

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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Our movement is a reform one, dealing with the very character of the race.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE U.L.T. seems to be very different from all other organizations in this (in the words of W. Q. Judge) "that in others plenty of money is furnished by members—clubs and churches can raise large sums of money because they offer definite creeds...where we offer nothing of that kind but demand real altruistic work."

By application and work on ourselves we forward the cause of the reform of the social order in which we live. That is of vital importance, and from one point of view this is the real reform. But Mr. Judge's words carry an implication of corporate reform of human character.

Political reform, to which the world pays so much attention, is not highly valued by the Esoteric Philosophy, for reasons well explained by H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy* (see Indian edition, pp. 229-30). Similarly, social reform through specially organized social service is not accorded the importance given to it by the world.

In the words of Mr. Judge quoted above, reference is made to the reform which touches human character. The educative value of any reform consists in its ability to change and elevate the citizen's

character. Thus Prohibition legislation in the U.S.A. in the '20s of this century degraded instead of ennobling the character of many citizens, and a good reform proved a failure.

There are numerous habits and custom which every nation and race needs to alter. For example, already a great change has taken place in the employer's behaviour towards the employee; more consideration is shown by the former towards the latter, but it is not a real reform inasmuch as the changed behaviour is due to Trade Unionism with its strike weapon. The outer behaviour has changed, but not the inner attitude. The same is true of the attitude of the employee towards the employer. Similarly, the relation between the mistress of a house and her servants has undergone a great change, mainly rooted in the plane of economics, but on the social plane adjustments remain to be made in wealthy U.S.A. as well as in poor India.

In both these instances relating to labour-capital problems or the master-servant problem, the old and real difficulty persists—lack of friendliness, even though there be kindness. *Noblesse oblige* on the part of those who have wealth or power or knowledge, and gratefulness on the part of those who are their beneficiaries, are not in evidence. Students of Theosophy should deliberately make due adjustment in these spheres as Karma offers them opportunities.

Or take another reform overdue in every country—penal reform. The treatment of prisoners has improved in many countries and new experiments are being tried. But, as long as the truth of reincarnation is not taken into account, real reform cannot be achieved. In discussing penal reform, students of Theosophy should stress the fact that the criminal is a brother to all men and that his treatment should be educative; and in planning his education, the aim should be to bring about a renovation in the consciousness of the criminal—and what is better calculated to accomplish this than knowledge of Karma, the doctrine of responsibility? The true explanation of fate and free will alone will start real reform.

Take the problem of the abolition of capital punishment. Facts about the after-death state of the soul of the executed, the new menace to society when execution takes place and cognate teach-

ings should be popularized.

In all these matters students of Theosophy themselves fail to apply to their own ideation what is implicit in the teachings of the Esoteric Philosophy, and this Mr. Judge has pointed out in more than one place.

Then, there is the problem of what is known as the colour bar. Not only in the [past] barbarous policy of South Africa but also elsewhere different aspects of this problem are in manifestation. The Blacks' problem in the U.S.A. and the untouchability problem in India are but aspects of the basic problem of the colour bar. Intermarriages between the Whites and the Blacks or between the high-caste Hindus and the Harijans are only one aspect. Inter-dining, social intercourse and intermarriage should be understood by the student in the light of Theosophy, and it will be a very different understanding. The study of races, cycles, evolution, etc., will give the student basic principles for right application.

The next pair of reforms we should consider is in the sphere of social customs and religious orthodoxy which militate against the principle of Universal Brotherhood. The superstition and dogmatism fostered by the priests in every country and in every creed corrupt not only the mind but also the morals of the people. Students of Theosophy should try not only to understand but also to apply what is implicit in the closing clause of our Declaration: "The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all." The student of Occultism must belong to no exclusive creed or sect, yet he is bound to show outward respect to every creed and faith if he would become an Adept of the Good Law. He must not be bound by the prejudiced and sectarian opinions of anyone; he has to form his own opinions and come to his own conclusions in accordance with the rules of evidence furnished to him by the Science to which he is devoted. Thus, if the student of Occultism is, as an illustration, a Christian, then, while regarding Jesus Christ as a grand Adept, he will regard Gautama Buddha also as a grand Adept, an incarnation of unselfish love, boundless charity and moral goodness; and so with other Prophet-Philanthropists. The student of the Esoteric Philosophy must abstain from observing the rites, ceremonies and

customs of the creed into which his body was born; he should study these rites, ceremonies and customs, rejecting what is chaff and using what is grain; but he has a similar duty towards the rites, ceremonies and customs of all other religious creeds.

To help persons or groups of persons by right reform, one must free oneself from the limitations of political, social and religious taboos. Spiritual freedom demands mental freedom, and there can be no mental freedom unless the thinking principle is extricated from desires and passions, from prejudices, prides and violence. Friendship and brotherliness are the soul of every reform, for love understands and the spirit of unity never fails to uplift.

THE living soul is to be known as part of the hundredth part of the point of a hair, divided a hundred times, and yet it is to be infinite.

It is not woman, it is not man, nor is it neuter; whatever body it takes, with that it is joined only.

By means of thoughts, touching, seeing, and passions the incarnate Self assumes successively in various places various forms, in accordance with his deeds, just as the body grows when food and drink are poured into it.

That incarnate Self, according to his own qualities, assumes many shapes, coarse or subtile, and having himself caused his union with them, he is seen as another and another, through the qualities of his acts, and through the qualities of his body.

He who knows him who has no beginning and no end, in the midst of chaos, creating all things, having many forms, alone enveloping everything, is freed from all fetters.

Those who know him who is to be grasped by the mind, who is not to be called the body, who makes existence and non-existence, the happy one (Siva) who also creates the elements, they have left the body.

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad*

THE FESTIVAL OF BIRTH

STUDENTS of Theosophy know that there is life after death; that, after the death of the body, there is a second death in which the immortal soul who is man discards his lower, ugly and selfish traits of character and of mind, and plunges into deep meditation or *Dhyana*, which is blissful and creative. In that state of meditation of the soul, called *Devachan*, the abode of the gods, the soul incorporates the material gathered as experiences in earth-life into the very fabric of his nature, the very structure of his character and being. That blissful, creative *Dhyana* or meditation is both a recompense and a preparation. It is a recompense, for through it the soul fulfils all his noble aspirations, his mental longings for knowledge and understanding; therefore there is unalloyed joy and bliss. But because that state is creative, it is also preparatory. Out of the knowledge and devotion, which the soul could not fully assimilate and express while on earth, he builds faculties, or, to be more accurate, strengthens them. His love, purified, becomes elevated and more and more unselfish; his patience, more methodical; his mental perception, keener and wider. This creative meditation may be compared to our morning meditation, which brings us strength and confidence to grapple with the tasks and duties of the day. When the soul has finished this meditation in the land of the gods, he is ready to grapple with the task of another incarnation, another life on earth.

