

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

THE RISING CYCLE	37
THE SEARCH FOR IMMORTALITY	41
OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS	47
THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN—I	51
THE IMPORTANCE OF THEOSOPHICAL STUDY	58
LIGHT ON THE PATH	60
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	65

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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 RISING CYCLE

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SOON we shall be passing the Winter Solstice, with the Sun entering on its northern course. Shortly after that the new calendar year will begin. H.P.B. regarded the period between the Winter Solstice and the Spring Equinox as of some importance in the life of the Inner Man. So should all students of Theosophy.

The psychic and spiritual powers of the season, which starts when the Sun begins to move northward, colour all Nature anew for the high enterprise of the coming Spring. The revivifying influences active during this time of the year touch the inner life of all forms and give a renewed impetus to expansion and growth. Since all that happens in Nature is reflected in man, to all channels of his life too there comes a new and fresh vigour.

The sacred and mysterious sign of *Makara* or Capricornus, H.P.B. has explained, is closely connected with the "Microcosmic Pentagon, the five-pointed star representing man." It is to the Hierarchy of highly Occult Beings called *Makaras* (*ma* meaning five, and *kara* a hand with five fingers, as also a five-sided sign or a pentagon, the points of which represent the limbs of a man) that we owe the Light of Wisdom and the Warmth of Compassion. These presiding deities of the season are the Fathers of thinking, conscious MAN. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

It becomes the task of the fifth Hierarchy—the mysterious beings that preside over the constellation Capricornus, Makara, or

"Crocodile" in India as in Egypt—to inform the empty and ethereal animal form and make of it the Rational Man. This is one of those subjects upon which very little may be said to the general public. It is a MYSTERY, truly, but only to him who is prepared to reject the existence of intellectual and conscious spiritual Beings in the Universe, limiting full Consciousness to man alone, and that only as a "function of the Brain." Many are those among the Spiritual Entities, who have incarnated bodily in man, since the beginning of his appearance, and who, for all that, still exist as independently as they did before, in the infinitudes of Space. (I, 233)

The Christmas season, then, has its own peculiar occult significance. It is the season of the birth of the Sun. The creative forces of Nature are most active and, with the increase in the light and power of the Sun, the seeds beneath the earth begin to germinate. Similarly, man too has the golden opportunity to radiate more light, more warmth—*i.e.*, Wisdom and Compassion—the gifts of the *Makaras*. Esoterically speaking, behind the physical, visible Sun there is Spirit, there is Life, there is Intelligence. So, there comes with the birth of the Sun a spiritual, a psychic, a mental, a moral growth and uplifting. There is a springtime not only in the lower kingdoms—among plants and animals—but among men too. There is an incursion of energy, so to speak, which, if we could take advantage of it, would enable us to do much more than we do now.

As H.P.B. has said, the astral life of the earth is young and strong between Christmas and Easter. Then, too, the inner life of man has its rejuvenescence and its growth; and ideas then taken hold of and carried into expression have tenfold the power which they would have at any other time. Christmas is a season of birth and of awakening; it is the season of the rebirth of the spiritual nature, and the birth of Jesus was made to accord with this old knowledge of the past and ancient observances.

Let us, then, as students of Theosophy, seize the opportune time and colour the forthcoming year in terms of our highest aspirations and deepest yearnings. "As a day can be coloured, so can a year." Just as there are artists in life, as Thoreau pointed out, endowed with the faculty of changing the colour of a day and making it beautiful to those they contact, so too there are adepts in life, those master-artists who know the greatest of all arts—that of colouring the very

atmosphere in which we live with the golden gleam of the Divine and the Sublime. Taking advantage of this Season of Right Resolve, if we, students of Theosophy, endeavoured to learn the art of making life not only beautiful but also divine, assuming the firm position that we are emanations from Divinity on our return path thereto, the coming year might well become for us one of greater spiritual development than any we have lived through. Our high resolve and righteous endeavour to live in terms of that resolve would affect the mental and moral atmosphere of the entire world, thus benefiting not only ourselves, not only those about us, but humanity at large.

Our task at the close of a year is to examine ourselves, sincerely and with an impersonal and dispassionate attitude, endeavouring to sum up the lessons learnt from the events of that year. But to look behind and linger there, attaching too much importance to those past incidents, is not a salutary exercise. Realizing, in Cardinal Newman's words, that in the past "Pride ruled my will," we have to take to heart his advice and appeal: "Remember not past years." Equally unwise is it to anticipate the future and dream daydreams about what we would like to happen in the coming year. It is to the present moment that we have to give our very best attention, at the same time preparing our inner attitude to meet whatever the new year may bring us. Our teachers have said:

The future lies in the present and both include the Past. With a rare occult insight Rohel made quite an *esoterically* true remark, in saying that "the future does not come from before to meet us, but comes streaming up from behind over our heads." For the Occultist and average Theosophist the Future and the Past are both included in each moment of their lives, hence in the eternal PRESENT.
—H.P.B. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 28*, p. 2)

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

Armed with confidence, calmness, hope, courage and intelligence,

let us resolve—to unfold Devotion of the Heart, Vigilance of the Head, Piety of the Hands. Devotion flows when disturbances are absent from the mind; they can be absent only when the mind is vigilant and attends to its real functions; its positive functions are pious deeds, holy acts. The head, the heart and the hands thus all unite to make our actions sacramental.

In formulating their wishes and making their resolves, students of Theosophy should take into account their self-imposed obligations to the U.L.T. There ought to be the desire to improve the quality of their service to the Lodge, to increase its quantity. Students do not confer any benefit on the Philosophy or on the Movement by their voluntary service, but by helping the Cause they are helping themselves. Let all who realize that the message of Theosophy would benefit the entire human family and bring to every unit of that family some peace of mind, some inspiration of the heart, some feeling of brotherliness for all, leading to the prosperity and happiness which all are seeking—let all who realize this, resolve to study, apply and promulgate the Teachings of Theosophy in every possible direction, while taking advantage of the rising cycle of the New Year to give strength and persistency to their aspirations and efforts.

If you shed tears when you miss the sun, you also miss the stars.

We come nearest to the great when we are great in humility.

Thank the flame for its light, but do not forget the lampholder standing in the shade with constancy of patience.

We read the world wrong and say that it deceives us.

In death the many become one; in life the one becomes many.

He who wants to do good knocks at the gate; he who loves finds the gate open.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

THE SEARCH FOR IMMORTALITY

THE instinctive feeling that there is something that lives on even after the body dies, is almost universal. It is one of those intuitions against which reason fails. This instinctive intuition is an inherent idea, a spiritual impress burnt into our consciousness. Just as prejudices, conventions, customs and manners peculiar to community, nation and race exist on the lower side of human life, so also in soul-life there are certain ideas that are commonly held by all peoples, irrespective of their beliefs. These are called inherent ideas. That man's soul is immortal is such an inherent idea with most people—but not with all.

This is because it is crushed out in some—crushed out by what we call our "civilization" and by our education. But quite often the power of the impress outlives even educative influence, and we may be thankful that it is so. For, it is the force of this inherent idea that urges man on in the search for immortality. The fact of being man does not in itself confer permanent immortality. That immortality must be acquired, says Theosophy, and that is why it becomes of paramount importance to understand at least in a general way what is meant by immortality.

One of the laws of Nature is the law of change. Even casual observation shows that everything changes, nothing endures. This is true of all appearances, all events, all happenings. On closer examination, however, we find that the law of polarity works here too: just as day and night, gravitation and levitation go together, so change and endurance work hand in hand. In perpetual change, something endures; *e.g.*, we see myriads of changes in the world, but we who see them represent the enduring aspect. Krishna says in the Ninth Discourse of the *Gita*: "I am being and non-being, Sat-Asat, death and immortality."

There is a basic principle in Nature which is changeless, just as there is another basic principle of change. Ordinarily we call them Spirit and Matter, *Purusha* and *Prakriti*. That which does not change but endures forever alone can convey immortality to that which undergoes constant change.

