidious practices, stealthily rooted in the “Great Heresy.” H.P.B. calls this “Great Heresy” *Attavada*, “the sin of personality.” Belief in “the separateness of soul or *Self* from the One Universal, Infinite SELF” is the self-inflicted curse from which our civilization of this Dark Age—*Kali Yuga*—is suffering.

The personal idea is the aspirant’s archetypal foe; from it a whole brood of foes emanates. Illusion—*Maya*; delusion—*Moha*; afflictions—*Klesha*; longings—*Trishna*—all arise from the notion that our personal soul is distinct and separate from the One Self. Our sense-perception is illusioned; our mind-perception becomes deluded; our heart-perception is afflicted; and our very Will to Live is corrupted.

The separative self has a distinct separated existence and is sustained as such by the man who is called “educated” and “civilized.” The spirit of competition and rivalry and their fruit, jealousy, flourish; while jealousy is condemned even by the worldly man, the parent, selfishness, is not condemned. All is fair in love and war, say the worshippers of Cupid and Bellona.

When the man of flesh feels from within the shake of self, he is led to the truth, to note the delusion of the separated self and the illusion of the separative tendency. He is taught to dispel the illusion, to face and overcome the delusion. If he is wise he will persist in the right course; he will seek the knowledge about the machinating lower self and the boon of the higher.

Knowledge is near at hand for the sincere enquirer; guidance and help await the earnest student. It is not difficult to comprehend the nature and power of the Higher Self. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

It is not of this world or plane, and may be compared only to an indestructible star of divine light and fire, thrown down on to our Earth as a plank of salvation for the personalities in which it indwells. It is for the latter to cling to it; and thus partaking of its divine nature, obtain immortality. Left to itself the Monad will

cling to no one; but, like the "plank," be drifted away to another incarnation by the unresting current of evolution. (I, 174-5 fn.)

The metaphysical truth contained in this passage is not very difficult to understand; its application—making the personality "cling to" the Higher Self—is a difficult task. Our thoughts, impregnated by personal desires, act like a citadel, preventing us from formulating aspirations for the practice of the true. Our desires lead us, even forcefully, to think of our personal self, our position, our wife and children, our possessions, many and varied, and we have to pay for these the price of injustice to others. Our words trap us into the egotistic speech of self. Our deeds, above all, show how subtle and insidious is the force of the self which sinks us into the abyss of separation. Mr. Judge advises the conquest of "the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward." This is difficult, but overcome the obstacle we must if we want the Peace and the Light of the Spirit. But actions and words will be reshaped if thoughts and desires are cleansed of violence and constantly given the food of kindness, generosity, brotherliness. Mr. Crosbie says:

It is not the personality that is in the way but the personal idea in regard to it. This is particularly fostered by the present civilization.

How to fight and conquer the personal idea?

The one safe method taught by the Esoteric Philosophy is to acquire definite knowledge about the One Spirit, the One Self, symbolized by the One Light—the Light of all lights. All branches of Right Knowledge point to the One. It should be our object of Wisdom. We need the Wisdom that leads to the perception of Light. That Light-Wisdom, however, is the presiding Genius in our Heart, but we have allowed it to be obscured by material influences; the result is profligacy. Most men and women have forgotten its very existence and are besieged by the four-armed demon, the dark shadow of the four-armed Deity.

But the Light within flickers on the shadows of illusion and delusion, darkens our afflictions and makes us question the validity of the very will to live.

The first perfume of Peace wafted on the air of ideation on the Self awakens us. The primary words of wisdom falling on our ears eager to listen bestir us to know more. The early glimpse of the Radiance of Reality goads us to put away the "childish things" of which St. Paul spoke.

How gracious is the Supreme Self, how bountiful is Mother

Nature, how compassionate the Gurus who are the Helpers of Nature and the Knowers of the Supreme! They continually perform the Magic Rite of Great Sacrifice by living in our midst lest dark death overtake mankind. The real Buddhas, the Enlightened Ones, impart the Glory to a sinful earth; They are the Glorious Divine Lights, who shine and point to the darkness and death surrounding us. They remind us: "All beings are potentially *Tathagatas*. All beings have the germ of Buddhahood in them." Further, They teach that "common people are perverted in their views." These verses from a Buddhist text, *Ratnagotravibhaga*, awaken the will to live, impel the mind to move towards the Light, inspire the Heart to love:

In spite of the adventitious faults, and because of the virtues essential to its nature,

The nature of Dharma remains immutable, the same in former and in subsequent states.

Like the Buddha in a faded lotus flower, like honey covered by a swarm of bees,

Like the kernel of a fruit in the husk, like gold within impurities,

Like a treasure hidden in the soil, the fruits in a small seed,

An image of the Jina in tattered garments,

The universal monarch in the vile belly of a woman,

And like a precious statue covered with dust,

So is this Element established in beings

Who are covered with the stains of adventitious defilements.

The Glory is buried in the sin.

No new ethics are presented by Theosophy, as it is held that right ethics are for ever the same. But in the doctrines of Theosophy is to be found the philosophical and reasonable basis for ethics and the natural enforcement of them in practice. Universal brotherhood is that which will result in doing unto others as you would have them do unto you, and in loving your neighbour as yourself—declared as right by all teachers in the great religions of the world.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE CYCLE MOVETH

[Under this caption, H.P.B. published the editorial which opened the sixth volume of *Lucifer*, in March 1890. The article surveys the past and depicts the tendencies of the then present, both of course from the point of view of the esotericist. One hundred years have wrought mighty changes on every plane of being, yet the message of the article remains true.—EDS.]

Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.

—TENNYSON

The goal of yesterday will be the starting-point of tomorrow.

—CARLYLE

THE great mystic of the eighteenth century, the ardent disciple of Jacob Boehme—Louis Claude de Saint Martin—used to say in the last years of his life: “I would have loved to meet more with those who guess at truths, for such alone are living men.”

This remark implies that, outside the limited circle of mystics which has existed in every age, people endowed with correct psychic intuition were still fewer at the end of the last century than they are now. These were, indeed, years of complete soul-blindness and spiritual drought. It is during that century that the chaotic darkness and Babylonish confusion with regard to spiritual things, which have ever reigned in brains too crammed with mere scientific learning, had fully asserted their sway over the masses. The lack of soul perception was not confined to the “Forty Immortals” of the French Academy, nor to their less pretentious colleagues of Europe in general, but had infected almost all the classes of Society, settling down as a chronic disease called Scepticism and the denial of all but matter.

The messengers sent out periodically in the last quarter of every century westward—ever since the mysteries which alone had the key to the secrets of nature had been crushed out of existence in Europe by heathen and Christian conquerors—had appeared that time in vain. St. Germain and Cagliostro are credited with real phenomenal powers only in fashionable novels, to remain inscribed in encyclopaedias—to purblind the better, we suppose, the minds of forthcoming generations—as merely clever charlatans. The only man whose powers and knowledge could have been easily tested by exact science, thus forming a firm link between physics and metaphysics—Friedrich Anton Mesmer—had been hooted from the scientific arena by the greatest “scholar-igno-

ramuses" in things spiritual, of Europe. For almost a century, namely, from 1770 down to 1870, a heavy spiritual darkness descending on the Western hemisphere, settled, as if it meant to stay, among *cultured* societies.

But an undercurrent appeared about the middle of our century in America, crossing the Atlantic between 1850 and 1860. Then came in its trail the marvellous medium for physical manifestations, D. D. Home. After he had taken by storm the Tuileries and the Winter Palace, light was no longer allowed to shine under a bushel. Already, some years before his advent, "a change" had come "o'er the spirit of the dream" of almost every civilized community in the two worlds, and a great reactive force was now at work.

What was it? Simply this. Amidst the greatest glow of the self-sufficiency of exact science, and the reckless triumphant crowing of victory over the ruins of the very foundations—as some Darwinists had fondly hoped—of old superstitions and creeds; in the midst of the deadliest calm of wholesale negations, there arose a breeze from a wholly unexpected quarter. At first the significant afflatus was like a hardly perceptible stir, puffs of wind in the rigging of a proud vessel—the ship called "Materialism," whose crew was merrily leading its passengers toward the Maelstrom of annihilation. But very soon the breeze freshened and finally blew a gale. It fell with every hour more ominously on the ears of the iconoclasts, and ended by raging loud enough to be heard by everyone who had ears to hear, eyes to see, and an intellect to discern. It was the inner voice of the masses, their spiritual intuition—that traditional enemy of cold intellectual reasoning, the legitimate progenitor of Materialism—that had awakened from its long cataleptic sleep. And, as a result, all those ideals of the human soul which had been so long trampled under the feet of the would-be conquerors of the world—superstitions, the self-constituted guides of a new humanity—appeared suddenly in the midst of all these raging elements of human thought, and, like Lazarus rising out of his tomb, lifted their voice and loudly demanded recognition.