This heavenly bliss, this purposive creativeness of the soul in *Devachan*, is a long process and is composed of several steps. Just as the Yogi's meditation is composed of *Pratyahara*, *Dharana*, *Dhyana* and *Samadhi*, so too the meditation of the *Devachanee*, of the soul in his Radiant Vesture, *Manasa-Rupa*, is composed of several stages. When the soul comes to the point where he has finished assimilating all the good and beneficent experiences and aspirations of his earth-life, he enters that condition which may be compared to the *Samadhi* of the Yogi. As the Yogi in his *Samadhi* unites himself to his Inner Ego and Higher Self, so also the *Devachanee*, the soul in the heavenly state of a god, a *deva*, unites

himself to his own Higher Self and thus obtains a vision of his real nature. The soul realizes himself as a divinity, one with the Universal Whole, himself a channel of Krishna, of Christos, of Avalokiteshwara. That is one aspect of his vision. The other is his perception of all his previous incarnations; he sees, as in a moving film, picture after picture of his previous lives on earth. This double phenomenon—one, his own relation to the universe, of which he is a part, and the other, the memory-pictures of all his past efforts and achievements, awakens in him the desire to continue his *dharma* on earth, to be born again to new efforts and new achievements, to learn and to love, to sacrifice and to serve the race to which he belongs. This awakening, this desire for a new body and a new life on earth, brings to the soul the vision of what his next incarnation is going to be like, what type of bodily existence the unerring Law of Karma is going to assign to him. As this vision of the coming incarnation becomes strong, the memory of his previous lives fades and he becomes more and more concentrated on his future. We need not go into the numerous steps and stages by which he is ultimately drawn to the womb of his future mother, and sees the light.

Christmas is described as the Festival of Birth. The birth of a human babe is not merely the birth of a body. That body is connected with and belongs to a soul. That soul and that body are also connected with the mind, the thinking principle, and with *Kama*, the desire principle. Nowadays the miracle and the mystery of birth are forgotten. The mother who gives birth to a baby is said in occult parlance to go through a veritable initiation. Birth and death of the body have invisible and spiritual aspects, unknown to modern civilization and unsuspected by modern science.

In ancient days, the great Sages, Seers and Teachers imparted the knowledge of the mystery of birth and of death, of marriage and of celibacy, and of other events of life—all of which are but reflections of deep spiritual verities. Thus, the occult meaning of the birth of the body was unveiled to the learned in what were called the Mysteries, and to the masses through allegory, myth, folklore and festivals. Christmas is the Festival of Birth, and it is not merely

a Christian festival. It was observed by the entire Pagan world centuries before the birth of Jesus. The Persians were celebrating the festival as the Birth of Mithra; the Egyptians, as the birth of Horus. The Phoenicians, the Greeks, the Romans, all had their sun-gods who were said to be born around the time of the Winter Solstice. Why did the ancient Teachers institute this Festival of Birth? What did they try to teach thereby?

There are many kinds of births. Birds and reptiles, for instance, are egg-born, humans and other mammals are born of the womb. Some insects are born neither of the womb, nor from an egg, but otherwise. These are examples of different types or modes of the birth of the body. Likewise, intelligence and consciousness in entities at different levels of evolution, have varying modes of coming to birth. Thus, the lower elementals are born in one way, the high *devas* in another, while human intelligences are born in still another manner. When people speak of birth, they refer to the birth of the body only, and not to that of the intelligence, consciousness, or soul which is connected with that body. In a way this is to be expected; for, in this *Kaliyuga*, the civilization of the predominance of matter, we are familiar only with one kind of birth—bodily birth. Theosophy teaches that highly spiritual Intelligences, Rishis and Mahatmas, Bodhisattvas and Nirmanakayas, are even today coming to birth in a fashion and by a mode unknown and unrecognized by us.

The Festival of Birth, as a myth and an allegory, was meant to teach the populace in every ancient land some of the facts of this mystery of Soul-Birth. In the Secret Mysteries, like those relating to Mithra and others, more detailed knowledge, not only theoretical but also practical, was given to the initiates. Though the great Mysteries have disappeared from the public gaze, the wisdom of Soul-Birth or Second Birth is secretly imparted by the Great Gurus to their disciples, who have passed the tests and trials of Chelaship. As theoretical knowledge must always precede practical instruction, in Theosophy we come across some teachings about this Mystery of Soul-Birth with which the Festival of Christmas is connected.

It is evident to anyone who observes, that in the human kingdom

there are many grades of intelligences—from the savage to the sage. There are two chief indicators of the stage of any human consciousness—mental perception and moral expression. We distinguish a savage from a sage, or a good man from a bad man, by the range of mental perception and moral expression of each. Arrogance and ignorance divide human beings according to the colour of the skin and so forth; to say that the white races are superior to the coloured races is sheer nonsense. Similarly, distinctions on the basis of caste, religion, sex, etc., are equally unfair. Whatever distinctions there are between human beings are founded on the varieties of mental perception and moral expression, and *not* on colour or caste or creed. There are mental and moral slums even in big cities, but in these very cities there are learned minds and saint-like characters. Everywhere there are noble souls and ignoble ones living side by side.

The human soul, through the process of Reincarnation and Karma, has developed his own mental perception and moral expression. Through pain and sorrow, through bodily and mental suffering, through the anguish of the heart and innumerable other experiences, the human soul grows, and this growth is depicted by that soul's range of mental perception, its depth of moral expression, both of which manifest through the temple of the body—"the negated city" which is the abode of the Self, says the *Gita*. In the course of his evolution, every soul reaches the stage where he wants to take his evolution in his own hands. This is a great step forward. Within him are the resources which he can handle or learn to handle. Soul-evolution is a series of progressive awakenings, and the very first of these is the awakening to the fact that we are the makers of our own destiny, the guides of our own evolution; and the two important constituents of our being, with which we have to deal, are our mental perception and our moral expression. However weak one may be, however full of faults, however ignorant, he has to work with these two. Worked upon and worked with, they produce awakening after awakening, birth after birth.

All of us have come to birth in the body, but how many have come to the stage of the birth of the soul, to the first great awakening

where we perceive with our mind that we are the makers of our own destiny, that we ourselves can guide our own evolution? That first soul-awakening reveals to each what virtue, what moral depth, what heart-unselfishness he possesses. There are those who have come to that stage and have widened their knowledge and improved their character; and what they have achieved, others also can carry out.

Corresponding to the evolution of the body are the steps and stages of the evolution of the soul. The birth of the soul is like the birth of the body; just as the body passes through certain prenatal processes in a given time before it is born, so it is with the soul. First, there is conception. This is followed by the prenatal life of the embryo. Then there is the event of birth, when the body leaves the mother's womb and commences its own separate existence. Using that analogy, we can see the three stages in the birth of the soul.

Conception is like the first awakening of the soul. For long periods, during many lives, men and women live what may be described as a soulless existence. They are bodies in which the place of the soul is usurped by desires and passions. Their self or soul is *Kama*: their *Kama* is their *Atma*, says the *Gita*. They live a sense-life, run after a hundred things they desire and fancy, mainly wealth, lust and power. They never ask what the soul is, nor do they care about what their condition will be after death. This kind of living by and in desires, gratifying the senses, inevitably produces sorrow—pains and aches of a thousand kind; and this suffering compels the soul to assert itself. Doctors of body, doctors of mind, doctors of soul, fail them; nature leaves such souls to their own devices, and ultimately they begin to seek the right path.

In the Zoroastrian scriptures there is a text which describes the plight, confusion and questioning of the evil and wicked soul after the death of the body. The soul cries out: "Where am I to go, O Ahura Mazda? In which direction am I to turn?" This is not just the fate of the soul *after* the death of the body. How many living men and women find themselves in this plight and are so confused that they cry out: "Where shall I go? In what direction shall I turn?" This cry is not just a cry of despair. It is also a cry of inquiry. And if the

cry is sent out earnestly, with sincerity, nature never fails to respond. This is the first stage, the first awakening of the soul which we know as conception in the case of the body. Conception takes place for the soul as well, and the human consciousness seeks and finds an answer. That answer is—self-reliance; dependence on one's own soul, within oneself. That soul within is the Inner Ruler, it is the True Priest. The Ruler and the Priest are within us, and the sincere seeker very soon finds this out. But, when he gets that answer, often he does not like it; the newly-conceived consciousness is frustrated, and the man returns to the kingdom of the living-dead. But if he accepts the answer and begins to rely on his own self, then he has a period of life which is similar to the life of the embryo.