Let us pause for a moment on the aspect of perpetual change. Things change and we call it "evolution," because we do not perceive that behind that change something eternal exists which changes not. If we did, we would use the word "emanation" instead of "evolution."

The changeless Spirit emanates a body, then emanates a force which we call death and which dissolves the body. We do not see that the Spirit *was* before the birth of the body and endures its death. In autumn, leaves fall, but the tree endures; some trees look dead, but the roots endure; at times all seems dead, even roots and branches, but the seed endures and a new tree is born.

Death and immortality, or change and changelessness, are the world's eternal ways.

Modern science has accepted this law of endurance partially, while it accepts the law of change completely—one of those minor illogicalities of modern science. It says that forms of matter change, but matter endures—indestructibility of matter. Further, it says that forms of energy change, but energy always endures—conservation of energy. Not knowing very much about consciousness, human or any other, it says that it does not observe anything enduring in the changes of consciousness, whose ordinary manifestations are sleep or death. So matter and energy are indestructible, that is, immortal. Is not the creator of thoughts, the maker of ideas, the builder of civilizations also immortal? Science says it knows it not. Because of this attitude of science, people conclude that there is no such thing as soul—how then can there be immortality?

Let us look at this dual law of change and endurance through which all progress takes place everywhere in nature.

Theosophy teaches that human Spirit is ever enduring, that Spirit alone is the one Eternal Reality. Human energy is conserved by the human Spirit; the energies of thought, will, feeling—*shaktis* of various kinds—are powers of the human Spirit. Human matter is indestructible; it makes a form, destroys it, remakes it, *i.e.*, the body changes from birth to death. Death is the great change in the human body.

What is true of the human kingdom is equally true of the whole of Nature. Everywhere, at every point of space, is Spirit, within which some power is manifested and the remainder lies latent.

The whole universe is a collection of Spirit-units—Leibnitz called them Monads, a term which is also used in Theosophy. Each unit or Monad is called the Eternal Pilgrim—eternal because it is immortal, pilgrim because it is on a pilgrimage. Through its material envelope or body it gains experience which is stored within the Spirit as its powers or *shaktis*. The whole universe is a "blazing fire," says one of

the Upanishads, and the sparks are the Eternal Pilgrims, Spirit-units, some in one kingdom of Nature, some in another. Consciousness is Life, and each Eternal Pilgrim, without exception, is a Life. Spirit is Life, therefore its powers are living. There is no dead matter. It is a living, breathing, pulsating universe.

In this living universe made up of life-units, fiery lives, there is interdependence and interplay; this is what is called in the world of matter "struggle for existence and survival of the fittest." It is true that in the kingdom of matter the strongest forms of life survive the longest, but in the kingdom of Spirit everything survives because it is not limited by time. There is *no* failure of Life; in the process of time, every life-unit must and will reach its goal and summation.

Every Spirit-unit is destined to become a human Spirit—if not in one world then in another; if not in this universe then in another; if not in one Manvantara then in another. Everything that is, either was a man, is a man, or will become a man. That is an important teaching of Theosophy.

To turn to the practical side: By the long process of evolution, that which we call our Spirit has reached the human stage, which means that the life-unit has attained awareness of itself. By acquiring a mind, that Spirit or Eternal Pilgrim has come to the position where it can know its own power. Mind-consciousness is self-consciousness, *i.e.*, mind is able to know or to be aware of the nature of consciousness. Animals are units of consciousness, but not self-conscious units. Every blade of grass is conscious, but knows not that it is conscious; every pebble is alive, but knows not that it is alive; but every human being knows that he exists and is able to say, "I am I."

As Spirit-beings we are all immortal, and whatever happens, the Spirit will survive. Even the death of a universe or *pralaya* simply means that the Eternal Pilgrims have gone to sleep—to awake again at the dawn of a new manifestation. What do *we* want then?

Just as consciousness has become, in the process of time, aware of itself, so also human self-consciousness (not human Spirit) wants to know the nature of immortality which is of the Spirit. Nay more, the human soul, one with the human Spirit, wants to gain the power of immortality belonging to that Spirit. In other words, man makes a bid to understand the indestructibility of matter, the conservation of energy, and the immortality of the Spirit. The triple division—

Spirit–Energy–Matter—should be noted.

The goal of evolution is not just man, but perfected man. What is the basic difference between the two? (1) Human Spirit is immortal, but human soul knows next to nothing about it. The powers of the Spirit are always conserved, but the human soul knows only of its own powers, and that very partially and faultily. (2) Mind can at best fathom the laws of mind, but as these are linked to the laws of Spirit on the one hand and of matter on the other, mind's knowledge is incomplete and therefore false, in the final analysis. (3) The nature of matter or body, indestructible in its essence, is not known to the human soul. By some process or another, this triple function taking place in the whole of Nature has to be known and mastered. The perfected man has done this.

The human soul knows itself as the vehicle of human Spirit, *i.e.*, self-consciousness is aware of the real nature of the Spirit and can utilize all the powers or *shaktis* of the Spirit. The soul partakes of the immortality of the Spirit-unit. At the other end, that human soul having acquired the knowledge of the Spirit-powers, creates for himself a vehicle of matter, a body or an instrument which is the permanent body of light over which the overcoat of flesh is sometimes thrown.

In us, body, soul (or mind) and spirit go each their own way. Nature brings them together and separates them, and the combination we call man. Unless the fusion is achieved, immortality for the mind- or soul-consciousness is not possible. The real man, the entity which deserves the name of man, is the harmonious fusion of Spirit-Energy-Matter into a true self-conscious being. All men and women are in a state of self-consciousness; all are not self-conscious beings. All have the *potentiality* of attaining spiritual immortality; all have not yet achieved it.

What shall we do to be self-conscious beings? How shall we seek this real immortality?

We must begin with the mind, which is our highest power and in which the faculties of thought and imagination reside. By thought and imagination we must see that that which we call "I" is the human soul, connected with the human Spirit. Thought results from study, and imagination—in the sense of reflection, meditation, contemplation—completes its expression.

But just as there is false knowledge and wrong thought, so also there are false and dangerous systems of meditation. Fancy and phantasy are also creative, but on the wrong side. The real *raja-yoga* practices have never been taught publicly, so let us not be misguided by so-called books, ancient or modern, dubbed treatises on *raja-yoga*. Even the Upanishads and the *Gita* are only partial treatises which but show that somewhere the real science of Spiritual Kings—*Raja-Rishis*—exists. The secrets are not written, though something is written about the secrets.

So, thought, through study and imagination, opens the way. The central thought is that we as human souls should know its *spiritual* character, and find how we are vehicles of the human Spirit. This cannot be known as experience in the first place; therefore we must go to the record of those who have experienced—*i.e.*, go to the immemorial Philosophy we know today as Theosophy. Theosophical teaching about the human soul and human Spirit should be thought about, and further we should visualize how the soul acts when it becomes the vehicle of Spirit. Let us think of ourselves as the Higher Divine Self, and by study we must find out the nature of that Self.

This should be our morning prayer, our meditation. But first we must get our basic thought ready by study, and use our imagination on that thought. The nature, character, function and powers of the Higher Self are good subjects for thought and meditation. During the day, let us turn the mind in the direction of the Spirit by remembering some phase of our prayer or meditation. Let us control our senses and our passions when they suggest something contrary to that knowledge.

Book-reading alone will not do. Study is the *first* step, but thinking is the beginning of application. Many would like to apply, yet they do not, because they do not take the step of applying their thought to what is studied. So let us find out from our study passages on which we should place our mind, for as we think, so we become. That is the law—if we entertain hateful thoughts, we will become hateful; if we entertain righteous thoughts, we will act righteously; and if we think of ourselves as divine, as spiritual beings, our words and works will be divine and spiritual.

