

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. 47, No. 4

17th February 1977

## THE HOUR OF CHOICE

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, October 1955.  
—EDS.]

*It is by passion and desire we are made to evolve through the mansions of death called lives on earth.*

—W. Q. JUDGE (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 50)

FOR the purpose of transmuting our ordinary ways of life into the extraordinary ways of the Higher Life we have to overcome our desires. Desires of the flesh, fleshly appetites, as well as mental cravings, rooted in ambition, etc., all have to be handled and overcome. *Kama* — desires and passions — is the worst enemy and a most friendly helper of each of us, whether we be simple-minded men and women or those possessing “educated” minds. The mind acquires perverted ingenuity and peculiar cunning through the force of desires and passions. The strength of *Kama* is both wide and deep and the *Gita* describes it as the constant enemy of man on earth.

Desires and passions are not born of the body. *Kama* is a principle in itself. Therefore it exists and functions in its macrocosmic aspect. What is *Kama* in Nature? Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

... *Kama* ... is in the Rig Veda (x. 129) the personification of that feeling which leads and propels to creation. He was the *first movement* that stirred the ONE, after its manifestation from the purely abstract principle, to create. “Desire first arose in It, which was the *primal germ of mind*; and which sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered to be the bond which connects Entity with Non-Entity.” A hymn in the *Atharva Veda* exalts *Kama* into a supreme God and Creator, and says: “*Kama* was born the first. Him, neither gods nor fathers (Pitara) nor men have equalled.” (II. 176)

In *The Theosophical Glossary* H.P.B. has some important and significant remarks, under "Kamadeva," which the student trying to understand his own desires and passions will do well not only to study but to ponder over.

But turn to the microcosmic aspect. When was *Kama* acquired by man? The human form was acquired by us in the long course of our eternal pilgrimage. So also the light of Mind. The *Chhayas* of our Lunar Ancestors became the starting point of our physical corpus. This was in the first Root Race. The lighting up of *Manas* took place in the third Root Race.

When did man develop the principle of desires and passions? *The Secret Doctrine* indicates that it was during the third Root Race that *Kama* was evolved (II. 116). It further points out that the rudiments of *Kama* are present as instinct in the animal kingdom, their intensity and development varying and changing with the species (II. 255). So, at the time of the lighting up of the Mind and the birth of Self-Consciousness, the animal-man (man in form, but not man in mind) had the roots of *Kama* and *Manas*. These roots provided the basis of aid without which Nature could do nothing further to help on man's evolution. *Prakriti*, Nature, unaided always fails.

So, man had, from the very hour of the birth of Self-Consciousness, a dual aspect in his desire principle: the instinctual desires of the animal-man and the mental desires of the self-conscious intelligence. In the course of evolution the higher mental desires were preyed upon by the instinctual and thus sprang into being the dual aspect of mind—the lower and the higher. *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 614) speaks of "*Manas* in its dual aspect" — sometimes connected with *Buddhi* and sometimes allowing itself to be dragged down by the *Kama* principle. The mystery of the fiend in man, the power of the constant enemy, has a peculiar intimacy with the aspect of *Manas* which has been dragged down and absorbed by *Kama*.

So each one of us has in him two kinds of desires — the lower and the higher. To distinguish the one from the other we refer to them as lower desires and higher aspirations. The root or womb of the lower is egotistic pride; of the higher aspirations, the Innate Idea, the Divine Intuition of Progression to Perfection. Naturally associated with the latter are the two cognate ideas of Universal Brotherhood and Perfected Masters. They embody within Themselves perfection through self-effort along the right lines, and are therefore named Elder Brothers.

In our effort to transmute our lower desires and make them fit vehicles of the Inner Ego — the Higher *Manas* joined to the Atma-Buddhic duad — and also to activate the higher aspirations in our embodied existence, we need accurate knowledge. H.P.B.'s highly important article on "Psychic and Noetic Action" contains numerous valuable practical hints; its teachings not only provoke thought but also stir our aspirations and suggest, if not compel, application to the *Kama* principle in us.

*Kama*, desires and aspirations, circulates in the vital astral body as blood circulates in the physical. When the lower passionate desires are active certain bodily organs, and the lives which compose them, are affected, causing illnesses and ailments — passing, chronic, or even congenital. These illnesses have a perverse influence and effect on the brain, as a reflex action. Conversely, when higher aspirations are active, they help noetic or spiritual functions, and affect for the better the subtle organisms of the brain and the real heart; these also have a reflex action on the body, especially the astral body.

It is often said that the fight is in the Mind. That fight is dual: the struggle of the lower mind when it endeavours to free itself, to extricate itself, from the clutches of *Kama*. Like a fish out of water it struggles and tries to go back to *Kama*. When the mind recognizes its own virtue and power, then commences the war, of Man, *Nara*, against his own lower machinating personality.

The war is from within without. There are thus two main phases: in the first the lower mind, having freed itself from gross desires and passions, becomes the *Antahkaranic* being. This is sometimes called the Internal Organ, the Conscience, and also the Heart. The thinking and aspiring "I" faces the lower animal nature; *Antahkarana* faces the animalism of the carnal nature. As the *Antahkaranic* being wins battles over lust and wrath and greed, it becomes more and more a true *Nara*, Man. To attain to true Manhood one passes through a double process. First, he subdues and controls his animal self and achieves progress. Then follows a more inner, esoteric endeavour to final Manhood. *Nara*, the youth, has to become *Nara*, the Sage. Doubt, hypocrisy and other mental desires are overcome by the higher Knowledge of the Science of Occultism, *Raja-Vidya*, the Kingly Wisdom. The Higher *Manas*, the real Human Soul, inspires the *Antahkaranic* being and performs *Yoga*-union with it.

Most earnest aspirants of this cycle are the "educated" men, versed

in worldly wisdom and graduated in worldly progress and prosperity. They are wrongly educated and the process of unlearning is hard and disquieting.

Ambition is the weapon of the wrongly educated mind; for, through it, Duryodhana, the Wealth of Evil, triumphs. Every aspirant has to face this stage. W. Q. Judge wrote to an aspiring correspondent:

I fell to thinking about you and wondering whether a future of power, a brilliancy of knowledge, was not your aspiration, and what effect certain occurrences would have upon that.

Our modern education is a strengthener of the non-spiritual mind — vigorous, with lust for power, having the “I-know-it-all” attitude, and guiding relatives, friends and strangers— often, alas! to their doom. True education is the awakener of real brotherliness, humility, resourcefulness, adaptability, grace of mind with insight to serve, while appearing as nothing in the eyes of the world.

Students of Theosophy! What training are you giving to your mind? Would you have it become brilliant, masterly, perverse to the extent that its machinations are not known to you? Or would you rather develop the power to hear what the Masters have said or are saying, the power to see under and beyond the surface, to act with patience and deliberation in terms of what the Esoteric Philosophy teaches? The hour of choice is upon us all.

---

THE steadfast pursuance of one aim and purpose is indispensable to the researcher and that way will always light his way, even though sometimes it may be dimmed by initial failures.

—MAX PLANCK

# RANDOM NOTES FROM "THE THEOSOPHIST"

## THEOSOPHY: ITS UNSECTARIAN SPIRIT

[Under the title "A Christian Minister on Theosophy," *The Theosophist* published a letter from the Rev. C. H. A. Dall to the *Indian Mirror*. In an editorial comment following the letter, H.P.B. corrected "a few erroneous impressions he seems to be labouring under." She wrote in part:]

YES; Theosophy is the science of all that is divine in man and nature. It is the study and the analysis, within the known and the knowable, of the unknown, and the otherwise UNKNOWABLE.

"In its practical application it certainly means — freedom (of thought), self-trust and self-control, courage and independence." And if all this how can our revd. well-wisher "fear its narrowness as a plan of life"? . . .

"Radical" Christianity is as welcome in its ranks as radical Buddhism, Judaism, or Hinduism. For, all religions divested of their man-made theologies and superlatively human ecclesiasticism rest on one and the same foundation, converge towards one focus: an ineradicable, congenital belief in an *inner* Nature reflected in the *inner* man, its microcosm; on this our earth, we can *know* of but one Light — the one *we see*. The Divine Principle, the WHOLE can be manifested to our consciousness but through Nature and its highest tabernacle — man, in the words of Jesus, the only "temple of God." Hence, the true Theosophist, of whatever religion, rejecting acceptance of, and belief in, an extra-cosmic God, yet accepts the actual existence of a *Logos*, whether in the Buddhist, Adwaitee, Christian Gnostic or New Platonic esoteric sense, but will bow to no ecclesiastical orthodox and dogmatic interpretation. Theosophy fights every anthropomorphic conception of the great UNKNOWABLE, and would impress upon the growing world, that its days of babyhood and even adolescence are over and gone by to return no more. Theosophy would teach its adherents that *animal* man, the finite, having been studied for ages and found wanting in everything but animalism — he being the moral as well as physical synthesis of all the forms and beings through which he has evolved, hence beyond correction and something that must be left to time and the work of evolution — it is more profitable to turn our attention to the spiritual or inner man, the infinite and the immortal. In its higher aspect, Theosophy pities and would help every living sentient creature, not man alone. He is a "good

Theosophist," and so far as exotericism goes, a *grand* Theosophist who said, and says, to "all nations" and to "all religions," "I was hungry and you fed me, I was naked and you clothed me," meaning by "I," the human Logos — spiritual mankind collectively, the spiritual whole manifested in its parts and atoms or — if so preferred "God manifested in Humanity." He is a better one who realizing deeply the profound esoteric meaning of this exoteric parable, *feeds and clothes all* nations and *all* religions unconditionally: one ever ready to trace back the personified pronoun "I" not to Jesus only, or even to any of the respective Christs and Gods manifested at different ages and to various nations, but to the universal *Logos* or divine Ego; one, in fine, who feeds the hungry and clothes the naked irrespective of their creed or nationality — as even the good king Asoka did. . . .