Just as the embryo develops into the foetus and lives in the mother's womb for nine months after conception, so the newly conceived soul-consciousness, which has taken its destiny in its own hands, has to pass through a period which is called Probation. Theosophy teaches that all life is probationary. The test and trials of life come to all, in the whole of Nature, but they are faced by sub-human kingdoms in unconsciousness. Most men and women too meet the tests and trials of life in unconscious ignorance; but when the soul has awakened to the reality of his own existence, then he has to meet these tests and trials consciously, *i.e.*, knowingly. It means he has at hand the knowledge to understand why these tests and trials of life come and how he should face them. Theosophy, Divine Wisdom, gives that knowledge. The great religious philosophies of the old world taught the truths of soul-struggle and soul-emancipation. Today, all religions without exception have become corrupted, and for most people their own religions fail to offer guidance. Without knowledge, the soul-embryo cannot survive this stage. Just as the mother nourishes the foetus, so does *Brahma-Vidya*, *Gupta-Vidya*, *Bodhi-Dharma*, Theosophy, the Science and Philosophy of Spirit, nourish the soul-embryo. In this stage, the soul who has awakened must remain true to the great Rules of Life; it cannot afford to do what it likes. That soul is no longer in the kingdom of the living-dead in which millions of men and women find themselves today. The Soul in this stage must seek the

company of others who also are in the same stage. And few though they be, there *are* those awakened soul-embryos who are self-reliant, who are facing tests with knowledge, and who are making a new and glorious destiny for the future. These soul-embryos, though they may not know it, are watched and helped and nourished by grown-up Souls, Those who have passed beyond embryonic life and birth, and are reborn—are *Dwijas*, Twice-Born Men who are Doctors of the Soul, the true Gurus, Masters of Wisdom and of Compassion.

This second stage of probation for the soul, before the actual second birth takes place, is long. What is but a nine-month period for the body lengthens into a series of lives for the soul. For lives and lives we have run after desires and indulged in mere sense existence. We have piled up evil Karma, have acquired evil habits, developed vices and weaknesses. All that has now to be overcome. Ordinary arithmetic would say that one must have as many lives of trial as one has had lives of neglect. Fortunately, it is not so. Geometric ratio operates at this stage of the soul's probation; *i.e.*, every good thought consciously and deliberately sent out, every good word cautiously and discriminately spoken, and especially every good deed well planned and executed, produces a manifold result compared to action performed while living and labouring unconsciously. Deliberate action, self-consciously planned and carried out, produces a tenfold benefit for the actor as for others, provided such action is ensouled by a pure motive, guided by right knowledge and performed without an eye to reward. Just as week by week, nourished and protected, the foetus in the womb grows, so year by year and life by life, nourished and helped by the Science of the Soul, by true Wisdom, the soul grows in strength, in discrimination-*Viveka*, in dispassion-*Vairagya*, in the control of the lower by the Higher Pole.

Then at last comes the Birth of the Soul, when one is truly born. The probationer has become accepted. As the child is a separate entity, yet clings to the mother for nourishment, for care, for protection, for everything, so the newly-born soul is the accepted chela who contacts his own Guru, and the wisdom of the Guru gives

nourishment; the compassion and sacrifice of the Guru give guidance and cause growth. The Birth of the Soul makes one a chela—not of some worldly guru, but of one of the Great Gurus, the Emancipated Beings, the *Muktas*, the Sage-*Jnanis*, the Mighty Renouncers. Then that Birth is followed by another and greater, when the chela in turn reaches Adeptship.

This is the message that Christmas, the Festival of Birth, brings. Christmas but allegorizes the Birth of the Spirit in the man of flesh.

The Festival of Birth also teaches us about the self-born Great Ones who, from time to time, incarnate to teach and serve Orphan Humanity. Just as in the long life of the human soul, the awakening or conception, the birth and the growth of the soul take place, so in the history of humanity Great Souls are born to aid the race by precept and example. The Incarnation of Divine Sages in the midst of mortals represents another aspect of the Festival of Birth. Taking birth in our midst, They teach us all how we can be re-born, and by Their own example They show what we ourselves can do. The Birth of Christ leads to Resurrection; the Birth of Spirit in the human heart leads to the Great Birth when the mortal becomes the Immortal, when death is conquered and Life Everlasting is realized.

WE ask for truth in everything; our object is the realization of the spiritual perfectibility possible to man: the broadening of his knowledge, the exercising of the powers of his soul, of all the psychical sides of his being. Our theosophical brotherhood must strive after the ideal of general brotherhood throughout all humanity; after the establishment of universal peace and the strengthening of charity and disinterestedness; after the destruction of materialism, of that coarse unbelief and egotism which saps the vitality of our world.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHY AND ITS MESSAGE TO HUMANITY

ONE does not become a Theosophist simply by enrolling as a member of a Theosophical lodge or society. To deserve this designation, one has to fulfil certain legitimate requirements of duty as well. A Theosophist is one who, unmindful of consequences, deliberately sets out on the path of Truth, observes the discipline required for moral, intellectual and spiritual growth, and follows the well-designed and long-established rules of progress and conduct. He does not utilize benefits thus derived for mere self-aggrandizement, but disinterestedly devotes himself to the service of humanity at large, without any distinction of caste, colour, creed, etc., and in the true spirit of self-sacrifice and Universal Brotherhood.

The well-informed statements of various occult writers, that Theosophy and Theosophists existed from very early times, that the Wisdom-Religion is as old as thinking man, have all their significance; and their hold over people's minds has never loosened. Let the earnest student throw back his vision and investigate the forgotten and obliterated pages of the history of the dim past, and he is sure to come across those unsuspected vestiges which shall take him back, link after link, to remote civilizations mightier than the one we have now. This vivid retrospect unfolds before him periods in which he can trace the guiding hand of gigantic minds who worked, sometimes singly and sometimes together, but all on the one broad principle of unity in heterogeneity. Historical and pre-historical periods abound with evidence that there never was a time when humanity was left entirely forsaken by great Beings.

Occult institutions existed everywhere in the good old times—in ancient India and Tibet and Persia, in ancient Egypt, Greece and other lands. We know of their existence in mediaeval Europe as the Rosicrucian Brotherhood and the like. All these sprang from a common source, forming, as it were, links of an ever-lengthening chain. They are all so many units that go to form one complete, undivided, harmonious Whole—all manifestations of the One Truth.

Coming down to our own times, between 1870 and 1880 we find

a nucleus forming on the continent of America—where the Sixth Root Race is to be born and to flourish ages hereafter—the future cradle round which gathered together the most daring souls of the age, headed by no less a personage than Madame H. P. Blavatsky of hallowed memory, the greatest teacher of the 19th-20th century. That nucleus, under the name of the Theosophical Society, began its work of raising a gigantic edifice out of the fragments of Truth handed down to us by the ancient world, an edifice towering above and suppressing all the susperstitions of the decaying religions on the one hand, and all the scepticism of a growing materialism on the other. The foundation-stone was the same strong and mighty inner growth that was able successfully to raise repeatedly in ancient times impregnable bulwarks against discord and disharmony of every sort and every description, *viz.*, the principle of Universal Brotherhood. It is the acceptance of that same principle by the Theosophical Movement that makes it a further link in the unending chain we have referred to above—a further manifestation of the One Truth, which, having been preceded and followed by periods of rest and quiescence, justifies a renaissance on a better and more evolved scale.

