

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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### THE POWER OF A WISH—A RESOLVE—A VOW

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Good resolutions are mind-painted pictures of good *deeds*: fancies, day-dreams, whisperings of the *Buddhi* to the *Manas*. If we encourage them they will not fade away like a dissolving mirage in the Shamo desert, but grow stronger and stronger until one's whole life becomes the expression and outward proof of the divine motive within....Be a missionary of love and charity, thus in helping others win your own salvation. There are innumerable pages of your life-record still to be written up; fair and blank they are as yet. Child of your race and of your age, seize the diamond-pen and inscribe them with the history of noble deeds, days well spent, years of holy striving. So will you win your way ever upward to the higher planes of spiritual consciousness.

—MAHATMA K.H.

BEFORE our next issue is out, the New Year according to the present secular calendar will have been ushered in. The New Year festivities follow closely on the festival of Christmas and the holiday spirit creates an atmosphere of friendliness. Friendliness engenders optimism, and optimism impels people to wish and to resolve—to wish for something they want to have come to themselves and to others in the coming months and year, and to resolve to eradicate that which stands in their way as souls and to bring into

their lives something that will instruct, will inspire them to lead a better, a nobler, life.

And yet people who, year after year, make wishes, resolves and even vows, taking advantage of the season's influence, do so without understanding the true significance of any of these. They only follow a custom without comprehending the soul-force that lies behind it.

The difference between a simple wish, a thoughtful resolve and a solemn vow, made to ourselves or to somebody else, needs to be looked into.

Good wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year are expressions of the spirit of fraternity that is abroad. But what are wishes worth if they are not realized by ourselves or by others for whom they are made? People do not ask why it is that these wishes are not realized, and they do not ask because they are not precise and scientific in the wishes they make. Every wish should be charged with real, potential energy which will bring its blessing of peace and goodwill to him for whom that wish is made. But, generally speaking, our wishes, being backed up neither by the power of thought nor by the energy of will, do not come true, even though they are the expression of a good and sincere desire.

A resolution is more potent than a wish, for it is backed not only by desire but also by thought. When we make a resolve we are supposed to have thought out the difficulties and obstacles that we are going to encounter, and to have calculated our strength and resources to overcome them. But very often in making a resolution we have in the back of our mind the thought: "I might fail in carrying out this resolve, but it is better to try and fail than not to try at all." That is true, but only to a certain extent; for, if a resolve has been made without proper forethought and knowledge of how to overcome the difficulties in our way, then in breaking it we weaken something in our psychic and spiritual nature. A little study of the true psychology that Theosophy puts forward helps us to make resolves that need not end in frustration.

The making of a vow requires something more than forethought. It is a solemn resolution born of absolute determination

that there shall be no failure. The breaking of a vow means degradation through loss of self-respect. In the spiritual life, one sure test of success and the attainment of experience is the gaining of self-respect. If a person cannot respect himself then all his efforts count for nothing. In making a vow we invoke forces that are higher than the forces of ordinary thought. It is the higher will that comes into play.

There are two aspects of the will—the lower aspect which in man works with the help of thought, and the higher aspect which is the energy, the radiation, of the highest in us. This higher will is the most sacred power in the universe; it is creative and its expression makes us spiritual. When we take a pledge or make a vow we call into play that particular aspect of the will. In breaking a resolution we shake our confidence in ourselves and that is bad enough, but in breaking a vow or a pledge we sin against our higher nature. Vows which are self-energized and are made after careful self-examination, when kept as they ought to be, produce an inner change that is of the nature of true conversion—quite different from the effects of outer proselytizing.

That, in brief, is the psychology of a wish, a resolve, a vow. After understanding it, shall we not make only such wishes as are thought-engendered? Shall we not resolve only after due consideration of our weaknesses and limitations, our virtues and powers? Shall we not make only solemn vows which will flower into spiritual knowledge which is peace, into real strength which is sacrifice, into the radiation of love which is bliss and which throbs at the heart of the universe?

People often proceed rashly because they do not understand, or hold back timidly because they do. There is a middle path which lies between rashness and timidity. By all means a sacred vow may be made after due consideration, but it has to be sustained by a firm resolve that, come what may, it shall not be broken. In terms of this resolve we can then proceed to formulate our wishes. Too often we go in the reverse order. We shower our wishes upon others, but they mean little save as expressions of good-will and fellowship. Many "resolves" are made, and many are broken, perhaps within 48 hours

if not earlier. But if we proceed with the vow to do something to elevate our own nature during the year, and make our resolves and offer our wishes in terms of that vow, these will have added potency.

The wishes we send out or express to our friends are mainly wishes for material prosperity and benefits, but how do we know that these are going to be of help to those friends? Years of pleasure and prosperity may bring little experience of value, but in a solitary hour of anguish perhaps a wonderful experience may be had. Resolves that are made in terms of our fancy, without proper knowledge of what is good for us, are almost certain to end in failure. The spirit of resolution lies in the vow, in the will that energizes thought and feeling and results in action. If we attune ourselves to the inner, secret and sacred part of our being which speaks to us through the still, small voice, and make a vow in terms of the dictates of that voice, it will bring into our lives an ideal, an objective. We shall then know what resolves and wishes we should make in terms of that ideal.

A vow such as this, pertaining to the immortal nature in each of us, gives us an ideal to live for: "Through all obstacles, in the midst of all difficulties, I will act as a human being, as an immortal soul ought to act." Our efforts to live up to this vow will necessitate the making of resolves. How shall we manifest the powers of the soul? How shall we behave in a given circumstance? How act in a particular environment? The need for knowledge is bound to be felt, and the knowledge that will help us is the Science of the Self, the Self which is at the basis of every form of life. From the resolve to gain that knowledge flowers the wish that in all that Self may shine forth. For helping to make such a wish effective in any measure we need more than knowledge; we need that love which arises out of the recognition of the fact of Universal Brotherhood. He who prates of brotherhood and does not try to practise it in the spirit of sacrifice falls into hypocrisy. His words, moreover, fall upon deaf ears. Only a lighted candle can enkindle others.

No man can make a vow for another, but each of us can make a vow in relation to his fellow beings. Take, for instance, the

celebrated vow of Kwan-Yin:

Never will I seek nor receive private, individual salvation; never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever, and everywhere, will I live and strive for the redemption of every creature throughout the world.

Why cannot we take a pledge such as this?—"I will not live for myself alone. I will not live for my family alone. I will not live for my town alone. I will not live for my country alone. I will not even live for mankind alone. I will live and work for the amelioration of the condition of every creature in the universe." All are sparks of the One Reality and are struggling along the dark and narrow path, seeking the Light.

In formulating their wishes, resolves and vows, students of Theosophy should take into account their self-imposed obligations to the Cause they cherish. There ought to be a desire to improve the quality of their service to the Cause, to increase its quantity. Pure motive, aided by correct method, will free us from the bonds of personal Karma, so that the Ego's one consuming desire emerges—to serve all human souls according to the plan of the Great Servants of the race.

