

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### JESUS—THE MAN

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IN these days when all that is known of Jesus of Nazareth is what is taught in the various churches of the many Christian sects and is so fragmentary, it is well for us to look at this great man from the Theosophical point of view. If this short article makes but a few read again the Gospel story and *The Acts of the Apostles*, to relive with Paul his journeyings among the few who struggled to keep alive the "theosophic" teachings of that century, to sense the wonder of that day when Jesus sat on the Mount and delivered his great Sermon to the multitude, then one more link will have been made with the chain of leaders, workers and guides in the great work of helping Humanity.

H.P.B. predicted that

belief in the Bible *literally*, and in a *carnalized* Christ, will not last a quarter of a century longer. The Churches will have to part with their cherished dogmas, or the 20th century will witness the downfall and ruin of all Christendom, and with it, belief even in a Christos as pure Spirit. The very name has now become obnoxious and theological Christianity must die out, *never to resurrect again* in its present form. This, in itself, would be the happiest solution of all, were there no danger from the natural reaction which is sure to follow: crass materialism will be the consequence and the result of centuries of blind faith, unless the loss of old ideals is replaced by other ideals,

## A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

JESUS—THE MAN	37
MERCURY—THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET	44
GOAL ACHIEVEMENT	48
VANITIES OF LIFE	53
HAVE WE LIVED BEFORE?	59
IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	65

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unassailable, because *universal*, and built on the rock of eternal truths instead of the shifting sands of human fancy. Pure immateriality must replace, in the end, the terrible anthropomorphism of those ideals in the conceptions of our modern dogmatists....(*The Esoteric Character of the Gospels*, pp. 44-45)

But on the other hand she said that “the grand figure of the philosopher and moral reformer [Jesus] instead of growing paler will become with every century more pronounced and more clearly defined”; also that what the world needs is a less exalted but more faithful view of him. It is, therefore, interesting to study just what Theosophy has to say about the personality of this man whom it reveres as a grand philosopher and moral reformer. “The name Jesus,” according to *The Theosophical Glossary*, “is rather a title of honour than a name—the true name of the *Soter* of Christianity being Emmanuel, or God with us (*Matt.*, i, 23).”

When was he born? In the *Glossary*, under “Ebionites,” we read that there is proof “that *Iassou* or *Jeshu* lived during the reign of Alexander Jannaeus [103-76 B.C.] at Lyd (or Lud).” According to the Talmudic *Sepher Toldos Jeshu*, he was the son of Joseph Pandira and was put to death at Lyd, also called Lydda. This man *Iassou*, who lived a century earlier than the era called Christian, we are further told, was the “adept ascetic around whom the legend of Christ was formed.” We read in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 577-78) that “genealogies and prophecies notwithstanding, Jesus *the initiate* (or *Jehoshua*)—the type from whom the ‘historical’ Jesus was copied—was not of pure Jewish blood.”

According to the Gospel stories, Jesus was taken to Egypt when very young by his father and mother to escape the slaughter of the “Innocents” (infant boys). The correct interpretation of this “infant massacre” has been given in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 199-201). During the Herodian reign, Wise Men and Initiates, nicknamed the “Innocents” and the “Babes” on account of their holiness, were being persecuted. According to the *Sepher Toldos Jeshu*, Jesus, or *Jehoshua*, had been entrusted by Mary, his mother, to Rabbi

Elhanan. Rabbi *Jehoshua*, who continued the boy's education after Elhanan, “initiated him in secret knowledge.” When Alexander Jannaeus ordered the slaying of all Initiates, the Rabbi fled to Egypt, taking the boy with him.

Every tradition shows that Jesus was educated in Egypt and passed his infancy and youth with the Brotherhood of the Essenes and other mystic communities. The Essenes were the descendants of the Egyptian hierophants in whose country they had been settled for several centuries before they were converted to Buddhist monasticism by the missionaries of King Asoka, and amalgamated later with the earliest Christians. It was among them that Jesus was initiated into the Mysteries. Later, however, he preferred the “free and independent life of a wandering *Nazaria*,” separating or “inazarenizing” himself from the Essenes and thus “becoming a travelling Therapeute, a *Nazaria*, a healer” (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 144), for he found himself disagreeing with the Essenes “on several questions of formal observance.” (*Ibid.*, II, 132)

There is food for thought in the word “*Nazaraïos*,” for we learn that “Jesus was called *Nazaraïos*, in reference to his humble and mean external condition; ‘for *Nazaraïos* means separation, alienation from other men’” (*Isis*, II, 128). He is pictured as having long hair and it is recorded that

the *nazars*—or set apart—as we see in the Jewish Scriptures, had to cut their hair which they wore long, and which “no razor touched” at any other time, and sacrifice it on the altar of initiation. (*Isis*, II, 90)

They were a class of Chaldean theurgists. The long white garment which Jesus is always represented as wearing was the dress adopted by the Nazarene Priests and the Pythagorean and Buddhist Essenes, as described by Josephus.

The oldest Nazarenes, who were the descendants of the scripture Nazars and whose last prominent leader was John the Baptist, though never very orthodox in the sight of the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, were, nevertheless, respected and left unmolested. But the new sect to which the followers of Jesus evidently adhered became a

thorn in the side of the scribes and Pharisees because they showed themselves “reformers and innovators.”

H.P.B. remarks: “How little Jesus had impressed his personality upon his own century, is calculated to astound the inquirer” (*Isis*, II, 335), even though “the civilized portion of the Pagans who knew of Jesus honoured him as a philosopher, an *adept* whom they placed on the same level with Pythagoras and Apollonius” (*Isis*, II, 150). His mission was short: “...*he died because he could not help it, and only when betrayed*....When, finally he saw that his time had come, he succumbed to the inevitable” (*Isis*, II, 545). As for the manner of his death, the Talmudists say that he

was thrown in prison, and kept there forty days; then flogged as a seditious rebel; then stoned as a blasphemer in a place called Lud, and finally allowed to expire upon a cross. “All this,” explains Levi, “because he revealed to the people the truths which they (the Pharisees) wished to bury for their own use. He had divined the occult theology of Israel, had compared it with the wisdom of Egypt, and found thereby the reason for a universal religious synthesis.” (*Isis*, II, 202)

Regarding his character, we learn from a footnote in *The Theosophist*:

The position THEY [the Mahatmas] give to Jesus, as far as we know, is that of a great and pure man, a reformer who would fain have lived but who had to die for that which he regarded as the greatest birthright of man—*absolute* Liberty of conscience; of an adept who preached a universal Religion knowing of, and having no other “temple of God” but man himself; that of a noble Teacher of esoteric truths which he had no time given him to explain; that of an initiate who recognized no difference—save the moral one—between men; who rejected caste, and despised wealth; and who preferred death rather than to reveal the secrets of initiation. And who, finally, lived over a century before the year of our vulgar, so-called, Christian era. (Vol. IV, p. 261)

Two further quotations teach us more:

As an incarnated God there is no single record of him on this earth capable of withstanding the critical examination of science; as one of the greatest reformers, an inveterate enemy of every theological dogmatism, a persecutor of bigotry, a teacher of one of the most sublime codes of ethics, Jesus is one of the grandest and most clearly-defined figures on the panorama of human history. (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 150)