So thought and imagination, or study and reflection, is the first step; it will enable us to lead the right kind of life, to live according to the Religion of Immortality. The second is remembrance—taking

precautions against forgetfulness, so that every thought, word and deed is in conformity with our true beliefs. The third is faith, that conviction which alone can remove the mountains of doubts, of difficulties, of depressions, and resist all attacks. Ridicule of friends, opposition of relatives, attacks of all who dislike the very idea of soul-life, will need an armour, and the only unbreakable one is faith. *Inner* conviction, not outer fanaticism, is required.

This will come if we can realize, by our intellect first and by our heart next, the supreme fact that men have done in the past what we are trying to do in the present; that they sought once as we are seeking now; that they struggled once as we do now; that they have succeeded in becoming immortal. That is why Theosophy puts forward the grand conception of the Masters—Immortal Men who have realized that they are immortal; who know that we humans desire to tread the path that they took in the past; and so they teach how we should walk that path.

Perseverance and persistence will reveal to us what the Way is, what the Truth is, what the Life is. Thinking and living according to our self-chosen discipline, the Higher Self will draw to us those in whom that Self shines forth. Raising ourselves by noble thinking, we shall draw closer to the Nobles of the Race, and they will teach us, as none else, the secret of Immortality.

As is the Inner so is the Outer; as is the Great so is the Small; as it is Above so it is Below; there is but one Life and Law. Nothing is Inner, nothing is Outer; nothing is Great, nothing is Small; nothing is High, nothing is Low, in the Divine Economy.

—SOURCE UNKNOWN

OBSTACLES TO PROGRESS

Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

IT is this concept of man's divine origin, his sacred mission and his final destiny, embodied in the above-quoted words of H.P.B., that has to be used as a measuring rod to evaluate modern progress—whether we consider man's progress individually or humanity's collectively.

The sixteenth chapter of the *Gita* divides human beings into two classes, according as the demoniac or the divine attributes predominate in them. At the one end are those few who, having learned to negate their personality, have made it pure and radiant enough to become the channel for the expression of the purely divine attributes. On the other hand we see today many signs and outward manifestations of the philosophy of materialism adhered to by those who have the demoniac dispositions predominant in them. What a perfect description does the *Gita* give of the theory of life current among most so-called civilized and educated people! They deny that there is any law or rhythm in the universe; they negate all spiritual values, and are so deluded as to think that we are material beings and that all is for enjoyment and sensuous gratification alone. The animal nature in us lives on sensuous gratification, and the more we indulge in it the more we get under the influence of the animal and the demoniac.

From the Theosophical point of view this strengthening of the animal in us is the very reverse of progress. All the rapid advance our civilization has made in conquests of nature, in mechanical arts, in the ability to pander to love of luxury and in inventions made for destroying life, does not constitute one single inch of true progress if our measuring rod remains our understanding that we are potentially divine and that the reason we are here in embodied existence is to utilize the instrumentality of our body and our senses so as to unfold the latent powers which are there in our own true nature.

In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. has given us a philosophical proposition of deep import: "Civilization has developed the physical and the intellectual at the cost of the psychic and spiritual." Our present civilization is not peculiar in this respect. The very forces which brought about in the past the downfall of other civilizations, mightier

than ours, are now corrupting our own. Our age is known as the dark age because materiality and pure intellectualism have almost obscured the spiritual and the psychic or emotional nature of man. "The Theosophist in all ages has regarded loss of spirituality as equivalent to the state of death and darkness," says Mr. Judge in one place, adding that "mere material progress in itself is not a sign of real advancement, but may have in it the elements of its own stoppage and destruction." H.P.B. too saw little in Western civilization worth boasting about. In *The Key to Theosophy* she says:

...we, Theosophists, say that your vaunted progress and civilization are no better than a host of will-o'-the-wisps, flickering over a marsh which exhales a poisonous and deadly miasma. This, because we see selfishness, crime, immorality, and all the evils imaginable, pouncing upon unfortunate mankind from this Pandora's box which you call an age of progress, and increasing *pari passu* with the growth of your material civilization.

True progress, it is being increasingly recognized even by those who are not Theosophists, is impossible without the development of the nobler qualities, without moral elevation and the deepening of spiritual perception. The best of thinkers are beginning to realize that all is not well with the people of the so-called advanced countries, that raising the standard of living does not make them any nobler or wiser. Signs of moral deterioration are becoming more and more evident, and modern education is responsible for it to no small extent. "Even ignorance is better than Head-learning with no Soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it."

The situation calls for an honest investigation of the crisis we are facing. It is essentially a moral and spiritual crisis. Recognizing that "all good and evil things in humanity have their roots in human character," we have to consider our situation in that light. There is but one way in which progress can be achieved, and that is to regard man as essentially a moral being and to recognize that his journey towards divinity is marked by a deeper appreciation of and insight into moral and spiritual values.

The fact that we find that our civilization has made a mess of things is no reason for despairing, for Theosophy leads us to see clearly for ourselves that we have built this civilization through our own past choices and actions, that the obstacles now in our way are of our own

making. It is not some blind force or chance that has brought us to this abnormal, degraded and animalistic condition and we need not have been in it. At our present stage of evolution we should be reascending towards the glory which is our goal, towards the light of Truth universal, towards the Compassion which is the Law of Laws and therefore the law of our own being. Instead, we find ourselves where we are. Still there is no cause for discouragement, for, if we have placed ourselves in an abnormal condition, then within ourselves is the necessary strength to get out of it. It is futile to look for our enemy outside of ourselves; it is hiding within.

This is the constant enemy of man on earth. Its expression and manifestations are many; still it remains the one common enemy of all of us. That enemy is selfishness, which causes disharmony. It has its roots in man's personality. "The power of the personality is great and insidious." It is the most difficult thing to overcome in our race, yet subdue it we must if we wish to be pestered no longer by our enemy. "What the Theosophist has to do above all is to forget his personality." How different a view from the one current in the world today, that the personality is a thing to be developed and strengthened!

This does not, however, mean that the personality has to be got rid of. Without it there would be no field of action, no evolution. It is our false identification with the personality that makes us think of it as the real self, our personal idea in regard to it that is in the way and is the enemy of progress. The personality has to be refined and cleansed, to be regarded as an instrument or a channel for the manifestation of the divine in us.

If we think of ourselves as personalities we shall also consider ourselves separate one from the other. The dire heresy of separateness which weans us from the rest and makes for rivalry and selfishness instead of co-operation, sympathy and generosity, retards our progress. The moment we see through the delusion that we are separate from our fellows, our "other selves," we begin to recognize that the same true Self is in us and in all creatures and to endeavour to live our lives in terms of that Self.

Many are the manifestations of the enemy within—the enemy of progress. All human vices are but aspects of the three gates of hell mentioned in the *Gita*: *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*—Desire, Anger, Covetousness. These we have allowed to develop in us, colouring our

mental consciousness to such an extent that time and again we forget our mission, nay more—allow the Inner Ego to be driven out.

There are other expressions of the inner enemy. The two predominant vices that hold sway over the minds of men today are Hypocrisy and Doubt. In pure Occultism, White Magic or Divine Wisdom, the first of these is known as an unpardonable sin. Its congener, doubt, is ever rooted in wavering, in uncertainty about one's own Higher Self and Inner God; it leads one to wreck. Hypocrisy tarnishes and weakens the very line of communication between our own consciousness here in the personality and the Divine Self within, making all pardon of our sins by the Divine Pardoner, the Inner Ruler, impossible.

But no matter how hypocritical and full of doubt and wavering we may hitherto have been, no matter what evil ways we may have fallen into, *now* is the most opportune time to resolve righteously and begin the necessary task of self-redemption and self-reform. By dint of persevering effort it will be possible for the Inner, Divine Man to adjust his outer terrestrial self to his own spiritual nature, and harmony will reign once more between the two.