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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. BLAVATSKY

## THE BIRTH OF SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

MODERN science has not yet solved the mystery of man's self-consciousness and intellect; may be it never will. But we know this is the barrier separating humans from animals and, if we have suffering and evil in our lives, we are justified in attributing these misfortunes to our self-consciousness, to the weakening of instinct, to the wayward and frequently harmful working of intellect. There was a Fall of Man, not such as the myths of religion suggest, but as a natural phenomenon. This Fall is intimately related to the birth of self- or reflective consciousness, with the power to compare and contrast and so choose, which implies freedom to determine. Here is the source of evil and pain—the martyrdom of self-conscious existence.

The birth of self-consciousness as a stage in human evolution is explained in the Esoteric Philosophy. Before that stage was reached, there was man in form but not in mind. "Living Fire" was needed, that fire which gives the human mind its self-perception and self-consciousness. This was provided by others, *i.e.*, by intelligences who had gone through this process ages upon ages ago in prior fields of evolution in other worlds; coming from other evolutionary periods, they lighted up the germ of mind in the mindless man.

In numerous ways, using different old-world texts, H.P.B. tries to clarify the confusion that exists in the modern mind coloured by the Darwinian theory of evolution, true in parts but very incomplete. In this teaching about the birth of self-consciousness lies buried the mystery of the "missing link" of modern science—between the animal and the human kingdoms. Given below are a few extracts from *The Secret Doctrine* which explain this teaching.

Man, philosophically considered, is, in his outward form, simply an animal, hardly more perfect than his pithecoïd-like ancestor of the third round. He is a living body, not a living being, since the realization of existence, the "Ego-Sum," necessitates self-

consciousness, and an animal can only have direct consciousness, or instinct. (I, 234)

The Doctrine teaches that, in order to become a divine, fully conscious god—aye, even the highest—the Spiritual primeval INTELLIGENCES must pass through the human stage. And when we say human, this does not apply merely to our terrestrial humanity, but to the mortals that inhabit any world, *i.e.*, to those Intelligences that have reached the appropriate equilibrium between matter and spirit, as we have now, since the middle point of the Fourth Root Race of the Fourth Round was passed. Each Entity must have won for itself the right of becoming divine, through self-experience. Hegel, the great German thinker, must have known or sensed intuitionally this truth when saying, as he did, that the Unconscious evolved the Universe only "in the hope of attaining clear self-consciousness," of becoming, in other words, MAN; for this is also the secret meaning of the usual Puranic phrase about Brahma being constantly "moved by the desire to create." This explains also the hidden Kabalistic meaning of the saying: "The *Breath* becomes a stone; the stone, a plant; the plant, an animal; the animal, a man; the man, a spirit; and the spirit, a god." The Mind-born Sons, the Rishis, the Builders, etc., were all men—of whatever forms and shapes—in other worlds and the preceding Manvantaras.

The subject, being so very mystical, is therefore the most difficult to explain in all its details and bearings; since the whole mystery of evolutionary creation is contained in it. (I, 106-7)

Exoteric Hindu books mention seven classes of Pitris, and among them two distinct kinds of Progenitors or Ancestors: the *Barhishad* and the *Agnishwatta*; or those possessed of the "sacred fire" and those devoid of it....It is the *Agnishwatta* alone who could complete man, *i.e.*, make of him a self-conscious, almost a divine being—a god on Earth....For, to complete the *septenary man*, to add to his three lower principles and cement them with the spiritual Monad—which could never dwell in such a form otherwise than in an *absolutely latent state*—two connecting principles are needed: *Manas* and *Kama*. This requires a living *Spiritual Fire* of the middle principle....The human *Ego* is neither Atman nor Buddhi,

but the higher *Manas*: the intellectual fruition and the efflorescence of the intellectual self-conscious *Egotism*—in the higher spiritual sense. The ancient works refer to it as *Karana Sarira* on the plane of *Sutratma*, which is the golden thread on which, like beads, the various personalities of this higher *Ego* are strung. (II, 77-79)

The Barhishad Pitris, or the Pitar-Devata, *i.e.*, those *possessed of the physical creative fire*...could only create, or rather clothe, the human Monads with their own astral Selves, but they could not make man in their image and likeness. "Man must not be like one of us," say the *creative* gods, entrusted with the fabrication of the lower animal but higher. Their creating the semblance of men out of their own divine Essence means, esoterically, that it is they who became the first Race, and thus shared its destiny and further evolution. They *would* not, simply because they *could* not, give to man that sacred spark which burns and expands into the flower of human reason and self-consciousness, for they had it not to give. This was left to that class of Devas who became symbolized in Greece under the name of Prometheus, to those who had nought to do with the physical body, yet everything with the purely spiritual man. (II, 94-95)

Hence, as the higher "Pitris or Dhyanis" had no hand in his physical creation, we find primeval man, issued from the bodies of his *spiritually fireless* progenitors, described as aeriform, devoid of compactness, and MINDLESS. He had no middle principle to serve him as a medium between the *highest* and the *lowest*, the spiritual man and the physical brain, for he lacked *Manas*. The Monads which incarnated in those *empty* SHELLS, remained as unconscious as when separated from their previous incomplete forms and vehicles. There is no potentiality for creation, or self-Consciousness, in a *pure* Spirit on this our plane, unless its too homogeneous, perfect, because divine, nature is, so to say, mixed with, and strengthened by, an essence already differentiated. It is only the lower line of the Triangle—representing the first triad that emanates from the Universal MONAD—that can furnish this needed

consciousness on the plane of differentiated Nature. (II, 80)

Between man and the animal—whose Monads (or Jivas) are fundamentally identical—there is the impassable abyss of Mentality and Self-consciousness. What is human mind in its higher aspect, whence comes it, if it is not a portion of the essence—and, in some rare cases of incarnation, the *very essence*—of a higher Being: one from a higher and divine plane? Can man—a god in the animal form—be the product of Material Nature by evolution alone, even as is the animal, which differs from man in external shape, but by no means in the materials of its physical fabric, and is informed by the same, though undeveloped, Monad—seeing that the intellectual potentialities of the two differ as the Sun does from the Glow-worm? And what is it that creates such difference, unless man is an animal *plus a living god* within his physical shell?....