Tender and perfect in his nature, “the meek Judean philosopher” was a glorious example, for,

whether the Jesus of the New Testament ever lived or not, whether he existed as an historical personage, or was simply a lay figure around which the Bible allegories clustered—the Jesus of Nazareth of Matthew and John, is the ideal for every would-be sage and Western candidate Theosophist to follow. That such an one as he, was a “Son of God,” is as undeniable as that he was neither the *only* “Son of God,” nor the first one, nor even the last who closed the series of the “Sons of God,” or the children of Divine Wisdom, on this earth. (*Lucifer*, I, 327)

What was his Mission? In *Isis Unveiled* we read:

There is quite enough in the four Gospels to show what was the secret and most fervent hope of Jesus; the hope in which he began to teach, and in which he died. In his immense and unselfish love for humanity, he considers it unjust to deprive the many of the results of the knowledge acquired by the few. This result he accordingly preaches—the unity of a spiritual God, whose temple is within each of us, and in whom we live as He lives in us—in spirit. (II, 561)

His motive was “to benefit humanity at large by producing a religious reform which should give it a religion of pure ethics; the true knowledge of God and nature having remained until then solely in the hands of the esoteric sects, and their adepts” (*Isis*, II, 133). This is brought out in the following extracts:

From that memorable day when he preached his Sermon on the Mount, an immeasurable void opened between his God and that other deity who fulminated his commands from that other

mount—Sinai. The language of Jesus is unequivocal; it implies not only rebellion but defiance of the Mosaic “Lord God.” “Ye have heard,” he tells us, “that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but *I say* unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. Ye have heard that it hath been said....Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But *I say* unto you: Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you.” (*Isis*, II, 163)

This shows clearly that he “recognized no Jehovah” (*S.D.*, I, 578). His commandments were simple. When asked what a man should do to have eternal life, he replied: “Keep the commandments.” When asked which ones, he answered:

Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. (*Matt.*, xix, 16-19)

We can see, as Ammonius Saccas saw, that

the *whole which Christ had in view* was to reinstate and restore to its primitive integrity the wisdom of the ancients—to reduce within bounds the universally prevailing dominion of superstition...and to exterminate the various errors that had found their way into the different popular religions. (*Isis*, II, 249-50)

A comparison of his teachings with those of Pythagoras and of the Buddha shows the truth of H.P.B.'s statement that

1, all his sayings are in a Pythagorean spirit, when not *verbatim* repetitions; 2, his code of ethics is purely Buddhist; 3, his mode of action and walk in life, Essenean; and 4, his mystical mode of expression, his parables, and his ways, those of an initiate, whether Grecian, Chaldean, or Magian. (*Isis*, II, 337)

Saddening but true is the following from *Isis Unveiled*:

Alas, alas! How little has the divine seed, scattered broadcast by the hand of the meek Judean philosopher, thrived or brought forth fruit. He, who himself had shunned hypocrisy, warned against public prayer, showing such contempt for any useless exhibition of the same, could he but cast his sorrowful glance on the earth, from the regions of eternal bliss, would see that this seed fell neither on sterile rock nor by the wayside. Nay, it took deep root in the most prolific soil; one enriched even to plethora with lies and human gore! (II, 303)

Perhaps these extracts will help us to see in the true light the “Prophet of Nazareth, by whose mouth the spirit of truth spake loudly to humanity.” May the day hasten when the grand figure and ethics of this “philosopher and moral reformer...will reign supreme and universal”! We are told that this will only be “on that day when the whole of humanity recognizes but one father—the UNKNOWN ONE above—and one brother—the whole of mankind below.” (*Isis*, II, 150-51)

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How the Masters would if They could, save humanity! They have done all they can. The Message is here, and it is our only hope. Jesus said, “O Jerusalem, how I would have gathered thee under my wing as a hen doth her chickens, but ye would not.” And Jerusalem was destroyed. We need not think there is not the same danger for us. There is nothing in our civilization that is enduring—of railroads, books, buildings—not a single relic would be left after a hundred years. So if there are those who have eyes to see, who have ears to hear and who can understand, let them work in season and out of season to put these ideas before their fellow-men, that the ideas may spread and make others think.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## MERCURY—THE MYSTERIOUS PLANET

THE planet Mercury, or Budha, is the one which lies nearest to the Sun and is said to receive seven times more light and heat from it than our Earth, whereas the beautiful Venus gets only twice the amount received by the Earth. So there is no doubt but that “Mercury is, as an astrological planet, still more occult and mysterious than Venus.” (*S.D.*, II, 28)

It also occupies a very important place in ancient Mythology, as it represents the principle of Buddhi—Esoteric Wisdom—and is therefore identified with the god of Wisdom, known under various names. In one place in *The Secret Doctrine* the Planet Mercury or Budha is designated as the “Lord of Wisdom” (II, 27), and in another place it is said that “the men of the Lord of Wisdom (*Budha Mercury*), not the sons of Soma (*the Moon*), are immortal” (II, 44). The day of the week which is named after this planet, Budha—Wednesday, was also, we are told, “sacred both to Hermes and Thot.” (II, 367)

Furthermore, “Ancient Mythology includes ancient Astronomy as well as Astrology. The planets were the hands pointing out, on the dial of our solar system, the hours of certain periodical events. Thus, Mercury was *the messenger* appointed to keep time during the daily solar and lunar phenomena, and was otherwise connected with the God and Goddess of Light.” (I, 389 fn.)

It is on the solid foundation of the Science of the Zodiac that ancient theogonies have been reared, and one cannot but be “struck with amazement at the idea of the days of Mercury (Wednesday), Venus (Friday), Jupiter (Thursday), Saturn (Saturday), and others being related to the days of the week in the same order and with the same names in India as in Northern Europe.” (I, 652)

The clear Theosophical teaching that each human being is endowed with the divine faculty of Buddhi, which can be developed by the requisite self-purification and spiritual training, as also the fact that Buddhi is the golden casket which serves as the vehicle in which a Ray of the Absolute is focused and becomes indivi-

dualized—these truths have been given expression to in a veiled and allegorical form, it seems, in the words of Mercury through his oracles: “I am he whom you call the Son of the Father (Jupiter) and Maia. Leaving the King of Heaven (the Sun) I come to help you, mortals” (II, 542). We can well understand, therefore, Madame Blavatsky's statement that “Mercury heals the blind and restores sight, mental and physical.” (*Ibid.*)

There is a beautiful allegory about the birth of this planet Budha which is full of deep significance. Soma, the sacred beverage drunk by the Brahmins and the Initiates during their mysteries and sacrificial rites, is really symbolic of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, and for this reason

Soma was never given in days of old to the non-initiated Brahman—the simple *Grihasta*, or priest of the exoteric ritual. Thus Brihaspati—“guru of the gods” though he was—still represented the dead-letter form of worship. It is Tara *his wife*—the symbol of one who, though wedded to dogmatic worship, longs for true wisdom—who is shown as initiated into his mysteries by King *Soma*, the giver of that Wisdom. Soma is thus made in the allegory *to carry her away*. The result of this is the birth of Budha—*esoteric Wisdom*—(Mercury, or Hermes in Greece and Egypt). He is represented as “so beautiful,” that even the husband, though well aware that Budha is not the progeny of his *dead-letter* worship—claims the “new-born” as his Son, the fruit of his ritualistic and meaningless forms. (II, 499)

Directly after relating the above, Madame Blavatsky very aptly observes in a footnote that “We see the same in the modern exoteric religions.”