This was brought on by the invasion of "Spirit" manifestations, when mediumistic phenomena had broken out like an influenza all over Europe. However unsatisfactory their philosophical interpretation, these phenomena being genuine and true as truth itself in their being and their reality, they were undeniable; and being in their very nature beyond denial, they came to be regarded as evident proofs of a life beyond—opening, moreover, a wide range

for the admission of every metaphysical possibility. This once the efforts of materialistic science to disprove them availed it nothing. Beliefs such as man's survival after death, and the immortality of Spirit, were no longer to be pooh-poohed as figments of imagination; for, prove once the genuineness of such transcendental phenomena to be beyond the realm of matter, and beyond investigation by means of *physical* science, and—whether these phenomena contain *per se* or not the *proof of immortality*, demonstrating as they do the existence of invisible and spiritual regions where other forces than those known to exact science are at work—they are shown to lie beyond the realm of materialism. Cross, by one step only, the line of matter, and the area of Spirit becomes infinite. Therefore, believers in them were no longer to be brow-beaten by threats of social contumacy and ostracism; this, also, for the simple reason that in the beginning of these manifestations almost the whole of the European higher classes became ardent "Spiritualists." To oppose the strong tidal wave of the cycle there remained at one time but a handful, in comparison with the number of believers, of grumbling and all-denying fogeys.

Thus was once more demonstrated that human life, devoid of all its world-ideals and beliefs—in which the whole of philosophical and cultured antiquity, headed in historical times by Socrates and Plato, by Pythagoras and the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, believed—becomes deprived of its higher sense and meaning. The world-ideals can never completely die out. Exiled by the fathers, they will be received with opened arms by the children.

Let us recall to mind how all this came to pass.

It was, as said, between the third and fourth quarters of the present century that reaction set in in Europe—as still earlier in the United States. The days of a determined psychic rebellion against the cold dogmatism of science and the still more chilling teachings of the schools of Büchner and Darwin, had come in their pre-ordained and pre-appointed time of cyclic law. Our older readers may easily recollect the suggestive march of events. Let them remember how the wave of mysticism, arrested in its free course during its first twelve or fifteen years in America by public, and especially by religious, prejudices, finally broke through every artificial dam and overflowed Europe, beginning with France and Russia and ending with England—the slowest of all countries to accept new ideas, though these may bring us truths as old as the world.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding every opposition, "Spiri-

tualism," as it was soon called, got its rights of citizenship in Great Britain. For several years it reigned undivided. Yet in truth, its phenomena, its psychic and mesmeric manifestations, were but the cyclic pioneers of the revival of prehistoric Theosophy, and the occult Gnosticism of the antediluvian mysteries. These are facts which no intelligent Spiritualist will deny; as, in truth, modern Spiritualism is but an earlier revival of crude Theosophy, and modern Theosophy a *renaissance* of ancient Spiritualism.

Thus, the waters of the great "Spiritual" flood were neither primordial nor pure. When, owing to cyclic law, they had first appeared, manifesting at Rochester, they were left to the mercies and mischievous devices of two little girls to give them a name and an interpretation. Therefore when, breaking the dam, these waters penetrated into Europe, they bore with them scum and dross, flotsam and jetsam, from the old wrecks of hypotheses and hazily outlined aspirations, based upon the dicta of the said little girls. Yet the eagerness with which "Spiritualism" and its twin-sister Spiritism were received, all their inanities notwithstanding, by almost all the cultured people of Europe, contains a splendid lesson. In this passionate aspiration of the human Soul—this irrepressible flight of the higher elements in man toward their forgotten Gods and the God within him—one heard the voice of the public conscience. It was an undeniable and not to be misunderstood answer of the inner nature of man to the then reveling, gloating Materialism of the age, as an escape from which there was but another form of evil—adherence to the dogmatic, ecclesiastical conventionalism of State religions. It was a loud, passionate protest against both, a drifting towards a middle way between the two extremes—namely, between the enforcement for long centuries of a *personal* God of infinite love and mercy by the diabolical means of sword, fire, and inquisitional tortures; and, on the other hand, the reign, as a natural reaction, of complete denial of such a God, and along with him of an infinite Spirit, a Universal Principle manifesting as immutable Law.

True science had wisely endeavoured to make away, along with the mental slavery of mankind, with its orthodox, paradoxical God; *pseudo*-science had devised by means of sophistry to do away with every belief save in matter. The haters of the Spirit of the world, denying God in Nature as much as an extracosmic Deity, had been preparing for long years to create an artificial, soulless humanity; and it was only just that their Karma should send a host of *pseudo*-"Spirits" or Souls to thwart their efforts. Shall anyone deny that the highest and the best among the

representatives of Materialistic science have succumbed to the fascination of the will-o'-the-wisps which looked at first sight as the most palpable proof of *an immortal Soul in man*¹—*i.e.*, the alleged *communion between the dead and the living*?² Yet, such as they were, these abnormal manifestations, being in their bulk genuine and spontaneous, carried away and won all those who had in their souls the sacred spark of intuition. Some clung to them because, owing to the death of ideals, of the crumbling of the Gods and faith in every civilized centre, they were dying themselves of spiritual starvation; others because, living amidst sophistical perversion of every noble truth, they preferred even a feeble approximation to truth to no truth whatever.

But, whether they placed belief in and followed "Spiritualism" or not, many were those on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle wrought an indelible impression; and such ex-materialists could never return again to their iconoclastic ideas. The enormous and ever-growing numbers of mystics at the present time show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal—the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective *orthodox* faiths, they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are devoting the rest of their lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than

¹ Let our readers recall the names of the several most eminent men in literature and science who have become openly Spiritualists. We have but to name Professor Hare, Epes Sarjeant, Robert Dale Owen, Judge Edmonds, etc., in America; Professor Butlerof, Wagner and, greater than they, the late Dr. Pirogoff (see his posthumous "Memoirs," published in *Rooskaya Starina*, 1884-1886), in Russia; Zöllner, in Germany; M. Camille Flammarion, the Astronomer, in France; and last but not least, Messrs. A. Russell Wallace, W. Crookes, Balfour Stewart, etc., in England, followed by a number of scientific stars of the second magnitude.

² We hope that the few friends we have left in the ranks of the Spiritualists may not misunderstand us. We denounce the bogus "spirits" of *séances* held by professional mediums, and deny the possibility of such manifestations of spirits on the physical plane. But we believe thoroughly in Spiritualistic phenomena, and in the intercourse between Spirits or *Egos*—of embodied and disembodied entities; only adding that, since the latter cannot manifest on our plane, it is the Ego of the living man which meets the Ego of the dead personality, by ascending to the Devachanic plane, which may be accomplished in trance, during sleep in dreams, and by other subjective means.

any intellectual speculation can give them. How few, in comparison to their numbers, and how rarely one meets with such, and yet their name is legion, if they only chose to reveal themselves.