The mystery attached to the highly spiritual ancestors of the *divine* man within the earthly man is very great. His dual creation is hinted at in the Puranas, though its esoteric meaning can be approached only by collating together the many varying accounts, and reading them in their symbolical and allegorical character. (II, 81)

*"The Sons of MAHAT are the quickeners of the human Plant. They are the Waters falling upon the arid soil of latent life, and the Spark that vivifies the human animal. They are the Lords of Spiritual Life eternal."*

Had not the "Sons of Mahat," speaking allegorically, skipped the intermediate worlds, in their impulse toward intellectual freedom, the animal man would never have been able to reach upward from this earth, and attain through self-exertion his ultimate goal. The cyclic pilgrimage would have to be performed through all the planes of existence half unconsciously, if not entirely so, as in the case of the animals. It is owing to this rebellion of intellectual life against the morbid inactivity of pure spirit, that we are what we are—self-conscious, thinking men, with the capabilities and attributes of Gods in us, for good as much as for evil. Hence the REBELS are our saviours. Let the philosopher ponder well over this, and

more than one mystery will become clear to him. It is only by the attractive force of the contrasts that the two opposites—Spirit and Matter—can be cemented on Earth, and, smelted in the fire of self-conscious experience and suffering, find themselves wedded in Eternity. This will reveal the meaning of many hitherto incomprehensible allegories, foolishly called "fables." (II, 103)

The legend of the "Fallen Angels" in its esoteric signification, contains the key to the manifold contradictions of human character; it points to the secret of man's self-consciousness; it is the angle-iron on which hinges his entire life-cycle—the history of his evolution and growth. On a firm grasp of this doctrine depends the correct understanding of esoteric anthropogenesis. It gives a clue to the vexed question of the Origin of Evil; and shows how man himself is the separator of the ONE into various contrasted aspects. (II, 274)

The myth [of Prometheus] belongs to neither Hesiod nor Aeschylus; but, as Bunsen says, it "is older than the Hellenes themselves," for it belongs, in truth, to the dawn of human consciousness. The *Crucified Titan* is the personified symbol of the collective Logos, the "Host," and of the "Lords of Wisdom" or the HEAVENLY MAN, who incarnated in Humanity. Moreover, as his name *Pro-me-theus*, meaning "he who sees before him" or futurity, shows—in the arts he devised and taught to humanity, psychological insight was not the least. For as he complains to the daughters of Oceanos:—

"Of prophecies the various modes I fixed,  
And among dreams did first discriminate  
The truthful vision...and mortals guided  
To a mysterious art....

All arts to mortals from Prometheus came..." (II, 413)

The subject of Aeschylus' drama (the trilogy is lost) is known to all cultured readers. The demi-god robs the gods (the Elohim) of their secret—the mystery of the *creative fire*. For this sacrilegious attempt he is struck down by KRONOS and delivered unto Zeus, the FATHER and creator of a mankind which he would wish to have blind

intellectually, and animal-like; a *personal* deity, which will not see MAN "like one of us." Hence Prometheus, "the fire and light-giver," is chained on Mount Caucasus and condemned to suffer torture. But the triform Fates (Karma), whose decrees, as the Titan says, even Zeus—"E'en he the fore-ordained cannot escape..."—ordain that those sufferings will last only to that day when a son of Zeus...will deliver Prometheus (the suffering Humanity) from his own fatal gift. His name is, "He who has to come...." (II, 414)

The intellectual evolution, in its progress hand-in-hand with the physical, has certainly been a curse instead of a blessing—a gift quickened by the "Lords of Wisdom," who have poured on the human *manas* the fresh dew of their own spirit and essence. The divine Titan has then suffered in vain; and one feels inclined to regret his benefaction to mankind, and sigh for those days so graphically depicted by Aeschylus, in his "Prometheus Bound," when, at the close of the first Titanic age...nascent, physical mankind, still mindless and (physiologically) senseless, is described as—

"Seeing, they saw in vain;  
Hearing, they heard not; but like shapes in dreams,  
Through the long time all things at random mixed."

Our *Saviours*, the Agnishwatta and other divine "Sons of the Flame of Wisdom" (personified by the Greeks in Prometheus), may well, in the injustice of the human heart, be left unrecognized and unthanked. They may, in our ignorance of the truth, be indirectly cursed for Pandora's gift....But, with the arts, the fire received has turned into the greatest curse: the animal element, and *consciousness* of its possession, has changed periodical instinct into chronic animalism and sensuality. It is this which hangs over humanity like a heavy funeral pall. Thus arises the responsibility of free-will; the Titanic passions which represent humanity in its darkest aspect; "the restless insatiability of the lower passions and desires, when, with self-asserting insolence, they bid defiance to the restraints of law."

Prometheus having endowed man, according to Plato's "Protagoras," with that "wisdom which ministers to physical well-being," but the lower aspect of *manas* of the animal (*Kama*) having remained unchanged, instead of "an untainted mind, heaven's first gift" (Aeschylus), there was created the eternal vulture of the ever unsatisfied desire, of regret and despair coupled with "the dream-like feebleness that fetters the blind race of mortals" unto the day when Prometheus is released by his heaven-appointed deliverer, Herakles. (II, 411-13)

The modern Prometheus has now become *Epi-metheus*, "he who sees only after the event"; because the universal philanthropy of the former has long ago degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration. Man will re-become the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures—the terrestrial and the divine; after which he becomes impermeable to the lower titanic forces, invulnerable in his personality, and immortal in his individuality, which cannot happen before every animal element is eliminated from his nature. When man understands that "*Deus non fecit mortem*" (*Sap. I, 13*), but that man has created it himself, he will re-become the Prometheus before his Fall. (II, 422)

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THERE is only One Life, One Consciousness. It masquerades under all the different forms of sentient beings, and these varying forms with their intelligences mirror a portion of the ONE LIFE, thus producing in each a false idea of egoism. FORM, as such, is nothing; phenomena are not realities *per se*; all must be referred to the Self. Rely upon the One Consciousness, which, as differentiated in Man, is his Higher Self. By means of this Higher Self he is to strengthen the lower, or that which he is accustomed to call "myself."

—W. Q. JUDGE

## RELIGION IN DAILY LIFE

THERE is perhaps no word more misunderstood or misinterpreted than the word "religion." Religion is *not* a creed or a sect; religion is *not* theology; religion is *not* a separative force. Religion is the great binding power, the power of cohesion, which keeps the minds and hearts of people united. Religion, in spirit and in truth, is *one*; forms of religion are numerous, and all forms, without exception, are fallible, limited, subject to decay and to death.

Therefore the sages of every era and clime have upheld the Religion of Life and have opposed all religions of belief and of form. Men of character, men of charity and piety and saintliness, have graced every religion. There have been Hindu sages, Muslim Sufis, Christian saints, and holy men of every other religion. And the reverse is equally true: thieves and dishonest people, criminals and antisocial elements are also to be found in every crowd—in the temple, in the mosque, in the church, in the synagogue. A little study and examination will make it amply clear that organized religion does not possess the charter to the real Religion of Life.

Those foolish enough to take a sectarian and orthodox attitude indulge in petty jealousies, petty meannesses, petty feuds. It might be argued, Why then should we have a religion at all? Certain principles of life and conduct ought to suffice! True, but those very principles of life and conduct constitute our religion. An agnostic has for his religion Agnosticism; a nationalist has for his religion Nationalism; and so on. Each one has an inner as well as an outer religion. The religion into which one is born is not one's true religion. The religion of a thief is thieving; his religious creed, or the temple or mosque or church he goes to, is but an outer show and has no relation to his life-activities. Our inner character and our outer conduct, or the principles of life that we hold and practise, constitute our true religion. Our religion manifests in our attitude and our actions, day by day, hour by hour. So, we must distinguish the inner religion from the outer.