An observation worth noting in reference to Mercury is the fact that it has no satellites. Astronomers are unable to explain why this should be so in reference to this planet, as also in the case of Venus. This is because

science has only one key—the key of matter—to open the mysteries of nature withal, while occult philosophy has seven

keys and explains that which science fails to see. Mercury and Venus have no satellites but they had “parents” just as the earth had. Both are far older than the Earth and, before the latter reaches her seventh Round, her mother Moon will have dissolved into thin air, as the “Moons” of the other planets have, or have not, as the case may be, since there are planets which have *several* moons—a mystery again which no Oedipus of Astronomy has solved. (I, 155-56 fn.)

Saturn, Jupiter, Mercury and Venus are said to be the four exoteric planets and these, along with three others which, Madame Blavatsky says, “must remain unnamed,” “were the heavenly bodies in direct astral and psychic communication with the Earth, its Guides, and Watchers—morally and physically; the visible orbs furnishing our Humanity with its outward and inward characteristics, and their ‘Regents’ or *Rectors* with our Monads and spiritual faculties.” In other words, it is made quite clear that “only seven of our planets are as intimately related to our globe, as the Sun is to all the bodies subject to him in his system.” (I, 575-76)

Although a good deal of rare and valuable esoteric knowledge about the planets was given out for the first time in Theosophical writings (*e.g.*, that pertaining to the Chain of Seven Globes interpenetrating one another, of which the visible heavenly bodies form but one Globe, the middle or fourth one), H.P.B. repeats in several places in *The Secret Doctrine* the idea that no one “could expect to have the secret teachings explained to him *thoroughly and completely*, before *he had irretrievably pledged himself to the Brotherhood and passed through at least one initiation*” (I, 164). The student is always encouraged by her therefore to use his intuition at every step and to draw as much as possible on this divine faculty of Buddhi which lies latent in him and with which the planet Mercury is so closely related.

However, even a casual and cursory acquaintance with Theosophical teachings will make one thing amply and unmistakably clear to every intelligent reader, namely, that

the planets are not merely spheres, twinkling in Space, and made to shine for no purpose, but the domains of various beings with whom the profane are so far unacquainted; nevertheless, having a mysterious, unbroken, and powerful connection with men and globes. Every heavenly body is the temple of a god, and these gods themselves are the temples of GOD, the Unknown “*Not Spirit.*” (I, 578)

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HE who is great must make humility his base. He who is high must make lowliness his foundation. Thus, princes and kings in speaking of themselves use the terms “lonely,” “friendless,” “of small account.”...

Thus it is that “Some things are increased by being diminished, others are diminished by being increased.”...

Therefore, if a great kingdom humbles itself before a small kingdom, it shall make that small kingdom its prize. And if a small kingdom humbles itself before a great kingdom, it shall win over that great kingdom. Thus the one humbles itself in order to attain, the other attains because it is humble....

Therefore, the Sage, wishing to be above the people, must by his words put himself below them; wishing to be before the people, he must put himself behind them. In this way, though he has his place above them, the people do not feel his weight; though he has his place before them, they do not feel it as an injury. Therefore all mankind delight to exalt him, and weary of him not.

—*Tao Te King*

## GOAL ACHIEVEMENT

Reach high, for stars lie hidden in your soul;  
Dream deep, for every dream precedes this goal.

—PAMELA VONIL STARR

CHRISTOPHER Columbus could not have reached the American shores if he did not set out with the conviction of viability of his plan to sail westward to reach India. The hazardous voyage through unknown waters did not deter him, for the determined end he perceived was clear to him. The Indian sub-continent was his destination and westward was his sight. Providence, or we might say a higher will, landed him on the New Continent. Columbus earned greater fortunes than the anticipated treasures of Asia.

To achieve anything, whether mundane or unearthly, the primary and crucial step is to set out with a clear-cut goal or goals before us. No one has ever hit the mark without taking an aim. Even when the pathways are not clear to us, the destination must be clear.

There are goals as varied as human nature, but we can classify them in the order of significance or value calculated to give meaning and purpose to human existence. Motivational psychology has also tried to classify human goals in terms of man's psychobiological needs and drives. For most men the instant drive is toward his so-called primary goals which cater to his immediate personal needs. They do not directly subscribe to the *ultimate* goal of man's endeavour as acknowledged in the highest tradition of supreme achievement. This first category obviously covers health, education, good social relationship, finance, career, etc. Once these are satisfied, there may arise "higher" needs.

Thus a second category of goal crystallizes. The life energy is now directed to achieving efficiency and excellence which could ensure satisfaction derived from personal development. The intelligent and well-informed people are geared to the second category of goal, *viz.*, self-development and achieving distinction in one's own field of endeavour. But these fall short of the "Highest"

possibilities awaiting human evolution. The penultimate goal being of refined or ethereal nature, it cannot be defined in hard-and-fast terms. And yet, some ideas must be crystallized—not rigidly concretized—if they are to become the very target of the whole life's discipline. Among the Theosophical Ideals, there stand out the great philanthropists, the Elder Brothers of humanity known as the Masters of Wisdom and of Compassion.

Therefore, the final aim for a true seeker is to become an efficient "beneficiary." "To be of service to others is the most satisfying motto in the life of a student-seeker." The humanistic psychologists like Erich Fromm acknowledge it as the most "productive" form of existence. It not only fulfils the individual himself but also serves life's highest purpose—as an individual soul.

There are still higher possibilities. The ideal, like the horizon, recedes as one approaches it. It seems there is no real finality to human perfection.

An all-round capability and efficient knowledge are great assets to the individual himself and to the society. All he needs is a further resolve to become a beneficent force for others. If this becomes the mainspring of his affirmation and endeavour, he fulfils the very *raison d'être* of his existence. He is qualified to receive invisible help from the higher planes of his being. Those who "live to benefit mankind," have a protective shield of which they may or may not be aware. *The Friendly Philosopher* states (p. 397), "All sincere students are surrounded by an 'invisible escort' as long as their faces are set toward the Goal and they remain staunch to Masters' programme." One has just to take the position of a "passer-on"—one among the many. He has to become a servant of the power [the escort] and the powers who are behind the evolutionary march of the Race. What better Goal to pursue than to become an efficient instrument of the Divine! The purpose of life then is to learn how to serve.

But what are the "dynamics" of goal achievement? In our achievement-driven society hints about the "dynamics" are always

welcome. The mushrooming Management schools are ever ready to supply the demand!