(November 1883)

[In a comment following Prof. Maudsley's exposition of a true religion for humanity, H.P.B. gave this definition of a Theosophist.]

. . . The Theosophists of all creeds, that is to say, every person in every Church, who makes personal efforts to attain the higher knowledge, whether or not he calls himself such, or even knows himself to be of the class so denominated. . . .

(May 1883)

[Publishing the inaugural addresses by two Branch Presidents — of the Ionian Theosophical Branch at Corfu, and of the Bombay Branch of the Theosophical Society — H.P.B. made these editorial comments.]

The inaugural addresses of the respective presiding officers of the Ionian and Bombay Branches of the Theosophical Society, which appear side by side in the present number, so well illustrate its policy of mutual tolerance and confraternity, that we bespeak for each a careful reading. Here we see the Italian thinker moved by the same lofty aspirations for individual perfection and the happiness and enlightenment of mankind, as the Parsi thinker of Bombay. And though the one conceives of the First Cause, or Deity, quite differently from the other, whose ancestors from time immemorial have worshipped the Sun as a visible type of Hormazd, yet a common religious feeling moves the

heart of each, and a common instinct makes him see the way upward towards the truth brighter and clearer by the light of Theosophy. Ours is not an atheistical society, though it does contain atheists; nor is it a Christian one, even though our brother Dr. Wyld, President of the British Theosophical Society, would have us accept Jesus as the most divine personage that ever appeared among men. Our Fellows are of the most varied opinions and each has a right to claim respect for his ideas as he is bound to respect those of his brothers. We have presidents who are severally Christian, Deist, Buddhist, Hindu and Atheist; none dogmatizers, none claiming to be wiser or more infallible than the other, yet each taking the other by the hand, calling him brother, and helping him and being helped in the divine quest after knowledge. Nor are all, or even a large minority, students of occult sciences, for rarely is the true mystic born. Few, alas! have they ever been, who so yearned after the discovery of Nature's secrets as to be willing to pursue that hard and unselfish course of study: and our own century can show fewer than any of its predecessors. As to the secrets of the Theosophical Society, when we mention the masonic-like signs of recognition, and the privacy secured for the handful who do make their experiments in psychological science, all has been said. The Parent Society is, in one word, a Republic of Conscience, a brotherhood of men in search of the Absolute Truth. As was sufficiently explained in our opening October number, every one of us professes to be ready to help the other, whatever the branch of science or religion to which his personal predilections may lead him.

(September 1880)

[The following editorial remarks were appended to a correspondent's queries published under the title "A Plea for a Personal God."]

The Theosophists are many and of various and many creeds. Each of them believes in whatever he likes, and there is no one to interfere with his private beliefs. The Theosophical Society is no school of sectarianism and holds to no special dogmas....

The "moral standard of the *Theosophists*" is — TRUTH — and this covers all. Whether those who believe in a personal or anthropomorphic deity, or those who call themselves Agnostics, or Atheists, or Buddhists or even Materialists, once that they have joined the Theosophical Society, they are bound to present to the world a far higher "standard of moral-

ity" than that which is developed merely through fear of hell or any other future punishment. . . .

(October 1883)

[The following is extracted from H.P.B.'s reply to a critic who wrote in *The Tribune* of Lahore under the *nom de plume* of "A Theosophist and Arya-Samajist."]

As the Editor of *The Theosophist*, I now publicly declare that being no sectarian, following no one's lead, and feeling the profoundest contempt for narrow-minded bigotry under whatever form, the columns of our journal — so long as I edit it — will never be closed against any writer, only because he happens to differ with me on religious or philosophical opinions. Holding Gautama Buddha higher in my veneration than any other religious teacher the world over, I yet publicly, and notwithstanding Buddhist opposition to the Hindu Scriptures — profess a profound admiration for the *Vedas* and the *Vedanta* teaching, simply because I claim an undeniable right of thinking for myself, untrammelled by any divine or human teacher or teaching. And were I to receive, at any day, a well-written article directed either against our Society, the Buddhist Saviour, or myself personally, I would surely publish it in the same spirit of tolerance and impartiality, and with the same readiness as I would give room to one against a declared enemy of ours.

(*Supplement to The Theosophist*, October 1881)

[Commenting on a letter from a correspondent who referred enthusiastically to the revival movement in Hinduism, congratulating the Theosophical Society on its work in this direction, and invoking the help of the "Divine Power" for "the advocates of the religion inculcated in the Aryan Shastras," H.P.B. wrote as follows in an Editorial Note.]

To avoid misunderstanding and especially "misrepresentations" on the part of our opponents, we must remark in connection with the above letter that we "advocate" no more the religion taught in the *Aryan Shastras* than we do any other faith. Our journal is *absolutely* unsectarian and equally open to every sincere and honest defender and advocate of his own faith — whatever the latter may be. We are devoted admirers of the *Vedas*, holding it in veneration as the oldest, and, as we believe, the wisest book of the world, although its mystical and

allegorical language needs the interpretation of one who thoroughly understands its spirit. As we do not feel competent to decide which of the various and many interpreters is the right one, we try to be impartial to all and let every sect (with the exception of the "Maharaja sect," of course) advocate its own cause before the public. The Founders of the Theosophical Society and Proprietors of this Journal are the staunch allies and devoted friends of Swamijee Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of the Arya Samaj, and author of the *Veda Bhashya*; but though the recognized supreme chief of a number of our Theosophists who belong to the Arya Samaj, neither the President of the Parent Society, Col. H. S. Olcott, nor yet its Corresponding Secretary, Mme. H. P. Blavatsky, can ever be his followers any more than those of any other Preacher, as the *Rules* of our Society strictly forbid its Founders and the Presidents of its many Branches to advocate either in our journal, or at mixed and general *meetings*, any one religion in preference to any other. We are all upon neutral ground, and even our own personal religious leanings or preferences have nothing to do and must not interfere with the general work. We preach and advocate an incessant and untiring search for TRUTH, and are ever ready to receive and accept it from whatever quarter. We are all enquirers and never offered ourselves as teachers, except in so far as to teach mutual tolerance, kindness and reciprocal enlightenment and a firm resistance to bigotry and arrogant conceit whether in RELIGION or SCIENCE.

(*Supplement to The Theosophist*, October 1881)

[Under the title "A Friendly Remonstrance," N. Chidambaram Iyer criticized certain expressions used by H.P.B. as favouring Buddhism at the expense of Hinduism, and ended by saying: "...in a spirit of indignation...you say that, 'for all alliances in the world,' you will not renounce what you 'consider to be the truth,' or pretend belief in that which you 'know to be false'...you would have done well if you had omitted the latter clause..." H.P.B. appended to his article the following Editorial Note.]

It is our intelligent correspondent, rather than ourselves, who has "overshot" his mark. He totally misconceives our meaning in the quoted sentences. We had in mind neither Hinduism nor Buddhism, but *truth in general, and the truth of Asiatic Psychology in particular*. We maintain that the phenomena of Spiritualism *are true*; Swami Dayanand

insists (though he knows better) that they are *all* false and "tamasha." We defend the *truth* of man's latent and — when developed — *phenomenal* powers to produce the most marvellous manifestations; the Swami tells his public that to insist that phenomena *can* be produced by will-power alone "is to say a lie," and forthwith derides very unphilosophically all phenomena; thus contradicting what he had maintained and admitted himself orally and in print, before he got "out of patience" with us for our eclecticism and universal religious toleration. That is what we meant by "true" and "false," and nothing more.

If we were disposed to imitate the sectarian bigots of whatsoever creed, our advocacy of the superior merits of Buddhism would not have taken the form of a casual sentence or two in an article upon a totally different subject, but would have been boldly and openly made. Our friend is but just when he says that, since beginning our Indian work, we have never publicly preached our private religious views. It would be well if this fact were never lost sight of. Colonel Olcott, in addressing audiences of various religious faiths, has always tried to put himself, for the moment, in the mental attitude of a believer in that faith which his audience represented, and to bring prominently before their minds the highest standard of morals and attainable wisdom which it contains. Thus, he has, to the Parsis, shown the magnificence of ancient Mazdasianism; to the Hindus, the splendours of Aryan philosophy, etc. And this, not from a poor desire to indiscriminately please, but from the deep conviction, shared by us both, that there is truth in every religion, and that every sincere devotee of any faith should be respected in that devotion, and helped to see whatever of good his faith contains. The rupture of the Swami with us resulted, not because of our holding to one religion or the other, but because of the strict policy of eclectic tolerance for men of all creeds upon which the Theosophical Society was founded and has since been building itself up.