Let us not make the mistake of imagining our inner religion to

be static and non-evolving. When, for one reason or another, we perceive the failings of the outer religion into which we are born and brought up, and decide to leave it and to practise that which we see to be rational and good, we are apt to make the same error that orthodox religionists make—we become mechanical and look upon our own principles and ideals as infallible and final. The spirit of inquiry and search, the spirit of intellectual honesty, of sincerity and of earnestness to live up to our highest ideal as we see it, while recognizing that there are nobler heights still—that is the very soul of inner religion. The fundamental characteristic of religion is its dynamism. A dynamic Religion cannot go wrong for ever; because of its dynamic power, that Religion is bound to bring us to Truth. We cannot make religion a living power in our daily existence if that religion is a static, stagnating, formal creed. Therefore it is necessary to analyse and examine what we call our principles of life and conduct.

So there is an inner, dynamic Religion and an outer, static creed. The prophet always proclaims the dynamic Religion; the priest ever preaches the static religion. The prophet brings knowledge and enlightenment; the priest compels belief and leads people to credulity and to superstition. The dynamic Religion which the prophet offers makes us search our own souls; the static religion of the priest makes us hand over our souls to his custody. Priests are ever the enemies of the prophets, and we cannot serve both; we cannot live by the dynamic Religion of our own mind and heart if we live by the static religion of formalism and of creed. Every prophet has cried, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate"; and by "them" who else could be meant than the priest-ridden blind believers?

Now what is the first step indicated in the dynamic Religion of Krishna and Buddha, of Jesus and Paul, of Mohammed and Moses? First and foremost—self-reformation or soul-reformation. The very nature and character of the dynamic Religion is motion and change. And the first motion is to turn from without within; away from the senses, towards and into the soul. Such has been ever and

always the first lesson taught by every prophet. Krishna was a reformer; Buddha was a breaker of traditional formalism; Jesus fought the priests of the synagogue; Mohammed was a Hanif, a seeker of Truth and Light, dissatisfied with the orthodoxy of his day and place. So if we want to secure for ourselves the help of the dynamic Religion, we must silence the senses and listen to the soul within. "Look inward: thou art Buddha," says *The Voice of the Silence*. "To thine own self be true," says Shakespeare, and the poet and the prophet at times have the same insight. Every great prophet, philosopher and poet has advised us to look within, so that we may be born again.

True conversion is not proselytism. There is no meaning whatsoever in changing one outer creed for another. What we need is to leave off a static religious creed of beliefs and become converted to the dynamic Religion of Life. Anyone who is desirous of *living* by the power of Religion must turn within, as the first, the initial step, and sort out his actual principles and convictions, seek out and test his ideals, hopes and aspirations. Those who boast of their principles and convictions have not really analysed them. Let us not be dogmatic about them; let us not be afraid of analysing and testing them. We cannot live up to our convictions unless they have been analysed; we cannot act according to our principles till they have been tested; we cannot realize our ideals till they have been examined.

The principles of the dynamic Religion of Life—principles of conduct and of action, ideals that shape and mould our character—are very definite. Because religion as a science is not recognized, and especially because as an applied science its value is regarded as practically nil, the search for the principles of religion is hardly undertaken. To students of comparative religions, it is quite clear that there is a definite method of graduation in religious life. That which Lao Tzu called the Tao, that which Krishna described as *Dharma*, that which the Buddha called the Noble Eightfold Path, that which Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus, asking him to be "born again," are identical in fundamentals and principles. Remove from

every static religious creed that which makes it different from other static creeds, and very soon we will see an outline of the dynamic Religion of Life.

What are the great principles that the Doctors of Soul-Science, the Prophets and the Sages, advocated for such as us who must perforce walk the path of routine day by day?

(1) The principle of the Moral Order of the Universe. Modern Science shows the visible universe to be precise and orderly, reveals the march of evolution to be steady and deliberate. The soul-science of the ancients goes further and reveals order and harmony, motion and rhythm, in the mental and moral worlds as well. Study of philosophy and of ethics brings the knowledge of the orderly progression of the kingdoms of the mind, the soul and the spirit. Philosophy or metaphysics is the science of ideas, not only in the ordinary sense, but also in the special sense in which Plato used that word. And ethics is applied science, just as philosophy is theoretical or speculative science. Therefore we might say that philosophical ideas and metaphysical concepts, when applied or practised in the struggles of daily existence, bring comfort of soul, peace of mind, joy of heart. Ethical precepts derived from correct philosophy and metaphysics are like useful gadgets and appliances of the kitchen which delight the heart of the housewife, not only because they save labour and time, but also because they bring joy and zest to her kitchen toils. Study of and contemplation on the Moral Order of the Universe, from star to dust, from seed to fruit, reveal the kinship subsisting between all forms of life—the relation between star and dust, between earth and seed and fruit, and the one who grows it and the one who eats it. There exists an indissoluble link between every form of life and every other form—species by species, kingdom by kingdom. However obscure, however invisible that link, it is there at work. Consideration of this link producing the Moral Order of the Universe, brings about that true conversion referred to above—from the static religion of some creed to the dynamic Religion of Life. This link existing in the moral Universe as the omnipresent and omnipotent Life-Force, is

the true God or Deity of every Sage and Seer. And that brings us to the next principle.

(2) The God or Deity of this dynamic Religion of Life is a great Presence. And because it is omnipresent, it is in every human heart. When we say, "Man is God," it might sound not only grandiloquent but even blasphemous to some. Without God or Deity no religion is conceivable and no religious life is practicable. When God or Bhagavan or Jehovah or Allah or Ahura Mazda are sought, not somewhere beyond the sky but within the human mind and the human heart, then the great step is taken and we are born anew. Our life is sordid, our outlook is sophisticated, our puzzlement about sorrow and suffering is profound and looks insoluble, because of the wrong conception we have of God. Dethrone the autocrat sitting on a priest-erected throne in some distant world, and see God as the pulsating essence of your own soul, and confidence will enter your blood, faith will enter your mind. Faith in one's own soul, confidence in one's own self, changes one's character as nothing else does, for thus fear vanishes and courage comes to life. And out of this soul-courage is born self-respect, respect for our own self and therefore respect for all other selves—all beings and creatures whatsoever. When we love our fellow-men, we may still harbour the devil of pride in us; but when we respect our fellow-men and see the divinity present in them, we kill that egotism, that *Ahankara*. And then we learn of the principle of responsibility which is the next fundamental.

(3) If the Moral Order of the Universe reveals the splendour and light of Deity in our own hearts, and that power enables us to respect our fellow-men, then, in our search of how to manifest and express that respect of soul for other souls, we gain a true perception of what responsibility is. The world at large, our entire civilization, is suffering from lack of responsibility. For our bodily health, we are dependent on doctors; for our social health, on the social servant; for our national welfare, on the politician who exploits our patriotism as the priest exploits our faith. True insight into the concept of responsibility is gained when the Moral Order

of the Universe, and the Deity at its core and at the core of our own being, are glimpsed. To feel responsible for our own soul and mind, to recognize that our weakness weakens the community and the country, our vice degrades our fellow-men and not only ourselves, is to develop the vision of Brotherhood. There is much talk about Universal Brotherhood but there is little of action because the sense of responsibility has not developed. Human beings, generally speaking, have evolved this sense of responsibility for the unit called the family, but most people have not gone further than that. In controlling our own senses, in purifying our own minds, in enlightening our own hearts and awakening our own souls, we develop that sense of responsibility. It is this sense which is the very soul of true Religion.

