

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### LEARNING TO READ

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STUDENTS often misunderstand instructions or the teachings received owing to the influence of their early education or of the trend of the life that surrounds them. They read a sentence and for some reason one word stands out and colours their interpretation, thus throwing them off their balance without their knowing it. Many a time the confusion ascribed to the so-called inconsistency of the teachings is because of this influence.

An instance of these queer twists of understanding is found in the questions that so often arise about the injunction given in *Light on the Path* to “test all experience.” The word “all” leaps forward and the student sees himself passing from one experience to another, going everywhere with all the world as his country, constantly on the lookout for new impressions, new situations, good, bad, or indifferent, so that he may test them. Is that what is required of the aspirant? he asks himself. It never strikes him that he may have misunderstood the simple words of the text. How about laying the emphasis on the word “test” instead of on “all”? That would certainly throw another light on the matter.

The above possibility should give the earnest student pause. Are we not all subject to the effects upon us of environment, past and present? And therefore apt to be “ceaselessly self-deceived”?

Under the circumstances, the above instance may furnish us a most useful and practical guide to better understanding. The first conclusion leaped at should be carefully considered before it is accepted as true, however clear and unequivocal it may seem. "All quick thinkers are hard to impress," wrote one of the Masters once; "in a flash they are out and away in 'full cry,' before half understanding what one wants to have them think." So, too, we may say that those who are too quickly convinced that they comprehend may, in their self-assurance, range themselves unconsciously with those who "know not and know not that they know not," and end in a blind alley.

Hence the value of group study. From a comparison of the various interpretations of different students, something may emerge more nearly approaching the truth than any single participant could achieve alone.

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#### AT EVENTIDE

Timely, when day is spent,  
And voices cease,  
Cometh a silence blent  
Of Thought and Peace.

Of Peace, for which we yearn,  
Our mind to still;  
And Thought, whereby to learn  
Our Master's will.

## STRUGGLING TOWARDS THE LIGHT

Strive with thy thoughts unclean before they overpower thee. Use them as they will thee, for if thou sparest them and they take root and grow, know well, these thoughts will overpower and kill thee.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

LIFE is and has always been a struggle to reach beyond earthly vicissitudes to where calmness reigns and where the mind deviates not from the laws that govern all manifestation. And yet, to reach this haven of bliss a long-drawn war has to be fought against powers and forces that bar our approach to the holy seat. If one looks at it dispassionately, one is forced to the startling conclusion that most of these antagonistic forces had at one time or another been invited by us with open arms, had been given the pride of place and were used for the unabashed gratification of lowly appetites. We wallowed in the mire and not only liked it but enjoyed the thrill and the experience.

In spite of these moments of sensual pleasures repeated to the point of satiation, there come moments of self-introspection when for a flitting instant the person involuntarily looks within his own self and wonders whether he really desired all this. If he has drunk deep at the fount of vice, he will brush the moment aside as one of weakness which, if dwelt upon, will lead to a betrayal of long-established associations. Yet, however dim the voice of conscience, it has reverberated in his being and thereafter the deliberate choosing of the paths of vice will invite its own appropriate retribution. But nature is a kind and merciful mother. Therefore, again and yet again she will present opportunities for reappraisal. Diseases that the erring soul cannot but connect with its erring ways, a steep sliding into penury, a life beset by doubts, harrowing circumstances and crippling losses—any of these present a valuable opportunity to the person to pause and reassess his sense of values. Pain and sorrow, grief and loss become for him stern yet necessary teachers that have the power to shake the soul out of its lethargy and arouse it from the profound somnolence of its vice-intoxicated mind. The elixir that

can change the sordid and the ugly into the beautiful and the true exists and is to be sought after and rediscovered in the Wisdom-Religion that is Theosophy. Many a harassed soul has profited by its instructions and has in turn become a medicine-man ministering to the needs of those who want to lift themselves out of the filth, yet know not where to turn for succour and guidance.