In Theosophical discipline too one needs the special skills and working knowledge for effective life and work. Even when the goals, and especially the motives, differ for the sacred as against the commercial enterprise, the basics for both pursuits are the same in principle. For instance, any management requires skill in interpersonal relationship, as much as in the art of governing an organization. In U.L.T. groups, “we are dealing with *minds*, not persons” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 398). “It is both wise and necessary to have a good comprehension of ways and means, of the processes of dealing with others' minds...that they and we may learn the rules of Soul-warfare.” (*Ibid.*, p. 379)

While the management rules are basic, they differ only in their application according to the moral quality of the goal, *i.e.*, the motive and the work ethics in an organization. The means, the method and the ends must be commensurate in an ethical enterprise. But certain “techniques,” as such, are not very different for any system to perform well. After all, leaders like H.P.B., W.Q.J. and Col. Olcott were excellent organizers in their own sphere of work. Of course, in their case, they were guided by intuitive insight into men and their mission.

As for the *theosophical endeavours* of our era, the aim and the objects are acknowledged by most of the students. It is the means and methods, the attitudes and largely the hidden *motives*, that create differences of approach and consequences. For a sincere student, the original teachings of Theosophy and the directions given by the Teachers themselves should be adequate as the “guiding light” for the study, application and especially the work. One need not go to the management consultant!

Referring to the original purpose and line of the Theosophical Movement, Mr. Crosbie emphasized the “need to keep the goal ever in sight and mind, never allowing any fogs or clouds to obstruct it. If this is not done, all direction is lost...W.Q.J. said there are two things needed—to hold on firmly, and to have perfect

confidence.” (*Ibid.*, pp. 33 and 139)

Technically, *action planning* is the second most important step, next to the first management rule, namely, *goal-setting*. One must be able to define or identify the steps that could lead to goal achievement. Sometimes the plan, however well set, may require to be modified as we go along the way—after due deliberation. One must be ready for an unexpected turn of events. The *game-plan* may be ready at hand but we must be creative and flexible in approach. Firmness of the resolve does not mean frozen rigidity or one-track thinking.

There is a law of mental dynamics, which always determines the results of our endeavour. One such rule is to clearly *visualize* and  *dwell steadily* on the object to be realized. This energizes the will and helps to bring into reality the thing visualized. This is an occult law applied unconsciously in all successful enterprises.

Generally, aptitude, talents, knowledge, enthusiasm, commitment, etc., are recommended as the ingredients of success. But even a talented individual may not succeed if he drifts, experiments or wavers on account of uncertain perspective or “vision” before him. Visualization has to be realistic and well *articulated*, *i.e.*, both the goal and the blueprint of the plan have to be set down in clear terms.

Sometimes one may be bogged down by immediate challenges. One may lose sight of the chosen goal, shaken by anxiety. Mr. Judge offers a remedy: “The way gets clearer as we go on [persevere], but as *we* get clearer we get less anxious as to the way ahead.”

Secondly, the lure and the inspiration of the luminous goal itself supplies the motivating impulse in our pursuit. It strengthens our resolve. And there is the faith that “Realization comes from dwelling upon the thing to be realized.” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 54)

There are other considerations when we set out to achieve our objectives—whether earthly or idealistic. The goal must be realistic, *i.e.*, attainable and specific.

The elaborate strategy of goal achievement for management schools is another matter. But for our purpose, *i.e.*, for leading a higher life, the virtues of enthusiasm, the spirit of adventure, decisiveness, commitment, adaptability, concentration, etc., are great assets. But the most relevant is the heart conviction or *faith* based on Theosophical knowledge.

For a climber it is not important how high he has reached but that he will continue to exert in the direction of the summit even after temporary upsets on slippery heights. The *vision* of the glorious summit has its own allurements for all real mountaineers. They are known to dream of it even in the delirium of a benumbed state.

We cannot always influence the outcome. But we must always accept what happens and move on.

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THE power of ideals is incalculable. We see no power in a drop of water. But let it get into a crack in the rock and be turned into ice, and it splits the rock; turned into steam, it drives the pistons of the most powerful engines. Something has happened to it which makes active and effective the power that is latent in it. So it is with ideals. Ideals are thoughts. So long as they exist merely as thoughts, the power latent in them remains ineffective, however great the enthusiasm and however strong the conviction with which the thought is held. Their power becomes effective only when they are taken up into some refined human personality.

—ALBERT SCHWEITZER

## VANITIES OF LIFE

THE short book of the Bible called *Ecclesiastes*, a word meaning Preacher, needs closer study; and when we realize, as H.P.B. tells us in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 703), that it contains the words of the “King-Initiate,” we can gain from it much of real value. In it Solomon, as an excellent preacher, shows the vanity of the things of this world, “in order to withdraw the hearts and affections of men from such empty toys.” The whole short book can be taken as a meditation on life: on “birth, death, decay, sickness and error.”

Starting with the well-known words, “Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity,” and repeating them in the last chapter after having taken us through all the vanities of life, the *Ecclesiastes* ends by giving us the antidote of vanity: fear of the Lord and the observance of the moral law.

To reach to the realization of this truth we must follow the *Ecclesiastes*, or the Preacher, in his mental researches.

Just as in the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* we are given the key to all that follows in that book, so also here we are given at the very outset the underlying basis of all that is to follow. We are brought to a conception of those two great aspects of life: Motion and Time.

*One* generation passeth away, and *another* generation cometh: but the earth standeth for ever.

The sun riseth, and goeth down, and returneth to his place: and there rising again,

Maketh his round by the south, and turneth again to the north: the spirit goeth forward, surveying all places round about, and returneth to his circuits.

All the rivers run into the sea, yet the sea doth not overflow: unto the place from whence the rivers come they return, to flow again.<sup>1</sup>

This eternal motion and the vanity of thinking that the earth

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<sup>1</sup>All quotations are from the Douay-Rheims Version of *The Holy Bible*.

and ourselves are unique, brings us to the second great principle—  
Duration:

What is it that hath been? The same thing that shall be.  
What is it that hath been done? The same that shall be done.

Nothing under the sun is new, neither is any man able to  
say: Behold this is new. For it hath already gone before in the  
ages that were before us.

If this is true then why do we not remember what has gone  
before? Ecclesiastes answers with the plain statement: “There is  
no remembrance of former things: nor indeed of those things which  
hereafter are to come, shall there be any remembrance with them  
that shall be in the latter end.”

It was with these thoughts in mind, he tells us, that he proposed  
in his mind “to seek and search out wisely concerning all things  
that are done under the sun.” For this is the whole duty of man. It  
is when despair sets in and the uselessness of life is seen that most  
of us begin to seek the purpose of our existence. The King-Initiate  
reminds us how, after becoming the greatest of Kings, he saw the  
vanity of all temporal things.

I have seen all things that are done under the sun: and behold  
all is vanity and vexation of spirit.

The perverse are hard to be corrected: and the number of  
fools is infinite.

I have spoken in my heart, saying: Behold I am become  
great, and have gone beyond all in wisdom that were before me  
in Jerusalem. And my mind hath contemplated many things  
wisely: and I have learned.

And I have given my heart to know prudence, and learning,  
and errors, and folly: and I have perceived that in these also  
there was labour and vexation of spirit,

Because in much wisdom there is much indignation: and  
he that addeth knowledge, addeth also labour.