So we have to learn the necessity of breaking the fetters of the static creed into which we are born, and examine the contents of the inner creed—our principles and ideals. Thus we must become converted to the real dynamic Religion of progress to perfection. By the study of philosophy and application of its ethical aspects, we must learn to recognize that a Moral Order pervades the whole of Nature, including ourselves; that within our own heart is the power and presence of Deity, and by its aid and energization we learn to respect all our fellow-men and acknowledge our minute but sublime responsibility to the race of which we are a part. These concepts of true Religion endow the day-to-day struggle of life with a meaning and a purpose; make the daily drudgery divine; reveal the beauty of the pattern of life by revealing its goal—that life which ordinarily looks sordid, ugly and miserable. Every failure spurs us to fresh effort, every success leads to new battle-fields. It was this kind of dynamic Religion which brought Mohammed his vision, Arjuna his courage. And because we all have a divinity within ourselves, we too can have the vision and the courage born of right effort. What men have done, that men can do.

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## WHAT IS MORALITY?

IN this day and age, morality is rejected by the masses, and the exponents of a moral way of living are scorned and regarded as impractical if not as fools. Why is this? Why is virtue looked upon with such disdain, and sexuality exalted to a high status in society? It is now a "virtue" to indulge in sexual acts that are anything but normal, and what is perverse is regarded as perfectly acceptable. The excuse given by most people, that morality is relative and that what is immoral for some societies is moral for others, does not stand up to close scrutiny. The problem is that we have lost the spiritual guidelines that would enable us to make comparisons and decide what is and what is not acceptable as regards morality.

Something else that has to be considered is that immorality has been made to seem attractive and fashionable, whereas morality is "old-fashioned," "boring" and "repressive" in the eyes of the promoters of the "new morality." The present pessimistic view of an ethical life is probably the fault of the orthodox religions. They invariably forced morality on their adherents amidst threats of eternal damnation and various other unpleasant punishments if they strayed but slightly from the prescribed path of virtue. As people became more sophisticated, they naturally rejected this coercion and defied the illogical premises given to them, by doing exactly what they had been told not to do. Is this not the way that a child defies a rule that he thinks to be unjust? If we are to return to a moral society, then it has to be a preference for something higher that guides us on our way, and not fear of retribution.

Fear needs to be banished from our minds completely if we are to progress spiritually. For long centuries, organized religions have ruled by fear. That must come to an end now. We must learn to see morality in a positive manner, as something that can benefit humanity as a whole. If humanity is not given clear reasons why it must pursue a certain course of action, then, in time, it will reject that course and turn its rage against those trying to lay down the law. Blind faith is only a temporary phase that collapses in the end

and leaves the world in an anarchical state, during the transitional period, after which the world in general will take either an upward or downward trend depending upon the impetus given to it by its inhabitants. This depends, in its turn, on the degree of ignorance or knowledge possessed by them.

The Theosophical Society was founded during such a period of unrest, and it gave the mystically-minded "ammunition" with which to fight in the battle against dogmatic religion and materialistic science. Society at that time felt uneasy with the dogmas being forced upon it, but lacked the discrimination to choose another way and so lapsed into psychism and spiritualism, until the Masters decided to give out as much of the Secret Doctrine as was then needed.

Theosophy has quite a lot to say about today's moral problem. We are told in *The Secret Doctrine* that a certain class of Third-Race beings, who were without mind, "took huge she-animals unto them" and begat "a race of crooked, red-hair-covered monsters, going on all fours. A dumb race, to keep the shame untold" (II, 184). Higher beings then decided to endow man with mind, "lest worse should happen." Unfortunately, this "sin of the mindless" was repeated by the Fourth-Race Atlanteans with full knowledge, as they possessed mind; and we of the Fifth Race, who are those very Atlanteans reborn, are still having to work off the Karma thus generated.

All of this will hardly satisfy the man or woman in the street who is looking for a practical way to solve the great mysteries of life. To such, it will seem to be a fairy tale invented to amuse a certain class of people. In time, they will come to understand the truth concerning the moral crisis in society, but, until then, what can we do to alleviate the misconceptions under which humanity at large labours? The starting point is to show, through an explanation of reincarnation and karma, that man is indeed a Divine Being, a creature of Light. He is not the victim of time that he is made to believe he is, but is, in fact, a denizen of Eternity.

The spiritual and moral regeneration of humanity must be

achieved by awakening men and women to their true nature and by restoring the dignity of the human condition as a result of the realization that we all have infinite potential. This is by no means easy. The conditioning of centuries will not disappear in a few days, or weeks, or months, or even years. It may take lifetimes in some cases and millenniums as regards mankind in general. The important thing is to have the *ideal* and to work towards it, despite the many trials of life. We have to learn to have real love for our brothers and sisters, and not to degrade ourselves as a result of a too materialistic view of human nature. This is the only true foundation for a lasting morality.

The fact is that our technological, materialistic society has made life so soulless and dull that men and women are driven to sexual "pleasure" as a diversion. The fact that these acts dissipate energy, drag the consciousness down to an animalistic level when indulged in indiscriminately, and demoralize humanity in general, does not seem to bother the majority of mankind, as these effects may seem to be the "lesser of two evils." It is only a few who have any idea of the negative effects of sexual indulgence. People are not wholly to blame for being victims of the mass hypnosis of the media which glorify the physical body and use sexuality to sell everything from toothpaste to cars. In schools, children are given "sex education" which allows them access to information that should not be theirs until they are old enough to realize its implications and are responsible enough to exercise discrimination. But this is thought to be a progressive trend, and so the innocence and beauty of childhood is destroyed. Did not Jesus say, concerning children, that he who offends one of them had better have a millstone tied around his neck and be thrown into the sea? Karma will certainly restore the balance!

The wider view of morality is that it is the ability to discern right from wrong in life. How is this to be achieved? With so many different ideas of what is good and evil, so that the two opposite poles are often hopelessly mixed up, how are we to know what is *really* moral? The only way this can be done is by trying to awaken

our spiritual intuitions, by living the kind of life that will enable us to turn our attention away from the glamour of material life and focus it upon the higher levels of being. As said earlier, we need to have a *preference* for something higher, and this arises from cultivating true knowledge. If we are coerced into following a certain line of thought, or even persuaded by able orators, then we are not reaching the decision by our own inner certainty. Something external is overpowering our senses and we are not living as we want to live. Unless we *feel* the need to take a step as a result of deep thought and meditation, it is wise to leave it alone for the time being. We have to learn, above all, to place ourselves under the guidance of our Divine Self and to dispel all reliance on intermediaries, whether in the form of individuals, groups, or the written word. All of these may be of use, but we must not rely on them.

The Theosophical Movement was founded on a non-dogmatic basis and we should remember that. One of its missions is to unite the various factions of humanity by offering them the knowledge that can reveal to them their common identity. True Morality, then, is based upon this intuitive realization of the Oneness of all things. How else can we conduct our lives so that we cause no offence, physically, mentally or morally, to our fellow creatures, save by coming to understand that we are all a part of one another and are all spiritual beings in essence!