Under the influence of that same passionate search of "life in spirit" and "life in truth," which compels every earnest Theosophist onward through years of normal obloquy and public ostracism; moved by the same dissatisfaction with the principles of pure conventionality of modern society, and scorn for the still triumphant, fashionable thought, which, appropriating to itself unblushingly the honoured epithets of "scientific" and "foremost," of "pioneer" and "liberal," uses these prerogatives but to domineer over the faint-hearted and selfish—these earnest men and women prefer to tread alone and unaided the narrow and thorny path that lies before him who will neither recognize authorities nor bow before cant. They may leave "Sir Oracles" of modern thought, as well as the Pecksniffs of time-dishonoured and dogma-soiled lay-figures of Church-conventionality, without protest; yet, carrying in the silent shrine of their soul the same grand ideals as all mystics do, they are in truth Theosophists *de facto* if not *de jure*. We meet such in every circle of society, in every class of life. They are found among artists and novelists, in the aristocracy and commerce, among the highest and the richest, as among the lowest and the poorest. Among the most prominent in this century is Count L. Tolstoi, a living example, and one of the signs of the times in this period, of the occult working of the ever moving cycle. Listen to a few lines of the history of the psycho-spiritual evolution of this aristocrat, the greatest writer of modern Russia, by one of the best *feuilletonistes* in St. Petersburg:

. . . The most famous of our Russian authors, the "word-painter," a writer of Shakespearean realism, a heathen poet, one who in a certain sense worshipped in his literary productions life for the sake of life, *an sich und fur sich*—as the Hegelians used to say—collapses suddenly over his fairy palette, lost in tormenting thought; and forthwith he commences to offer to himself and the world the most abstruse and insoluble problems. . . . The author of the *Cossacks* and *Family Happiness*, clad in peasant's garb and bast shoes, starts as a pilgrim on foot in search of divine truth. He goes to the solitary forest *skits*³ of the *Raskolniki*,⁴ visits the monks of the Desert of Optino, passes his time in fasting and prayer. For

³ *Skit* is a religious hermitage.

⁴ *Raskolnik*, a Dissenter; hitherto persecuted and forbidden sects in Russia.

his *belles lettres* and philosophy he substitutes the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers; and, as a sequel to *Anna Karenina* he creates his *Confessions* and *Explanations of the New Testament*.

The fact that Count Tolstoi, all his passionate earnestness notwithstanding, did not become an orthodox Christian, nor has succumbed to the wiles of Spiritualism (as his latest satire on mediums and "spirits" proves), prevents him in no way from being a full-fledged mystic. What is the mysterious influence which has suddenly forced him into that weird current almost without any transition period? What unexpected idea or vision led him into that new groove of thought? Who knoweth save himself, or those real "Spirits," who are not likely to gossip it out in a modern séance-room?

And yet Count Tolstoi is by no means a solitary example of the work of that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity—a work which, silently and unperceived, will grind to the dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations, and reduce to nought in a few days the intellectual work of years. What is that moral and invisible Force? Eastern philosophy alone can explain.

In 1875 the Theosophical Society came into existence. It was ushered into the world with the distinct intention of becoming an ally to, a supplement and a helper of, the Spiritualistic movement—of course, in its higher and more philosophical aspect. It succeeded, however, only in making of the Spiritualists its bitterest enemies, its most untiring persecutors and denunciators. Perchance the chief reason for it may be found in the fact that many of the best and most intellectual of their representatives passed body and soul into the Theosophical Society. Theosophy was, indeed, the only system that gave a philosophical *rationale* of mediumistic phenomena, a logical *raison d'être* for them. Incomplete and unsatisfactory some of its teachings certainly are, which is only owing to the imperfections of the human nature of its exponents, not to any fault in the system itself or its teachings. Based as these are upon philosophies hoary with age, the experience of men and races nearer than we are to the source of things, and the records of sages who have questioned successively and for numberless generations the Sphinx of Nature, who now holds her lips sealed as to the secrets of life and death—certainly these teachings have to be held as a little more reliable than the dicta of certain "intelligences." Whether the intellect and consciousness of the latter be *induced* and artificial—as we hold—or emanate from a personal source and entity, it matters not. Even

the *exoteric* philosophies of the Eastern sages—systems of thought whose grandeur and logic few will deny—agree in every fundamental doctrine with our Theosophical teachings. As to those creatures which are called and accepted as “Spirits of the Dead”—because, forsooth, they themselves say so—their true nature is as unknown to the Spiritualists as to their mediums. With the most intellectual of the former the question remains to this day *sub judice*. Nor is it the Theosophists who would differ from them in their higher view of Spirits.

As it is not the object of this article, however, to contrast the two most significant movements of our century, nor to discuss their relative merits or superiority, we say at once that our only aim in bringing them forward is to draw attention to the wonderful progress of late of this occult cycle. While the enormous numbers of adherents to both Theosophy and Spiritualism, within or outside of our respective societies, show that both movements were but the necessary and, so to say, Karmically preordained work of the age, and that each of them was born at its proper hour and fulfilled its proper mission at the right time, there are other and still more significant signs of the times.

A few years ago we predicted in print that after a short cycle of abuse and persecution, many of our enemies would come round, while others would, *en désespoir de cause*, follow our example and found mystic Societies. As Egypt in the prophecy of Hermes, Theosophy was accused by “impious foreigners” (in our case, those outside its fold) of adoring monsters and chimeras, and teaching “enigmas incredible to posterity.” If our “sacred scribes and hierophants” are not wanderers upon the face of the earth, it was through no fault of good Christian priests and clergymen; and no less than the Egyptians in the early centuries of the new faith and era, had we, from fear of a still worse profanation of sacred things and names, to bury deeper than ever the little of the esoteric knowledge that had been permitted to be given out to the world.

But, during the last three years all this has rapidly changed, and the demand for mystic information became so great that the Theosophical Publishing Society could not find workers enough to supply the demand. Even the *Secret Doctrine*, the most abstruse of our publications—notwithstanding its forbidding price, the conspiracy of silence, and the nasty, contemptuous flings at it by some daily papers—has proved financially a success. See the change. That which Theosophists hardly dared speak about with bated breath for fear of being called lunatics but a few years

ago, is now being given out by lecturers, publicly advocated by mystical clergymen. While the orthodox hasten to make away with the old hell and sapphire-paved New Jerusalem, the more liberal accept now under Christian veils and biblical nomenclature our Doctrine of Karma, Reincarnation, and God as an abstract Principle.

Thus the Church is slowly drifting into philosophy and pantheism. Daily, we recognize some of our teachings creeping out as speculations—religious, poetical and even scientific; and these noticed with respect by the same papers which will neither admit their theosophical origin nor abstain from vilipending the very granary of such mystic ideas—the Theosophical Society. About a year ago a wise criticaster exclaimed in a paper we need not advertise:

To show the utterly *unscientific* ideas with which the work (the *Secret Doctrine*) is crammed, it may be sufficient to point out that its author refuses belief in the existence of *inorganic matter* and endows atoms with intelligence.

And today we find Edison's conception of matter quoted with approval and sympathy by London magazines from *Harper's*, in which we read:

I do not believe that matter is inert, acted upon by an outside force. To me it seems that every atom is possessed by a certain amount of primitive intelligence: look at the thousand ways in which atoms of hydrogen combine with those of other elements. . . . Do you mean to say they do this without intelligence? . . .

Mr. Edison is a Theosophist, though not a very active one. Still, the very fact of his holding a diploma seems to inspire him with Theosophical truths.

"Theosophists believe in reincarnation!" say contemptuously our Christian enemies. "We do not find one word ever said by our Saviour that *could be interpreted against the modern belief in reincarnation . . .*" preaches the Rev. Mr. Bullard, thus half opening, and very wisely too, a back door for the day when this Buddhistical and Brahmanical "inane belief" will have become general.

Theosophists believe that the earliest races of men were as ethereal as are now their astral doubles, and call them *chhayas* (shadows). And now hear the English poet-laureate singing in his last book, *Demeter, and Other Poems*:

The *ghost in man, the ghost that once was man,*
 But cannot wholly free itself from men,
 Are calling to each other through a Dawn,
 Stronger than earth has ever seen; *the veil*
Is rending, and the voices of the day
 Are heard across the voices of the Dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell for man,

• • • • •

Æonian evolution, swift or slow,
Through all the spheres—an ever opening height,
 An ever lessening earth. . . . [Italics ours]

This looks as if Lord Tennyson had read Theosophical books, or is inspired by the same grand truths as we are.