Naturally, therefore, the question arises as to the genesis of the formation of such nuclei at certain periodical stages of evolution and progress.

What made Plato and Pythagoras, for instance, preach at intervals the sacred doctrines of the East to a Western nation? Whence the mighty learning displayed in the works of, say, Euclid and Aeschylus and a host of others whose names are still revered and honoured? Were all these mighty revealers of truth ordinary people like men of modern learning? Did they accomplish what they did by their mere unguided brain activity, as some modern materialists suppose? Occultism does not place men like Gautama Buddha, Jesus Christ, Plato and Pythagoras in the same category as men of modern knowledge, however learned they be. A graded, progressive scale of evolution necessarily implies the existence of perfected beings, men of perfect Wisdom and of Compassion, in the midst of ordinary aspirants whose goal it is to attain that perfection. These

men are referred to as Adepts, Masters, Initiates, Rishis, etc., of higher or lower grades, and often such high souls are known as the efflorescence of humanity. They form the very essence of our race by the great worth of their knowledge which contains the acme of past experiences gathered on the soil of self-effort.

These wise ones, who are also called the Elder Brothers of the human family, form the great White Lodge which is the very source of the ordinary person's scrutinizing, discriminative and inventive faculties. One not inspired and put on the proper path by aid rendered by them, will always be in the same predicament as one groping in the dark, or trackless in a labyrinth. We become willing and apt pupils of these Great Ones when we persistently make efforts to be *en rapport* with them. Their mode of living and of working is not like ours, so that unless we completely control all our centres of activity, we cannot be in regular touch with them. Such are the Masters and such their pupils, their companions, who all unitedly work for our regeneration and in whose safe custody the rational philosophy, the scientific religion and the religious science, has rested from time immemorial, safe and untouched, through the ravages of the devastating Lemurian fires and the overwhelming Atlantean floods—because of their prospective intellectual clairvoyance, to which time and space are no barriers.

Such is the explanation offered by occultism as to the *rationale* of various societies and brotherhoods that have a sort of mystic stamp on them. All those earnest seekers who carefully and impartially study the world's history as it passes through the ebbs and flows of civilizations and mental upheavals, will find much that occultism offers *in extenso* at first-hand.

The Theosophical Movement gets its sustenance from the ever-existent spiritual force. Its greatness and utility is not to be gauged by the acts of omission and commission of individual students, but by the standard of moral, ethical and philosophical acumen that its hidden influences offer to its votaries in their everyday vocations.

Let us now turn our attention to some of the world-wide influences that Theosophy has inculcated, if not on a grandiose scale, at least on a highly utilitarian standard. Theosophists have

belief in their stupendous work done in the past, have full faith in their present undertaking, and look hopefully and cheerfully to their future enterprise, because they believe in the existence of a spirit of love, faith, tolerance and unification, not only in their midst, but in the outside world as well. The inculcator of truth, love and brotherhood belongs, by right of his ideals, to our fold and has a claim on our gratitude, so that, when Madame Blavatsky began disseminating Theosophical conceptions, she felt a sort of freedom of activity and latitude of expression, as if she were speaking in the midst of associates. And why? Because the same impulse permeates every inquirer after knowledge, and that impulse is the *Search after Truth*. If she spoke to the clergy, she frankly told them where they were right and where wrong. If she had occasion to refer to the different cults, creeds, nationalities, etc., she put her finger on the source of all and traced their growth to one primal fount, the Ancient Wisdom. When she discussed with scientists, she told them of their great achievements in the domain of physical manifestation, and never allowed the opportunity to slip of asking them to reconcile science with religion. And she encouraged them to expand the narrow limits of their researches, by carrying on without bias or preconception their experiments in psychical investigations. To help them in this, she took the trouble to perform certain phenomena which tended to prove the existence of super-physical agencies, which materialistic science was loath to recognize.

Religion, Science, Philosophy, psychic laws and faculties, all received due attention from her scrutinizing search-light of archaic knowledge. Boldly, workers for Theosophy have gone out into the world, and with love and sympathy exhorted men and women to search after Truth. They did not inculcate the wrong idea of that search, by urging people to seek by any *one* particular road. To say that God, through His Prophet, helps only the chosen followers, is a highly mischievous misconception. Conversion or proselytism is a sin against the Theosophical idea of unification.

The world-wide influence of Theosophy rests mainly on the efforts that its students strenuously make to revive the almost forgotten doctrine of Reincarnation and the changeless law of

Karma, the latter explaining how every cause created by desire and thought and action brings about certain effects, which in their turn again become causes themselves.

Efforts such as these are repeated time after time and age after age, in one or another part of the world, when a towering personality, armed with all the resources of bringing conviction to the elect as well as to the ignorant masses, takes birth to carry out this mission. He has to struggle against tremendous odds, as did Madame Blavatsky, who found herself in the midst of a humanity which did not at all understand her. Ruthlessly maltreated and ignorantly misunderstood, she was made to suffer mental torture by an organized campaign of maligning her in her self-sacrificing mission of helping humanity onwards. Her monumental work, *The Secret Doctrine*, is a legacy to humanity, and lovers of Truth may find in it all the ambrosia that they need in their hour of despair and desolation, when everything else appears bitterness indeed. The book "is written in the service of humanity, and by humanity and the future generations it must be judged." (Preface)

But great thinkers and erudite metaphysicians have had such treatment meted out to them, and we have no cause to wonder at the way in which misguided people talk irreverently of the Occult Sciences, which "will have the finger of scorn pointed at them from every street corner, and everyone will seek to ridicule and crush them in the name, and for the greater glory, of Materialism and its so-called Science." (*S.D.*, I, 298)

As well said by H. T. Buckle, in his admirable *History of Civilization* (quoted in *The Secret Doctrine*, I, 298):

Owing to circumstances still unknown (Karmic provision, H.P.B.) there appear from time to time great thinkers, who, devoting their lives to a single purpose, are able to anticipate the progress of mankind, and to produce a religion or a philosophy by which important effects are eventually brought about. But if we look into history we shall clearly see that, although the origin of a new opinion may be thus due to a single man, the result which the new opinion produces will depend on the condition of the people among whom it is propagated. If either a religion or

a philosophy is too much in advance of a nation, it can do no present service but must bide its time until the minds of men are ripe for its reception....Every science, every creed has had its martyrs. *According to the ordinary course of affairs, a few generations pass away, and then there comes a period when these very truths are looked upon as commonplace facts, and a little later there comes another period in which they are declared to be necessary, and even the dullest intellect wonders how they could ever have been denied.*

Before the launching of the Theosophical Movement, who had heard of the seven principles of man, who had ever suspected an unbroken chain of lives on this earth for every soul, and who had traced the pedigree of man to Divine Progenitors? Few at least in the Western world to be sure, where the Darwinists and the Evolutionists, styling themselves as the teachers of humanity, offered the pithecoïd ape as our ancestor and dubbed him the Father of Man! It is in the Western schools and colleges, at the grand halls of Royal Societies and Scientific Institutes, from religious pulpits and in theological sermons, that

Theosophists and Occultists stand arraigned by public opinion, which still holds high the banner of the inductive Sciences. The latter have, then, to be examined; and it must be shown how far their achievements and discoveries in the realm of natural law are opposed, not so much to our claims, as to facts in nature. The hour has now struck to ascertain whether the walls of the modern Jericho are so impregnable, that no blast of the Occult trumpet is ever likely to make them crumble.