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CHARACTER is repeated habits, and repeated habits alone can reform character.

It is character that cleaves its way through adamant walls of difficulties.

Character has to be established through a thousand stumbles.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## THE GREAT HARMONY

EVEN a casual glance at our world today shows us a sad picture of humanity ailing from various diseases of body, mind and soul, in spite of our much-vaunted scientific advancement and achievements. In these critical times, if there is one thing we need to learn more than any other, it is the Science of Life. Lack of true knowledge of the guiding principles which would make life worth living is the root cause of the present chaotic condition. That Science alone can help humanity to save itself, to come out of the darkness of ignorance and feel the joy of Life, to understand the meaning, the purpose and the goal of existence and transform this world of strife and struggle into a united, happy world.

When we speak of the Science of Life, the word "Science" should be taken in its right Theosophical sense, as complete in itself, and not opposed to true Religion or Philosophy. Science does not mean just laboratory work and physical experiments. As is well explained in *Light on the Path*:

...science, we must remember, is derived from *sciens*, present participle of *scire*, "to know"—its origin is similar to that of the word "discern," "to ken." Science does not therefore deal only with matter, no, not even its subtlest and obscurest forms. Such an idea is born merely of the idle spirit of the age. Science is a word which covers all forms of knowledge. (p. 32)

So it means pursuit of true knowledge, search for Truth. Whereas modern scientists try to penetrate matter, the Scientists of ancient times began with universal concepts, with Truth itself, and came down to particulars; from the invisible they derived knowledge of visible, physical matter.

Now what is Life? It is THAT in which we live and move and have our being, the active, manifested aspect of the Absolute, Eternal background which ever is. Its motion spells rhythm and harmony. It is not silent but ever speaks to us through its numberless expressions. To quote *Light on the Path* again: "...its utterance is not, as you that are deaf may suppose, a cry: it is a song." What

is the message of that song?— "Learn from it that you are a part of the harmony; learn from it to obey the laws of the harmony."

This is a most important lesson the Science of Life has to teach us. The recognition and realization that each being, each creature, is a part of the great harmony that exists in all departments of Nature because it is at the very Source and Fount of all manifestation, naturally changes our attitude to Life and all its mysteries. Is it not regrettable that man, the masterpiece and crown of evolution, for whom the whole drama of evolution takes place, should be ignorant of this great fact and should therefore go against the laws of harmony and create discord and confusion, not only in his own kingdom, but throughout the whole of Nature? Why does he do that? Because he does not understand the Law of Unity.

The radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the highest Dhyān Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptation of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds—this is the one fundamental law in Occult Science. (*S.D.*, I, 120)

Man does not know that there is unity in diversity; nor has he any idea that the star and the mineral atom, the highest Dhyān Chohan and the smallest infusoria, all affect him and are affected by him. It is only by understanding the relationship of the spiritual, intellectual and physical worlds, the three lines of evolution as indicated in *The Secret Doctrine*, that man can come to know of his great heritage, his divine destiny, and can realize that he is a part of the great harmony in the universe and therefore must learn to obey the laws of that harmony.

This will at once bring us the knowledge of the sanctity of Life, its meaning and purpose. We are here on this earth for a dual purpose: to reach perfection, the goal of human evolution, and to help and aid, uplift and elevate, not only other pilgrim-souls travelling side by side with us but also all other forms of Life, to treat them with the respect and reverence due to them, for all Life is sacred. This unity and harmony can be observed and preserved

in daily life by following the Divine Discipline indicated in the Sixth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

This divine discipline, Arjuna, is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching. The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking. When the man, so living, centres his heart in the true Self and is exempt from attachment to all desires, he is said to have attained to Yoga.

So moderation in all things is another important lesson to be learned from the Science of Life. Such moderation would always enable us to preserve harmony, balance, and, rising above the pairs of opposites, to attain to *Yoga*, union with the Divine. Neither overindulgence nor false asceticism can lead us on the right path.

The Great Perfected Ones are Those who have mastered the Science of Life; They hold Life and Death in Their own hands because They have risen above the illusions of space and time, matter and mind, by looking on all things as part of the harmony, by obeying the laws of the harmony. It is by constant, laborious efforts that the wrong concepts about Life and God, Nature and Man, can be transformed into the real knowledge of the Science of Life. Then the utterance of Life which seems to us to be a cry will become a song, and men and women, instead of living in the chaotic atmosphere of today, always fearful of their future, will be able to lead happy, useful, consecrated lives.

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THERE is no education like adversity.

—DISRAELI

## HEAD-LEARNING AND HEART-WISDOM

WE are living in times when intellectuality is held in high esteem. People stuff their heads with all kinds of knowledge—good, bad or indifferent—without any idea of how to apply that knowledge for the betterment of their souls. Head-learning has to be transformed into heart-wisdom to fit in with the requirements of our own life and the problems that our soul has to face and solve. The worth of any knowledge, any philosophy, lies in our being able to prove with the heart what we have learnt with the head.

True knowledge is based on complete understanding of the hidden laws of nature and is meant for all souls, whatever their stage of evolution. People, however, differ in their ideas and values which are rooted in their inborn beliefs and predilections. Generally speaking, it might be said that the heart-knowledge an individual has to acquire for the time being is that portion of the great ocean of knowledge which enables the soul to study and solve his own problems in the light of his conscience. Our conscience limits our capacity to grasp and apply true knowledge.

Knowledge is not an end in itself. It must in due course be transformed into practical wisdom, otherwise the time and trouble spent in acquiring it is wasted and the lesson of the incarnation is lost to the soul. Most people who make much ado about brain-learning have not exercised their heart consciousness to digest their knowledge even within the limits set by conscience. A proper equilibrium between the head and the heart is an essential requisite of a good soul-life. Most human souls are encumbered by numerous shortcomings, whether they are aware of them or not. Some of these infirmities may be latent at present, but if not detected and eradicated in time, they may sprout into activity in the future and ruin the prospects of the soul.

A pious wish that our weaknesses should be eradicated does not take us far. We must know how to eradicate them, and start doing so now. Patient and sincere self-analysis, with a clear mind, is necessary to apprehend the subtleties of our very complicated

inner nature and to form a just estimate of our merits and demerits. This formidable task is made even more difficult by the spread of new-fangled accommodating notions of life which provide plausible excuses for our lapses and throw us off the scent. An aspirant to the higher life has to guard against such pitfalls. He must be an impartial judge and accept no other advocacy than that of his inner voice.

It is here that a sincere aspirant parts company with one in whom aspiration for a higher life has not yet dawned. Both have moral drawbacks which must be spotted and eradicated, but one who is not an aspirant has not the qualms of conscience to worry about these drawbacks. He indulges in them with nonchalance, which results in their strengthening their hold on him. On the other hand, the voice of conscience of an aspirant forewarns him of the danger in trucking with his weaknesses; and if he succumbs to their promptings, the after-effect is to fill him with shame and sorrow. In such genuine regret of the soul is planted the seed of the person's reformation and the ultimate conquest of evil within him.