Man progresses and learns by self-effort and by the method of  
trial and error; and so Ecclesiastes says that he set out to find “what  
was profitable for the children of men, and what they ought to do

under the sun, all the days of their life.” He said in his heart that he  
would go and enjoy all that there was to be enjoyed, in order to  
find out wherein lay wisdom and wherein lay folly. He had palaces  
and gardens and orchards made for him; he got himself men-  
servants and maid-servants, had a big family, and grew in prosperity.  
“I surpassed in riches all that were before me in Jerusalem: my  
wisdom also remained with me.” But when he looked at all these  
riches and worldly labours he saw in them vanity, and realized that  
nothing was lasting.

Then he saw that “wisdom excelled folly, as much as light  
differeth from darkness.” But, though the wise man was alert and  
could see things, while the fool was ignorant and walked in  
darkness, both alike were to die one day. Therefore of what avail is  
the wise man's wisdom and labour? This also he considered to be  
vanity, for both the wise man and the fool are forgotten in time.

He became weary of life, for everything he turned to seemed  
to him to be “vanity and vexation of spirit.” And he began to hate  
all the things he had worked for, as he would have to leave them  
behind. Despair set in, and “I left off, and my heart renounced  
labouring any more under the sun.” In such a state of despair he  
almost repeated Arjuna's cry, “I shall not fight.”

Then he turned away from his own individual life and looked  
around. It brought him to the law of cycles, of change, for he learned  
that all that is earthly is liable to perpetual change.

All things have their season: and in their times all things  
pass under heaven.

A time to be born, and a time to die. A time to plant, and a  
time to pluck up that which is planted.

A time to kill, and a time to heal. A time to destroy, and a  
time to build.

A time to weep, and a time to laugh. A time to mourn, and a  
time to dance....

And he follows this theme through the events of life, reaching  
the conclusion that by the necessary change of times, vanity is  
added to human travail. He then realizes that we are to put our

trust in the Good Law and cast away fruitless cares. And the first cheerful note is sounded:

I have known that there was no better thing than to rejoice and do well in this life.

For every man that eateth and drinketh, and seeth good of his labour, this is the gift of God.

I have learned that all the works which God hath made continue for ever: we cannot add anything, nor take away from those things which God hath made that he may be feared.

If we see that God and Law are one, we sense the truth of what is said and what follows: “The things that shall be have already been: and God restoreth that which is past.” In other words, realizing that Law works everywhere and in all things, Ecclesiastes saw the unity of all. “All things breathe alike...and all things go to one place.” He perceived that “nothing is better than for a man to rejoice in his work: and that this is his portion.” Have we not here the great teaching of the *Gita* to do our duty, that *dharma* to which we are born, with the added injunction to *rejoice* in doing it?

But the human spirit can never rest in peace while still human and with a mind that is constantly seeking the true essence of life. So Ecclesiastes turned to other things and saw that oppressions were rife and the innocent shed tears; and “they had no comforter...being destitute of help from any.” Of what use, then, are all the labours of men? “The fool foldeth his hands together... saying: “Better is a handful with rest, than both hands full with labour, and vexation of mind.” Vanity is increased by oppression, by envy, by idleness, by covetousness, by solitariness, by wilfulness.

It is better...that two should be together than one: for they have the advantage of their society. If one fall he shall be supported by the other...

Better is a child that is poor and wise than a king that is old and foolish, who knoweth not to foresee for hereafter.

Because out of prison and chains sometimes a man cometh forth to a kingdom: and another born king is consumed with poverty.

This again is a reminder of the teaching of the Buddha:

Who toiled a slave may come anew a Prince  
For gentle worthiness and merit won;  
Who ruled a King may wander earth in rags  
For things done and undone.

When we see the oppression of the poor and the perversion of justice, let us realize that “he that is high hath another higher, and there are others still higher than these.” Is this a hint to us to let the Law work, and not become ourselves agents of retaliation? We are told, also, what will be the fate of the covetous. All that comes to us is really not ours; the covetous man and the rich man suffer: the one is never satisfied and the other loses his sleep through surfeit. Riches hurt the owner, for when they are lost he suffers. “As he came forth naked from his mother's womb, so shall he return...What then doth it profit him that he hath laboured for the wind?”

Next, we are given prescriptions against worldly vanities—mortification, patience, and seeking wisdom.

I have surveyed all things with my mind, to know, and consider, and seek out wisdom and reason: and to know the wickedness of the fool and the error of the imprudent...

Only this I have found, that God made man right, and he hath entangled himself with an infinity of questions. Who is as the wise man? And who hath known the resolution of the word?...

He that keepeth the commandment shall find no evil. The heart of a wise man understandeth time and answer.

There is a time and opportunity for every business.

Understanding the Law, or Divine Providence, he is led to see that “it is better with the godly in adversity, than with the wicked in prosperity.” “There are just men to whom evils happen, as though they had done the works of the wicked: and there are wicked men who are as secure as though they had the deeds of the just. But this also I judge most vain.” For, though “sentence is not speedily pronounced against the evil,” yet Divine Providence rules over

all. We come to see that “wisdom is better than weapons of war: but one sinner destroyeth much good;” and that “the words of the wise are heard in silence, more than the cry of a prince among fools.” Even though we cannot see the why of things, still “whatsoever thy hand is able to do, do it earnestly....”

The last chapter gives the chief antidote to vanity.

Whereas Ecclesiastes was very wise, he taught the people, and declared the things that he had done: and seeking out, he set forth many parables.

He sought profitable words: and wrote words most right, and full of truth.

The words of the wise are as goads, and as nails deeply fastened in, which by the counsel of masters are given from one shepherd.

More than these, my son, require not. Of making many books there is no end: and much study is an affliction of the flesh.

Let us all hear together the conclusion of the discourse. Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is all man:

And all things that are done, God will bring into judgement for every error, whether it be good or evil.

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HUMAN betterment is a gradual, two-steps-forward, one-step-back effort. Forgive others for their misdeeds over and over again. This gesture fosters inner ease. Forgive yourself over and over again. Then try to do better next time....Regularly ask yourself, “How are my thoughts, words, and deeds affecting my friends, my spouse, my neighbour, my child, my employer, my subordinates, my fellow citizens? Am I doing my part to contribute to the spiritual progress of all with whom I come in contact?” Make it your business to draw out the best in others by being an exemplar yourself.

—EPICTETUS

## HAVE WE LIVED BEFORE?

IN his talk, “What Reincarnates?” printed in *The Friendly Philosopher*, Mr. Crosbie observes, “What reincarnates is a mystery to many minds because they find a difficulty in understanding such a permanency as must stand behind repeated incarnations.” If we ask a question at all about whether we lived before, and whether we are going to live again in this body after death, we are implying that there is something permanent, which is capable of existing, apart from this body—or even apart from the personality. In *The Key to Theosophy*, Madame Blavatsky distinguishes between the Individuality and the Personality. She remarks that when you say, “I am,” that is your sense of being an Individual. But, if you say, “I am Mr. Brown,” that is a complex idea—it is really the “I” wrapped up in a particular temperament and personality. Mr. Crosbie comments: “Theosophy presents a larger view in showing that a man is *not* his body, because the body is continually changing; that man is not his mind, because he is constantly changing his mind; that there *is* in man a permanency, which is the identity throughout all kinds of embodiments.” We observe that the child practically doubles its weight in the first six months, but that doesn't mean its identity has changed.