These are Madame Blavatsky's words, and we, her humble followers, who are blessed with eyes to see and ears to hear, do see and hear in this our 20th century that "exact" science is willy-nilly undergoing a slow but sure transformation day by day, and perhaps unknown to its proponents it is converging toward the borderland of the forbidden pasture-ground of superphysical realms.

Madame Blavatsky is not dead and gone; the message that she brought and the mission she has left in our charge remain to tell their further tale; and we who were told by her that in the 20th century

great changes would take place in the mind of the race have had the satisfaction of seeing how her expectations have been fulfilled. We can further take satisfaction at the change of attitude towards matters Theosophical that has come about, how men and women are one by one striving to look higher and deeper in all that pertains to their well-being. A sensible view is taken nowadays of death, not of annihilation or of perdition to eternal hell, but a day of departure to realms where peace abides.

Before we close the subject for the present, let us recapitulate the weighty words of one who has a claim to speak with authority on the subject, being a great Master of Wisdom and a devout benefactor of mankind:

Theosophy can only find objective expression in an all embracing code of life, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of mutual tolerance, charity, and brotherly love. Its Society, as a body, has a task before it which, unless performed with the utmost discretion, will cause the world of the indifferent and the selfish to rise up in arms against it. Theosophy has to fight intolerance, prejudice, ignorance, and selfishness, hidden under the mantle of hypocrisy. It has to throw all the light it can from the torch of Truth, with which its servants are entrusted. It must do this without fear or hesitation, dreading neither reproof nor condemnation. Theosophy, through its mouthpiece, the Society, has to tell the TRUTH to the very face of LIE; to beard the tiger in its den, without thought or fear of evil consequences, and to set at defiance calumny and threats. *As an Association*, it has not only the right, but the duty to uncloak vice and do its best to redress wrongs....

The problem of true Theosophy and its great mission are, first, the working out of clear unequivocal conceptions of ethic ideas and duties, such as shall best and most fully satisfy the right and altruistic feelings in men; and second, the modelling of these conceptions for their adaptation into such forms of daily life, as shall offer a field where they may be applied with most equitableness.

THE THREE PATHS

KNOWLEDGE, ACTION, DEVOTION

Light on the Path says: "Seek out the way." *Seeking the way* means choosing to leave behind sense-life and pursuing soul-life. It means looking for the real in the ever-changing, evanescent world. But we are also told: "Seek the way by retreating within. Seek the way by advancing boldly without." When one just retreats within, there is the danger of becoming self-centred; and merely advancing without could take one to the other extreme of getting too involved in mundane life. There has to be a balance, so that one would go out, *i.e.*, be able to participate in all human experiences while remaining detached from one's personal predilections, biases and outer circumstances, and at the same time turn within and inspect one's motives, thoughts, feelings and actions.

We are also told not to seek the way by any one road:

To each temperament there is one road which seems the most desirable. But the way is not found by devotion alone, by religious contemplation alone, by ardent progress, by self-sacrificing labour, by studious observation of life. None alone can take the disciple more than one step onwards. All steps are necessary to make up the ladder. (*Light on the Path*, p. 5)

In attempting to live the spiritual life, we are conditioned by our temperament. Left to ourselves, we are inclined to follow any one road which suits us best. Treading one or the other path comes naturally to each aspirant. But, as *Light on the Path* says, we cannot reach the goal by following any one road. Even as students of Theosophy, we must be prepared to work in whichever way we are required to work—whether it be speaking from the platform or attending to the book table.

Coming to the *Bhagavad-Gita's* classification of the paths to salvation—Knowledge, Action, Devotion: When we speak of the path of knowledge, it is in the sense of supreme self-knowledge that the word is used. This knowledge is essential to remove ignorance. It is ignorance which makes us think that God is a being outside of

us, that we are poor miserable sinners, and that everything is predestined so that there is no liberty for the human individual. H.P.B. says that there are two kinds of knowledge, the lower or *Apara Vidya* and the higher or *Para Vidya*. What is the source of the higher knowledge or wisdom? All our experiences, right from the Monadic stage, are stored in *Buddhi*. So in a sense this wisdom is in *Buddhi-Manas*.

To acquire true knowledge, there must be recognition that it exists, and then there must be the ardent desire to obtain that knowledge. Even mere intellectual appreciation of it may be an effective starting point, because it would prepare the individual to take an upward step in his next life. "Even if only a mere enquirer, he reaches beyond the word of the *Vedas*," says the *Gita* (VI, 44). But mere head-learning, if it remains there, is dangerous, because it does not tend to develop the nobler qualities in the person and can in fact produce misguided pride. So head-learning has to be guided by Soul-Wisdom. This Wisdom is within us potentially, and for it to flower forth one must acquire breadth and depth of mind.

Wisdom consists in knowing the exact relations between existing things and also their relation to the One Reality. This intuitive knowledge brings spiritual discernment by means of which the Supreme Spirit can be discerned in all things. Krishna says that this sort of knowledge leaves nothing else to be known. Also it is the most excellent purifier. So much so that he says: "Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge" (IV, 36). We have the instance of Valiya Koli transforming himself into Valmiki Rishi. Real knowledge is that which makes us realize our true nature and enables us to see the presence of the One Self in all. *The Voice of the Silence* says: "Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." It is in those moments of unconditional love when we forget ourselves in helping someone, or in admiring virtue for its own sake, that we get an opportunity to be closer to our higher nature.

Again, to acquire this knowledge one needs to change. One cannot remain the same old selfish person and hope to get wisdom. As Aldous Huxley points out in *The Perennial Philosophy*,

"Knowledge is a function of being. When there is a change in the being of the knower, there is a corresponding change in the nature and amount of knowing." If we put into practice the spiritual teachings, we can so change the quality of mind that it becomes porous to the influx from above. This shows that an individual may start out walking the path of knowledge, but he can never hope to reach the goal unless he also takes steps on the path of action and devotion.

In walking the path of action, the first thing that the devotee keeps in mind is to perform good actions and accumulate merit. The visible good and evil are relative, because outward action has its own context. So the law of Karma has two aspects—action-reaction, and ethical causation. The latter aspect takes into account not just the outward action, but the motive and the actual state of the inner man as well. Though the outward act performed by two people may be the same, the state of the inner man in the two cases may be different. Also, the force of action is not just in the outward consequences but in the modification of the inner nature for better or for worse. The motive is all-important. A person may do good for prestige or praise, which means he is still self-centred and his consciousness has not changed. The attitude must be: "I don't care for reward, or praise, or the approval or disapproval of others." There must thus be commitment to principles, regardless of praise or blame.

It is not easy to do good. As *Light on the Path* says: "He who desires to form good Karma will meet with many confusions" (p. 88). For instance, when we do good or practise a virtue we cannot help feeling that we have done this good deed. But if doing good gives us the feeling of superiority, then the deed is rendered useless. The keynote of *Karma Yoga* is to perform actions without attachment to results. "All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action" (*Gita*, III, 9). Actions must be performed with the feeling, "I am doing nothing in seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing..." (V, 8). When an individual identifies himself with his higher nature and has no sense of "I" as separate, he then does not offer any focus and

the reactions do not come back to him.