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A HUMAN being is part of the whole, called by us "universe"; a part limited in space and time. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest; a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is, in itself, a part of the liberation and a foundation for inner security.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

# THE HEALTH OF THE PERSONAL MAN

## II.—FOOD AND DRESS

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, November 1956.]

Eat not the food proscribed, but use discretion  
In lustral rites and the freeing of the soul.

—*The Golden Verses of Pythagoras*

The Master said, "The dress and the one worn over it do not take the place, the one of the other, it being intimated to the people thereby that they should not trouble or interfere with one another."

When a superior man puts on the dress of his rank, he sets it off by the demeanour of a superior man. That demeanour he sets off with the language of a superior man; and that language he makes good by the virtues of a superior man. Hence the superior man is ashamed to wear the robes, and not have the demeanour, ashamed to have the demeanour, and not the style of speech; ashamed to have the style of speech, and not the virtues; ashamed to have the virtues and not the conduct proper to them.

—CONFUCIUS

IN food, as in all else, a person is inclined to *tamasic*, *rajasic* or *sattvic* types according to his bodily temperament, which expresses the nature of the lives of his body. On the physical plane we recognize the value of certain foods and the harmfulness of others from the point of view of physiology and its knowledge about the health of the body. But in actual practice most people go by the inclination and urge of the palate, its likes and dislikes. Our modern knowledge has its own values for different foods. It also recognizes hygienic values in the preparation and serving of food, but its knowledge of the principles of hygiene is very limited. Modern men and women know next to nothing about human magnetism, its properties, nature and functions. The hygienist knows about physical cleanliness, but does not even suspect the existence of magnetism and the necessity of magnetic purity. Similarly, we do not

consider the inwardness in preparation of food; we think of it only as something which should satisfy the palate or hunger. When we endeavour to practise the Esoteric doctrines of our philosophy we consider and value foods differently. Food is living—even a dead carcass is living. Food is made up of elemental lives. Our physical body is named *Annamaya Kosha*, the sheath of food; food makes the body, transforms it; deterioration or improvement of the health and sensitivity of the body depend on food in a great measure. Order, cleanliness, attention to detail, are necessary in all the stages of preparing food and eating it. Order implies, philosophically speaking, mathematical and geometrical proportions, and the slovenly or egotistic mind ignores such fundamentals. Food must be regarded as a gift of the Self to the body, and so must be taken in the right way, at the right place and time. Is the body feeling grateful for the gift?

Modern knowledge takes a very much mistaken view of food and misleads masses of people. This mistake is admirably described by Roy Walker in his informative and valuable pamphlet, *Bread and Peace*:

Modern nutritional science treats the human body as an economic unit, a house to be set in order, but not for any particular occupant; the dweller is a hypothesis formally referred to another department. The nutritionist will provide the prefabricated body; soul, if such there be, must adjust herself accordingly.

But the true use of food is to minister to the well-being of the whole man, to contribute to the ideal of a healthy mind in a healthy body. The first simple rule of that hygiene is not to feed one at the expense of the other. Just as the mind and spirit provide the most delicate checks and balances to adjust the physical sex instinct to choice of an appropriate partner, so mind and spirit are meant to inform the bodily appetite for food, so that the material that is transubstantiated into our very flesh shall be wholly appropriate to the personality. There is such a thing as dietetic promiscuity, and it is as dangerous to the higher human integrations as sexual promiscuity. The remarkable energy of such men as Gandhi was, as Shaw and Cripps are, is not due to a larger

intake of protein or vitamins—they certainly take less than the average consumer—but to the simple fact that imagination and body sit down at the same table and both are nourished. There is no need to dissociate imagination from act, to repress imaginative knowledge of slaughter and physical revulsion at the thought of consuming flesh and blood.

The *Abidhamma* (Book VII) speaks of four kinds of food: (1) material food; (2) sense-impression food; (3) mind-volition food; and (4) consciousness food. And Krishna in the *Gita* says: "I associate with the upward and downward breathing, and cause the four kinds of food to digest." (XV, 14)

All this is true of dress as well. The attentive mind looks upon the body as a miniature copy of the whole universe. The characteristic of even the visible universe is law and order. So also the outer manifestation of oneself, *i.e.*, clothes, must be orderly, clean and proper. Otherwise one is not imaging forth the Divine.

Just as so-called yogis and fakirs pay no heed to the well-being and training of the body and even torture it, so also some students of Theosophy are careless of their garments. The principles of utility, propriety, appearance and so forth are involved in our apparel, which, as the great master of human nature said, "oft proclaims the man." The great Confucius has some very wise things to say on this subject, which Theosophical students will do well to study and to apply.

There are robes for the holy rites of initiation into the lesser Mysteries, derived from the Shangna Robe of the greater, which a footnote in *The Voice of the Silence* describes as "the initiation robe" of the Neophytes; again, it refers to the vestures or the great *kayas*. Freemasonry has its symbolic garments for its numerous degrees—a remnant from older institutions of mystic learners. Should not the Theosophical student reflect on what is implicit in the above for him? If the neophyte has to have a special robe for his initiation, if the greater and the lesser Mysteries prescribe an appropriate costume, does not the U.L.T. platform require something along this line from the worker? Should not the dignity and inner reality

of the U.L.T. meetings be taken into account by every Associate who attends the meetings?

The texture of cotton cloth is different from that of woollen cloth; but who takes into account the magnetic quality of cotton or wool, and again of silk? People pay attention to a well-fitting costume, and it is right that they should; for the cold season people use wool; for summer, light cotton; but what about the psychic cold and heat of the wearer? Does not the magnetism of wool, cotton or silk affect it? Why is red considered a hot colour? Why did Buddha select yellow for his own robe, and prescribe for his monks the wearing of the yellow robe? Has the orange shade of the *sannyasis'* clothes any meaning? Such questions are dangerous from one point of view, for very often people, including students of Theosophy, focus their attention on outer things and miss out on essentials, forgetting Ben Jonson's true adage—"Apes are apes though clothed in scarlet." How true are the words (and what profound words they are) of the Buddha!—

What avails thy matted hair, O fool? What avails thy deer skin? Outwardly you clean yourself, within you there is ravening.  
(*Dhammapada*, Verse 394)

The principle to be adopted by every Theosophical practitioner is succinctly laid down by W. Q. Judge in his letter to his London friends, printed in the second volume of *Letters That Have Helped Me* (Indian ed., pp. 73-78; Los Angeles ed., 69-73).

This pair of food and dress, let us remind the reader, like the second pair of exercise and breathing, is outer and objective and must *follow* the subjective development related to attention and sleep, ideation and imagination.

(*To be continued*)

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

An average child, by the time it is four, knows thousands of words and has a sense of grammar and syntax. How do infants learn language? Not too long ago it was believed by the then-dominant creed of behaviourism that infants must learn everything from scratch, and that language is learnt simply by listening to parental talk.