(June 1882)

[Adverting to an article published by Prof. Pramada Dasa Mitra in *The Theosophist* for October 1879, Vara Guru, writing under the title "Brahma, Iswara and Maya," made a number of observations from the standpoint of a Vedantist, and closed by saying that "before...the Theosophists extend their researches to one and all of the above specified *Bhashyas*, and discover by which of them these mighty problems are clearly solved, it is too premature to uphold the doctrine laid down by Pramada Dasa

Mittra." Commenting on this and introducing a reply by Prof. Mittra himself, H.P.B. said:]

The Theosophists *not* having as yet studied all these *Bhashyas*, have no intention to uphold any particular sectarian school. They leave this to the pandits, for whose especial benefit, among others, this journal was founded. A great American quarterly — the *North American Review* — adopts the plan of submitting some famous contributor's manuscript to one or more equally famous writers of very antagonistic views, and then printing all of the criticisms together. By this wise device, the reader of the magazine is able to see what can be said of a given subject from every point of view. We will do likewise; and, as a beginning, here is Professor Pramada Dasa Mittra's criticism upon his critic, after reading the above. "*Du choc des opinions jaillit la vérité*" — said a great French philosopher.

(January 1880)

[Under the title "Buddhism and Brahmanism," H.P.B. printed extracts from Dr. William Hunter's *The Indian Empire: Its History, People and Products*. One of the extracts reads: "Buddhism carried transmigration to its utmost spiritual use, and proclaimed our own actions to be the sole ruling influence on our past, present, and future states. It was thus led into the denial of any external being or god who could interfere with the immutable law of Cause and Effect as applied to the Soul. But, on the other hand, it linked together mankind as parts of one universal whole, and denounced the isolated self-seeking of the human hearts as *the heresy of individuality*. Its mission was to make men more moral, kinder to others, and happier themselves; not to propitiate imaginary deities. It accordingly founded its teachings on man's duty to his neighbour, instead of on his obligations to God." Commenting on this passage, H.P.B. said in a footnote signed "Editor":]

The Theosophical Society is based on the principles contained in the above lines, as far as it finds it compatible with its *unsectarian* policy. And, hence, though it does not oppose, it nevertheless does not advise asceticism, "the heresy of individuality."

(February 1882)

[Reprinting a letter from a Christian clergyman, the Rev. J. A. Spaar, H.P.B. wrote these words of introduction.]

The emotional letter to the Editor of a Christian journal of London, from a well-known native clergyman of Ceylon, which we copy below, is generously accorded the wide circulation of our magazine to show that we bear no malice even to such bitter and often truculent enemies as the missionaries have shown themselves to be. . . . Our mission is not one of aggression, but of defence. We defend, first, the principle of Universal Brotherhood and mutual tolerance, and then the right of all Asiatic peoples to be left unmolested in the enjoyment of their ancient faiths. Whatever we have ever done against missionaries in Asia has been done because those propagandists are trying their utmost to stamp out and destroy religions far better suited to Asiatic moral needs than the one they would introduce, and taking advantage of the ignorance of youth to turn them into irreligious sceptics. . . .

(February 1882)

---

GIVE the preposterous theory [of ancestral memories] up and believe with three quarters of the human race that you have lived before and will always live. If you want the finest logic and reason brought to bear on the problem read MacTaggart, the greatest of English philosophers, upon "The Doctrine of Pre-existence." Yeats thinks he is the only English philosopher worthy of the name. You will be in good company with the great Avatars, Buddha, Krishna, with philosophers like Plato and Plotinus, with poets like Goethe, Hugo, Wordsworth, Tennyson, Vaughan, Emerson, Whitman, Shelley, and a score of others, and in believing this you will have grown up in mind and will get an age in your thought. This is the "Ancestral Wisdom" which Keats said was in every man.

—A.E.

## THE GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE

IN ANY SPHERE of existence, there is harmony where the push and the pull of centrifugal and centripetal forces complement each the other. Where any one force outruns another, there must eventually arise a distortion and loss of equilibrium. Such maladjustment sets up a turmoil within the organism where these forces manifest, and the effort at progress is retarded to allow for processes of readjustment.

Ebb must follow upon a tide, endlessly. So must the night the day and the sleeping the awakening. The law of action and reaction is universal. There is rhythm in the breathing in and the breathing-out. Prolong or shorten one and the rhythm is broken with consequent reactions on the man. If then this pattern of motion cycling back on itself is present in all manifestation, why should it be otherwise in the more intimate aspects of the man himself? If there is action (a motivating something driving a thing motivated) there is also the reaction; if there is a cause, it has necessarily to be followed by its effect. The effect is within the generated cause; it may be succedent to it only in the time required for its outward manifestation. In this law is perceived the dynamics of matter as also the interplay of forces that are continually in motion within the subtle aspects of man and nature. In fact, the powers and forces that men of science are trying to unravel are but the shadowy projections of the finer forces that have their source and origin in the occult.

Take, for instance, the student-life of the U.L.T. Associate. From being a man of the world, he steps across a threshold and enters a world of ideation quite different from the one to which he was accustomed. He starts receiving a knowledge which previously he did not possess. As he progressively applies that knowledge to life and life's problems, he starts drawing upon a force that was hitherto latent. Albeit in small measure, he has a new knowledge and a new force released to him. It is there and he has used it and experimented with it. There was no ostensible giving and receiving, yet the inflow is unmistakable. It cannot be denied. But here the law steps in. He cannot go on receiving all the time. He has to copy nature and so set the good law moving. He has now to give. The receiving constitutes one arc of the circle which has now to be completed by the other arc of giving. The student's progress depends to a considerable extent on his ability and willingness to complete the circle. All receiving and no giving is

as lop-sided and uncouth as its opposite of all-giving and no receiving. Both are wrong and cause a malaise of the Soul. The student of Theosophy has to realize that he is not playing a game of philosophic make-believe. He arouses powerful forces and he must qualify himself to control and use them.

If the student has benefited aught from the gift of knowledge, the law demands that he give in his turn, and that too in the same coinage and currency. Very seldom is the true assessment made of the fact that the student is receiving knowledge which is in the direct care and custody of the Masters of Wisdom. If he has been the fortunate recipient of it, it becomes his duty to promulgate it to those who are less fortunate than he and have not heard of its existence. When he joined the U.L.T., he became a volunteer-pupil. The Law demands that he become a volunteer-teacher. This receiving and giving is not one of the numerous pairs of opposites like cold and heat. The one is a natural corollary and a complementary aspect of the other.

This knowledge that kindles the inner flame is not bartered nor sold. It was so given to the disciple. In like manner must it be used to light another candle that is ready to receive the flame. It is in this manner that the *guruparampara* chain is formed. The pupil does not remain a pupil, nor the teacher a teacher. Each becomes a pupil-teacher and takes his place with those others who are dedicated to the selfless service of mankind.

That this receiving and giving is qualitatively different from the ordinary acts of taking and offering is readily recognizable. Yet, the student may, through force of habit, take them in their materialistic connotation and forget to spiritualize his efforts. To receive without gratitude is to offend against the very spirit of the gift. The man of little vanities and the worldly wise who is usually spiritually dormant do not bow their stubborn knees to divinity nor see in the gift its intrinsic merit and benevolence. They are like the primitive savage who "threw a pearl away, richer than all his tribe." But, if the boor does this through ignorance, the proud do it through a refusal to acknowledge a deficiency in themselves. Accustomed to darkness, they refuse the light that will illumine their lives. There are still others who receive the flame, yet minimize its value and are not grateful. In their case, the psychic bonds that bind the teacher and the pupil are loose and may weaken and break through indifference and sloth. The true student alone reverences his teacher, for it is he who fills the want of the pupil.

He guides and he adjusts. If the pupil at all appreciates the sacrifices being undertaken for his welfare, he merges himself in the Guru's task — becomes a part of him; a projection of the Teacher who will touch minds and hearts which through psychic idiosyncrasies are not able to reach his beloved Preceptor.

The student in school and college feels no gratitude to the institution and the teacher. He lightly assesses their value and his attitude to them is marked by indifference. This attitude makes the gift paltry and the giving of the knowledge a mockery. No lasting psychic bonds are forged and the relationship of pupil and teacher hangs by a slender thread. The act of receiving, if given its true value, becomes sanctified by gratitude and exalted by devotion. Benedictions are receivable by no lesser sentiments.

Between the acts of receiving and giving, the gratitude and devotion of the disciple gets tested. Is he destined for all time to be a mere impersonal channel for the passing on of knowledge? Has he to be content to act as an agent, a servant, when in fact he can himself become the great dispenser? Will he pass on the knowledge unadulterated; or will he water it down, dilute and mayhap poison it by adding here and subtracting there and passing off in its name what he considers to be the acme of his own exaltation? Selfishness and delusion have thrown many a good and promising student out of the enchanted circle of pupil-teachers. They may not know it and their vanity may blind them to the fact that they are rejects from the school of life.