This idea of “all kinds of embodiments” is very interesting. Mr. Judge writes in *The Ocean of Theosophy* that the world is made up of Consciousness and Substance—Spirit and Matter. When they combine, the same Spirit is being embodied in various forms of matter. Matter is indestructible, but not the forms. Matter persists, although the particular form crumbles. But the same matter is used to make another form and this is called *reembodiment*. Mr. Judge writes, “Now the moment we postulate a double evolution, physical and spiritual, we have at the same time to admit that it can only be carried on by reincarnation.” For alone in the doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation is the answer to all the problems of life and the force that will make man pursue what they convey in theory.

If there is anything other than matter in man, then the question arises, how are the two linked together? In the early centuries of the Christian era, there was a great argument in the Western world about the doctrine of preexistence—*i.e.*, the doctrine of existence of the soul *before* it is born. Opinion was divided on this matter. Five hundred years after Jesus, in the Council of Constantinople, the doctrine of reincarnation was anathematized.

If one regards a human being as essentially his body—and considers the feelings, the mind, etc., as a kind of by-product of biological processes—then the only logical belief he can hold is that he has neither lived before nor will he live after death. But anyone who thinks the mind, the consciousness, the soul are independent of body, may ask the question, “What is their nature?” The philosophers observe that by its nature consciousness must be continuous and not liable to be interrupted or ended. If there are only two aspects to this universe—consciousness and matter—and if we do not accept that consciousness is the result of matter, then there is nothing to restart consciousness if it is interrupted. Since matter cannot restart consciousness, it is only logical to conclude that consciousness cannot be interrupted—even by death. However, for most of us, death does interrupt something else—it interrupts memory. There are different aspects to memory—some of them depend on the physical body and brain as the apparatus.

Mr. “X” becomes so in virtue of particular tendencies and characteristics that are assembled for this birth—the Buddhist philosophers call it *skandhas*, while the modern scientists describe it as genetic inheritance. Naturally this apparatus cannot tell anything about what happened before the birth of that body. However, there is something, the real “I” or the individuality, which uses certain instruments and vestures at one time and other instruments and vestures at another time. Mme. Blavatsky uses the simile of an actor performing many roles, to explain the relationship between the individuality and the personality. During one lifetime you appear as a particular kind of person and that is like performing one role. A good actor, immersed in the

performance of his role, may almost forget that he is Mr. So-and-So. Mme. Blavatsky remarks that in our lives unfortunately this ignorance of who we really are, is but too real. We get so involved in performing the role, which is our personality in this life, that we simply have forgotten what we really are—independently of this particular personality.

The whole question of “Have we lived before?” depends on whether we believe in the existence of an identity apart from the personality. As Mr. Crosbie points out, we change at the level of body, mind and emotions. We speak of a person as having mellowed as he grew older and having been very rough and temperamental as a young man. What keeps changing is not exactly our identity; we *use* it; it is closely associated with us. Anyone who has practised meditation, knows that the first step is to withdraw from identification with the physical body. The Buddha taught that what you call “yourself” is really a stream of changing conditions and not a lasting entity. Once we grasp this, we are able to see that the death of the physical body is not the end, because the body is not the whole of the man. When a person loses weight or gains weight, we do not say he is another person. If a young man goes abroad and acquires many degrees, do his friends and relations think he has become somebody else? Well, no! So there is this underlying permanence, and at the same time there is a constant change on the visible level which has to be understood.

Thus, we may postulate a real being who exists even before the body is born, and who enters the body and assumes a personality like an actor putting on the costume for the performance of a particular role.

There are many kinds of memory. The simple physical memory in any case is very unreliable. After all, we do not really remember what we had for breakfast a year or two ago. But what we ate has gone into us and sustained our body and energy. As the little old hymn says, whatever Miss “T” eats becomes Miss “T.” In that sense, the *body* remembers that old breakfast, but we have no conscious memory of it. However, there is another kind of memory

called reminiscence—the memory of the Soul. Mme. Blavatsky argues that to get convinced of the fact of reincarnation and past lives one must put oneself *en rapport* with one's real permanent ego, not one's evanescent memory. The fact that we *do not* remember has nothing to do with whether the event took place or not, or whether something existed or not. But then if we do not remember, how do we know that it existed at all? This is the important thing. Here we must regard for a moment reincarnation as a necessary hypothesis, which arises out of the very nature of life.

Mme. Blavatsky writes in *The Key to Theosophy* (pp. 139-40):

When your modern philosophers will have succeeded in showing to us a good reason why so many apparently innocent and good men are born only to suffer during a whole lifetime; why so many are born poor unto starvation in the slums of great cities, abandoned by fate and men; why, while these are born in the gutter, others open their eyes to light in palaces....when this, and much more, is satisfactorily explained by either your philosophers or theologians, then only, but not till then, you will have the right to reject the theory of reincarnation.

Why do we have this strange amalgam of everything—of inborn qualities, appearance, health, circumstances in life, money, access to education, etc.? If we have not lived before, then all these seem to have been randomly acquired. For no reason at all, one man is intelligent and the other is a moron! One man has a comfortable home life and encouragement to study at school and college, while the other—perhaps possessed of a very high I.Q.—cannot get a decent education. To explain this, we must accept a preexistence, where causes had been set in motion.

Reincarnation has to be understood together with the twin doctrine of Karma. According to the doctrine of Karma, the previous actions of the permanent being—the soul within—lead the ego from one set of factors to the next. Thus:

That which ye sow ye reap. See yonder fields!  
The sesamum was sesamum, the corn

Was corn. The Silence and the Darkness knew!  
So is a man's fate born. (*The Light of Asia*)

That is the beautiful turn of poetic phrase. The silence and the darkness know—life is not random or accidental. In the silence and the darkness, the seed is beneath the earth, and the seed of sesamum is to grow up as a sesamum plant, it is not going to grow up as something else. How does it proceed?

No matter how tightly bound our present circumstances and position may be, what we do now will change it. Then from here we can move onwards. But when we live the life necessary, learning from life and doing good for evil, then comes a time when we do not have to take birth again.

*Through the Gates of Gold* speaks of the soul's desire for sensation in a technical sense. It is the desire for all forms of experience. Both pleasant and painful experiences form the raw material necessary for developing potential powers and faculties, which are there in every human soul. The true self within does not change—it watches, it learns. So long as this process is incomplete, there remains the desire for sensation and for experience in the outer world.

Acting in this world we create debts, towards others. As people say rather cynically, “There is no such thing as a free lunch.” We are all interdependent. We cannot form a link at one time because it suits our needs and then drop that link when we please. People often do that. For instance, when they have risen in life, they want to drop old acquaintances who do not have the same standing in life. In the true sense, however, the relationships continue, whether we like it or not. What we owe, has to be paid back some time. But also, we shall get unexpected help and unexpected friendship. There is so much to our life that we do not understand. Our present life does not make sense. The twin doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma are simply a kind of unavoidable hypothesis to make sense of life itself.