Three decades ago, the American linguist Noam Chomsky came up with the theory that the world's languages are all governed by the same universal grammar and each baby is born with a knowledge of that grammar; in other words, that this universal grammar is encoded in genes. Today, linguists are joining forces with neuropsychologists and molecular geneticists to find answers to the question how infants learn language. (*New Scientist*, June 25)

Steven Pinker, author of *The Language Instinct*, is one of the new breed of linguistic psychologists. In the course of an interview with *New Scientist*, he stated:

Just finding a gene tells you nothing about the logic of language and how it develops. Gene mania is only part of the story. Let me take a step back. The first enthusiasm for language being an innate capacity came in the 1960s when Chomsky set the scene and Eric Lenneberg wrote a book called *The Biological Foundations of Language*....Lenneberg talked about language skills being encoded biologically in the brain....

In the past five to ten years, several developments have strengthened the claim that language is innate. One is that studies of language development in children have produced important empirical findings supporting Chomsky. We now know in quite some detail how children mentally process the sequences of words in their parents' speech to figure out the grammar of their parents' language. And we know that they can't do this without applying innate linguistic rules.

While scientists are trying to find genetic or biological explanations for how infants learn language and exhibit behavioural traits at an early age, those who know reincarnation to be a fact

would explain it otherwise. Language ability, like some other abilities, is not obtained by learning from scratch. Everyone has some degree of inborn knowledge, as a result of having passed through many births. This explains the "instinct for language," complete with grammar and syntax, in a four-year-old "that would put even the most powerful AI (artificial intelligence) programmes to shame," as admitted by linguistic psychologists.

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The opening article in the September issue of *Purity* focuses on "the most vital dimension" of the population problem that is entirely missing in all the different approaches adopted so far to tackle it:

Unless this missing dimension is taken into consideration, all the resources invested in population control would go in vain. The clue to this missing dimension lies in the answer to the question: "What really is a human being?" Isn't it a being in a human form (*humus* in Latin means earth, soil)? Thus, if we wish to control the population of human beings, should we not take into consideration that we are actually dealing with two entities, *i.e.*, the earthly or physical entity, namely the body, and the spiritual entity, namely the "being" or soul which gives life to the body?

All existing plans for population control take into consideration the production of physical bodies only. They completely disregard the fact that a "being" (soul) also resides in the body. The job of physical parents is merely to produce a human body. They have no power to bring a "being" or soul into existence....

Souls have to take birth and perform actions in a human body. If they cannot incarnate in a family observing birth control, they will select other parents who don't. Thus, an increase in population can perhaps be stopped in certain groups, but not on the whole in terms of the world's population.

If we understand the Tree of Humanity, which incorporates a time frame, we will come to know that the population will naturally cease to grow and automatically reduce at the appropri-

ate time....There is really no need to invest billions in attempts to control the production of human bodies, since the population increase will naturally and automatically come to an end.

Our appeal to the authorities and agencies concerned with population control is to...devote their energies to restoring human values leading to more equitable distribution of world resources.

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Although science and technology have made life easier in many ways and have placed the comforts of the material world within the reach of many, yet lasting peace and joy are proving elusive and stress and illness are on the increase. In *World Health Magazine*, Dr. Ali Hussain of the World Health Organization, Geneva, suggests that at the root of most of the problems facing us today lies our failure to know ourselves. The process of self-inquiry begins with the question, "Who am I?"

Great thinkers, saints and sages in the past have declared that human beings are composed of body, mind and spirit. While it is easy enough to identify and serve the body and mind, many people have doubts about the reality of an invisible and intangible spirit which is said to be the very basis of all matter, including the body and mind. The relationship between body and spirit is analogous to a building and its foundation lying under the ground; the foundation, although hidden, remains an indispensable support to the building. Likewise, the spirit is the base on which the body and mind rest....

While normal consciousness makes us aware of our identity and surroundings, a higher plane of super-consciousness—with enhanced awareness—is said to be attainable by self-inquiry, the practice of self-discipline (both morally and physically) and certain exercises (e.g., meditation)....

It may be asked: Is there any use in exploring the higher consciousness? Will it help us achieve a new world order—based on justice, equality, human rights, democracy and so on? The answer is yes, because the process of self-discovery involves purification of the mind from anger, hatred, lust, greed, envy, jealousy, pride and other characteristics that lead to conflict and

suffering. All of them and their counterparts—the higher values such as truth, love, peace, caring and sharing—are first expressed in our thoughts and feelings and then in our actions. Therefore, central to the whole process of realizing the higher consciousness, is the process of self-discipline and gradual elimination of the less desirable traits....

Knowledge alone cannot avert the crises of today and of the future. Wisdom is the needed catalyst to direct our worldly knowledge towards a correct understanding in ourselves of the world we live in. Only virtue and wisdom together will show us where lasting peace and joy can be found.

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*The Secret Doctrine* (II, 30) calls Venus "the most occult, powerful, and mysterious of all the planets; the one whose influence upon and relation to the Earth is most prominent."

*Astronomy Now* (August 1994) reports that Venus has been found to be geologically still active in places, even though radar images of its surface indicate that little has changed in the past half-billion years. Dr. Suzanne Smrekar, a geophysicist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory, says that her studies based on data from the Magellan spacecraft mission suggest that there are some "active hot spots" on Venus. Does this imply that there is life on Venus? Says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 706-7):

...the facts of physical astronomy speak strongly in favour of the presence of life, even organized life, on other planets....And further, examining the astronomical conditions of the other planets, it is easy to show that several are far better adapted for the development of life and intelligence—even under the conditions with which men are acquainted—than is our earth....

That some forms of life such as we know are *possible* on these planets, has been long since abundantly demonstrated, and it seems perfectly useless to go into detailed questions of the physiology, etc., etc., of these hypothetical inhabitants, since after all the reader can arrive only at an imaginary extension of his familiar surroundings. It is better to rest content with the

three conclusions which M. C. Flammarion, whom we have so largely quoted, formulates as rigorous and exact deductions from the known *facts* and laws of science.

I. The various forces which were active in the beginning of evolution gave birth to a great variety of beings on the several worlds; both in the organic and inorganic kingdoms.

II. The animated beings were constituted from the first according to forms and organisms in correlation with the physiological state of each inhabited globe.

III. The humanities of other worlds differ from us, as much in their inner organization as in their external physical type.

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Speaking in Bombay at a conference on Education and Development in the 21st century, Carlos Hernandez, internationally renowned educationist and President of New Jersey City State University, bemoaned the lack of moral vision among educators. Subjects like ethics, morality and value integration should, first and foremost, form part of the curriculum in teacher education programmes, he said. (*The Times of India*, September 18)

Hernandez suggested that educational institutions should have value education programmes for their primary students as attitudes tend to be imbibed at a very early age.

Observing that "the classroom exists wherever people exist," he urged educators to go out to the people. He termed as a major fallacy the equating of education with literacy. Educational institutes, he observed, needed to go beyond literacy and train their students to critically analyse, reflect on and evolve creative solutions to problems like poverty and unsustainable development.

It is indeed lamentable that higher education, since the past few decades, has lacked a moral mission and been reduced to technical career education. It is time educational institutes clearly defined their basic mission and purpose and evaluated their programmes to see if they really met these objectives.

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