Unless we as individuals begin to purify our personality we shall not be contributing to the progress of humanity *en masse*. There can never be world improvement without individual improvement; there is no world problem—there is only the individual problem. In this *Kali Yuga*, man no longer follows his spiritual intuitions; instead of acting from within he ever follows impulses from without—those produced by his physical senses and gross selfish body. But there never is any need to despair. The ascending arc of the spiral of human evolution may bring to us a better time of which Mr. Judge has written:

...out of anger and disturbance will arise a new and better time; yet not without the pain which accompanies every new birth.

LIFE is one grand school of Being, and we have come to that stage where it is time for us to learn to understand the purpose of existence; to grasp our whole nature firmly; to use every means in our power in every direction—waking, dreaming, sleeping, or in any other state—to bring the whole of our nature into accord, so that our lower instrument may be "in line" and thus more and more fully reflect our divine inner nature.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

I

Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. (*John*, III, 15)

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (*Matt.*, VI, 21)

IN this age of crass materialism, there are very few who believe either in God, spirituality or a life after death. Fewer still believe that by sacrificing sense pleasures and adopting some ascetic rules they can attain to a high level of consciousness which in turn would lead them to what the Gospel calls the Kingdom of Heaven. And yet today there are thousands, not necessarily of the Christian fold, who firmly believe in what the two words "CHRESTOS" and "CHRISTOS" imply, and who therefore try to lead the life ethical according to the rules laid down in the Sermon on the Mount, rules moreover which couched in a language suited to other times and other eras can be traced in all the scriptures of the world's great religions. Such parallels can be traced by diligent search to periods back and further back till the dark veil of receding centuries makes dim and finally shuts out the history of far distant civilizations.

If we are to understand man in his real aspect, we cannot but see him as a projection of divinity on earth, a projection which though it is wallowing today in the mire and filth of matter, has the choice to return to the mansion of his Father as did the prodigal son of the parable.

According to Theosophy, mankind as we know it has been on this earth for over eighteen million years, during which it has been gathering experiences of both good and evil through a long series of reincarnations. Theosophy asserts that initially man was a son of light and had one language and one religion. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

In the common acceptance of the term, [the early races] had no religion, as they knew no dogma, nor had they to believe *on faith*. No sooner had the mental eye of man been opened to understanding, than the Third Race felt itself one with the ever-present as the ever to be unknown and invisible ALL, the One Universal Deity. Endowed with divine powers, and feeling in himself his *inner* God, each felt

he was a Man-God in his nature, though an animal in his physical self....Was not their childhood passed with, nursed and tended by those who had given them life and called them forth to intelligent, conscious life? We are assured it was so, and we believe it. (II, 272-73)

With these considerations as preliminaries to our study, let us proceed. For one who believes in holy living and serene dying, there comes after death a stay for a time in the kingdom of the elect, but he descends to earth again when his stock of merit is exhausted. For the others, and they are the very few, the attaining of the Kingdom of Heaven is by a conscious and deliberate effort of the will, and then their abode becomes quasi-permanent. For this, the individual has to reach to a state of consciousness which is attainable through such disciplines as will enable him to confabulate with the immortal part of himself. For him who is a confirmed materialist and who glories in sense-life, there is no possibility of entry into the Kingdom of Heaven. His mental attitude shuts him off from that high and exalted state of consciousness. Such an one refuses to accept the testimony of the great and the good of the ages, as also of the philosophies that ruled the thoughts of men during aeons past; philosophies which, though separated one from the other by untold ages, are yet found to have based themselves on those fundamental truths that underlie all life. The materialist scoffs at the very idea of a Kingdom of Heaven because according to him the concept militates against what he calls rationalistic thought. He believes in the rule of reason and intellect. He refuses to acknowledge that beyond reason and supplementing it is intuition, which is the voice of his Soul, a voice which he has successfully muted by turning a deaf ear to its behests. He chooses to ignore intuition in the same manner as he deliberately ignores the voice of his conscience. Both hinder his material aggrandizement, and so he will have nothing to do with either. He turns a blind eye to the truth stated in the Gospel that you cannot serve God and Mammon at the same time. He is ruthless in his search for material wealth, but none the less he attends church and temple and puts on a mantle of piety when it suits his interests. For him, knowledge at comparatively low levels is the sad yet only alternative.

For a closer look at the subject of our study, it is necessary to consider that wonderful complex being we call man. Centuries before

the Delphic Oracle gave the advice, "Man, know thyself," the advanced among men were searching for that knowledge which would make them understand *themselves* and which would give them a clue to the purpose of their existence. Anyone who has taken the trouble to know who he is intrinsically, will have realized that he is composed of various forces, some of which are diametrically opposed to one another, yet which find their habitat and playground in the composite man of many moods and divergent desires. From the earliest times, there has come down to us the threefold classification of man which makes of him a unit composed of body, soul and spirit. There are also classifications of a fivefold and sevenfold man; however, for the purpose of our study the threefold classification will suffice.

This classification, though glibly talked about and discussed, is very seldom acted upon and adopted as a yardstick to measure the successes and failures of a lifetime. Why is this so? The answer seems to be that the keys to its application are lost to the modern unbelievers who have become the truly heathen of mankind. One of these keys is that the body of man is allied to the body of Nature, his soul to its soul, and his spirit to its spirit. Theosophy therefore echoes the old, old truth that the trinity of Nature is the lock of magic and the trinity of man is the key that fits it. Modern scientific researches have shown that plant life is conscious and that it responds to human affection directed to it. Psychometric experiments have shown that stones and minerals not only display sympathies and antipathies, but that they have also a retentive memory which will give up its secrets to one who knows how to tap this hidden and still unfamiliar source. With this living testimony, science in its own laborious way is approaching the ancient teaching that man and Nature are allied, so that the appropriate part of man's constitution can touch and converse with its counterpart in Nature.

As this threefold classification is intimately related to the study of our subject, it becomes necessary to examine it in somewhat greater detail. There is first the outer material aspect, which may be either visible or invisible. Water is to us visible, but not so steam. These material aspects are subject to constant change. Next to these, and giving them life and motivation, is the inner, the energizing aspect—the astral counterpart which gives to manifested Nature what are called its inherent laws. This astral too is subject to change. Over

these two and illuminating them is the third aspect—the Spirit, the source of all forces, itself unchanging, immortal and infinite. This Spirit aspect can be made to reflect itself on earth by one who succeeds in controlling the two lower aspects and making them merge with the divine. It is the second aspect, the energizing part of the man, which reaching upto and getting assimilated in the third, inherits the Kingdom of Heaven. This Kingdom has to be taken "by violence." There is no other alternative. The wayward pulls of body and soul have to be tamed by violence in the same manner as men tame wild horses. Both body and soul have to be so trained as to respond on the instant and obey without cavil or delay any order that emanates from the supreme aspect. To achieve this, one has to impose on oneself numerous disciplines. It therefore becomes our duty not only to set out the immemorial rules which if followed will lead us to the Kingdom of Heaven, but also to try to understand their rationale and relevance. For, unless we recognize the need and the value of these exercises, we shall find them irksome in the extreme and resent their severity. In the latter eventuality, we shall most likely abandon our rightful position as trainees of wild horses, and worse still, seek our delight in the display of brute energy with which the uncontrolled body and mind will rush us into strange and bizarre experiences.

The rules that have to be followed are not of anyone's making. They are merely derivations of the laws which exist in super-nature. Besides them, and making them clear and understandable, are commentaries and aids left by those who have passed on to their ultimate salvation. For, as each striver towards the divine reaches to the threshold that divides the life temporal from the life spiritual, he pauses awhile and leaves behind him the enunciation of those aspects of the law which to him appeared helpful in his long and arduous journey to the seats of bliss. This is the priceless heritage that man has acquired across untold ages and civilizations so distant that they stand separated from us by archaic and fragmented history. This record of the to us distant sages forms a plank of salvation for humanity and takes its place as an important chapter in the Wisdom-Religion of the Race. For our study we have selected at random the rules that govern the higher life. The order in which they are to be studied and made a part of one's life depends entirely upon the degree of aspiration of the candidate, his strength or lack of it to start and persevere in the

discipline, and the tenacity with which he remains true to his exalted purpose, come hell or high water.