Again, we are told that "no one ever resteth a moment inactive" (III, 5). The emphasis in the *Gita* is on the performance of one's duty. H.P.B. tells us in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Duty is that which *is due* to Humanity, to our fellow-men, neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation. Theosophy is the quintessence of *duty*. (p. 227)

It is by the cheerful and careful performance of duty that the individual takes his next step in evolution. In the *Gita* (XVIII, 3), we are advised that over and above one's duty, one must never abandon acts of *Dana* (charity), *Tapas* (mortification) and *Yagna* (sacrifice). In the third chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna gives his own example and says that "there is nothing in the three regions of the universe which it is necessary for me to perform, nor anything possible to obtain which I have not obtained, and yet I am constantly in action." If he did not do so, he adds, "these creatures would perish." So also each human being is advised to continue to keep this wheel of sacrifice revolving.

But we see that in walking the spiritual path, the beginning is made with devotion. In rising above our normal self, there needs to be first the heart feeling. When we speak of devotion to music or to mathematics, it involves offering *a part* of ourself, as needed for that particular field. But on the spiritual path, when we speak of devotion, it implies offering *our entire* self. This complete offering is very difficult. As this spiritual discipline is going to go on for many lives, it is only devotion that can sustain us and make us go on in the face of all difficulties.

We need to get over the idea that devotion is a short cut and we can do away with action and knowledge, as "God" will take care of everything. This misconception prevails because God is thought of as a person, and so devotion is taken to mean a sort of emotion that we may have towards a person. But true devotion is something by which the devotee "knoweth fundamentally who and what I am and

having thus discovered me he enters into me without any intermediate condition," says Krishna (*Gita*, XVIII, 55). When this love or singleness of attachment is directed towards a personal god, an idol, or a religion, then it degenerates into fanaticism and this cannot be real *bhakti* or devotion.

On the other hand, to realize that we do not exist as separate entities and that the personalities are the forms taken by the Self for gaining experience—to understand this and feel glad, is real devotion. It is important to recall Krishna's words to Arjuna in Chapter XVIII (verses 61-62): "There dwelleth in the heart of every creature, O Arjuna, the Master—*Ishwara*—who by his magic power causeth all things and creatures to revolve mounted upon the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him alone...." This sanctuary means arriving somewhere—arriving where our inner nature wants us to arrive. Real devotion consists in realizing that Krishna, or the highest we can conceive of, is in the temple, mosque, church all right, but above all He is in us. Why then go wandering to external places of pilgrimage, as Sant Kabir asks?

When we speak of walking the Path, it does not mean that the Path is somewhere out there. As *The Voice of the Silence* says: "Thou canst not travel on the Path before thou hast become that Path itself."

CONDEMN no man in his absence; and when forced to reprove, do so to his face, but gently, and in words full of charity and compassion. For the human heart is like the Kusuli plant: it opens its cup to the sweet morning dew, and closes it before a heavy shower of rain.

—BUDDHIST PRECEPT

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

LIFE—what is it? What do we mean by "living"? We cannot help waking up in the morning and going to sleep at night, dying and being born. Pain and pleasure, illness and health, joy and sorrow, come without our apparent aid. We are, as it were, in a train which takes us on and on to its destination—death—where we enter another train which carries us to *its* destination—life. But how little we know of the scenery we pass through and the fellow travellers we meet! We look out of the windows, not at the spot we are passing, but always at that which we have passed or are coming to, and as quickly as the train travels, our impressions come and go.

Normally a person travels because he has to reach a destination, and generally he prepares himself for the journey, though some, indeed, have no forethought and have to be helped by fellow-travellers—like the one who boasts he travels light, with as little luggage as possible, but accepts the rug of the more heavily laden traveller when it is cold!

We miss a lot of the scenery at night and fail to see the landscape beautifully lit up by the radiant moon; so we retain our awareness only during half the journey!

Are we attentive even during that half? How often do we lose our awareness during waking life!

Indeed, what is life made up of and what is it for? How shall we keep awake all day and be "awake" in the sleep condition? And "awake" in the death condition?

These are questions that need deep thought. Sometimes we tend to be confused by all the instructions given to us, and we end up using none of them. Let us engrave in our hearts the facts we know and apply some at least so that we can prove them to ourselves. But *we must apply them.*

NATURE is upheld by antagonism. Passions, resistance, danger, are educators. We acquire the strength we have overcome.

—EMERSON

THEOSOPHY AND YOGA

II

[Collated from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky]

OUR correspondent [Hubbë-Schleiden] is too well read in Buddhist *Sutras* not to be aware of the existence of the esoteric system taught *precisely* in the *Yogacharya* or the contemplative Mahayana schools. And in that system the hermit or yogi life, except for a few years of preliminary teaching, *is strongly objected to* and called SELFISHNESS. Witness Buddha in those superb pages of *Light of Asia* (Book the Fifth) when arguing with and reprimanding the self-torturing Yogis, whom, "sadly eyeing," the Lord asks:

"...Wherefore add ye ills to life
Which is so evil?"

When told in answer that they stake brief agonies to gain the larger joys of Nirvana, what does he say? This:

"Yet if they last
A myriad years...they fade at length,
Those joys....Speak! Do your Gods endure
For ever, brothers?"

"Nay," the Yogis said,
"Only great Brahm endures: the Gods but live."

Now if our correspondent understood, as he should, these lines rendered in blank verse, yet word for word as in the *Sutras*, he would have a better idea of the esoteric teaching than he now has; and, having understood it, he would not oppose what we said; for not only was self-torture, selfish solitude, and life in the jungle simply for one's own salvation condemned in the *Mahayana* (in the real esoteric system, not the mutilated translations he reads) but even *renunciation of Nirvana for the sake of mankind* is preached therein. One of its fundamental laws is, that ordinary morality is insufficient to deliver one from rebirth; one has to practise the six Paramitas or cardinal virtues for it: (1) Charity, (2) Chastity, (3) Patience, (4) Industry, (5) Meditation, (6) Ingenuousness (or

openness of heart, sincerity). And how can a *hermit* practise charity or industry if he runs away from man? Bodhisattvas, who, having fulfilled all the conditions of Buddhahood, have the right to forthwith enter Nirvana, prefer instead, out of unlimited pity for the suffering ignorant world, to renounce this state of bliss and become *Nirmanakayas*. (H.P.B.'s Note to "World-Improvement or World-Deliverance?", *Lucifer*, July 1889)

Oriental Wisdom teaches us that the Hindu *Yogi* who isolates himself in an impenetrable forest, like the Christian hermit who, as was common in former times, retires to the desert, are both of them nothing but accomplished egoists. The one acts with the sole idea of finding a nirvanic refuge against reincarnation; the other acts with the unique idea of saving his soul—both of them think only of themselves. Their motive is altogether personal; for, even supposing they attain their end, are they not like cowardly soldiers, who desert their regiment when it goes into action, in order to keep out of the way of the bullets? In isolating themselves as they do, neither the *Yogi* nor the "Saint" helps anyone but himself; on the contrary both show themselves profoundly indifferent to the fate of mankind whom they fly from and desert....Gautama, the Buddha, only remained in solitude long enough to enable him to arrive at the truth, to the promulgation of which he devoted himself from that time on, begging his bread, and living for humanity. Jesus retired to the desert only for forty days, and died for this same humanity. Apollonius of Tyana, Plotinus and Iamblichus, while leading lives of singular abstinence, almost of asceticism, lived in the world and *for* the world. The greatest ascetics and *saints* of our days are not those who retire into inaccessible places, but those who pass their lives in travelling from place to place, doing good and trying to raise mankind. ("Le Phare de l'Inconnu," *La Revue Théosophique*, May-August 1889; translated from the original French and published in *The Theosophist*, July-October 1889)