When in all sincerity the person enters upon the long and arduous journey from the realms of darkness to the kingdom of light, he finds to his horror that he is prone to trip when negotiating obstacles, so that before he realizes it he resumes from time to time his erstwhile attachments to the thirsts and hungers that used to beset his life. Re-emerging from his moments of sense-intoxication, he is wont to ask himself why, after shedding bitter tears of repentance and sincerely resolving to reform himself, he finds that much against his desire he still continues to seek his delight in the old and now forbidden desires. It is not as if these desires force themselves on him at every occasion. Often enough he seeks and creates opportunities for indulgence, though later he may stand appalled at the enormity of his offence. There is an answer and an explanation for this slipping backward and it is important that each struggler on the path equip himself with the knowledge of the factors that contribute to his failures.

It is a well-established truism that all temptations can be fought off only so long as the mind remains positively active. In the struggle for self-mastery, the soul may find the mind turning passive and refusing to obey its commands or becoming incapable of it. Freed from the onus of obeying the dictates of the soul, the passive mind becomes a medium for any force or entity which has the power to occupy it. In any particular case it would be the force of that passion or desire which prior to the resolve had succeeded in the making of the mind a medium for its own escapades. Since the aspirant comes from that state where he had been under the unrestricted dominance of vice for long periods, it follows that he had permitted his mind to act as a passive agent of undesirable extraneous forces which now rebel at the prospect of being evicted from their stronghold.

The rationale for this condition and the consequent failures found in Theosophy. It teaches that each medium has a certain moral and physical condition which induces emanations, or an aura, in which his controlling intelligences can live, and by which they manifest themselves. This aura varies from day to day and even hour by hour. It is an external effect resulting from internal causes. The medium's moral state determines the kind of intelligences that come, and the latter reciprocally influence the medium, physically, intellectually and morally. When the medium becomes totally passive, his own astral spirit may be benumbed and even crowded out of his body, which is then occupied by an elemental or, worse still, by a human fiend of the eighth sphere. Too often the cause of the most celebrated crime is to be sought in such possessions.<sup>1</sup> Each upsurge of temptation comes from one or the other of these "controlling intelligences." At one time they were the person's honoured guests and now they resist eviction. Their method of satisfying their lusts is such that their presence and activity is at no time apparent to the medium. They have the ability to arouse memories of past indulgences in those particular organs of the medium's body which were used in the act of fulfilment. These memory pictures intoxicate the mind so that it stampedes out of the control of the soul. Passivity of the mind is thus produced and the undesirable have an unimpeded expression till satiety sets in. Then they withdraw from the mind, leaving it weaker for the experience, and therefore the more untractable when the next bout of internal images sweeps it out of the soul's control.

Besides the curbing of fleshly appetites, there are other subtle and therefore more dangerous attachments that, taking hold of the mind, drag it down and then open it up to one or another unusual weakness. Ambition, envy, vanity, pride, greed, bigotry, fanaticism and selfishness are dangerous companions to harbour within the personal atmosphere which surrounds us and which remains a part and prolongation of oneself. Each of these militates against universality and brotherhood and therefore each becomes a destabilizing force which rejoices in the harm of other

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*Isis Unveiled*, I, 490.

units of the human family. Each is anti-soul and has therefore the power to crowd the soul out of the mind. Each has its votaries in the invisible atmosphere that remains a part of the person's personal make-up and which attracts and gives shelter to entities congenial to its moral, physical and intellectual character.

The remedy for the woes that attend upon one's straying away from the true path is set out in *The Voice of the Silence* which lays down the discipline thus: "Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights. Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they should cast." A similar teaching couched in other terms is given in *Isis Unveiled*. The antidote to physical mediumship is:

*Let the medium cease being passive.* Spirits never control persons of positive character who are determined to resist all extraneous influences. The weak and the feeble-minded whom they can make their victims, they drive into vice.<sup>2</sup>

If so far we have considered the aspects that drag the mind-soul down into unfathomable depths of degradation, it is appropriate that we turn our attention to the higher aspects of the soul that gravitate towards divinity. Says *Isis Unveiled*:

From the remotest antiquity *mankind as a whole have always been convinced of the existence of a personal spiritual entity within the personal physical man . . . .* The closer the union, the more serene man's destiny, the less dangerous the external conditions . . . . Furthermore, they believed that *there are external and internal conditions which affect the determination of our will upon our actions.*<sup>3</sup>