In Theosophy there is this injunction:

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance.

This seemingly simple rule has far-reaching applications, and becomes mandatory for the serious student who desires to tread the upward way. One of its implications is that the individual has a duty to discharge towards Nature and that he can expect to become an integrated being only when he volunteers as an active server in the onerous task of helping Nature in fulfilling its great purpose and destiny. It therefore becomes his primary duty to help Nature move along its appointed way. No act of his can be allowed to go contrary to the impulse of Nature in its vast surge of evolutionary movement, lest his puny opposition to the great movement get pulverized under the tremendous force of Nature in its irresistible movement onwards.

As soon as the individual arrives at an understanding of his kinship with Nature, he is constrained by the very nature of his progress to search for that knowledge which will put him in tune with Nature's soul-thought. At one with it, he becomes invincible; separate from it, he becomes a playground of all the world's delusions. That this close union of man with Nature finds a mention in the world's scriptures can no longer be denied. In the Old Testament, Job was made aware of this relationship in no ambiguous terms. The scripture records:

At destructions and famine thou shalt laugh; neither shalt thou be afraid of the beasts of the earth. For thou shalt be in league with the stones of the field: and the beasts of the field shall be at peace with thee. (V, 22-23)

This statement is based on no poetic fancy nor on any Utopian dream. This brotherhood with all created things—with the stones and with the beasts—has to be recognized, and one's actions of a lifetime have to be regulated accordingly. There is no alternate highway that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven. This injunction of working with Nature would remain meaningless in the same manner as would a string of incomprehensible words upon a printed page unless some further guidance is had in unravelling its true import. The extra guidance, the deeper instruction is therefore made available to the

diligent searcher as to the one who hungers after soul-wisdom. Says the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee. (IV, 34)

Do we see the implication? It is we who are expected to take the first step and thus to give an earnest of our all-consuming desire to be instructed. The great Gurus who are at the back of the Theosophical Movement have said: "Every step made by one in our direction will force us to make one toward him." The sincere efforts of the hungry soul are ever recognized. His aspirations are printed indelibly in the atmosphere of the invisible regions, and the Wise who anxiously await this first awakening will be found ready and anxious to minister to the needs of the querying soul. The Gospel gives the promise in these words: "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." (*Matt.*, xviii, 20)

Those who ignore this statement and indulge in trivialities at the time they meet in solemn conclave, do so at great peril to themselves. The greatest of all Gurus, the true and compassionate Teacher, is there by the mere fact of two or three agreeing to gather in His name. And yet there are hundreds today who seek for and pin their faith on mortal gurus who have not the knowledge nor the art to impart it in such manner that the message speaks direct to the soul and is not snatched away by the dark forces that throng the plane of longings and desires.

In our search for the real Guru and the true Shastra, we find our guidance in that priceless little book, *Light on the Path*. It says:

Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

If we have found no "holy one of the earth" to whom we can apply for instruction, we may be sure that there are lurking deep within us and unknown to ourselves the images of forbidden desires which at one time in our life delighted our animal nature with their witchery. These enemies of the nobler sentiments may in unguarded moments sprout forth and demand satisfaction. If they are strong enough to

capture the mind by their hypnotic spell, they will drown even the little knowledge that may have been gathered, in torrents upon torrents of sensation. If the soul is susceptible of losing its balance because of the strong breezes of unfulfilled desires, how can it be expected to remain staunchly loyal to the first selfless and sacrificial work it is expected to undertake—the helping of Nature in its impersonal tasks?

(To be concluded)

YEARS ago, I had a beautiful experience which set me on a road that has led to the writing of *The Tao of Physics*. I was sitting by the ocean one late summer afternoon, watching the waves rolling in and feeling the rhythm of my breathing when I suddenly became aware of my whole environment as being engaged in a gigantic cosmic dance.

Being a physicist I know that the sand, rocks, water and air around me were made of vibrating molecules and atoms and that these consisted of particles which interacted with one another by creating and destroying other particles. I knew also that the earth's atmosphere was continually bombarded by showers of "Cosmic rays," particles of high energy undergoing multiple collisions as they penetrated the air.

All this was familiar to me from my research in high energy physics, but until that moment I had only experienced through graphs, diagrams and mathematical theories. As I sat on that beach, my former experience came to life; I "saw" cascades of energy coming down from outer space in which particles were created and destroyed in rhythmic pulses; I "saw" the atoms of the elements and those of my body participating in this cosmic dance of energy; I felt its rhythm and I "heard" its sound, and at that moment I knew that this was the Dance of Siva, the Lord of Dancers worshipped by the Hindus.

—FRITJOF CAPRA

THE IMPORTANCE OF THEOSOPHICAL STUDY

IN this day and age of countless movements that purport to teach meditation and spiritual truth, what room is there for the teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters, which may seem to some like the relics of a long-lost civilization?

To answer this question, we have to become aware of the profound effect that study of Theosophy has on our minds, and how this influences the way we think and act and relate to others. This influence is not one that makes us slaves of external ideas and concepts, but one that arises from within and helps us to see the world as it is, and not as public opinion and the inadequate education system would have us see it. In other words, study of genuine Theosophy opens doors for us and enables us to awaken our dormant intuitions and explore the many wonders of nature at first hand. It gives us the ability to read all the great world scriptures between the lines and to understand them a lot better. This is because correct study clears away the many intellectual barriers that prevent us from seeing into the heart of the teachings of the Great Masters.

We are sometimes not aware of the changes that are occurring in our world view as a result of our studies, and this is because these changes are often gradual and therefore imperceptible. There may be those who have studied Theosophy for a number of years, have acquired the ability to read certain scriptures and spiritual works between the lines, and then have abandoned Theosophy, even renounced it in favour of their chosen religion, forgetting that it was their theosophical studies that enabled them to gain these insights. We should therefore always remain aware of the fact that Theosophy has an important part to play in the aspirant's spiritual development.

If we look closely at the lives of all the Initiates of different traditions, we shall find that they went through a process of intense study and practice. They were all well acquainted with the doctrines pertaining to reincarnation, karma, the constitution of man, rounds and races, etc. In most of their written works, or their oral teachings recorded by others, a knowledge of the basic truths of life is taken for granted, so these are mentioned only in passing. If the student is not conversant with these ideas, then he will be unable to relate what he is reading to the great Cyclic Law that is working at all levels of

being. He may also pick up some strange ideas from lay books or teachers, and believe that we are reborn as animals, or some such faulty notions. So it is very important indeed that we have a good grounding in the basics of true spiritual teaching.

To provide such an education was the purpose of H.P.B.'s mission and of works such as *Isis Unveiled*, *The Secret Doctrine*, *The Key to Theosophy*, *The Voice of the Silence*, etc. Some of the teachings contained in these books had previously been revealed only to a select few who were ready to receive them. H.P.B. was sent out to make public facts that had earlier been kept from the lay person, because it was felt that the time was ripe to do so. Of course the Masters were very careful about what they actually gave to humanity. They were aware that certain teachings would be misunderstood and that this could lead to terrible karmic consequences for those who put them into practice and, worse still, for humanity in general. They were also keen to put across the idea that the teachings given out would only lead us towards the truth and that we should find our way through the teachings to the higher experiences. On the other hand, if we wish to gain some insight into reality, we must go through the correct course of study and training. This was provided by H.P.B. in her many books and articles. We need to find our way through the labyrinth of so-called "occult" teachings, and true Theosophy provides the thread of Ariadne that will lead us to safety. But then we must go on, because this is only one stage completed. As the Masters say, most of the teachings are incommunicable and we have to prove ourselves worthy to receive them. The worthiness and the reception, though, are not decided by some outside authority, but are a result of our own endeavours to attune ourselves to the heart and mind of humanity, thereby becoming aware of the Oneness of all. We can then find an affinity with the words of all the Great Ones, and then perhaps with the Great Ones themselves in those realms of Being that escape our conceptual thought altogether. Says H.P.B.:

He who would profit by the wisdom of the universal mind, has to reach it through *the whole of Humanity* without distinction of race, complexion, religion or social status. It is altruism, not egoism even in its most legal and noble conception, that can lead the unit to merge its little Self into the Universal Selves.