European Theosophists have very little to do with "asceticism." It is a hereditary disease of the *Hatha-Yogis*, the Hindu prototypes

of the Christians who whip themselves and mortify their flesh until they become idiots and converse with the Devil without converting him. The Theosophists, even in India, protest against the *Yogism* of the fakirs. A solitary ascetic is a symbol of *the most cowardly egotism*; a hermit who flees from his brothers instead of helping them to carry the burden of life, to work for others, and to put their shoulders to the wheel of social life, is a coward who hides himself when the battle is on, and goes to sleep drunk on an opiate. *Asceticism*, as understood by exoteric religions, has produced the ignorant fools who throw themselves under the chariot of Juggernaut. If these unfortunate people had studied the esoteric philosophy, they would know that under the dead letter of the dogma taught by the Brahmanas—exploiters, like all priests, inheritors of the possessions of their victims, who are driven to madness by superstitious terrors—is hidden a profoundly philosophical meaning; they would know that their bodies which they crush under the wheels of the chariot of *Jagan-natha* (*Juggernaut* in popular dialect—meaning Lord of the World or *Anima mundi*) are the symbols of the gross material passions which this "chariot" (the divine and spiritual soul) must crush. Knowing this they would not apply the moral and spiritual asceticism taught by esotericism to their bodies—the mere outer animal husk of the god which is latent within. The Theosophists of India labour to destroy exoteric asceticism, or the "deification of suffering," veritable *Satanism* of superstition. ("Misconceptions," *Le Lotus*, September 1887; translated from the original French)

It certainly is not worth the while of any sensible man to spend time in learning such puerilities [puerile phenomena performed by a so-called fakir to serve his own ends]. These are the baser branches of occultism. A Yogi who gets frightened at any threat is *no* Yogi, but one of those who learn to produce effects without knowing or having learnt what are the causes. Such men, if not tricksters, are simply *passive* mediums—not adepts! (Comment on "Yakshni," *The Theosophist*, April 1881)

The root idea that evil is born and generated by the ever increasing complications of the homogeneous material, which enters into form and differentiates more and more, as that form becomes physically more perfect, has an esoteric side to it which seems to have never occurred to the modern pessimist. Its dead-letter aspect, however, became the subject of speculation with every ancient thinking nation. Even in India the primitive thought, underlying the formula already cited, has been disfigured by Sectarianism, and has led to the ritualistic, purely dogmatic observances of the *Hatha Yogis*, in contradistinction to the philosophical Vedantic *Raja Yoga*. Pagan and Christian exoteric speculation, and even mediaeval monastic asceticism, have extracted all they could from the originally noble idea, and made it subservient to their narrow-minded sectarian views. ("The Origin of Evil," *Lucifer*, October 1887)

Before one becomes a practitioner, he ought to become a student....A gradual development of the mental and physical occult faculties is the method used by the true adept in studying the Raj-Yog. The practice of blindly "transferring" and "receiving" [faculties]—is that of sorcerers, whether they are so consciously or unconsciously. Moreover, the ignorant practice of Hatha-Yoga leads one invariably into that undesirable acquisition. The Hatha-Yogi either becomes a sorcerer, or learns practically *nothing*; or more frequently yet, kills himself by such an injudicious practice. The *mantram* ignorantly employed may, and often has, proved a treacherous weapon, whose mystical power has caused it to turn and *stab the user*. (Editor's Note to "'Tharana,' or Mesmerism," *The Theosophist*, August 1882)

The childish, not to say absurd, ideas about Yogis, and their *supernatural* powers—whereas they are at best but *superhuman*—that we often find current among our own Theosophists, and the superstitious and grotesque tales narrated of these holy personages among that class of Hindus, which being more orthodox than educated, derives all its ideas from the dead-letter traditions of the

Puranas and *Sastras*, have very little to do with sober truth. An adept, or Raj Yogi (we now speak of the real, not the fictitious ones of idle rumour) is simply the custodian of the secrets of the hidden possibilities of nature; the master and guide of her undiscovered potentialities, one who awakens and arouses them into activity by abnormal yet natural powers, and by furnishing them with the requisite group of conditions which lie dormant and can rarely, if ever, be brought together if left alone. ("The Death of a Great Man: Pundit Dayananda Saraswati," *The Theosophist*, December 1883)

Theosophy is synonymous with the *Gnana-Vidya* and with the *Brahma-Vidya* of the Hindus, and again with the *Dzyan* of the trans-Himalayan adepts, the science of the *true* Raj-Yogis, who are much more accessible than one thinks. This science has many schools in the East, but its offshoots are still more numerous, each one having ended by separating itself from the parent stem—the *Archaic Wisdom*—and varying in its form.

By Raja Yoga training, the body becomes pure as a crystal casket, the soul purged of all its grossness, and the spirit which, before the beginning of his course of self-purification and development, was to him but a dream, has now become a reality—the man has become a demi-god. (Footnote to "The Brahmachari Bawa," *The Theosophist*, November 1879)

All human *individualities*, although alike in nature yet differ in *manifestations* according to the vehicles and the conditions through which they have to act. The *Yogi*, therefore, so far elevates his other principles, or let us call them vehicles, if preferred, as to facilitate the manifestation of his individuality in its original nature. (Footnote to "Visishtadvaita Philosophy," *The Theosophist*, June 1883)

(To be concluded)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

What is history? How is it written? What is the relationship between history and ideology? And how does this relationship measure up to the notion of objective history, if objectivity is at all possible? Does history have any role to play in shaping the future of a society, and if so, what precise role does it play in this regard? These were some of the questions addressed by B. P. Singh, Secretary to the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resources Development, in his K. K. Dutta Memorial Lecture on "Moulding Society Through Study of History," delivered at Patna. A slightly abridged version of the lecture appears in *Bhavan's Journal*, August 15.

The notion of history [the speaker said] is by no means an easy notion to define. At its simplest, history is concerned with the reconstruction of the past of an individual, or a community, or a nation. It reconstructs this past in the form of a narrative which establishes interconnections between different facets of what is being explored, at the same time as it seeks to dwell upon how the individual, or the community, or the nation in question, has changed over time....

Just as an individual, to understand himself and to negotiate his way through life, needs a memory of his life experiences, similarly a society or a nation—which is a collection of individuals—also needs a "memory" of its past and its life experiences. This memory confers on the society or the nation in question an understanding of itself; a sense of social and moral poise; and an ability to reflect meaningfully upon its future, and initiate action directed towards the future for which it aspires. All this makes it clear how essential it is for an individual, or a society, or a nation, to have a historical understanding of himself/itself. Such an understanding not only provides poise and a sense of direction to the individual, or the collectivity, but it also enables him to map out the future.

History is not simply a chronicle of dynasties and wars, any more than it is an analysis of the development of trade routes and markets. Its task is to follow the central thread which alone makes

the past of importance to the present. The basic fact of history is that of continuity. There is a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress, and we see this in history, and even find it within our own experience.