Side by side with passive mediums in the progress of the world's history, appear active mediators . . . . These men are guided merely by their own personal spirit, or divine soul, availing themselves of the help of spirits but so far as these remain in the right path.<sup>4</sup>

Iamblichus asserted that our soul can attain communion with

<sup>2</sup> *Isis Unveiled*, I, 490.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 593.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 488.

the highest intelligences. He believed "in the attaining of a divine power, which, overcoming the mundane life, rendered the individual an organ of the Deity." The student of Theosophy is well aware of the sevenfold classification of man to have any doubts about his intimate connection with both the Divine and the Universal. Yet, the teaching must remain in the realm of the abstract till such time as he acquires the power to wrench his mind away from the heady fumes that rise from matter in both its grosser and rarefied forms. To be able at all times to retain an unbroken contact with the spiritual part of himself, the man's soul has to maintain personal purity and acquire a trained and indomitable power, and both these can be obtained by constant restraints on emotions and passions.

When well advanced on the path of peace and power, the aspirant will find knowledge springing up spontaneously from within himself in the progress of time. Yet, in the earlier stages the student is advised to exercise caution and discretion. Says the text:

While the *ego* or the conscious entity is yet *within* the material body, the clearness and correctness of its spiritual visions depend on its more or less intimate relation with its higher Principle. When this relation is such as to allow the most ethereal portions of the soul-essence to act independently of its grosser particles and of the brain, it can unerringly comprehend what it sees; then only is it the pure, rational, *supersentient* soul. That state is known in India as the *Samadhi*; it is the highest condition of spirituality possible to man on earth.<sup>5</sup>

In regard to the visions of *dharana*, *Isis Unveiled* sounds a note of caution. Says the text:

When the body is in the state of *dharana*—a total catalepsy of the physical frame—the soul of the clairvoyant may liberate itself, and perceive things subjectively. And yet, as the sentient principle of the brain is alive and active, these pictures of the past, present and future will be tinged with the terrestrial perceptions of the objective world; the physical *memory* and *fancy* will be in the way of clear vision.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 590.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 591.

Even at such high stages where the practice of *dharana* becomes a possibility, the struggle goes on, but is now shifted from the person's thought creations to his physical memory and fancy. It is indeed true that the Kingdom of Heaven is to be taken by violence. There is no other way.

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To ALLOW unto others the victory, taking unto oneself the defeat is the sign of the superior man.

Inasmuch as all beings are our kindly parents, it would be a cause of regret to have aversion for and thus disown or abandon any of them.

To avoid error in choosing a *guru*, the disciple requireth knowledge of his own faults and virtues.

Illness and tribulations, being teachers of piety, are not to be avoided.

That which cometh of itself, being a divine gift, is not to be avoided.

The thought of helping others, however limited one's ability to help others may be, is not to be avoided.

One must know that sorrow, being the means of convincing one of the need of the religious life, is a *guru*.

Unless the mind be trained to selflessness and infinite compassion, one is apt to fall into the error of seeking liberation for self alone.

A mere glimpse of Reality may be mistaken for complete realization.

To preach religion and not to practise it is to be like a parrot saying a prayer.

To exercise patience for merely selfish ends rather than for doing good to others is to be like a cat exercising patience in order to kill a rat.

If, after having heard much of the Doctrine, one's nature still be unattuned, one is like a physician with a chronic disease.

One must have confidence in the Thatness (as being the Sole Refuge) even as an exhausted crow far from land hath confidence in the mast of the ship on which it resteth.

## SHALL WE BECOME CIVILIZED?

[Reprinted from *The Aryan Path*, April 1930.—Eds.]