If the act of receiving is hallowed, so is that of giving. The pupil finds that his taking from the gift has neither diminished nor diluted it. In fact, its lustre is increased by the sanctity with which he has invested the gift. In the act of giving, he can claim no rights of service and expect no returns.

It is no light task this: the act of giving. It requires the exercise of discrimination, perspicacity, tolerance and humility. Riding the high horse is alien to the Theosophic spirit. Further, the knowledge is not to be given away to all and sundry, to be scattered like chaff before the winds of chance.

The worldly teacher is apt too often to make a show of his authority; to, as it were, throw his weight about. The teacher of Theosophy dare not yield to the seduction of his high office without shame. "Thy strength is in thy Soul; and thy Soul's strength is in the storm and not in the calm revealed" is a truism that proves itself in all spheres of

life. It applies to the teacher. It applies as comprehensively to the pupil also. That teacher discharges his obligations well who remembers that he in fact cannot "give" that which he cannot claim, that which was never his property and did not bear his label. Yet is his position exalted. For, he becomes a passer-on of a boon — a channel created on earth through which higher influences can be made to flow unimpeded and untouched by pollutants. His high estate comes from the degree of his own merger in the hierarchy of Teachers that has one mind and one heart. The individuality of the teacher has to be lost in the individuality of his group. There is no lesser alternative. His own effacement has to be total.

It is on such lines that the institution of pupil-teachers was based. They receive and they give. Their action is hallowed by the sanctity of the knowledge to which they give life by providing it hands and hearts, speech and light.

---

I never could have done what I have done, without habits of punctuality, order, and diligence, without the determination to concentrate myself on one object at a time, no matter how quickly its successor should come upon its heels. . . . whatever I have tried to do in life, I have tried with all my heart to do well; whatever I have devoted myself to, I have devoted myself to completely; in great aims and in small, I have always been thoroughly in earnest. I have never believed it possible that any natural or improved ability can claim immunity from the companionship of the steady, plain, hard-working qualities, and hope to gain its end. There is no such thing as such fulfilment on this earth. Some happy talent, and some fortunate opportunity, may form the two sides of the ladder on which some men mount, but the rounds of that ladder must be made of stuff to stand wear and tear; and there is no substitute for thoroughgoing, ardent and sincere earnestness. Never to put one hand to anything on which I could throw my whole self; and never to affect depreciation of my work, whatever it was; I find, now, to have been my golden rules.

—CHARLES DICKENS, writing as David Copperfield

## THE EVOLUTIONARY PLAN

AN EVOLUTIONARY THEORY or teaching endeavours to explain the series of steps by which Man and Nature have become as they are. In Theosophy this includes not only *how* they came to be as they are, but also *why* — that is, the purpose involved, as well as the Goal towards which the whole process aims.

Modern science seeks only to explain the *how*, while refusing to acknowledge Plan, Purpose or Goal. It strives to demonstrate that all of Life can be interpreted in terms of physical matter alone.

But Theosophy declares that matter is only one of the three broad divisions that comprise Man and Nature, the other two being Consciousness (Mind, Intelligence) and Spirit. Therefore, to understand the Evolutionary Plan is to know the origin of these categories, which have combined to produce Man and Nature as we now find them.

Of these three, Spirit remains always the same, from the dawn of Manifestation throughout the many changes that ensue. For Spirit is Life itself, uncreate and indestructible. Forms and beings exist because there is Life or Spirit to sustain them. When Spirit is gradually withdrawn at the beginning of *Pralaya*, a period of dissolution or repose, forms and beings cease to be, until the advent of the ensuing *Manvantara*, a period of manifestation.

We have now to understand the origin of Matter and Consciousness. At the beginning of the *Manvantara*, there are present two universal Principles — Primordial Matter and Cosmic Ideation. The former is the source-material from which are derived all the degrees of substance or matter that appear on the seven planes of the manifested world. Cosmic Ideation or Cosmic Mind is the origin of all intelligence, from the instinct displayed in the lower kingdoms to the mind of man. Whether conscious, as in the lower kingdoms, or self-conscious, as in man, it is all an expression of the Intelligence resident in Cosmic Mind.

These two Universal Principles are interdependent. To produce any form of Life, both are required. As an example, consider the electric bulb emitting light. To produce this light both the bulb and the electric current are required. One without the other will not do. Similarly, in the universe, every form of matter — on whatever plane — expresses a degree of intelligence. And while the potentiality of intelligence is limitless, the actual use of it is confined to the ability of the form to contain or express it. Thus a 200-watt bulb gives more light than a

40-watt bulb.

In the process which begins at the highest level and continues through the various planes, there is implicit an overall Purpose. That is, to evolve an individual mind which can reflect all the facets and aspects of manifested Nature. And in doing so, to learn to understand and use all of Nature's powers, becoming, in time, a creative force in Nature. This individual mind is found in every man; and that is why man has been called the microcosm of the macrocosm.

But before individual mind may appear on the scene, a vehicle must be prepared for it. Since this vehicle represents all of Nature, a vast amount of time is required to fashion all the parts that will make up this form. As an analogy to this process, consider the production of an automobile. After the model is conceived in the mind of the designer, careful plans are made to acquire the many hundreds of parts necessary to its successful functioning. Each of these parts is manufactured by a separate factory. Then they are brought together and fitted into the automobile. Even then, the car cannot fulfil its purpose until a man — or woman — drives it away.

Similarly, the man-form is fitted with "parts" evolved in the lower kingdoms. Thus potential contact is made with every department of Nature. Then man, the thinker, steps into the form and the next stage of evolution commences — the evolution of the mental, psychic, spiritual man.

The purpose of this joining together is twofold. First, by fusing the consciousness of the form — and thus of lower Nature — with the man-consciousness, the former is given the necessary impetus for its further evolution. Second, the character of lower Nature — expressed in the form — becomes the field of experience for the Incarnated Ego. The successful fruition of this experience will add to the store of knowledge already existing in the Ego. It will also develop its potential higher powers, and thus aid the Ego to become, eventually, a conscious worker with Nature, a Sage, a Mahatma.

---

## IF METHUSELAH EXISTED, WHY SO SHORT OUR LIVES?

[Reprinted from *The Path*, May 1891.—Eds.]

At a Theosophical Society meeting the other day, it was stated that in the early races, say the second and third, referred to in the *Secret Doctrine*, man had a much more ethereal body, which lived many more years than Methuselah, the aged. In elaborating this, the objection was advanced that the body of man is now much more compact and stable than it was in those early races, because the atoms of which it is composed know their business better now than then, have greater affinity for certain combinations and for each other, and are not so readily scattered and disintegrated; and, if so, how is it explained that the length of human life now is only three score and ten years, against several hundred in primitive times?

At first sight this seems to be perhaps a strong objection, but a careful consideration will dissipate it.

In the first place, when the human body was in a nebulous state the friction between the particles was much less than when they had drawn closer together. If the theory of ultimate atoms is admitted, we must also assent to the law that there is friction between them which will develop heat or tend to reduce the cohesive power. The heat evolved will have a tendency to destroy the intervening medium, or at least to so alter its state as to make it useless as a medium for cohesion to act.

Further, if we suppose, as is perfectly justifiable, that there are large and small combinations of atoms in each of which the units are closer to each other, the heat evolved will destroy the constitution of the element, whatever it may be, that is between that combination of atoms and the adjoining one. And, still further, the friction between any two such bodies will also tend to rub off or draw off atoms from either of two to unite with the stronger, or be thrown entirely out of both collections.

Such a process as described will in the end bring about the disintegration of the entire mass of atoms. Thus at first, the atoms being farther removed, the destructive means can only act at intervals or more slowly than when the union is more intimate, and from this we reach the reason why the age of the combination of atoms would be greater in the one case than in the other.

Coming down in the present period we find that, in addition to the

closer association of atoms in the physical frame, there is also another disturbing element tending to destruction of the union, that is, the force of the mind and the emotions.

It is well known that as man increases his brain use and power and the play of his emotions, he is able to affect his physical frame thereby. Today many hold that the American people are becoming too nervously organized. This reacts upon the atoms in the body, and must make the average age less than those ancient races when the mental and emotional natures did not have such sway over the human being.

This is perfectly in accord with the *Secret Doctrine*, as it is shown that in the early ages everything went slower in all departments and that now in Kali Yuga all things move with great rapidity.

So it may be properly concluded that the great law of conservation of energy, of correlation of forces, makes it now out of the ordinary for men to live to the age of Methuselah.

—F.T.S.

---

IN the intent practice of mystic contemplation leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and the things that the senses or the intellect can perceive and all things which are not and all things which are, and strain upwards in unknowing, as far as may be, towards union with that which is above all being and all knowledge. For by unceasing and absolute withdrawal from thyself and from all things in purity, abandoning all and set free from all, thou wilt be borne up to the ray of Divine darkness that surpasseth all Being.

—DIONYSIUS

## DOUBT, AND THE SWORD OF KNOWLEDGE

THAT sombre word "doubt," with all its gloomy connotations, is one we find but seldom in those letters of Mr. Judge so rightly entitled *Letters That Have Helped Me*. What we do find is faith and confidence, faith in Masters and in the teachings of Theosophy, confidence that however obscure may seem the Karmic path to the pilgrim, meaning and ultimate good are assured on it.