LIGHT ON THE PATH

[P. Sreenevas Row's annotations on the closing Section of *Light on the Path*, entitled "Karma," are continued here from our last issue. They appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for December 1885.]

SECTION III CLAUSE III

And remember that the threads are living—are like electric wires, more, are like quivering nerves. How far, then, must the stain, the drag awry, be communicated!

AS shown in the preceding clause, the threads of human existence, though colourless and pure in their origin, are yet liable to become coloured and impure when a man is led away by his passions and desires. The colour of a thread is of itself capable of communicating its stain to the individuals who caused it and to others who come into contact with it; but if it happens that the coloured threads are not inactive, ineffective particles of matter, but are like living and effective electric wires, then the result of their communication to us and others must necessarily be more serious. A piece of charcoal stains our fingers, but if it be a live coal, the stain would be accompanied with pain and concomitant evil—so it is with Karma. The threads which form the rope of Karma (*Karma pasa*), being as effective as a living electric wire, their effect, when communicated to the individuals, must certainly be to affect them either for good or evil, according to the nature of the cause which produced that effect.

But in order to be able to realize this great idea, the reader should clearly understand how human action is originated, and what follows after the action is performed. Let him remember that desires are the springs of action; one of the essential conditions of an action is Will; and the exertion of the Will stirs up the nervo-vital force which is within us. This force thereupon acts upon the nerves; nerves contract the muscles; and the muscles produce the necessary movements, resulting in the performance of the action intended. But the influence of this vital force, when once roused by the Will, does not cease upon the completion of the action. Being an offspring, as it were, of the human Will, and consequently, semi-intelligent and electric in its effects, this vital force flows out of the body as a material emanation endowed with sound, colour and odour; and spreads itself in the

ethereal space, making impressions and radiating the character of the Will upon all surrounding objects, animate and inanimate; and then reflects back upon the very individual from whom it first emanated, under the well-known mechanical law of action and reaction, either for good or evil, according as the Will was in itself good or evil. This in brief is the philosophy of Karma; and a great Oriental Adept has described this in lucid and forcible language thus:

Every thought of man upon being evolved passes into the inner world, and becomes an active entity by associating itself—coalescing we might term it, with an elemental—that is to say, with one of the semi-intelligent forces of the kingdoms. It survives as an active intelligence—a creature of the mind's begetting—for a longer or shorter period proportionate to the original intensity of the cerebral action which generated it. Thus, a good thought is perpetuated as an active, beneficent power; an evil one, as a maleficent demon. And so man is continually peopling his current in space with a world of his own, crowded with the offsprings of his fancies, desires, impulses and passions; a current which reacts upon any sensitive or nervous organization which comes into contact with it, in proportion to its dynamic intensity. The Buddhist calls this his "Skandha"; the Hindu gives it the name of "Karma." The Adept evolves these shapes consciously; other men throw them off unconsciously.

In the following pages, I shall endeavour to explain and prove *seriatim* each of the propositions above put forward; and I beg the reader will be pleased to follow me step by step patiently.

To begin with the origin of human action. The motive powers of man's conscious nature, which give impulse and energy to human activity and set him in motion internally and externally, are what are called *Desires*, which include blind impulses, such as various kinds of appetites, as well as impulses accompanied by knowledge and intention; in fact, every impulse which urges man to action. Desires are thus the springs of action, and action is the exertion or exercise of the faculties of man, internal or external, and includes not only an overt act or uttered speech, but also the inmost thought.

One of the essential conditions for the performance of an action is Will. It is the Will that determines the action, and it therefore is the cause of Karma. In the absence of Will, as in the case of infants or

idiots, no Karma is generated, as the cause does not exist. So that man's accountability for his actions commences with the Will, irrespective of the commission of the action or otherwise. If the Will be followed by a *corresponding* overt act or speech, then his action would be doubly meritorious or vicious according to the nature and quality of the Will itself; and if the Will be not so followed by deed or word, then he shall have his deserts for the Will alone, for *in foro conscientiae*, a mere Will to do an act or speak a word is itself commendable or blamable as the case may be. Here it is that the Moralist differs from the Jurist. A vicious will without a vicious act is no offence in the eye of the Public Law, whereas morality takes cognizance of both, separately and jointly. True, the law takes notice of what it calls an "attempt" to commit an offence; but an attempt implies more than mere will; it is a stage beyond that. "Acts," says a lawyer, "immediately and necessarily connected with the commission of the offence and which constitute the commission of the offence, not being completed only because the offender is hindered by circumstances independent of his will, as by seizure by the police, etc., are attempts." So that it is clear that an attempt is one of a series of small actions necessary to the fulfilment of a great one.

It may be asked whether the Law does not look to Will as the criterion for ascertaining whether an offence committed was intentional or otherwise. I know the Law does this; indeed the maxim of the Jurist is, *Actus non facit rem, nisi mens sit rea* (the action itself does not constitute guilt unless it is done with a guilty intention). But then, it must be remarked that the means which the Jurist employs to discover the Will, the internal motive, are confessedly *external*; for he says, *Acta exteriora indicant interiora secreta* (external acts indicate internal secrets); and regards only such intentions as are demonstrated by outward actions, and assumes jurisdiction against an *overt act* or against an intention manifested by an *overt act*, in utter disregard of the antecedent latent will which influenced the overt act. Surely this mode of procedure is not calculated to elicit the truth, and it may and does very often tend to eliminate it, for man is quite capable of covering his foulest deeds and thoughts by parading his innocent ones with simulated candour, and prearranging matters in the manner best suited to prevent the possibility of arousing suspicion in the shrewdest people. The more enlightened a man is, the greater is the chance of

his proving a consummate cheat, unless his enlightenment has extended to the regions of spiritual purity. But the Jurist is powerless in dealing with such cases. Wherever the Public Law is severed from spiritual matters, there necessarily arises an insurmountable barrier which confines the Jurist within narrow limits in point of time and scope of inquiry. Nay, it is not, in such a state of things, possible for a Public Tribunal to devote the unlimited time and energy necessary for the divulgence of every immoral act committed within the realm. So that his motto has been, "Let not the strife be immortal while those who strive are mortal." But the reign of psychology begins at this very point; it deals with the *immortal portion* of man principally; and its functions are neither restricted by time nor by any other consideration. It takes cognizance of every action, whether trivial or grave, whether still in the bud, in the mere conception of the individual, or an accomplished fact, and deals out retributive justice, whether the process takes days, centuries or even cycles.

Hence it is an essential condition of the law of Karma that we should dive deep into the human heart, and examine the character of the Will, in every action, outward or inward. The influence of the Will is the cerebral influence, that is, the influence of nerves, or rather the pairs of nerves, emerging from the brain, such as optic nerves, auditory nerves, olfactory nerves. This influence of the Will, when exerted, stimulates the vital force which pervades the brain and the nerves, travels to every part of the human system with the speed of lightning, and causes a vibration of the nerves. Then the nerves, acting through the interposition of the spinal cord, the main trunk of the nerves distributed to all parts of the body except the brain, contract the muscles. And lastly, the muscles produce the movement of such part of the body as may be necessary for the performance of the action contemplated by the Will. In other words, the vital force, agitated by the Will, flows out and results in an action, external or internal; for, it must be remembered that "besides the mechanical effects produced by our outward actions, there is also an electric influence exerted and propagated by almost every muscular effort, every chemical change within us, and every variation in the state of health or vigour, and especially by every mental effort; for no thought can arise in the mind which does not alter the psychological, chemical, and electric condition of the brain, and consequently of the whole

system. The stronger the emotion, the greater the change; so that great mental efforts and great exertions of the Will bring about important moral effects. If the action is an overt one, as when we raise the hand or utter a word, the action of the vital force is mechanical, but if it is an internal action, as when we do not proceed beyond evolving a thought, then the effect is electrical; and consequently the result in the first case is more palpable than in the second. But in either case it is the vital force that has produced the result; and the question arises whether there exists such a thing in the human constitution as the vital force of which we are speaking.