The truly devoted, for the purification of the heart, perform actions with their bodies, their minds, their understanding, and their senses, putting away all self-interest.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*, V. 11

INDIA is cursed with millions of idlers who call themselves Sannyasis and are generally accepted as such. They not only make the economic situation of this poor country worse than it already is, but also are a moral plague, for they exploit the devotion of millions of villagers, especially the women. They are false and fleeting shadows, but faintly indicative of the very few and the rarely to be encountered true sons of light, the genuine Sannyasis. To such true ones we give salutations and say—*Namastae!*

The *Gita* is the book of rules and conduct for true Sannyasis. Its fifth discourse is named Sannyasa-yoga, yoga or devotion by means of renunciation of action. In the shloka quoted above, we find described by Sri Krishna what a Yogi does. A real Yogi is a truly devoted person, and he performs many kinds of actions. He is not idle either with his body and its senses, or with his mind, or with his discriminative *Buddhi*.

It is a matter of conviction with us that India's emancipation depends on her producing Sannyasis of the true type. Towards that end the idea should go abroad that to support and feed the idler who poses as a Sannyasi is irreligious and unspiritual, and that it is false charity, for it is given to the wrong person, at the wrong place and at the wrong time. An elimination of false Yogis and Sannyasis must take place.

How can India produce true Yogis and Sannyasis? First, by understanding what the words imply, and then by a few patriots setting out not to talk but to practise Yoga and Sannyasa. A Yogi is one who has taken the path in the direction of his Inner God, or Higher Self, and recognizing It as his adviser and sustainer, has begun to act selflessly.

A Sannyasi is one who renounces not the doing of actions

but the result of their performance. He goes through his appointed work in life, follows the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, but endeavours seriously and regularly to close his mind to pleasures as to pains.

These definitions arise, over and over again, in our study of the *Gita*. The Mahatma speaking to his Chela repeats the concepts of real Sannyasa and true Tyaga, and quotes Himself and His like as examples of Men who act. Their renunciation being of the sweet fruits of Their deeds.

There is another thing that the *Gita* brings out. Nowhere do we find that only a caste-man or even an Aryan alone can enter the Path of Renunciation. Can Musalmans become Sannyasis without turning infidels? Of course they can. Every real Sufi is a Sannyasi, every true Dervish is a Yogi, and the noble word Fakir has been as debased by its application to worthless beggars as the name Tyagi. Can Parsis practise Yoga? Certainly; for every Parsi heart is the receptacle of the embers of the Sacred Fire which, once kindled, makes him the Son of Ahura Mazda. For the Christians, St. Paul's admonition holds true: "If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you." (*Romans*, viii, 11). Every true Buddhist knows the injunction: "Look within, thou art Buddha." Every Jew familiar with his Kabala knows about the alchemical process whereby the self is raised unto the Self.

Any man or woman acquiring a new attitude to life can tread the Path of Renunciation. Such a man need not give up his home to make the jungle his habitat; he has to begin to live in the home differently. He must not commit the sin of running away from his duties, but should perform every single one of them without anxiety about the accruing results. He must train and control his senses; he must exercise and make agile and healthy his body; he must act mentally, *i.e.*, study and reflect upon what he studies, and make use of his discrimination born of his meditations in the performance of all acts. Throughout he must bear in mind the object which the above-quoted *Gita* verse advocates—purification of the heart. Body and it

senses, mind and its powers are but the instruments which are to be used to purify the heart.

It is not what we do that alone matters, but also how we do it. What we should avoid doing are those acts which take us away from our congenital duties; what we should be attentive to is the timely performance of all that is to be done. The method of such performance makes the Yogi, the Sannyasi, the Bhogi—to do our duty by every duty, regardless of consequences; we learn that in every station of life the Soul is educating itself, and that what matters is that the education continues irrespective of its bestowing on us pleasure or inflicting on us pain. In opulence and poverty alike the Soul grows—more in poverty than in opulence.

To educate ourselves in the school of life we need a discipline, and the *Gita* supplies it for every stage of human evolution. We have to impose that discipline on ourselves. The barbarian who receives his death-warrant when we take ourselves in hand must energize ourselves to act with thought and deliberation. To be self-reliant is to be dependent on the Great Self within and not on any outside agency. To acquire true individuality we must live daily by self-induced and self-devised efforts, and even though our past errors may check and thwart us we must persist and ascend through all degrees of intelligence till perfection is reached. To start this journey is to touch civilization, for thus we leave chaos behind and enter the world of order. To start us on that journey the Wise One said:

Rouse thyself by thy Self, examine thyself by thy Self; thus self-protected and attentive wilt thou live happily. (*Dhammapada*, 379)

—B.M.