The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 34)

Kingdoms and empires are under the same cyclic law as planets, races, and everything else in Kosmos. But the cyclic movement is ever upward. When "history repeats itself," it never does so exactly. Nevertheless, we can learn from historical analogies. The destinies of nations are shaped by the events of their past according to Karmic law. Just as past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them, so, too, coming events cast their shadows before.

It is a matter of little wonder that present-day historians, whose "experience is limited to a few thousand years, to less than a day in the whole age of Humanity," should make errors and confusion in their efforts to predict future historical events. There are, however, Eastern Initiates who "maintain that they have preserved records of the racial development and of events of universal import ever since the beginning of the Fourth Race" (*S.D.*, I, 646), and who *can* predict future events with accuracy.

For some time now, scientists have been trying to understand the underlying law behind nature's patterns—how and why they form. The latest view is that from the ripples on a sandy beach to the immense cellular structures of flowing air that form in thunderstorms, and the very stripes on a zebra's back, all arise from the same simple building block—a fundamental theory of pattern formation.

In *New Scientist* (July 12), Marcus Chown discusses the work of a team of physicists at the University of Texas, who are studying pattern formation using a vibrating box of sand. The researchers say that the patterns are not simply formed by the vibrations, but reflect instead the behaviour of the grains, and their tendency to "self-organize." The idea is simply to shake the box at different frequencies and amplitudes and see what happens. As soon as the sand is shaken vigorously, patterns are seen; stripes, squares and hexagons emerge. The scientists have changed the shape of the pan, and used dozens of different types of grains, from salt and sugar granules to small brass balls of varying diameters. "It really doesn't matter what the particles are," says a team member. "The patterns are always the same." Similar patterns have also been spotted in vibrating layers of liquid by other researchers.

What all this means for patterns in more complex systems is still unclear to the scientists. As Marcus Chown states:

The idea that a single theory could explain pattern formation in diverse settings might seem ludicrous. But in the past ten years, scientists have found strikingly similar patterns forming in everything from tanks of stirred chemicals and dishes of growing amoebae to fields of freezing and thawing tundra. The nature of the underlying stuff is seemingly irrelevant, as if the true roots of pattern formation lay in some deep and as yet unrevealed mathematical similarity between all of these systems.

As *The Secret Doctrine* says, all the wonderful discoveries made by modern scientists "would go for nothing and remain for ever *headless* bodies, unless they lift the veil of matter and strain their eyes to see *beyond*" (I, 610). A Universal Theory of Pattern Formation that scientists are looking for, will for ever elude them as long as they refuse to blend physics with metaphysics, the body with its informing soul and spirit. However, it is a hopeful sign that a minority are striving very sensibly to enlarge the domain of physical science by making inroads on the hitherto forbidden grounds of metaphysics.

The first law in nature is uniformity in diversity, and the second—analogy. "As above, so below."

In Esoteric Philosophy, every physical particle corresponds to and depends on its higher *noumenon*—the Being to whose essence it belongs; and above as below, the Spiritual evolves from the Divine, the psycho-mental from the Spiritual—tainted from its lower plane by the astral—the whole animate and (seemingly) inanimate Nature evolving on parallel lines and drawing its attributes from above as well as from below. (*S.D.*, I, 218 fn.)

We see Cosmic matter scattering and forming itself into elements; grouped into the mystic four within the fifth element—Ether, the lining of Akasa, the Anima Mundi or Mother of Kosmos. "Dots, Lines, Triangles, Cubes, Circles" and finally "Spheres"—why or how? Because, says the Commentary, such is the first law of Nature, and because Nature geometrizes universally in all her manifestations. There is an inherent law—not only in the primordial, but also in the manifested matter of our phenomenal plane—by which Nature correlates her geometrical forms, and later, also, her compound elements; and in which there is no place for accident or chance. (*Ibid.*, I, 97)

For a long time researchers in the field of microbiology have searched for signs of intelligence and learning in progressively smaller and more primitive organisms. They are turning up more and more evidence that even single-celled organisms like bacteria are sensate beings who move in purposive ways and make decisive choices.

Scientists have gradually realized that diverse bacteria communicate among themselves and form coalitions to accomplish feats that individuals cannot. *Science News* (August 23) reports:

Once considered an oddity, this organizational ability appears to be a common occurrence. Evolution seems to have distributed a standard kit of two genes to a variety of unrelated bacteria. Armed with these tools, the various species exploit a similar tactic for mobilizing mass production of useful molecules. Each member of an assembly is counted, and the bacteria wait until the crowd has gathered enough members—a quorum—to render success likely. Then each bacterium begins to work

toward the common goal.

"That is a radical concept," says Kendall M. Gray of the University of South Florida in Tampa. "They're single-celled organisms, but they exhibit complex behaviour. They're not only communicating, they're co-ordinating their behaviour so that they behave in a uniform manner."

"It's a very general phenomenon, and it's likely to be a key to the life of micro-organisms in many settings," says one of the researchers. "If the bacteria can't talk amongst themselves, they're not able to survive."

All this bears out the Occult theory that where there is life—and life is everywhere in the Universe—there is consciousness and intelligence. The difference is only in *degree*—from the simplest to the more complex organisms.

It is a particularly vexing experience with most people that the very things they do not want to think about—their worries, undesirable habits, etc.—keep on recurring in their minds. Psychologist Daniel Wegner, a professor at the University of Virginia, U.S.A., says that the effort to restrict thought is itself to blame. "Trying to keep a thought out of your mind," he says, "can produce the very state you are trying to avoid." (*Psychology Today*, September/October 1997)

The solution, suggests Wegner, is to give up trying to control our thoughts, especially when we are under stress. Better, he says, to alter our environment to create the mood or thoughts we want. When, for instance, we are depressed, if we sit by ourselves trying to think cheerful thoughts, we often do not succeed. But if we mix with people who are cheerful and laughing, says Wegner, it can help to bring about a change in our own mood.

In trying not to think about something unpleasant, we must first think about it. Actively trying to suppress an unwanted thought, paradoxically makes us preoccupied with it. Every thought we think, every act we perform, creates in us an impression, and that impression, like everything else, is subject to cyclic law and

becomes repetitive. Mr. Judge suggests a way out of this trend of repetitive thoughts, feelings and moods:

I have friends and acquaintances who have desponding spells. It is the return of old cyclic impressions, or the cyclic return of impressions. What are you to do? Some people say, I just sit down and let it go; that is to say, you sit there and create it once more. You cannot rub it out if it has been coming, but when it comes, start up something else, start up cheerfulness, be good to someone, then try to relieve some other person who is despondent, and you will have started another impression, which will return at the same time. It does not make any difference if you wait a day or two to do this. The next day, or a few days after will do, for when the old cyclic impression returns, it will have dragged up the new one, because it is related to it by association. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24, p. 12*)

If left to our own devices we cannot bring about a change of mood and compel ourselves to feel joyous, then let us try to feel the joy of others, and thus by implanting in ourselves the opposite impression, we can counteract the impression of sadness and depression.

A nation-wide survey on communalism was conducted recently by the Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, an institute dedicated to the pursuit of philosophy and religion. A majority of the respondents were of the view that education is the best antidote for the communal virus. Inevitably, education tends to make people less fundamentalist and more tolerant towards other communities, according to the finding that emerges from the survey.

Among the other findings is the perception that the single most important factor responsible for generating communal tension is the direct or indirect appeals made by political parties to communal loyalties and interests for electoral gains. A significant number of the respondents felt that de-communalization of politics through electoral reforms would stem the rising tide of communalism.

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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.