This is not to say, though, that Mr. Judge deliberately turns a blind eye on what he himself calls "those moments of intellectual gloom" (p. 7)<sup>1</sup> when life with its trials and perplexities can so easily induce a mood of depression. But he accounts for them simply, and with no hint of censure for the weaker brother who may from time to time succumb to them — "As he is in a mortal body, he is affected by doubts which will spring up. When they do arise, it is because he is ignorant about something." (p. 32)

In Chapter IV of his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, however, we see how gravely Mr. Judge, without condemning the doubter, views this insidious weakness that afflicts humankind; almost every reference to doubt in the letters can be traced to this chapter. It is Krishna himself who says, "It springs from ignorance," and he bids us "take the sword of knowledge and cut all doubts at once" (*Notes*, p. 111). Accordingly, to Jasper Niemand, Mr. Judge writes as follows:

By going carefully over your letter there appears to be the possibility of the seed of doubt in your heart as to the wise ordering of all things. . . . Mind, I only say the "*possibility of the seed of doubt*." . . . If that is allowed to remain it will metamorphose itself into a seed and afterward a plant of doubt. Cast it right out! It does not show as seed of doubt, but it will be a case of metamorphosis, and the change would be so great as to deceive you into thinking it were never from the same root. (p. 14)

How urgent it is to destroy doubt *at once* Mr. Judge makes plain in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, in the chapter already quoted from:

So long as doubt remains there will be no peace, no certainty, nor any hope of finding it in this world or the lives upon it hereafter, and not even in the vast reaches of other universes on which we may live in future ages; the doubter now will be the doubter

---

<sup>1</sup> Except where otherwise stated, all quotations are from *Letters That Have Helped Me*, Indian edition.

then, and so on while the wheel revolves for the millions of years yet before us. (p. 113)

What a fearful prospect! For how *can* we cast doubt "right out"? Fortunately, Mr. Judge, having diagnosed an ill, never fails to produce the counter-measure. He again takes up the words of Krishna — the doubter "should be able to disperse doubt 'by the sword of knowledge,'" (*Letters*, p. 32), and of knowledge of this nature there is great store for those who seek it. The *Gita* itself, in the first place, affords it, and for students of Theosophy the range is wide. Granted, doubt may not vanish *in toto* at one stroke, but "if he has a ready answer to some doubt, he disperses that much," says Mr. Judge (p. 32). It is up to him, then, to pursue Truth further and to meditate on and assimilate what he reads. Mr. Judge tells us:

The best advice I ever saw was to read holy books or whatever books tend to elevate yourself. . . . All these *are instinct with a life of their own* which changes the vibrations. Vibration is the key to it all. The different states are only differences of vibration, and we do not recognize the astral or other planes because we are out of tune with their vibrations. (p. 44)

So, if we wish to reach the plane of Truth, we must brood closely over such writings as make it real to us. This is the process known as osmosis, by which, it is said, we can actually absorb some of the elementals of the devoted and illumined writer.

Doubt is not invariably the same. It comes differently to different people. So it would seem only practical to ask oneself what form it takes with *us*. It could, for instance, be self-doubt, the fear that we are inherently imperfect and weak, and that all our efforts and aspirations are so inevitably foredoomed to failure as to be worthless. This despondent frame of mind Mr. Judge explains — and challenges, saying:

Some have doubt and darkness, the doubt mostly as to themselves. This should not be harboured, for it is a wile of the lower man striving to keep you back among the mediocre of the race. When you have lifted yourself up over that level of the race, the enemy of man strikes and strives at all times to bring clouds of doubt and despair. . . . Do not allow discouragement to come in. Time is needed for all growth, and all change, and all development. (p. 72)

Mr. Judge's response to what had evidently been the sad cry of

“Failure!” on the part of Jasper Niemand, at a time of the latter’s serious illness, was to point out with his characteristic common sense that “while life hangs in the balance . . . you will feel much depression.” He then proceeds:

The doubt which you now feel as to success is morbid. Please destroy it. . . . Doubt is most to be guarded and repelled in relation to oneself. . . . We are not to try to be chelas or to do any one thing in this incarnation, but only to know and to be just as much as we can, and the possibility is not measured. Reflect, then, that it is only a question of being overcome — by what? By something outside. But if you accuse or doubt yourself, you then give the enemy a rest; he has nothing to do, for you do it all yourself for him, and, leaving you to your fate, he seeks other victims. Rise, then, from this despondency and seize the sword of knowledge. With it, and with Love, the universe is conquerable. (pp. 39-40)

So again we find Mr. Judge using that telling phrase, “the sword of knowledge,” and, further, he adjures one of his unnamed correspondents: “Never be afraid, never be sorry, and cut all doubts with the sword of knowledge” (p. 139). But apart from fighting doubt mentally — a self-contained act — he suggests another, this time an outgoing, method. “Let us, then, extend help to all who come our way. . . . the veils that come over our souls fall away when we work for others.” (p. 27)

Reassurance of two sorts is also proffered by the same wise helper. We are not to judge ourselves too harshly for our doubts, for as we tread, or endeavour to tread, the Path, “there are valleys in which the greatest shadows are due to old lives in other bodies” (p. 140). We should also bear in mind that “from the great power of the general badness” — *i.e.*, of the race and the age we live in — “we each one have a greater fight to wage the moment we force our inner nature up beyond the dead level of the world” (p. 76). He states, moreover, that “all doubts come from the lower nature, and *never* in any case from higher nature” (p. 32). They pertain, therefore, to the realm of Maya and are in fact illusionary, no matter how grimly real they may seem to us. Therefore, “Cast all doubt, all fear, all regret aside, and freely take of truth what you may contain right on every step. It will thus be well,” Mr. Judge reassures us. (p. 12)

“Ah, but,” says the doubter, “how am I to know what is truth?”

We may assume Mr. Judge’s answer to the doubter would be in the

words of one of his earliest letters to Jasper Niemand:

As you say, it is all Faith; but what is Faith? It is the intuitional feeling — “*that is true.*” So formulate to yourself certain things as true that you feel to be true, and then increase your faith in them. (p. 9)

What a beautiful and simple practice! Yet, though simple, its results could be far-reaching, for in the contemplation of those “things,” “the eye,” says Mr. Judge — the inner eye — “is fixed where the light shines” (p. 42). After which he has but to add, “Do not fear nor fail because you feel dark and heavy.” (p. 2)

Let us resolve, then, firmly, not to be like “the ever-doubting one” mentioned in his *Notes on the Gita*, “who believes neither his own thoughts nor the words of others, but who is forever asking for more” (p. 111). Much has been told us by H.P.B. and W.Q.J., but the latter gives this warning to those whose doubts may keep them still unsatisfied: “Many of us could not grasp nor understand all that might be given, and to us would result a danger and new difficulty for other lives, to be worked out in pain and sorrow” (p. 77). Let us heed, too, some further words of his, namely, that “the much-lauded mind is not the final judge, and that there are higher faculties which may be exercised for the acquirement of knowledge.” (*Notes*, p. 112)

To still the former and let Intuition speak “must be our object,” says Mr. Judge, for thus do we lay ourselves open to illumination from

“the Fathers,” that is, the spirits of “just men made perfect,” those Who lived and worked for humanity ages ago and Who are now out of our sphere, but Who nevertheless still influence us in that Their spiritual forces flow down upon this earth for all pure souls. Their immediate influence is felt by Masters, and by us through the latter. (p. 9)

What of the theologians and philosophers? Alas, all too rarely are they helpful. Instead of lifting the unhappy doubter out of his quagmire, rather do they, with their conflicting 'ologies and 'isms, pile Pelion on Ossa atop of him. But Mr. Judge never fails us. So let us make our own those words of his to a disciple of an earlier day: “That you may pass beyond the sea of darkness, I offer you my life and help.” (p. 5)

The hand that penned them has long been ashes, but through his Letters we maintain a living contact.

---

## “THOU ART THAT”

What should be done is to realize that “the Master-Soul is one” with all that that implies; to know the meaning of the old teaching, “Thou art That.”

—*Letters That Have Helped Me*

IN the above words Mr. Judge gives very helpful advice to all aspirants treading the spiritual path—the path of self-discipline, service and sacrificē—and desirous of achieving unity and harmony with all beings and creatures in the whole of nature. It is an advice which, if followed systematically, will gradually raise the level of consciousness to the unity and harmony of the Supreme Self, the Self of all creatures. Thus, one’s mode of thinking can be changed slowly, but in all certainty, from the personal to the impersonal, from the individual to the universal. Man is thought-formed, so all depends upon his thoughts. He is essentially a thinker for whom involvement in the attractions of personal existence is unbecoming.

This was Arjuna’s difficulty, so he asks Krishna in the sixth discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita* what he should do with his restless and turbulent mind which is difficult to control. Krishna answers that, though difficult, it *can* be controlled by detachment and constant practice. Every time it is drawn to its own attractions, it must be subdued, brought back, and placed upon the Spirit. That is the one and only prescription for realizing—“Thou art That.” The individual has to climb to the higher altitudes to breathe the pure air that obtains there. He cannot expect to do so if he remains in his own mental “slum.”