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THIS TIME, like all other times, is a very good one, if we but know what to do with it.

—RALPH WALDO EMERSON

## THE SOUL'S SURROUNDINGS

"It is easy enough for *him* to be calm and steady and to have noble thoughts; see what a beautiful, peaceful environment he lives in!"

A natural reflection, perhaps, for the man who has not thought the problem through. But is it true? Does environment work so potent a spell? Not so in nature. Diamonds are produced in the dark depths of the earth, cut off from the sun in which they will one day sparkle; the seed that falls on a dung-heap may produce a flower as fair as any carefully nurtured garden plant can show. And in the human kingdom itself we all know that there are men with unlimited wealth at their command who have surrounded themselves with beauty, the views from whose windows command the heaven-aspiring mountains or the sea's broad expanse, and who yet have thoughts anything but noble, who are passionate and turbulent in their nature and cruel and unjust in their acts and words. We once heard of petty squabbles and mean acts which continuously poisoned the life of the community at a beautiful altitude where a famous astronomical observatory is situate. The spirit of gossip and of backbiting was not killed by the splendour of the blue dome of the heavens. Most of us are fortunate enough to know also some in humble circumstances, with little of leisure in their lives or of beauty in their surroundings, who are both steady and calm and whose facial expression as well as whose words and actions bespeaks the nobility of their thoughts. Is there, then, no connection between environment and character? Indeed there is a close relation between the two, though there is sometimes a time lag which may obscure their cause-and-effect relationship, or make effect appear cause, or *vice versa*.

Beautiful and peaceful surroundings are most congenial to the pure in heart, but they do not in themselves convey purity. Take the analogy of bodily cleanliness. It is true that inner purity finds one natural outer expression in a clean body and fresh raiment but, on the other hand, the extreme of outer fastidiousness is not incompatible with moral pollution. No amount of bathing

Whether in ordinary water or in the holy Ganges itself, will wash away the stains left on the inner nature by evil thinking or by selfishness, nor will it lessen in the smallest degree the tendencies in those directions.

What is environment from the standpoint of Theosophy? It is all that surrounds the Soul. The external surroundings are, as it were, the outer garments of the human Soul, but the personality itself is part of the Soul's environment. How did we come to have the mental capacity or limitation which is ours, the traits of character, the body of a particular sex, colour, race, stature and general appearance—through which, if at all, we have to express ourselves? They are our Karma—our actions. Through the laws of psychic magnetism we have drawn to ourselves that which is our own, as surely as the magnet draws the iron filings. The same applies to the individuals who surround us and to the outer environment into which we are born.

Fortunately we can modify both the personality with its limitations and its blemishes and the surroundings which we regard as a handicap to our spiritual progress. We can build them nearer to our heart's desire, but how to go about it? The way which commends itself to the thoughtless is to change at once the outer circumstances, violently if need be, to desert duties which are onerous and to make a fresh start under conditions more congenial and assumed to be more conducive to growth and progress. That is a grave mistake.

The Theosophical principle, when one is confronted by a number of obstacles requiring to be overcome, is to begin with those nearest at hand. And, the nearest environmental obstacles are those in our own personality. Better to deal first with the more intimate parts of our environment—our thought-feelings, our habits, customs and manners. Our outer circumstances form a mirror in which our inner environmental parts are reflected. There is an intimate interplay between the two portions of the environment of the Ego.

Now, Karma is not only justice; its mercy is seen in the fact that our circumstances, whatever they may be, present the best possible opportunity for our further growth. The overcoming of

the self-constructed obstacle immediately before us is our Karmic opportunity.

In this discipline, however, in which the student occupies himself with altering outer environment by changing his thinking, he passes from place to place without making *real* soul progress. In the more congenial environment he has built for himself he finds new difficulties of which he never dreamt. More subtle desires still bind him fast to earth. If he is no longer a slave of gross lusts he has become a slave of subtler and more insidious passions. He has killed the braying ass and the roaring tiger of his nature, but he has encaged within himself the singing bird and the darting butterfly. Not living in a slum but in a beauty-spot, he has not the drab conditions of the former to overcome, but the insidious temptations of the latter are there, and often their very existence is not suspected.