This subject belongs to the department of Occult science, which from time immemorial has been the peculiar possession of the sacerdotal section of the Aryans; and "into the knowledge of which Moses was initiated at Heliopolis (in Egypt) where he was educated, and Jesus among the Essenian priests of Egypt or Judea; and by which these great reformers, particularly the latter, wrought many of the miracles mentioned in the Scripture," as stated by Dr. Williams, a Professor of psychological science in England, upon the authority of Rebold. These ancient Occultists designated the vital force under the name of regenerating Fire, which the Sanscritists call *Tejas*.

(To be continued)

THERE may be another sort of wealth than mere gold, another sort of power than position in politics or society. The powerful, wide, all-embracing, rapidly-acting brain stored with knowledge is a vast possession which one man may enjoy. He can use it properly or improperly. It may lead him to excesses, to vileness, to the very opposite of all that is good. It is his reward for a long past life of stupidity followed by others of noble deeds and thoughts....The possessor thus given a reward may misuse it so as to turn it, next time he is born, into a source of punishment. We are thus continually fitting our arrows to the bow, drawing them back hard to the ear, and shooting them forth from us. When we enter the field of earth-life again, they will surely strike us or our enemies of human shape or the circumstances which otherwise would hurt us. It is not the arrow or the bow that counts, but the motive and thought with which the missile is shot.

—W. Q. JUDGE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The majority of astronomers have believed for years that we are not alone in the universe, that intelligent life exists on other planets in other solar systems. The cover story in the September issue of *Life* magazine deals with the gathering momentum of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. There are billions of galaxies in the universe, and billions of stars similar to our sun in a single galaxy. According to Carl Sagan, it is inconceivable that humans are the only intelligent life in such a vast universe. In 1982, under his lead, more than 50 prominent scientists signed a petition supporting SETI (Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence), even in the face of opposition from other scientists. That same year a panel of astronomers concluded: "Intelligent organisms are as much a part of the universe as stars and galaxies. It is hard to imagine a more exciting astronomical discovery or one that would have greater impact on human perceptions than the detection of extraterrestrial intelligence."

Scientists have used radio telescopes in the past to listen for signs of intelligent life in the universe, but the current NASA SETI project, which got to a start this October, goes far beyond all previous efforts. The project, which will continue for at least a decade, will attempt to discover radio waves created by intelligent beings, "radio waves that may have begun their journey toward earth at the speed of light as recently as yesterday—or as long ago as thousands of millennia."

In the same issue of *Life* magazine, renowned science writer Arthur C. Clarke explains why scientists consider it important to listen to signals from distant stars:

There are two aspects of the search for extraterrestrial intelligence—the technological and the philosophical. The first is the concern of engineers and scientists. Where and how do we search, and with what equipment? The second should be the concern of every thinking person, because it deals with one of the most fundamental questions that can be asked: What is the status of that recent arrival on the scene, *Homo sapiens*, in the cosmic pecking order?...

However it might occur, the detection of intelligent life beyond the earth would change forever our outlook on the universe. At the very least, it would prove that intelligence *does* have some survival value...

I suspect the first thing we would like to know about an E.T. is "What does it look like?"...Almost certainly, we would be in for a shock. Although our basic design seems to be an efficient one, which may well occur frequently on earthlike planets, nowhere in the galaxy will there be creatures we could mistake for human beings....Never in the whole of time and space would our *exact* evolutionary sequence be repeated....

This may be the reason why so many people are opposed to SETI....Those who are in favour of the search hope for great benefits. If there are higher civilizations out there in the Milky Way, perhaps they are continually broadcasting an easily decoded "Encyclopedia Galactica" for the benefit of their less advanced neighbours. It may contain answers to almost all the questions our philosophers and scientists have been asking for centuries, and solutions to many of the practical problems that beset mankind.

But could we absorb such a flood of knowledge, and would its very existence not give us a—perhaps terminal—inferiority complex? Even the most well-intentioned contacts between cultures at different levels of development can have disastrous results. Might we be better off, in the long run, to acquire knowledge by our own efforts? I recall that a tribal chief, when confronted with the marvels of Western technology, remarked, "You have stolen our dreams."

"Scientific reasoning, as well as observed facts, concur with the statements of the seer and the innate voice in man's own heart in declaring that life—intelligent, conscious life—*must* exist on other worlds than ours," declares *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 702). However, an error hitherto commonly made by science-fiction writers as well as by some scientists themselves was to take the conditions of life on earth as the standard by which to determine the degree to which other planets were adapted for habitation by "other humanities"—a mistake now being admitted to.

That time is gone by for ever, when, although our pious ancestors believed that our earth was in the centre of the universe, the church and her arrogant servants could insist that we should regard as a blasphemy the supposition that any other planet could be inhabited. Adam and Eve, the Serpent, and the Original Sin followed by atonement through blood, have been too long in the way, and thus was universal truth sacrificed to the insane conceit of us little men....

But when, extending our speculations beyond our planetary chain, we try to cross the limits of the solar system, then indeed we act as do presumptuous fools....The ordinary man has no experience of any state of consciousness other than that to which the physical senses link him. Men dream; they sleep the profound sleep which is too deep for dreams to impress the physical brain; and in these states there must still be consciousness. How, then, while these mysteries remain unexplored, can we hope to speculate with profit on the nature of globes which, in the economy of nature, must needs belong to states of consciousness other and quite different from *any* which man experiences here?

And this is true to the letter. For even great adepts (those initiated of course), trained seers though they are, can claim thorough acquaintance with the nature and appearance of planets and their inhabitants belonging to our solar system only. They *know* that almost all the planetary worlds are inhabited, but can have access to—even in spirit—only those of our system; and they are also aware how difficult it is, *even for them*, to put themselves into full rapport even with the planes of consciousness *within* our system, but differing from the states of consciousness possible on this globe; *i.e.*, on the three planes of the chain of spheres beyond our earth. Such knowledge and intercourse are possible to them because they have learned how to penetrate to planes of consciousness which are closed to the perceptions of ordinary men; but were they to communicate their knowledge, the world would be no wiser, because it lacks that experience of other forms of perception which alone could enable them to grasp what was told them....

Let us, however, leave profitless and empty speculations, which, though they seem to fill our hearts with a glow of enthusiasm and to enlarge our mental and spiritual grasp, do but in reality cause a factitious stimulation, and blind us more and more to our ignorance not only of the world we inhabit, but even of the infinitude contained within ourselves. (*S.D.*, II, 699-703)

Psychologists have written tomes analysing misery and how to relieve it. Studies of negative emotions, like stress, depression, anxiety, have greatly overshadowed studies of positive emotions. Till lately, very little had been said by psychologists on joy and happiness; but

now that is changing. David G. Myers writes in *Psychology Today* (July–August 1992) of the findings of researchers who are trying to get a fresh perspective on the age-old problem of happiness.

Psychologists at the National Institute on Aging in the United States found that the enduring characteristics of the individual strongly influenced his well-being. A 10-year study revealed that, given the right disposition, people can find renewed happiness even in the face of difficulties. According to these researchers, there are four main traits of happy people: (1) Self-esteem. People who are realistic, free of illusions, and who accept themselves for what they are, feel good about themselves and life in general. (2) Realistic optimism. Those who see the glass of life as half-full rather than half-empty are usually happier, and healthier, and more successful. (3) Extroversion. Extroverts are more cheerful and high-spirited and, studies reveal, happier and more satisfied with life. (4) Personal control. People who believe they can control their lives and shape their destinies feel satisfied and have "extraordinarily positive feelings of happiness."