It may be questioned, Since we live and work in this objective world, in bodies of flesh and blood, how can it be possible to be free from personal bondage? This can be achieved by not giving undue attention and importance to the personal and the objective, by assigning to it its proper place. Worldly duties should be performed because it is necessary to do so, without attachment or involvement. That is the meaning of the injunction: “Be *in* the world, but not *of* the world.” That is true disinterestedness in action—action performed without thought of reward for oneself, dedicating it to the Supreme Self.

When we say “Thou art That,” do we understand what is meant by “Thou” and “That”? They are interlinked. “That” is the source and the root, and “Thou”—each of us—is the child. Each has his beginning in “That.” The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of

men makes us united. Just as a sunbeam has all the characteristics of the parent luminary, the spark has all the qualities of the fire and the flame, the drop of water contains within itself all the properties of the ocean, so also the divine ray of light and life which every one of us is, partakes of all the forces, energies and divinity of the Supreme Self which is omnipresent, omnipotent, omniscient. What a glorious heritage for man, the thinker — to reach conscious godhood, to become a god-like being!

Dust thou art, to dust returnest,  
Was not spoken of the Soul. (Longfellow)

It is only the body of flesh and blood that perishes in the dust, but the soul is immortal and can rise to the heights of divinity to help mankind in its spiritual progress.

“That” is Divine Light, Life, Law. Each of us has to become an embodiment of that Divinity through his own efforts, always following the Light, Life and Law within him, without giving way to the forces of darkness. As Children of Light we have to *seek* to render gentle service to all that lives. So, one has to be always vigilant and watchful to respond to the need of the hour. Each of us lives. Our life is the outcome of our previous births. What we are today depends upon the causes generated by us in the past, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually. We have within us the power to advance by following the precepts laid down for us by all the Great Teachers and reiterated in Theosophical teachings. In this atomic age it is well to realize that every kind of atom is within our possession, on which we lay our impress for weal or woe according to our ideation, action and life. Man is essentially a thinker, so it behoves him to ideate and keep his mind at a higher level, making of it a superior, creative mind, and thus fulfilling his life's mission.

Man is his own lawgiver. It is his prerogative to shape and model himself and build his character in terms of his own understanding of the Law. A bird or an animal, a flower or a leaf, a stone or a metal, has no such power to change itself. Man and man alone, because of his self-consciousness and power of choice, can consciously follow the Law, can work in harmony with that Law, can help Nature and work on with her — or do just the opposite. Most human beings, not understanding the working of the Law, move in wrong directions, unconsciously to themselves and without due thought, bound by a hundred cords of desire. They thus frustrate the purpose of existence — to reach

self-conscious godhood and become great Renunciators for the spiritual upliftment of mankind. "Thou" has to become one with "That," has to achieve the realization of the Supreme Self. Jesus taught: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." This may seem difficult in the beginning, but it becomes easier as we practise righteousness in daily life.

Children of Theosophy School realize this great Truth from an early age, for their Poem teaches them:

We are reaching through all laws  
To the garment hem of Cause,  
THAT, the endless, unbegun,  
The Unnamable, the One  
Light of all our light the Source,  
Life of life, and Force of force.

So "That" is beginningless and endless, birthless and deathless, and also unnamable — the One Reality back of all manifestation. Realization of this will enable us to be in accord with all other beings and the whole of nature. It is a long and arduous task which cannot be accomplished in one incarnation, so rebirth becomes necessary. Purity in causation will help us to free ourselves from the bondage of personal Karma, and therefore from the ever revolving wheel of birth and death. "That" is the Master-Soul, the Universal Soul, the One Reality, a ray of which each man has within him. The great Teachers of humanity are Those who have been able to identify Themselves with and merge Themselves into It. Out of Their compassion, They come again and again to this world of sorrow to resuscitate the Eternal Verities.

Self-doomed to live through future Kalpas, unthanked and unperceived by men; wedged as a stone with countless other stones which form the "Guardian Wall," such is thy future if the seventh Gate thou passest. Built by the hands of many Masters of Compassion, raised by their tortures, by their blood cemented, it shields mankind, since man is man, protecting it from further and far greater misery and sorrow. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 74)

---

WHATEVER else may be mechanical, values are not.

—BERTRAND RUSSELL

## ON PRAYER

[The following, reprinted from *The Theosophist* for March 1884, is a reply by Damodar K. Mavalankar to a letter from "K.C.M." who asked about the real meaning of prayer, and if there was any harm in the various forms or methods of approaching the "Great-self" in prayer. He wrote: "...I find that prayer is allowed in all the known religions of the world. There must have been some strong grounds for enjoining the practice. Was it because the Teachers thought it advisable not to meddle with the natural feelings of their followers? ..."]

WE ACT upon the principle that what is meat for one is death for another. While, therefore, some people may not be able to develop their latent psychic capacities without prayer, there are others who can. We set no value upon the words uttered. For, if the words had any effect, how is it that different religionists, although using different forms of expression, obtain the same result? Again, those who pray silently and intensely, gain their object, while those who merely mumble some formula without understanding the meaning, get no answers to their prayers. As has been said in *Isis Unveiled*, we believe prayer is the giving of expression to the desire, which generates Will. And this WILL is all-powerful; its effect depending, of course, upon all the surrounding conditions. Philosophers can be but few. They need no external ceremony or object for the purpose of concentrating their will-force. We cannot expect the ordinary mortals, whose sensuous perceptions and avocations do not permit them to penetrate behind the mask, to do without the help of some external process. What we regret is the degeneration of this real prayer — the outward expression of the inward feeling — into a meaningless jumble of words. The prayer of the philosopher is his contemplation, an article on which subject will be found in the last number of *The Theosophist*.<sup>1</sup>

—D.K.M.

---

<sup>1</sup> This refers to Damodar's own article on "Contemplation," reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*. — EDS.

## REPRESSING TENDENCIES

WHEN the self-righteous student falls he indulges in self-pity. These two weaknesses make a pair and it is most easy to pass on from the one to the other. Both can be overcome by a single effort. Their common factor is the desire to think and to talk about oneself. "I am righteous, I am doing this, I am not doing that, and who knows what I may not be accomplishing!" After such folly, the inevitable fall; and then: "Oh! I am to be so pitied! Who has to suffer as I have to! I did err, but how was I to know? Why was I not told?"

Such modesty and humility are false and assumed and are but the legitimate children of the boasting attitude towards one's own duties in life. The student cannot afford to forget that he should not look out for and expect reward and recognition for the right performance of his own duties and obligations and undertakings. We are not putting the Law of Karma under an obligation by behaving as we should; nor are we favouring the Cause of Theosophy by our endeavours, or putting the Great Ones into a debt by devoted service of humanity, of which we ourselves are a part. Because one of Them has said that ingratitude is not one of Their vices, the self-righteous student thinks he has a claim upon Their gratitude — such is the *maya* of personal thinking.

When the folly brings the fall, the self-pitying student will not look at the root-cause of his trouble but asks for forgiveness. This only shows how poor has been his understanding of the Law of Karma. Praying for forgiveness is one of those evil practices indulged in by the blind believers in the Personal God. Karma compensates through adjustment; it does not and it cannot forgive. Forgiveness of sin is a demoniacal doctrine, for it tends to perpetuate people's weaknesses and sins. When our self-pitying student asks for forgiveness, all he wants is that his chastisement should be relieved and he be given a chance — to err again. Much time is wasted even by well-meaning and earnest individuals who look for charity while all they need is to seek and find work to do. They will not forget their own petty selves.

No, Karma neither forgives nor forgets, and it is high mercy that this is so. For, according to this doctrine a man can save himself and is not dependent upon any priest or prophet. A quiet reflection on two Aphorisms on Karma will help:

The effects may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another, and then the resulting effects

represent the combination and interaction of the whole number of causes involved in producing the effects.

Measures taken by an Ego to repress tendency, eliminate defects, and to counteract by setting up different causes, will alter the sway of Karmic tendency and shorten its influence in accordance with the strength or weakness of the efforts expended in carrying out the measures adopted. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*, pp. 6,7)

---

SO-CALLED astrological prognostications of the present day relate chiefly to the body and its environment, and on that basis people seek only for good, try to dodge sickness and evil. On the basis of our own true natures we should not seek for good, nor even to *be* good. We should seek to *do* good, and then, we can see we *are* good. We are not trying for any reward, but trying only to make ourselves efficient ministers of good to others. So, we do not have to avoid evil because we are not creating evil. Wherever and whenever we give forth evil we receive the effects of evil; wherever and whenever we give forth good we receive the effects of good. Each one is absolutely and unconditionally responsible for the condition in which he finds himself. To blame planetary influences for this or that condition is as foolish as to blame the water for drowning a man whose own carelessness, and not the water, was responsible for the drowning. . . .