“Oh!” we hear some sceptics exclaiming, “but these are poetical licences. The writer does not believe a word of it.” How do you know this? But even if it were so, here is one more proof of the cyclic evolution of our Theosophical ideas, which, I hope, will not be dubbed, to match, as “clerical licences.” One of the most esteemed and sympathetic of London clergymen, the Rev. G. W. Allen, has just stepped into our Theosophical shoes and followed our good example by founding a “Christo-Theosophical Society.” As its double title shows, its platform and programme have to be necessarily more restricted and limited than our own, for in the words of its circular “it is (only) intended to cover ground which that (the original or ‘Parent’) Society at present does not cover.” However much our esteemed friend and co-worker in Theosophy may be mistaken in believing that the teachings of the Theosophical Society do not cover *esoteric* Christianity as they do the esoteric aspect of all other world-religions, yet his new Society is sure to do good work. For, if the name chosen means anything at all, it means that the work and study of the members must of necessity be Theosophical. The above is again proven by what the circular of the “Christo-Theosophical Society” states in the following words:

It is believed that at the present day there are many persons who are dissatisfied with the crude and unphilosophical enunciation of Christianity put forward so often in sermons and theological writings. Some of these persons are impelled to give up all faith in Christianity, but many of them do this reluctantly, and would gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths which should show them to be in harmony with the conclusions of reason and the testimony of undeniable intuition. There are many others, also,

whose only feeling is that the truths of their religion mean so very little to them practically, and have such very little power to influence and ennoble their daily life and character. To such persons the Christo-Theosophical Society makes its appeal, inviting them to join together in a common effort to discover that apprehension of Christian Truth, and to attain that Power, which must be able to satisfy the deep yearnings of the human heart, and give strength for self-mastery and a life lived for others.

This is admirable, and shows plainly its purpose of counteracting the very pernicious influences of exoteric and dogmatic theology, and it is just what we have been trying to do all along. All similarity, however, stops here, as it has nothing to do, as it appears, with *universal* but only sectarian Theosophy. We fear greatly that the "C.T.S."—by inviting

to its membership those persons who, while desirous of apprehending ever more and more clearly the mysteries of Divine Truth, *yet wish to retain as the foundation of their philosophy the Christian doctrines of God as the Father of all men, and Christ as His revelation of Himself to mankind*

—limits thereby "the Mysteries of the Divine Truth" to one single and the youngest of all religions, and *avatars* to but one man. We hope sincerely that the members of the Christo-Theosophical Society may be able to avoid this Charybdis without falling into Scylla.

There is one more difficulty in our way, and we would humbly ask to have it explained to us. "The Society," states the circular, "is not made up of Teachers and Learners. We are all learners." This, with the hope distinctly expressed a few lines higher, that the members will "gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths . . . in harmony with the conclusions of reason," etc., leads to a natural query: Which of the "learners" is to present the said truths to the other learners? Then comes the unavoidable reasoning that whosoever the "learner" may be, no sooner he will begin his "presentation" than he will become *nolens volens* a "teacher."

But this is, after all, a trifle. We feel too proud and too satisfied with the homage thus paid to Theosophy, and with the sight of a representative of the Anglican clergy following in our track, to find fault with details, or wish anything but good luck to the Christo-Theosophical Association.

THE WORK BEFORE US

Father, oh Father, what do I here
In this land of unbelief and fear?
The land of dreams were better far
Beyond the light of the evening star.

EVEN students of Theosophy, like all other human creatures, are apt, when overwhelmed by the sadness and discouragement so common in the world around us, to echo, if not the words, at least the spirit of the above verse and, in an unguarded moment, long for release in the land of dreams. "Why are we here?" they ask, implying that there is every reason why they should *not* be here where things are so distasteful to them.

But in their hearts they know that such an attitude towards life is a mistaken one. They know that they are here to pay a debt and, more, to take advantage of the great privilege that life is offering them, namely, to learn to be "a witness on the scene" and, as such, as far as their capacities allow, to hold their own amid the countless complications arising from the decay of an old and the birth of a new age. A witness to what? To the existence of the Ancient Path of spiritual evolution and of a Movement by means of which the Elder Brothers of the human race spread broadcast the teachings needed by humanity to enable it to make its way in the right direction in these troublous times.

W. Q. Judge has described the position and function of such witnesses or representatives as all of us should strive to become, as follows:

...the Masters have said this is a transition age, and he who has ears to hear will hear what has thus been said. We are working for the new cycles and centuries. What we do now in this transition age will be like what the great Dhyan Chohans did in the transition point—the midway point—in evolution at the time when all matter and all types were in a transition and fluid state. They then gave the new impulse for the new types, which resulted later in the vast varieties of nature. In the mental development we are now at the same point and what we now do in faith and hope for others and for ourselves will result similarly on the plane to which it is all directed. . . . Hence we are not working for some definite organization of the new years to come, but for a change in the Manas and Buddhi of the Race. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, Indian ed., pp. 76-77)

This definition of our task may seem rather indefinite. No

wonder, since we ourselves belong to the race which must undergo the changes indicated. We may feel that this is a disadvantage from the point of view of work, but it is not really. The Masters need companions. Some tasks can only be performed by the Masters, but there are many duties which They must leave to others who are, in development, nearer the level and within the easy reach of the great mass of mankind—to people like us, students of Theosophy, in fact, who are ordinary men and women differing markedly from the vast majority of our fellow men in one respect only, namely, we know where the right road lies. The fact that we share their problems and are trying to solve these in the light of our philosophy enables us to help those who are really searching for that road. How? By passing on to them the teachings of the Ancient Wisdom as recorded in the writings of H.P.B. and W.Q.J., and bringing them the warm encouragement of our own conviction.

How and when did we get that conviction and that ardent wish to arouse it in others? It must have been in past incarnations and as the result of the efforts of the promoters of the Theosophical Movement of those days. For this certainty that the way to our goal lies in the direction indicated by the philosophy of Theosophy can only come to us through contact with the Teachers whose work is to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions. He who possesses them must have experienced their vivifying influence, whether as one of the many whose minds are fecundated periodically by "Those who know," or as one of the few who receive individual training in order to become effective workers for the race. Ever since the 14th century, we are told, a dual attempt has been in progress to change the Manas of the race, including that of the West, and to draw from within its ranks those ready, however few, for the Path of Discipleship leading to Emancipation-Enlightenment. No wonder experience along this line leaves a permanent impression that emerges as a conviction in subsequent lives, accompanied by a sense of gratitude and loyalty.

There is a well-known passage in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 210) which will perhaps recur to the student in this connection. In it H.P.B. speaks of primitive man and the first effects upon him of the enlightening of the fifth principle in him:

When, moved by the law of Evolution, the Lords of Wisdom infused into him the spark of consciousness, the first feeling it awoke to life and activity was a sense of solidarity, of one-ness with his spiritual creators. . . . DEVOTION arose out of that feeling, and became the first and foremost motor in his nature.

She compares this condition to that of the newborn child whose "first feeling is for its mother and nurse" to whom it instinctively turns for sustenance.

The transition period which H.P.B. speaks of in this passage is the one referred to by Mr. Judge in his words quoted above. The present era, too, as he says, is one of transition, but conditions have altered in the eighteen million years that have elapsed since man became self-conscious. Our race as a whole can no longer be described as "primitive" or as being in its infancy. We are approaching the point where Buddhi will begin to come to the fore and are now in a position to shoulder our responsibility. We are told that we ourselves must seize the keys to the mysteries of life and open the doors to the future.

Realizing this, we are not surprised at W. Q. Judge's suggestion that during the present age of transition we ourselves must do the work which at the previous critical point of our evolution was done for us by the Dhyan Chohans. Those of us who wish to and are willing to submit to the necessary training may now act the part of responsible human beings about to reach their majority.

Clearly, then, this is not the time to seek refuge in the land of dreams. We must be up and doing according to the programme and injunctions of our unseen guides. "Happy he who lends a helping hand."

My life is for itself and not for a spectacle. I much prefer that it should be of a lower strain, so it be genuine and equal, than that it should be glittering and unsteady. . . . Few and mean as my gifts may be, I actually am, and do not need for my own assurance or the assurance of my fellows any secondary testimony.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and in intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness. It is the harder because you will always find those who think they know what is your duty better than you know it. It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after your own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

"UNTO THEE WHO FINDETH NO FAULT"

I desire to receive thee now with devotion and reverence. . . . I desire to reserve nothing to myself, but freely and most cheerfully to sacrifice unto thee myself and all that is mine.

O Lord my God, I desire to receive thee with affection, reverence, praise and honour, with gratitude, worthiness and love, with faith, hope and purity.