To this purely theoretical structure, confirmation is given by some exceptional people. Some very great beings like Buddha have

said unequivocally that they remembered their past lives. How is this possible? Ordinarily, the memory of the immortal soul and the memory of the personal man working in the brain, are not very well attuned to each other. But as spiritual discipline proceeds, man stops identifying himself with these changeable external factors. A time comes when the actor stops being preoccupied with the role he is playing. He can step back during the interval and remember that he is Sir Lawrence Olivier and not Hamlet. When the two levels come to an attunement, the immortal ego can impress its memory on the personal consciousness. At certain times in meditation such attunement takes place. When a person reaches a stage of *Samma Sambodhi*, he has the total memory of all his experiences in the manifested universe.

Mme. Blavatsky writes about life as seen in the light of these doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, thus:

For logic, consistency, profound philosophy, divine mercy and equity, this doctrine of Reincarnation has not its equal on earth....From strength to strength, from the beauty and perfection of one plane to the greater beauty and perfection of another, with accessions of new glory, of fresh knowledge and power in each cycle, such is the destiny of every Ego, which thus becomes its own Saviour in each world and incarnation. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 152)

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CONFUCIUS said, "The good man does not grieve that other people do not recognize his merits. His only anxiety is lest he should fail to recognize theirs."

—*Analects*

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Palaeontologist Paul Sereno—explorer-in-residence at the National Geographic Society and professor at the University of Chicago—and his team recently discovered India's first predator dinosaur, named *Rajasaurus narmadensis*, or lizard king of the Narmada. It was the first Abelisaur, the predator of the southern continent—comprising South America, Antarctica, Africa, Australia, Madagascar and India—to be discovered in India. It is believed to have lived 67 million years ago, during the Cretaceous period. Until recently, most of the dinosaur studies were confined to the northern continent, Laurasia—the primordial grouping of North America, Europe and Asia that broke away from Pangea. Now, world attention is shifting to hitherto neglected southern continents. India—especially the Narmada Valley and the entire state of Gujarat—is considered today to be the largest source of dinosaur eggs and fossils, which over the years, remained concealed beneath the crust of lava.

"India's dinosaurs could have a larger role to play in not only understanding why dinosaurs died out but also how the continents split apart...The *Rajasaurus* was closely linked to dinosaurs like *Majunga tholus* of Madagascar and *Carnotaurus* of South America," writes Sandeep Unnithan (*India Today*, September 1). "Don't forget," says Sereno, "dinosaurs were the only large-bodied animals that lived, evolved and died when all the continents were united."

*The Secret Doctrine* teaches that the Secondary Age, comprising Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous periods, was the age of gigantic reptiles. "This...is the age of the Third Race, in which origins of the early Fourth may be perhaps also discoverable" (II, 713). Further, "Lemuria," the continent of the Third Race, was a gigantic land. It stretched south from the foot of the Himalayas across what is now India, Ceylon and Sumatra; then going further south it embraced on its way Madagascar and portions of Africa on its right, and Australia, Tasmania and the Pacific Ocean on its

left, further stretching to include a few degrees of the Antarctic Circle (*S.D.*, II, 323-24). We also learn that “Lemuria was not submerged by a flood, but was destroyed by volcanic action and afterwards sank.” (*S.D.*, II, 141fn.)

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We seldom think creatively. Creative thinking is exploring various methods of solving a problem. It consists in readiness to rethink—not being satisfied with the first answer. Ordinarily we think *reproductively*, hence our response is based on our previous experience on a similar occasion. We need to think *productively*, taking into account alternative possibilities and approaches. “Thinking in new ways opens the mind to boundless possibilities and creative solutions,” writes Michael Michalko. (*The Futurist*, September-October, 2003)

The greatest obstacle to innovative thinking is education.... We are taught how to handle problems and new phenomena with fixed mental attitudes based on what past thinkers thought....In short, we are taught *what* to think instead of *how* to think....

Creative ideas, like pearls, occur infrequently. So the sensible thing to do is to produce many ideas. Just as a good idea may stop you from going on to discover a great one, a great idea may stop you from discovering the right one....

The key is to move beyond logic to creative thinking by learning how to blend dissimilar concepts deliberately and consciously....Consider Einstein imagining objects in motion and at rest at the same time. Consider Niels Bohr imagining light as a particle and wave....These examples give a sense of the meaning of conceptual blending....

Creativity requires a lot of energy and hard work. In the physical world, objects resist change: Objects at rest remain so, and objects in motion continue in the same direction unless impacted by some force. In the same way, ideas resist movement from their current state. This is why, when people develop ideas, those ideas tend to resemble old ones.

*The Voice of the Silence* suggests that the creative mind is the mind with breadth and depth. Depth of mind comes from knowing the “why” of everything. It is the ability to link effect to cause. It is also the ability of going from the particulars to universals. But, above all, depth of mind comes by cultivating a general love of truth. There must be continuous quest for truth—replacing the question “Is this the correct answer?” with “What is truth?”

Mr. Judge writes in *Letters That Have Helped Me*:

The Masters have said that the great step is to learn how to get out of the rut each one has by nature and by training, and to fill up the old grooves. This has been misconstrued by some who have applied it only to mere outer habits of life, and forgotten that its real application is to the mental grooves, and the astral ones, also.

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According to an international study, the Arctic ice cap will melt completely within the next century if carbon dioxide emissions continue to heat the earth's atmosphere at current rates. Satellite observations show that the polar ice cap has shrunk by one million square kilometres over the last 20 years. According to Ola Johannessen, a professor at the Nansen Research Institute in Bergen, Norway, the total melting of the ice cap could adversely affect the climate and ecosystem of the European continent. It would result in a massive flow of cold water, which in turn may strongly reduce the effect of warm surface ocean currents, which help to maintain temperate climate in Europe. (*The Times of India*, August 15)

Regarding the polar regions (arctic and antarctic) H.P.B. has this to say:

The polar lands....have changed form several times, at each new cataclysm, or disappearance of one continent to make room for another. The whole globe is convulsed periodically; and has been so convulsed, since the appearance of the First Race, four times. Yet, though the whole face of the earth was transformed thereby each time, the conformation of the arctic

and antarctic poles has but little altered. (*S.D.*, II, 776)

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Technological developments in the field of entertainment seem to spell doom for the make-believe world of children. An article in *Newsweek* (August 25 / September 1, 2003) explores the pros and cons of electronic entertainment. In many countries children devote 40 hours a week to television, videogames, CDs and Internet. There is growing concern that these have an adverse effect on the intellectual development and creative thinking of the children.

When children play make-believe, they get a chance to exercise their imaginations, to socialize, to express emotions and to practise motor skills. “If you take the box that the washing machine came in, it’s a space-ship, a submarine, a train,” says Michael Mendizza, co-founder of Touch the Future, a nonprofit resource and learning centre focused on children and play. “Time is taken away from human relationships, playing, wrestling, hugging, kissing, pulling each other’s hair,” says Paolo Crepet, a psychiatrist at the University of Siena in Italy. Sandra Russ, a psychologist at Case Western Reserve University, says that children who play imaginatively in their early years are more likely to think creatively and are better problem solvers as they grow older.