It is not the conditions nor the circumstances, but the attitude we hold toward them, which matters, the true attitude held with regard to our own natures gives us the power to withstand any influence whatever. According to our attitude, and according to our understanding that all things material and physical evolve from and are ruled by the spiritual, will we — the real Thinkers — receive the effect of any planet. . . . All states are within ourselves, as we ought to understand by seeing that one gets good effects and another bad effects from precisely the same set of circumstances. So, we are not the victims of circumstances save as we make ourselves the victims.

It remains for man to see and *realize* that he has within him all the elements of the great ocean of Life. It remains for him, in that realization, to *act* as one who understands all the rest, and who sends out benefit in every direction for those knowing still less than he does.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## ROBERT CROSBIE SPEAKS

### IV.—ABOUT THE LITTLE WORD “IF”

IF anyone desires to be a Theosophist, let him study Theosophy as it was given by those who enunciated it.

IF we make effort to apply what we know, with an end in view, failure to achieve does not disconcert us, because we still have the active knowledge and the end is still in view; it just means a continuation of effort.

IF the right attitude is kept up, all necessary qualities will appear.

IF we are developing the child-heart; IF we are learning to love things beautiful; IF we are becoming more honest and plain and simple; IF we are beginning to sense the sweet side of life; IF we are getting to like our friends better and extending the circle; IF we feel ourselves expanding in sympathy; IF we love to work for Theosophy and do not ask position as a reward; IF we are not bothering too much about whether we are personal or impersonal — this is travelling on the path of impersonality.

IF the motive is right, anything we do is right, and every duty is equally great. IF the right course is followed, there will be time and occasion for all duties and none will be neglected.

IF we waited till we were saints, would we ever begin? We would not. So, recognizing this interiorly — if not in words — we go on and keep going.

IF one sees that in many ways he is not able to do all that needs to be done, or that he would like to accomplish, it is evidence that he is in the way of improving.

IF one doubts the existence of anything greater than mind, he has but to see that the very fact of doubting — the expression of doubt — shows an act and purpose beyond the idea. We could *utterly refuse to think*, and *still exist*. We must look deeper for ourselves than the mind and the body. Both are but instruments which WE use.

IF all study so as to be the better able to help and teach others, here must result a general gain and help.

IF we have that preference for something higher, we must admit that others who are with us on the “path” have it also; we can then sympathize with them in their struggles, knowing it is through continued struggle that both they and “we” become free. This is the be-

ginning of Compassion.

IF as individuals we could take the position of *Kamaduk*, the cow of plenty, and with universal beneficence use our powers without thought of self, life would be another story.

IF one cannot do what he would like to do, he can always do what he can. No one can do more than this. And doing this, he does *all*.

IF the idea is held that there is but one life on earth, then all the learning of the man and of the age is limited to a small and narrow range. But IF one grasps the idea of successive lives on earth — all under Karma — then, the learning takes on a wider sweep, leading the man to the conception that all powers of every kind proceed from the Supreme, the Self of all creatures; that he himself is in reality a spiritual being, and must think and act as such.

IF aspiration is for all, and not for self alone, it reaches up to the Universal finally; IF for self, some degree of illumination results, but only in degree. The stream of effort cannot rise above its source.

REFERENCES: *The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 369, 58-59, 89, 127, 168, 131, 365, 250, 366, 45, 25, 87, 395-396, 48.

---

“Do you hold that the study of Vedas and Shastras is of no use?”

“It is of no use unless what they teach is practised. They are like beacon lights in surrounding darkness. Would it help a man who has lost his way to gaze at the light without taking the road which the light is destined to show?”

—GURU NANAK

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

With the mushrooming of "faith healers" or "psychic healers" here, there, everywhere, there is a growing conviction among researchers and men of science that the subject merits serious study. Evidence in this field, however, can be marshalled with the greatest difficulty, says Dina Mehta in an article, "In Search of the Miraculous Cure," in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, December 19; for, the investigator "has to grapple, on the one hand, with fakery and fraud and, on the other, with questions which only seem to proliferate into more questions. With every phenomenon there seems to be a counter-phenomenon, for every explanation an alternative explanation."

There is nothing new about faith healing. As Dr. Louis Rose, clinical psychiatrist at London's St. Bartholomew's Hospital, has pointed out, no belief has made so many converts over so long a period as the belief that "some form of mental or spiritual activity can induce major improvements in human health." What is new is that scientific investigators are no longer laughing. There is a new openness in medical attitudes towards unconventional healing, miscalled "miraculous" healing.

Cures effected by unconventional methods "have had their echoes in almost every century," says Dina Mehta,

and they still crop up today in countries of the "mysterious" East as well as the "developed" West. Hypnotists, spiritualists, Christian Scientists, lay preachers, Jesuit priests, psychic surgeons from Brazil, Japan, and the Philippines, Hindu *swamis* and Muslim *pirs* may be numbered among the modern healers who claim remarkable cures by means not known to medical science. . . .

The amazing thing is that very few of these healers are quacks who do not believe in their own claims, or deliberately choose to deceive the public. Most of them rarely accept payment for their services and make no more than a humble income from the exercise of their gifts. Many of them have no clue as to the source of their power, which sometimes fades as mysteriously as it has come, so that the healer himself remains puzzled over it. And very few of them claim to be infallible, finding it as difficult to explain their "failures" as their "successes" . . .

If physical diseases can be produced by non-physical causes, surely the reverse can apply and they can be relieved by non-physical methods? But little is known yet concerning the physical and psychological mechanisms by which a command to the suf-

ferer to get well passes through the complex that is man, and the physician insists that the whole range of suggestive techniques has but a transitory effect on the disease and is found to be more successful in relieving symptoms than in eliminating their origins, or changing the underlying pathology....

Obviously, metaphysical ideas do not belong in the domain of that which can be moulded into a formal synthesis by methods hitherto credited by scientists. Each one of us still accepts them only to the extent to which we understand intuitively that they exist. A logical disposition of faith carried correctly from *alpha* to *omega* is a contradiction in terms. A new yardstick must be evolved before a rationale of the irrational can be attempted.

Till then all that science can do is to lead us by the hand to the edge of the ditch which separates expressible truths from intuitive knowledge: and it is up to us to jump the ditch.

The healers of old recognized the power of faith and will in effecting cures. "*Faith* must confirm the imagination," says Paracelsus, "the divine," as he was called, "for faith establishes the *will*. . . . Determined will is a beginning of all magical operations." H.P.B. has this to say about what modern science looks upon as "unconventional" healing:

Healing, to deserve the name, requires either faith in the patient, or robust health united with a strong will, in the operator. *With expectancy supplemented by faith, one can cure himself of almost any morbid condition.* The tomb of a saint; a holy relic; a talisman; a bit of paper or a garment that has been handled by the supposed healer; a nostrum; a penance, or a ceremonial; the laying on of hands, or a few words impressively pronounced — either will do. It is a question of temperament, imagination, self-cure. In thousands of instances, the doctor, the priest, or the relic has had credit for healings that were solely and simply due to the patient's unconscious will. The woman with the bloody issue who pressed through the throng to touch the robe of Jesus, was told that her "faith" had made her whole.

The influence of mind over the body is so powerful that it has effected miracles at all ages.

"How many unhopèd-for, sudden, and prodigious cures have been effected by imagination," says Salverte. "Our medical books are filled with facts of this nature which would easily pass for miracles."

But, if the patient has no faith, what then? If he is physically negative and receptive, and the healer strong, healthy, posi-

tive, determined, the disease may be extirpated by the imperative will of the operator, which, consciously or unconsciously, draws to and reinforces itself with the universal spirit of nature, and restores the disturbed equilibrium of the patient's aura. He may employ as an auxiliary, a crucifix — as Gassner did; or impose the hands and “will,” like the French Zouave Jacob, like our celebrated American, Newton, the healer of many thousands of sufferers, and like many others; or like Jesus, and some apostles, he may cure by the word of command. The process in each case is the same. (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 216-17)

These, H.P.B. adds, “are real and God-like healers who, notwithstanding all the malice and skepticism of their bigoted opponents, have become famous in the world's history.” The cures they effected were radical and real, and without secondary ill-effects. But she sounds a warning which those glamoured by “faith healers,” “psychic healers,” “miracle healers,” etc., should do well to take note of:

...when one who is himself physically diseased, attempts healing, he not only fails of that, but often imparts his illness to his patient, and robs him of what strength he may have... If a diseased person — medium or not — attempts to heal, his force may be sufficiently robust to displace the disease, to disturb it in the present place, and cause it to shift to another, where shortly it will appear; the patient, meanwhile, thinking himself cured.

But, what if the healer be morally diseased? The consequences may be infinitely more mischievous; for it is easier to cure a bodily disease than cleanse a constitution infected with moral turpitude... The healer, in such a case, conveys to his patient — who is now his victim — the moral poison that infects his own mind and heart. His magnetic touch is defilement; his glance, profanation. Against this insidious taint, there is no protection for the passively-receptive subject. The healer holds him under his power, spell-bound and powerless, as the serpent holds a poor, weak bird. The evil that one such “healing medium” can effect is incalculably great; and such healers there are by the hundred. (*Ibid.*, I. 217)

Writing of “Metaphysical Healing,” “Mind Cure,” “Christian Science” and the like, Mr. Judge repeats H.P.B.'s warning that some of these practices, while they do effect cures, are of the nature of black magic, and he adds:

The line of demarcation between black and white magic is

very thin, but it is quite plain when one sees the art of healing by means of such high forces as are claimed by these schools practised for purely selfish ends or for money in addition. There is danger in it, and all theosophists ought to look well that they do not fall themselves or cause others to. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1940)

---

Unesco's efforts today are mostly directed at assisting development in the fields of education, science, communications and culture in underdeveloped countries, and this involves a better ordering of relationships between all nations. Such a task inevitably implies intellectual co-operation, which has been at the heart of Unesco's activities since its inception. Unesco House was therefore the fitting venue for a roundtable of eminent personalities who met last June to discuss cultural and intellectual co-operation and the new international economic order.