Dr. Myers has this final comment to offer, which brings us back to the perennial question of nature *versus* nurture, fate *versus* free will:

It's easily enough said that happiness comes with having positive self-esteem, feeling in control of our lives, and having optimistic, outgoing dispositions, but how can we strengthen such traits?...More than such advice-givers realize, we bring our basic dispositions with us into the world.

More and more studies show that our basic personality traits endure, especially after childhood. While developmental psychologists are sometimes surprised by how often troubled, unhappy children mature into competent, successful adults, there is nonetheless an underlying consistency to personality. After the end of the teen years, traits such as outgoingness, emotional stability, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness seem to persist throughout adulthood.

But it's also true that we have the power to affect our own destinies, for we are the creators as well as the creatures of our social worlds. We may be the products of our past, but we are also the architects of our future. Personality isn't programmed like eye colour. The predispositions we bring with us into the world leave room for nurture's influence, and our own efforts as well. What we do today shapes our world and ourselves tomorrow.

If social psychologists have proven anything during the last 30 years, they have proven that the actions we take leave a residue inside us. Every time we act, we amplify the underlying idea or tendency behind it. Most people presume the reverse: that our traits and attitudes affect our behaviour. While this is true to a certain extent (though less so than commonly supposed), it is also true that our traits and attitudes *follow* our behaviour. We are as likely to act ourselves into a new way of thinking as to think ourselves into a new way of acting.

There is a practical moral here for us all. Do we wish to change ourselves in some important way? Perhaps boost our self-esteem? Become more optimistic and socially assertive? Well, a potent strategy is to get up and start doing that very thing....Going through the motions can trigger the emotions.

A word of caution, however. To go on being unhappy inside while forcing oneself on the surface to enjoy "the everyday pageant of existence" tends to disintegrate the consciousness, when integration is the main aim. For true happiness, body, soul and spirit have to work together. Grief and misery must not be indulged but faced and conquered. That can only be by taking the wider view, by lifting the consciousness above self-pity, by dwelling upon high ideals, by acquiring an understanding of the purpose of life and setting oneself to attain it. For, as H.P.B. reminds us:

Joys and pleasures teach us nothing; they are evanescent, and can only bring in the long run satiety....The object of doing our duties to all men and to ourselves the last, is not the attainment of personal happiness, but of the happiness of others; the fulfilment of right for the sake of right, not for what it may bring us. Happiness, or rather contentment, may indeed follow the performance of duty, but is not and must not be the motive for it. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 225-26, Indian ed.)

His Holiness the Dalai Lama, in his exclusive column in *The Times of India* (October 2, 1992), considers compassion to be the key that will solve many a problem facing human beings. If we want to find a solution to external problems, he suggests, we should begin by understanding ourselves, changing ourselves. This will lead to a

change in our attitude even to the so-called "external enemy." There will be forgiveness and an increase in our inner strength. His Holiness, who commands respect worldwide for his deep humanity, observes:

We must realize that human happiness is interdependent. One's own successful or happy future is related to that of others. Therefore, helping others or having consideration for their rights and needs is actually not only one's responsibility but a matter of one's own happiness....

Genuine non-violence is related to one's mental attitude. When we talk of peace we must mean genuine peace, not merely the absence of war....The nature of non-violence should be something that is not passive but active in helping others. Non-violence means that if you can help and serve others you must do that. If you cannot, you must at least restrain yourself from harming others....

Compassion and love are not matters of religion, though many religions teach these things. When we are born, we do not have any religion but we are not free from human love and affection. This is not a matter of religion....

Why is it necessary to make a distinction between religion and human nature? This is essential because, of the five billion or so people on our planet, no more than about one billion are "believers" or actively follow any organized religion. We are all members of the same human family. We must find ways of cultivating a deeper awareness of love and compassion, with or without religion. At the same time, we need to understand the negative expressions of the human mind such as anger, hatred and attachment....

We are human beings, our basic nature is that of love and compassion....In human nature, there is a natural feeling for living things. I think the time has come to think about the basic cause of our suffering.

A volume published in the mid-eighties, under the aegis of the United Nations, mentioned more than six thousand major world problems, but it did not mention any single major factor that lies at the root of all these problems.

In the October issue of *Purity*, B. K. Jagdish suggests that the underlying cause of these problems, most of which are interlinked, is invariably some form of disharmony—political, social, communal,

racial, environmental, etc.:

A study of the case-history of any of these problems would also show that if the policy, practice or solution adopted to solve that problem had been other than the one that aimed at restoring the harmony, it had not only failed but had also led to a bigger problem because it caused greater disharmony....

Another thing that people hardly realize is that the cause of all social, political and other upheavals is the inner disharmony....If mankind understood that the crux of all problems is disharmony of one kind or the other, and that the disharmony is caused mainly by inner mental or spiritual disharmony, then it would not try to curb violence by using violence, nor would it attempt to remove poverty by overambitious developmental plans that cause ecological disharmony. Instead, it would consider universal harmony as the only worthy remedy. Also, though political, religious, racial, spiritual or any other kind of harmony was the need of the time during different periods of history, there never was such an urgent need for all kinds of harmony than there is now. So, let restoring harmony in all spheres of life be our first priority and our declared goal, policy, plan and avowed practice now.

In the same issue of *Purity* appears a paper presented by Nicholaa Malet de Carteret at a UNDP Conference held in Romania this September on the theme Global Change within the context of Human Development. The following excerpts from the paper emphasize the impact of value systems in shaping change:

What forms an individual's or society's value systems? A combination of thought processes, attitudes, beliefs, knowledge, motive and conscience. What does a value system represent? It represents a statement of what an individual or society holds to be of value, socially or morally, based on standards of right and wrong....

The internal moral order is mediated by individual conscience, which arises out of the human capacity for self-judgment. Thus, a prerequisite to morality and ultimately, to value-based judgments is self-awareness; in other words, the awareness of internal thought processes. Self-awareness implies self-respect and self-esteem. When awareness is not internalized, or when it is misdirected, self-respect

manifests negatively as pride or ego....

Over the last few decades, society has endorsed, through a collective value system, purchasing power as a symbol of status and esteem. The more cars one has, or the bigger the house, the more regard one is accorded by society. It may be worth highlighting at this point the linkage between a lack of self-respect and the need to supplement internal deficiencies through material acquisition.

The extravagant consumption of material goods, the unjustified and unplanned leakages of human and technological waste are instigated—dare we say—by a value system at whose core lies human greed, a lack of concern for the environment, and an inability to share more equitably with others available natural resources.

The latest UNDP Human Development report states, "In 1960, the richest 20% of the world's population had incomes 30 times greater than the poorest 20%. By 1990, the richest 20% were getting 60 times more." In other words, the world's richest fifth now receives 82.7% of the total world income and the poorest fifth receives 1.4% of the total world income. In spite of efforts by development workers to improve the quality of life of the world's poor, the downhill slide in the last 30 years is irrefutable. This comes at a time when civilization is supposedly at the height of its progress. Conditions for the world as a whole are not getting better; they are becoming worse.

We have attempted to demonstrate the impact of negative and positive value systems in shaping change. Value systems propelled by greed or fear, or insecurity, promote consumer-oriented and aggressive societies which exploit the environment and sanction poverty and war. Some traditional value systems encourage, albeit unwittingly, population growth and prohibit modernization. At the heart of positive value systems lies the individual capacity for self-awareness and self-judgment. Decisions which bring benefit to the self and others can only be taken when mediated by a clear conscience and by a consciousness imbued with self-respect and spiritual energy.

Society gives priority to material well-being over mental, emotional and spiritual well-being. Yet it is the spiritual well-being of the individual that determines self-respect, and lack of it lies at the root of so many problems concerned with development.

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

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever 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 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.