—THOMAS A KEMPIS in *The Imitation of Christ*

THE Ninth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* begins with Krishna addressing Arjuna in these terms: "Unto thee who findeth no fault I will now make known this most mysterious knowledge, coupled with a realization of it, which having known thou shalt be delivered from evil." "Finding no fault" by no means signifies that Arjuna should be a simpleton, nodding his head to everything that he is told, without the exercise of any discrimination or critical perception. In the earlier chapters, he has been asking questions and appealing to Krishna to be definite in his answers. He says, "At one time, O Krishna, thou praisest the renunciation of action, and yet again its right performance. Tell me with certainty which of the two is better." (V, 1)

Instead of giving a direct answer, Krishna leads Arjuna on to the Eighth Chapter, wherein he describes the characteristics of Brahman (the supreme and uncognizable Principle of the Universe), of Adhyatma (the Individual Self), of Adhibhuta (the primordial element), of Adhidaivata (the Heavenly Man or Spiritual Self), and of Adhiyajna (the Supreme Sacrifice). By the explanations in this chapter, which is entitled "Akshara Brahma Yoga" ("Devotion to the Omnipresent Spirit named as Om"), Arjuna is initiated into the Yoga of Dharana (concentration), which can be attained by closing all the gates of the body (the senses, etc.), by restraining the mind, and by fixing the life force in the head. And he is told that the result is none other than the attainment of Brahman, the highest goal. (VIII, 12-13)

With this instruction, Arjuna has seen the futility of mere questions born of intellect, which are at best only pettifogging arguments, and he is now ready to receive the secret doctrine (*guhya-tamam*), most secret thing of all, the essential wisdom (*jnanam*), coupled with the experiential knowledge (*vijnanam*), by knowing which one is released from evil. Shankaracharya, commenting on the word *idam* (now), meaning, in this chapter, after Arjuna's initiation in the Akshara Brahma Yoga, affirms that the Brahma-

Jnana is superior even to Dhyana, as this right knowledge alone forms the direct means of attaining liberation, as declared in the *sruti* and *smriti*. He then refers to the Mahavakyas in the Upanishads: "All this is the Self" (*Chandogya Upanishad*), "One only without a second" (*Ibid.*), and "Vasudeva is all that is." (*Gita*, VII, 19)

This secret doctrine of the Ninth Chapter is described in seven manners in the second verse: "This is the royal knowledge, the royal mystery, the most excellent purifier, clearly comprehensible, not opposed to sacred law, easy to perform, and inexhaustible."

Till this stage in the Ninth Chapter is reached, Arjuna is still undecided as to which of the ways leading to the Truth is best suited to him. He has to sacrifice all personal ties, such as "tutors, sons and fathers, grandsires and grandsons, uncles and nephews, cousins, kindred and friends" (*Gita*, I, 34), as well as the comfort of solitary blessedness. But, having chosen to go on the Path of Dharma, he is engaged in a continual process of choosing, probing and suffering, with his questionings and doubts, which constitutes the subject of the first six chapters. But, when the stage described in the Eighth Chapter is reached, he is forced to see his egocentric patterns with clarity, and there is the facing of the means by which to break from them instead of staying imprisoned in them. Arjuna has broken the ego defences and is now ready to listen to the esoteric doctrine, commencing from the Ninth Chapter.

To go to the core of the secret underlying the Universe—call it God, the Father, Allah, Jehovah and what not—one must first get to the core of oneself. This is a difficult task indeed, but with Krishna as the charioteer to guide him, Arjuna is able to achieve it after the first eight chapters of the discourse. No one can know this ultimate secret who has not first known himself as the Imperishable Self—Akshara Brahma Yoga. One has to probe the depths of the Soul, the secret place of the Most High, for the powers and faculties of Divinity are focused therein. And no wonder that the Tamil word *Kadavul* for God or Divine Principle implies that IT transcends all that is "inner." By going within, by contemplation and meditation, more and more veils may be removed; still, like the horizon, Reality or God is ever receding. It is not a thing to be grasped, for it is No-Thing. The *Mandukya Upanishad* verse aptly describes it as "the unseen, beyond empirical dealings, beyond the grasp of organs of sense or mind, uninferable, unthinkable, undescribable, and whose valid proof consists in the single belief in the SELF."

THE ONE RELIGION

THE power that unites man to man is Religion. By Religion here is not meant creedalism, which is only a maker of cliques similar to the parties made by political views, or to clubs and smart sets which come into existence in society. The power of Religion resides in the heart of man and is the chief expression of the Soul itself. False interpretations of Religion have played havoc in the history of human thought and have separated man from man instead of uniting men in a single whole. Not even blood plays so vital a part in unfolding the true spirit of the family as does the understanding of true religious principles; these weaken our *ahankaric* selves, purify and elevate our affections, rationalize our sympathies and create in us the power to sacrifice. If they play a vital part in the well-being of a small family, their influence in transforming the human race into a harmonious unit after the family pattern is vast. "Religion, *per se*," wrote H.P.B., "in its widest meaning is that which binds not only *all* Men, but also all Beings and all *things* in the entire Universe into one grand whole."

The world in which we now live needs the healing balm of true Religion. For many centuries now, Religion has been relegated to the church and the temple and the mosque and its activities have been confined to a few occasional affairs of life; its chief concern has been with the performance of ceremonies connected with the birth, the marriage and the death of men and women. Instead of Knowledge of the Way of the Inner Life, Religion has become differing methods of outer and superficial rites and ceremonies. Even its chief instrument—prayer—has become corrupted; instead of inner communion with the Divine Presence in the shrine of the Heart, it has become an act of petition for pity, for forgiveness of self-indulgence, and of appeal for favours.

In Christendom, Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches have fought in the name of Jesus Christ, as here in India, even today, Hindus and Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs, clash in the name of religion, to the degradation of all. Sincere efforts to bring the followers of the warring creeds into a single group of men and women inspired by Truths which are universal and common to all faiths have been made from time to time, in the world at large. In India, the Theosophical Movement inaugurated the revival of Religion, as distinct from religions. Such a reform could be introduced only by the spread of Knowledge which shows that all religions have but one source, that all are true at the bottom, and all false on their surface.

For the Brotherhood of Man to be acted up to, it must be seen as true; that is the superior knowledge which unfolds this perception and leads to right application. Marcus Aurelius, the Emperor of ancient Rome, wrote thus:

If our intellectual part is common, the reason also, in respect of which we are rational beings, is common; if this is so, common also is the reason which commands us what to do, and what not to do; if this is so, there is a common law also; if this is so, we are fellow-citizens; if this is so, we are members of some political community; if this is so, the world is in a manner a state. For, of what other common political community will anyone say that the whole human race are members? . . .

We are made for co-operation, like feet, like hands, like eyelids, like the rows of the upper and lower teeth. To act against one another, then, is contrary to nature; and it is acting against one another to be vexed and to turn away.

No amount of political discussion, no amount of reading political economy, will inspire men and women to apply the truth of these words to their personal lives or to their national problems. Even the appeal of patriotism fails, as in national and international affairs patriotism often acts as a deterrent to the realization of world unity. An insight deeper than that of the mind is necessary, and a clear-sightedness which even the love of one's country fails to supply. Such an insight is born of the understanding and the application of the principles of Religion, one and universal. Every country and every city has a message to receive from the truth that each individual is a member of but one family—the human race.

HE who lives in one colour of the rainbow is blind to the rest. Live in the Light diffused through the entire arc and you will know it all.

—*The Path*

"IN KSHANTI'S ESSENCE BATHE THY SOUL"

PATIENCE is a much misunderstood quality. To most of us it means quiet waiting for things to happen, not being impatient, *i.e.*, not trying to hurry things up. A "placid" person, we think, is a patient one. He who "suffers all things meekly," as mentioned by St. Paul, is thought to be the one who never retaliates, never "gets cross," never agitates.

But, to use a phrase of H.P.B.'s in a different context: "Elephants and cows are that." Also many of the half-witted and the intensely self-centred are that. Mother Earth with her mountainous rocks does not get as agitated as the waters of the river and the ocean, while the air may become a roaring hurricane, but certainly earthquakes and volcanoes cause much disturbance. And yet the one truly patient Being is Mother Nature.

We can, in fact, trace the duality of all Nature in the dual aspects of patience, positive and negative. What we ordinarily call patience is a negative quality; spiritual patience, *Titiksha*, is positive, even dynamic. The destroyer of ordinary negative patience is fear; the opposite virtue to fear is fortitude, which is the virtue of *Titiksha*. To move from fear to fortitude, from ordinary patience to spiritual patience, we must pass through impatience, *i.e.*, rajasic patience, if the term may be employed; we must pass from *tamas through rajas to sattva*.