*Unesco Features* (No. 707-708) is devoted to some of the significant statements made at the roundtable. The participants, who included Nobel Prize winners and other intellectuals and artists from around the world, were united in their view that an international morality covering world problems needs to be worked out. The ethical concern underlying the discussion was stated at the outset by Mr. Amadou-Mahtar M'Bow, Director-General of Unesco:

It would be wrong to think that the longing for a new world order is based on nothing but recrimination or the revolt of the poor against the rich. It derives, above all, from a reasoned passion — the passion to serve men, and to persuade all nations to fight, shoulder to shoulder, against the evils which, to varying degrees, of course, affect them all: the threat of armed conflict, the collapse of moral values, alarming disparities between social groups or the rapidly growing deterioration of the natural and cultural heritage.

Mr. Willy Brandt, former West German Chancellor and winner of the Nobel Prize for peace in 1971, in the key-note speech of the meeting put the participants' concern with spiritual and intellectual values this way:

From time to time life teaches us that there is such a thing as a brotherhood of the spirit. . . . Those throughout the world who

belong to this brotherhood are not able to take responsibility for politics. But they are perfectly well able, if they so choose, to define the essence of this responsibility with ever greater clarity. . . . They are society's watchdogs and it is a role which they could exercise to better effect.

Perhaps all we can do at this time is to place uncompromising emphasis on the importance of a questioning intelligence: to carry along the slow-moving chariot of politics by intensifying world-wide collaboration between the forces of intelligence; to spur it on, regardless of disappointments and frustrations, by doggedly asserting the right to question in thought and speech, together with independence of research, education and art throughout the world and freedom to develop along one's own lines. In a word, to throw down to the world of politics the challenge of intellectual confrontation.

Mrs. Hepzibah Menuhin-Hauser, sister of the violinist Yehudi Menuhin and active in Britain in social and educational work, said in the same vein: "Society needs its value-carriers, the people with courage, new ideas . . . intellectuals and creators, who represent influence, but not power." The importance of the intellect in assuring human survival and building a better world was stressed also by the renowned American engineer, Richard Buckminster Fuller, who told his colleagues he assumed that "you and I are here for our minds and not for our muscles." Referring to the human situation, he said that "if we come out with mind in control, we will probably be here for eons."

The Indian educationist, Prem Nath Kirpal, took a rather pessimistic view, saying that

The pace of development has regressed sadly, the peace of the world remains apparently fragile and threatened, the violation of human rights is greater than their loud proclamation and violence looms larger with the increase of self-centredness, indifference and greed. . . . The need for co-operation was never greater and the cultural co-operation now holds the key to the unfolding of a new world order.

Many of the participants stressed the need for diversity because otherwise creativity is not possible. At the same time, in this diversity we must find a common basis for unity, they felt. In other words, what was being sought was a "humanism based on the reciprocal acceptance of the cultural and ethical values of different societies."

---

Considerable interest is evinced today in the new "science" of futurology — a multidisciplinary field whose practitioners include educators, writers, sociologists, politicians, philosophers, scientists, and other professionals. Setting up mathematical models, futurologists, especially in the U.S., make analyses and predictions regarding present problems — or present trends that may lead to other problems in the years ahead. No aspect of life on earth is exempt from their analysis — home and family, work, lifestyle, technology, energy, population, the cities, the farms, the courts, the media, etc. What is happening *now* to each of these aspects of human society? What will happen to them in 25 years, or in 100 years? In sum, they are seeking to know what the future holds for us and what can be done to avoid the bad and secure the good.

The January *Span* devotes several pages to the thoughts of two of futurology's most distinguished practitioners — Buckminster Fuller and Herman Kahn. Interviewed recently in New Delhi by T. K. Mahadevan, Fuller, the octogenarian philosopher, scientist, engineer, mathematician, architect and cartographer, expressed his thesis: Understand the design of the universe and tailor yourself in harmony with it; learn to fit that design and not fight it. When asked, "What do you think are humanity's chances at the moment?" Mr. Fuller replied:

I consider it absolutely touch and go. All I know is we have the option, the capability, the potential to make it. For the first time in history it can all be documented. But I feel that the chances are 50-50 whether humanity will make it or not.... We've all to become completely desovereignized, give up our political systems, stop thinking or doing anything that might jeopardize someone else's interest. Our solutions are not going to come from political reform, but entirely from a design revolution. You see, when human beings develop the knowledge and the confidence to employ the principles of design underlying the universe, they will collaborate spontaneously....

It's clearly documentable that within 10 years we can have all of humanity enjoying standards of living higher than anybody has ever known. Within 10 years! We have the knowledge, the resources, the capabilities to do that today. But it can be done only by all the sovereignties going, all the political systems going.... Whether we do will depend on how rapidly humanity learns that we now *do have* the opportunity.

In reply to the question, "From where do you get your faith?" Mr. Fuller said:

Well, of course, I am deeply moved by religious fervour. But I think you must now ask yourself a question in terms of your own personal experience! Have you any reason, any experimental evidence, that tells you there is a greater intellect operating in the universe than the intellect of human beings?

To me the answer is quite self-evident. I spoke about generalized laws — the gravitational interpull, for example. It has always been there, and when man discovered it he did so intellectually. The law of gravitation is a purely mathematical statement. When you discover it, what you discover is an intellectual design.

So we come to the realization that there is an *a priori* intellectual design in our universe. I am overwhelmed by its integrity. I am just overwhelmed by it! A word like God seems to me quite inadequate for what I am trying to convey.

---

In the other interview published in the January *Span*, that with Herman Kahn, a physicist, this onetime doomsday prophet now rejects the pessimistic view that we are running out of food, energy and other resources. He predicts that things will get better in our own lifetime and that the next 200 years will see worldwide abolition of absolute poverty, famine, and pollution.

Dr. Kahn is of the opinion that there are no limits to growth, now or in the foreseeable future. He sees no reason why the world should not be able to support a population of 30 billion people with a comfortable standard of living and with all the energy, raw materials and food they need. He predicts, however, not an accelerated growth rate but a world population of only 15 billion people and a flat or declining growth rate by the year 2176, saying:

If you look at any extended period of human history — say, 8,000 years — you will see that the rate of population expansion in the last hundred years is an aberration, a blip on an otherwise level line. We are now approaching the top of the blip, and in the next few years we will see a decline. The limits-to-growth people make the mistake of extrapolating from the high point. This is like taking the growth rate of a 14-year-old boy and assuming he will continue to grow at the same rate. You realize with alarm that he will be a monster by the age of 25, so you say, "Let's starve him," or, in this case, "Let's cut back the birthrate." This is probably the world's worst strategy. Look at

birthrates in Latin America — they are no longer increasing, and some are already declining.

Through better management of the world's agriculture Dr. Kahn feels that sufficient food could be produced to feed even 30 billion. Nor need the world fear a shortage of natural resources or of energy. There are so many sources of energy — solar, geothermal, fusion, fission — that there is no way we can run out of energy in the next 200 years.

The fear that the world's population will keep on multiplying is known to students of Theosophy to be unfounded, for, as *The Secret Doctrine* explains:

Those who are born and bred in the Christian faith, and have been trained in the idea that a new soul is created by God for every newly-born infant . . . ask whether in such case the number of incarnating Monads on earth is limited; to which they are answered in the affirmative. For, however countless, in our conceptions, the number of the incarnating monads — even if we take into account the fact that ever since the Second Race, when their respective seven groups were furnished with bodies, several births and deaths may be allowed for every second of time in the aeons already passed still, there must be a limit. It was stated that Karma-Nemesis, whose bond-maid is Nature, adjusted everything in the most harmonious manner; and that, therefore, the fresh pouring-in, or arrival of new Monads, had ceased as soon as Humanity had reached its full physical development. No fresh Monads have incarnated since the middle-point of the Atlanteans. Hence, remembering that, save in the case of young children, and of individuals whose lives were violently cut off by some accident, no Spiritual Entity can reincarnate before a period of many centuries has elapsed, such gaps alone must show that the number of Monads is necessarily finite and limited. (II. 302-3)

How, then, account for the present increase in the world's population? The length of stay in the post-mortem states varies from individual to individual, and, as Mr. Judge says, "whenever there occurs a great number of deaths by war, pestilence, or famine, there is at once a rush of souls to incarnation, either in the same place or in some other place or race" (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 83). One might add that in our materialistic civilization based on denial of the soul and of an after-death existence, the period of *devachanic* assimilation is necessarily shortened.

---