The defenders of high-tech toys and video action games argue that these “benefit the kids by honing their reflexes and visual skills.” They help prepare children for the 21st century. To help cultivate imagination in children, researchers at the MIT Media Lab in Cambridge, Massachusetts, are trying to merge technology with fantasy.

Yet, it is simple toys and games that seem to enrich children and their imagination, and must be given priority. Since electronic entertainment is here to stay for a long time, it is crucial to ensure that children are not deprived of entertainment that gives play to simple human emotions and human relationships.

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“Why do physicians need to learn about spirituality?” asks Dr. Aniruddha Malpani (*Housecall*, January 2003). It is amazing that now, more than ever, a physician is being told to be aware of “man as a living whole.” Some 2500 years ago, Hippocrates, considered to be the father of Medicine, made that principle the basis of the study of Medicine in his Academy. Hippocrates, the priest-physician and teacher, is even today recognized as one who anticipated modern medicine.

The article suggests to the physician: Before you address your patient’s spiritual needs, you need to understand your own spiritual beliefs. One way to promote self-understanding is to perform a formal self-assessment by taking a spiritual history of yourself! Thus, honest self-examination is now rightly prescribed for the healers. It means also, “physician, heal thyself!” Malpani writes:

Learning about spirituality will help you become a better physician. It will help you find meaning in your daily work as you appreciate the importance of your primary role—to serve your patients. It will also help you become more compassionate, and teach you the importance of hope, and why you need to support your patient’s spiritual needs. Finally, it will help to keep you humble, because it will teach you to realize that there is so much about the human body that we do not understand and cannot control, and that the human spirit can perform miracles that modern medicine still cannot comprehend.

While medicine as an art and a science of healing advocates objectivity, *i.e.*, an impersonal examination and judgement, it can easily slide down to indifference, cold concern, and now even to commercial motives. Originally, Ayurveda was rightly called the science of healthy living and was considered an art of healing based on the knowledge of the whole man. That knowledge was supposed to be gifted by the gods who preside over health and healing.

Today, medical practice tends toward compartmentalization, encouraging superspecialities to flourish. It makes the patient more confused and his burden painfully more complicated.

A sensitive physician will not ignore the complete man, and

not just treat the body. In times of yore, medical practice was conducted by the physician-priest who understood the mind-body relationship besides the spiritual need of the sufferer. Preventive measures included community and family involvement, meditation, yoga, etc.

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These days, the chanting of mantras, especially the Gayatri, is gaining popularity. Few, however, understand the real meaning of this Mantra. “Vedic rishis, sages and scholars have sung the glory of the *Gayatri Mantra*,” writes L.R. Sabharwal. (*The Times of India*, July 21)

The Gayatri Mantra is a universal prayer; chanting it leads to wisdom and illuminated deeds....Our greatest heritage, this mantra is also known as the Guru Mantra, Savitri Mantra and Maha Mantra....

Aum is the way towards salvation of soul and it is the support of soul. God is addressed as *Bhu* because He is the support of all life in the universe....God is addressed as *Bhuvah* because He is free from all sorrow. Man's soul becomes free from all sorrow in His company. God is called *Svaha* because He is spread through the entire universe in all its diversely coloured forms and maintains it. *Savitah* is another name of God....

The word “Gayatri” means to pray and sing the glory of God to direct our intellect in an honest and just direction.

In an article, “A Commentary on the Gayatri,” Mr. Judge writes:

The three first words, Om, Bhur, Bhuvah, draw attention to and designate the three worlds....The request made in the verse to *unveil the face of the True Sun* is that the Higher Self may shine down into us and do its work of illumination....The sun we see is not the true sun, and signifies too that the light of intellect is not the true sun of our moral being. Our forefathers in the dim past knew how to draw forth through the visible Sun the forces from the True one....

*Unveil* is the cry of the man who is determined to know the

truth and who perceives that something hides it from him. It is hidden by his own Karmic effects, which have put him now where the brain and the desires are too strong for the higher self to pierce through so long as he remains careless and ignorant. (*W.Q.J. Series*, No. 17)

H.P.B. explains in *Isis Unveiled* that the effect produced by any mantram is determined by the numbers, syllables, rhythm and intonation of the sacred metre.

This great significance of the metrical speech is derived from the number of syllables of which it consists, for each thing has certain numerical proportions....The Gayatri metre, for example, consists of *thrice eight syllables*, and is considered the most sacred of metres. It is the metre of Agni, the fire-god, and becomes at times the emblem of Brahma himself, the chief creator and “fashioner of man” in his own image. (II, 410)

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Would scientists succeed in understanding the mystery of love and romance? Having identified the region of “fear” on the map of the mind, they are now trying to do the same for “love and attachment.” “Like all emotions, love originates in the brain,” writes Steven Johnson. Thus:

We feel the passions of love because our brains contain specific neurochemical systems that create those feelings in us. We are not torn between the heart and the brain but rather between different parts of the brain....

A new portrait of love has begun to emerge, and at its centre lies a fascinating hormone called oxytocin....People under the influence of oxytocin have smaller, briefer stress responses than others do; bad news seems to roll off them more readily....In terms of brain chemistry, you can load up on adrenaline and fight or flee, or you can cool down with oxytocin and tend and befriend.

Folklore and literature are filled with tales of love potions, but the story is far more complicated than that. There is a biologically grounded brain system that creates and maintains

the feeling we call love, but its cause can't be reduced to a single molecule...Love may not reside in the heart, as folk wisdom would have it, but neither does it reside in a single molecule. When we feel the stirring of romantic love or parental attachment, we are sensing complex interplay of brain chemicals, triggering activity in specific regions of the brain. Oxytocin is critical to that interplay, but it is not the whole story. (*Discover*, May 2003)

Can Love—earthly or divine—be explained in terms of a single molecule? Finite love is the shadow and distortion of Universal Love. Fohat, Eros or Kamadeva represent Universal Love which degenerates into Cupid—the power that gratifies desire on the animal plane.

H.P.B. observes in her article “Psychic and Noetic Action,” (reprinted in *Raja Yoga* or *Occultism*): “Every Theosophist must understand when told that there are *Manasic* as well as *Kamic* organs in him, although the cells of his body answer to both physical and spiritual impulse....Occultism teaches that the liver and the spleen-cells are the most subservient to the action of our ‘personal’ mind, the heart being the organ *par excellence* through which the ‘Higher’ Ego acts—through the Lower Self.”

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YOUR race boasts of having liberated in their century the genius so long imprisoned in the narrow vase of dogmatism and intolerance—the genius of knowledge, wisdom and freethought. It says that in their turn ignorant prejudice and religious bigotry, bottled up like the wicked *Jin* of old, and sealed up by the Solomons of science, rests at the bottom of the sea and can never, escaping to the surface again, reign over the world as it did in days of old; that the public mind is quite free, in short, and ready to accept any demonstrated truth. Aye; but is it verily so, my respected friend?

—MAHATMA K.H.