The lower patience must be achieved, but it must be achieved from the higher level, *i.e.*, through knowledge.

Tamasic patience allows anything to happen, does not exert itself for any purpose and is not "ruffled" even if it sees impending disaster which, with the use of a little rajas, could be avoided. The rajasic patience begins to see the need for hurry if anything is to be achieved, begins to be ruffled if its outgoing force is stopped by the adamant will of Nature or by another's will or his tamasic nature. Neither of these sees the causes behind the workings they are watching, and both are in the clutches of that mysterious factor, Time.

The tamasic patience says, "It will come at its right time." The rajasic patience says, "It must come now or it will be too late." Only the sattvic patience knows when is the right time, letting great Nature work, but alert to catch the cycle at its right moment. With the rajasic, impatience results because it is "our" plan that has gone wrong through "others'" dilatoriness—an admission that we do not know the rules and scientific laws of the operation which we have planned. We "fear" the result—or lack of result.

It may sound unethical, but the sooner we learn that impatience is infinitely preferable to tamasic patience, the earlier we shall get to sattvic patience.

There are two kinds of sattvic patience; both result from a knowledge of the laws operating, and the recognition of responsibility, together with an appreciation of the "ultimate divisions of Time." There are times when sattvic patience is patience; times when it is impatience, *i.e.*, when full exertion has to be made if the operation is to be achieved in its proper time. It may be very necessary to hurry. It may well be that "there are but a few short years more." Cycles are actual powers, up-going and down-going, and, unless caught in their upward soaring will draw us down. Impatience with those who, if they would be saved from danger, must do thus and so, and yet who do nothing, may achieve the result of stirring them to action. The general of an army may, at the right time, achieve success through impatience; at another time through patience. Indeed, the greater the responsibility and the greater the knowledge, the greater and the more vivid the results of action or inaction.

It will be easier for us, beginners on the path from *tamas* to *sattva* and beyond, to think of the vices and virtues which *result in* and are the *result of* patience.

Fear kills the will, we are told, and without fearlessness we cannot have patience. What has the will to do with patience? It does not mean the so-called strong will that forces down the rising impatience in order to appear patient on the outside, but is that energy which grows out of a firm conviction that nothing can destroy the soul; nothing can destroy the will. We usually apply our will power to the body, yet we are told that the body may be agitated with the mind tranquil and the soul as placid as a mountain lake. So with fear; the body may be fearful, but if the mind and soul are free from fear, that is all that matters. Why? Because in time the body will follow the thought-feeling.

It may be noted that it is in Kshanti's *essence* that we must bathe; and it is not the body that has to be bathed in it, but the Soul. To endeavour to centre the consciousness in the Soul will right all things.

Patience grows out of Shila and Dana; without love for our fellow-men, without harmony in thought and in act, we have no soil in our character on which patience will grow.

Fearlessness, which is the result of a conquering of fear, is by no means the virtue of patience. The latter virtue, we have seen, is fortitude, which is quite a different thing from fearlessness.

Fearlessness is the absence of fear; fortitude calls for the possession of strength. The very word implies strength, a rock-like quality, with its roots in the depths of Being. Rocks do not sway in the wind, they are the symbol of fortitude, although the analogy breaks down at one point. Fortitude is positive; endurance may be said to be the negative side of fortitude, fortitude the positive side of endurance. Fortitude reminds us of the battle between immovable matter and irresistible force, which results in perfect balance. Until that state is reached we have not attained to patience. Therefore our endeavour should be to develop fortitude. To do so we must find "our own base," some spot in us or some teaching on which we feel sure, and then increase our faith in that. Only from that sure basis can we practise patience, either as regards our own life or the life around us.

HUMAN Nature is originally good. Any evil in it results from the changes made upon it by external things. He who knows the injury caused by those external things and who can revert to himself (*i.e.*, can return to his original condition), can then know that goodness is the innate possession of our Nature.

Where there is good there must be evil. The transition from one to the other is truly like the turning over of one's hand. Goodness, however, is so from the very beginning, whereas evil comes into existence only as a result of such a "turning over."

What is it that will injure your Mind? It is Desire. When Desires are many, what we can preserve of our Original Mind is inevitably little; and conversely, when the Desires are few, what we can preserve of our Original Mind is inevitably much. Therefore, the Superior Man does not worry that his Mind is not preserved, but rather worries that his Desires are not made few. For if the Desires were eliminated, the Mind would automatically be preserved. Thus, then, does not the preserving of what is good in our Mind depend upon the elimination of what does it injure?

—LU WANG (1139-1192)

SACRED PROMISES

WHY is it that people want to make resolutions, at the New Year or at any new cycle of life? Human civilization itself is tacitly based on people's "word" or "oath." No business can be conducted except on the basis of promises; religions are based on promises, from baptism (or similar rituals of other religions) to the marriage vows, and the vows of the spiritual life. The vow or "oath" is recognized as sacred; even a man's word is recognized as a sacred bond, though the recognition is not always acted up to. Why is it that people today say, "Promises are made to be broken," whereas King Arthur made his knights keep their vow to seek the Holy Grail, even though he knew that it would bring disaster on them and on himself, and Rama held that his father must keep his vow even though it meant his own banishment? Actions reflect beliefs and ideas, and according to the sacredness attaching to a promise, a civilization rises or falls.

In spite of our failings, we realize that promises are sacred and that resolutions must be kept, because inherent in us is the belief, even the conviction, that there is that in us which is greater than what is apparent, and It can be called upon to stand by us if we stand by It. A pledge taken in the name of that which we recognize to be beyond all ordinary human changes of opinion, selfishness and so on, is a vow or an oath, even if taken by ourselves to ourselves, and is therefore sacred. Only when we refuse to acknowledge this do we break our promises and our vows and, in the lower reflection of life which is our daily living, we make resolutions and vows, saying to ourselves that we may keep them or break them. As for our little New Year resolutions, we even forget after a day or two that we have made them, as we slip back into the old routine of life.

We say that we are weak-willed, but we do not ask ourselves *why* we are weak-willed because we have forgotten that we are more than that which shows itself to others, or even to ourselves in our thoughts, when we think of who and what we are. We have forgotten that the very power we have as persons, living in the world and analysing it, comes from our higher nature. Even our desires and feelings (Kama) have within them the power of the spiritual nature—Buddhi. The will is the power of Spirit in action; no matter what the action, the power of the will to bring it about is the power of the Spirit.

It is true that the strongest expression of the will today is in Kama and shows itself as obstinacy and stubbornness, while there

are those in whom personal indulgence has paralysed the power of the will itself. But there is an aspect of will which enabled the Buddha to strive through all obstacles to reach the goal for the sake of humanity itself. This highest aspect of will can be reached by what is called pure ideation, right thought, impersonal and universal thought.

How is this to be achieved?

In our evolutionary journey as human souls, we have reached the position where desires are no longer purely instinctive but can be, and are, thought out, brought into being and to fruition by the thought. Thought is the food of desires and the soil in which they grow, and the power to keep the thought on the desire is the power of the will. Therefore, we have first to begin to analyse our thought.

It is important that we bear constantly in mind that Lower Manas is the ray of the Higher, and therefore is of its nature. But it has entered into our senses and organs and body and become immersed in the desire and feeling nature, so that we have lost all correct idea of its powers and functions. Its separation from the desires and the senses will help us to understand what it is. Caught up as we are in our desire life—"I want, I think, I desire"—we make our resolutions or our vows or promises on the spur of the moment, or in the heat of a desire. We fail to keep them because at some other moment another desire may take hold of the mind and gain strength and usurp the place of the former. And so the round goes on, and each time we break a promise, the power of the will is weakened.

Will itself is like a colourless fluid, and fluids need an instrument or a vehicle. It is therefore necessary to make and strengthen the vehicle, and that is our task. The vehicle is Kama or desire, for desire is the mover of the will, but if we have many desires it is like pouring water into a sieve. Therefore we are told that we should cultivate one great Desire. All worthy smaller desires will fit into the one great Desire and in time a vehicle which is permanent will be created through which the will can work.

It is not necessary to try to rid ourselves of Kama. To do so is impossible. Kama is one of the principles of our sevenfold nature and we cannot do without it. But we can try to contact that aspect of it which is permanent, what we may call its soul, closely akin to Buddhi. To do so we must formulate our desire well and firmly, and devote study and thought to find out whether it is one that will always last, whether it is worth using the will on, what its nature is and the motive for desiring it. We must work out the

application of the desire first in the mind, before we finally resolve, and then keep it alive by our thought, constant and steady. One of the chief aspects of the will is its steady flow, and this is made possible at our stage only by the steady holding of the desire in the mind.

As every new cycle begins, we should look at the desires we have and get rid of those that are temporary, worthless, selfish, deluding. Every year we ought to look at the desires in the light of the experience gained during the past year. If the same desires remain, we must see if that is because they are universal in application or because we have not grown in our knowledge. Then it is necessary to try to find out what is the new desire, one, not many, that we wish to bring to fruition. This we can find out by study, by thought, by search, by application.

Our thought today fails because we do not *ideate*; we go round and round the old thoughts and desires and emotions like a squirrel in a cage, or we are negative, apathetic. If after a period of thought, earnest and sincere, we have not enlarged our original concept, of what use the time spent in the thought? The first step is study, to put ourselves in touch with the great ideas which have in them a spiritual potency. The next step is to *think* on what we have studied. Study must lead to thought, which itself is a search for understanding. And understanding in turn is not complete unless the thought is put into practice. All this is not possible without the use of the will, steadily applied. The practice must be kept up through the steady flow of thought, desire, will. That is where our failings show themselves, and we say, "I can't do it." But that is not where the real failing is; it is in the thought, the planning, the building of the invisible side of the visible practice. As nothing can exist materially without its astral counterpart and its spirit or energizing agency, so no practice can be without its astral counterpart and it cannot continue without the energizing spirit or will behind it.

The root of the living of a better life is self-examination, in which we compare ourselves with those who possess more spirituality than ourselves, but in which it is worse than useless to compare ourselves with those who do not seem as far "advanced" as we seem to be, unless the latter is done by way of an impersonal analysis showing the effect of the universal spiritual ideas in practice.

When thought, desires and will are in perfect conjunction, expressing themselves as one force in action, then one begins to be an integrated individual, trustworthy, steady, sounding a note

of balance in an unbalanced world, living the life of Spirit in the world of matter, one of those who walk upright, faithful and true. The beginning is now and here.

A pledge, once taken, is forever binding in both the moral and the occult worlds. If we break it once and are punished, that does not justify us in breaking it again, and, so long as we do, so long will the mighty lever of the Law [of Karma] react upon us. (*The Path*, July, 1889, Vol. IV, pp. 98-9)

THE individual is not only himself, but is in solidarity with all of his kind—let us leave aside for the moment that which seems to be not of his kind. That which we are has expressed itself through the individual, but also through the universality; and though each has to fulfil itself in its own way, neither can succeed independently of the other. The society has no right to crush or efface the individual for its own better development or self-satisfaction; the individual, so long at least as he chooses to live in the world, has no right to disregard for the sake of his own solitary satisfaction the development of his fellow-beings, and to live at war with them or seek a selfishly isolated good. And when we say “no right” it is from no social, moral or religious standpoint, but from the most positive, and simply with a view to the law of existence itself. For neither the society nor the individual can so develop to their fulfilment. Every time the society crushes or effaces the individual, it is inflicting a wound on itself and depriving its own life of priceless sources of stimulation and growth. The individual too cannot flourish by himself; for the universal, the unity and collectivity of his fellow-beings, is his present source and stock. . . . This is what a true subjectivism teaches us—first, that we are a higher self than our ego or our members; secondly, that we are in our life and being not only ourselves but all others; for there is a secret solidarity which our egoism may kick at and strive against, but from which we cannot escape. It is the old Indian discovery that our real “I” is a Supreme Being which is our true self and which it is our business to discover and consciously become; and, secondly, that that Being is one in all, expressed in the individual and in the collectivity—and only by admitting and realizing our unity with others can we entirely fulfil our true self-being.

—SRI AUROBINDO

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

James Lovelock was not the first to argue that our planet Earth is alive and functions like a superorganism in which living things interact with one another and with geophysical and chemical processes to maintain conditions suitable for life. But his Gaia theory (named after the ancient Earth goddess of the Greeks) is having better impact on the scientific world today than when he formulated it in the early 1970s, because science now has the tools to explore some of the vast interactions that govern global systems. (*Time*, November 13)

Lovelock originally held that a purposeful design governed the Earth and all living things. It is a pity that in view of scientific criticism he has somewhat modified his theory. *Time* magazine reports:

In its newest form, Gaia has inspired a flood of research into the interaction between living systems and the atmosphere, earth and oceans. At the first major scientific conference on Gaia, sponsored by the American Geophysical Union in 1988, the austere group of scientists ended their meeting by giving Lovelock an exuberant standing ovation.

Scientists have begun to regard Gaia more seriously because the world has forced them to do so. If they are to understand such pressing environmental problems as the greenhouse effect or the consequences of mass extinctions, they will have to overcome their reluctance to look beyond their own specialities: nature does not necessarily respect the arbitrary boundaries established for scientific disciplines. . . .

Scientists have yet to uncover the actual mechanisms by which life processes regulate earth's climate and atmosphere. Lovelock maintains that this makes it all the more imperative that man halt the mass extinctions threatened by the destruction of tropical forests, because he does not know what creatures are essential to his own survival. At the American Geophysical Union conference on Gaia, Lovelock argued that diversity makes Earth both stable and habitable: "You cannot have a sparse planet any more than you can have half an animal." . . .

Its critics notwithstanding, Gaia seems to be gaining in influence among both scientists and theologians. To some, Gaia's appeal is that it promises to end the long estrangement of Western science and religion. Even if the biosphere regulates the planet by feedback, Gaia still integrates living things and inanimate forces into

a unified system, allowing both science and religion to look at life as something more than a mere accident. Says James Parks Morton, dean of New York City's St. John the Divine Episcopal Cathedral and a leading religious advocate of Gaia's: "The very nature of this hypothesis shows that we are now at a new moment when scientific and religious enquiry is directed to the same reality and discussed in a common language."

The idea that the Earth and all nature act with a sense of purpose seems crucial to the theory of Gaia. The occult doctrine, which is more logical than scientific theories, teaches that it is the same, never-varying evolutionary law in nature, a universal plan, "that prevails through the whole manvantaric period and deals with the land worm as it deals with man. . . . Both have started from the same neutral centre of Life and both have to re-emerge into it at the consummation of the cycle" (*S.D.*, II, 261). Even the little that scientists know and have hitherto discovered of the forces at work in the universe, shows "very plainly that every part, every speck and atom are in harmony with their fellow atoms, and these with the whole, each having its distinct mission throughout the life-cycle" (*S.D.*, II, 653-54). "There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces"; for,

Nature taken in its abstract sense, *cannot* be "unconscious," as it is the emanation from, and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is that daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals *a consciousness of their own*? All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension. (*S.D.*, I, 277 fn.)

Science has theories but no complete answer to why it is that people go out of their way to relieve another's distress, even if it involves personal peril to themselves. (See "In the Light of Theosophy," January and May 1989.) The recent earthquake in the San Francisco Bay Area had a silver lining: residents continue to share tales of extraordinary altruism amid adversity.

There have been many attempts to explain why disaster brings out the best in people. *Newsweek* (November 6) states:

Every human disaster seems to create heroes along with its victims. Their courage sometimes appears more glandular than intentional ("I just did what I had to do," 28-year-old Lenny Skutnik explained after diving into an ice-strewn Potomac River

to rescue a drowning plane-crash victim in 1982). But even the most prolonged nightmares spawn astonishing acts of benevolence. A Dutch civilian named Miep Gies risked her life daily for more than two years to feed and shelter the Frank family during the Nazi Holocaust. The 3,000 peasants of Le Chambon, a Huguenot village in south-central France, took similar risks to help Jewish refugees flee the occupation.

Maybe Adam Smith had it right when he remarked that "there seem to be principles in man's nature which interest him in the fortunes of others, and render their happiness necessary to him." But what are those principles? What drives human beings to risk so much for one another? Social scientists think a lot about such questions. Their approaches to human altruism, even their definitions of it, are often disparate, and their findings sometimes raise more questions than they answer. No one can fully explain what propels individuals toward particular acts of bravery. But the research provides a broad framework within which an "interest in the fortunes of others" begins to make sense. . . .

Social psychologists have developed at least three competing hypotheses. According to the "empathy altruism" model, altruists have no motive beyond the welfare of the person in need. By contrast, the "negative-state relief" model holds that seeing someone in distress causes sadness. Getting involved serves to relieve the sadness, even if it does nothing for the recipient. Finally there's the "empathic joy" hypothesis. Like the sadness-relief model, it assumes that altruistic acts serve to enhance one's own state of mind. But according to this theory, the psychic payoff lies not in trying to help but in witnessing the effect.

In our age, acts of violence have become a part of daily life; yet there is hope for man's future. Man helps his fellows much oftener than he kills or even injures them. The roots of altruism lie in the basics of human nature. The capacity for empathy, for deriving pleasure from other people's pleasure and distress from their distress, is bred in each human being. Its opposite is "an *abnormal, unnatural* manifestation."

The quest for happiness has been a perennial motivating force. One provocative finding of recent psychological research is that happiness and unhappiness are not two ends of the same spectrum. "They are two distinct feelings that, coexisting, rise and fall independently." (*Psychology Today*, July-August 1989)

“You’d think that the higher a person’s level of unhappiness, the lower his level of happiness and vice versa,” says Edward Diener, a University of Illinois professor of psychology who has done much of the new work on positive and negative emotions. But when Diener and other researchers measured people’s average levels of happiness and unhappiness, they often found little relationship between the two.

The recognition that feelings of happiness and unhappiness can coexist much like love and hate in a close relationship may offer valuable clues on how to lead a happier life. It suggests, for example, that changing or avoiding things that make you miserable may well make you less miserable but probably won’t make you any happier. That advice is backed up by an extraordinary series of studies which indicate that a genetic predisposition for unhappiness may run in certain families. Conversely, researchers have found, happiness doesn’t appear to be anyone’s heritage. The capacity for joy is a talent you develop largely for yourself. . . .

Psychologists have settled on a working definition of the feeling—happiness is a sense of subjective well-being. They’ve also begun to find out who’s happy, who isn’t and why. To date, the research hasn’t found a simple recipe for a happy life, but it has charted some of the actions and attitudes that seem to bring people closer to that most desired of feelings.

In the quest for happiness, it is often overlooked that sorrow and suffering too have a lesson to teach us and can be used as avenues for further growth.

. . . the Occultists . . . recognize in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility. . . . Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death? (*S.D.*, II, 475)

Dreams that come true are reported from time to time and continue to baffle the materialists. A man dreamed he was opening a checking account when two armed robbers burst into the bank. The dream was so vivid that he felt compelled to recount it

to a friend the next morning. Later that same day, the man was opening a checking account when the bank was robbed, just as he had seen in his dream.

U.S. psychologist David Ryback thinks stories like this one show that people may be particularly open to psychic experiences in their dreams. Surveying 433 college students, Ryback concluded that one in twelve had, in fact, experienced paranormal dreams; more than half of these dreams, he says, were precognitive. (*Omni*, October 1989)

In his book *Dreams That Come True*, Ryback recounts a series of such dreams reported to him. One woman, for example, woke up terrified and told her husband she had dreamed of being struck by a train. A few weeks later she was killed while trying to save her daughter, who had wandered in front of a train. Another woman, while away from home, dreamed her house had been robbed. She soon learned that her home had been broken into and that the objects she dreamed had been stolen were the ones taken.

Ryback states that the ability to have such warning or prophetic dreams can be encouraged. "People should write down their dreams and consider the possibility that what they dream might come true," he says. "If the dream seems to be a warning, they should do whatever they think they should to prevent it from happening."

The major difficulty arises from people's failure to distinguish between dreams which are mere fancies, chaotic pictures, caused by indigestion, some mental trouble, or other external cause, and the true dreams which record the independent activities of the Soul, and which are impressed by it upon the sleeping brain. Theosophy also tells us of that "tablet of the unseen universe," the astral light, on which all things both past and future are recorded. It is possible that our own quasi-omniscient spiritual "I" impresses upon the brain, during sleep, what it sees pictured in the astral light.

A fuller treatment of this subject will be found in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 11* on dreams, and in H.P.B.'s *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*.

Man has ever been awed by the heavenly orbs, the sun, the moon, and other planets and stars. The sun especially has been a subject of speculation and an object of scientific and philosophic

enquiry since time immemorial. In recent years, scientists have used the International Sun-Earth Explorer-3 satellite for more precise predictions of solar magnetic disturbances so that protective measures against damage to transformers and utility networks could be taken. The Electric Power Research Institute's *Journal* in its July-August issue states:

Although their consequences are not usually very severe, solar magnetic disturbances are neither rare nor unexpected. In the Arctic, they are responsible for the spectacular auroral displays commonly known as the northern lights, and their potential for disrupting power transmission and communication is only too well known.

A Commentary on one of the Stanzas of the Book of Dzyan refers to the Aurora Borealis as "the agitation of the *Fohatic* Forces at the two cold ends (North and South Poles) of the Earth which resulted in a multicoloured radiance at night, [and which] have in them several of the properties of Akasa (Ether) *colour* and sound as well" (*S.D.*, I, 205). H.P.B. observes:

The Aurora Borealis and Australis, both...take place at the very centres of terrestrial electric and magnetic forces. The two poles are said to be the storehouses, the receptacles and liberators, at the same time, of Cosmic and terrestrial Vitality (Electricity); from the surplus of which the Earth, had it not been for these two natural "safety-valves," would have been rent to pieces long ago. (*Ibid.*)

Reference is made in the article to the eleven-year cycle of the sun spots:

Solar activity in the current cycle is already greater than that observed in a similar period in the 1957 cycle, so vulnerable utilities may experience an unusual number of strong magnetic storms over the next two or three years. The effects could be particularly severe if a power system happened to be subjected to lightning strikes at the same time magnetic disturbances were occurring....

With solar activity expected to reach a peak over the next couple of years, considerable international effort is being made to improve both long-term and short-term predictions related to magnetic storms and their effects.

To one who is acquainted with the characteristics of a magnetic field, the true nature of the sun's radiation will be evident. The so-called flames or flares, referred to in the article, present exactly the same formal phenomena as iron filings shaken on a paper lying over a magnet. *The Secret Doctrine* in several passages

describes these flares as the solar or heart ends of the great space arteries through which the unseen forces flow. The fluid which flows through these channels is electricity in all its aspects, or call it Life, vital, psychic, mental and spiritual as well as physical. H.P.B. observes:

The primordial Electric Entity—for the Eastern Occultists insist that Electricity is an Entity—electrifies into life, and separates primordial stuff or pregenetic matter into atoms, themselves the source of all life and consciousness. . . . “There exists an universal *agent unique* of all forms of life [which] is the first light in Creation” . . . the first Light of the primordial Elohim. . . or (scientifically) ELECTRICITY AND LIFE. (S.D., I, 76)

In one of his songs, Kabir remarks: “I laugh when I hear that the fish in the water is thirsty.” So would we when we are told that a corpuscle or cell in the body is all alone, while it is bathed in the fluids to which it owes its life. Such is the attitude of those who profess physical and psychic independence from the sun, and in this respect they are less wise than the ancient sun-worshippers. More than a hundred years ago, H.P.B. explained the mystery of the sun in *The Secret Doctrine*:

This “mystery,” or the origin of the LIFE ESSENCE, Occultism locates in the same centre as the nucleus of *prima materia* (for they are one) of our Solar system. (S.D., I, 540)

“The Sun is the heart of the Solar World (System) and its brain is hidden behind the (visible) Sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve-centre of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence flow into each artery and vein. . . . The planets are its limbs and pulses. . . .” (Commentary) (S.D., I, 541)

How similar are these words to the last few verses of the *Isavasya Upanishad*:

The face of the Truth (Brahman in the solar orb) is concealed with a golden vessel. Do thou, O Sun, open it so that I may realize the Truth.

O thou who art the nourisher, the solitary traveller, the controller, the acquirer, the son of Prajapati, do remove thy rays, do gather up thy dazzle. I shall behold that form of thine [the Central Spiritual Sun] which is the most benign. I am that very Person that is yonder in the Sun.

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U.L.T. PAMPHLET SERIES. Nos. 1-36
H. P. BLAVATSKY AND WILLIAM Q. JUDGE PAMPHLET SERIES

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 founder 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 is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however 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 signatures 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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