Very glibly aspirants talk of looking within, of listening to the voice of the Inner God, so that they may successfully fight the devil of flesh and blood and pull out of the hell of lust, anger and greed. The soul does not reveal itself and become active for the asking. It is crying for the moon. On the other hand, the method of starting with environment, both inner and outer, is not the way of real Occultism or pure Raja Yoga. That we have to handle the animal in us and make it truly human goes without saying. But to read the lesson about our weakness in our textbooks and then to affirm, "This is to be eradicated, this is to be eradicated," and to use some thought-force and desire-force on them will not work. Thus much time is spent in the vehement endeavour to improve the lower and the consciousness is drawn away from effort in the right direction, *i.e.*, from the endeavour to live in the Eternal, for which is required Mental Devotion, called *Buddhi-Yoga* in the *Bhagavad Gita*.

What shall we do with the three factors involved—the Inner Ego, the Personal Nature and the Outer Environment?

The outer environment will change automatically as the personal nature undergoes transmutation. In the personal nature are two constituents which must be seen as distinct, *viz.*, existence

of weaknesses and absence of capacities. Not through a desire to overcome weaknesses can they be overcome, and the attempt may strengthen weaknesses and even increase them. Reason and will have to be used, but what is the right mode of using them? First and foremost and as a starting-point, the performance of duties is the only safe way. Meditation exercises will prove fruitless unless the way of the performance of works is found. In the discharge of duties, in the performance of works pleasing to the soul and which attract its guidance and grace—in this dual fulfilment lies the beginner's salvation.

That is the real way for both our undertakings—eradication of vice and unfoldment of soul-power. It is that teaching which Mr. Judge presents:

The attitude to be assumed, then, is that of doing every act, small and great, trifling or important, because it is before us to do, and as a mere carrying out by us as instruments of the will of that Deity who is ourself. Nor should we stop to inquire whether the act is of any use to the Lord within, as some ask. For, they say, of what possible benefit to Him can be the small hourly acts which, as soon as done, are forgotten? It is not for us to inquire. The act that pleases that Lord is the act which is done as presented with no attachment to its result, while the act that is displeasing to Him is the one which we do, desiring some result therefrom. This practice is the highest; that which some day we must and will learn to perform.

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LIFE is a fragment, a moment between two eternities, influenced by all that has preceded, and to influence all that follows. The only way to illumine it is by extent of view.

—WILLIAM ELLERY CHANNING

## THE FUNCTION OF ATTENTION IN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, November 1888.—EDS.]

TRUE STUDY of any branch of knowledge consists in giving the matter of that branch such repetitions of *attentive* consideration that it at length becomes an integral part of the domain of the consciousness, and can at any time, under any correlated stimulus, be made use of by automatic mental action.

True study of an Art consists, primarily, in the *attentive* repetitions of the action of the physiological organs involved in the productions of that Art, until that action becomes automatic, and is as well and so naturally performed as any original reflex physiological function.

In these definitions the word qualifying the necessary processes is the adjective *attentive*, denoting the presence of *attention* in the operation. Without this word the definitions would not merely be imperfect, they would be essentially incorrect and misleading.

Only in the quality of being *attentive* can the reiterated consideration and the reiterated action, respectively, result in the *possession*, on the one hand, of a new realm of knowledge, or, on the other hand, of a new area of power.

What is the *nature and manner of expression* of this supreme quality Attention?

An appreciative intellectual grasp of the answer to this question and a realization of the function of its subject in the processes of human personal evolution, should be recognized as fundamental elements in the knowledge and understanding of the true educationist, be he teacher or not.

The word Attention is used largely, but loosely, in educational employments, yet we have no other word with which habitually, to express that *attitude of the consciousness* which in any study or acquisition of power, is absolutely and continuously demanded, in order to ensure intrinsic results. The term *concentration* is more literally correct in this relation, but concentration has, with most persons, too limited and too special a

application to render it available for ordinary use instead of Attention.

Yet the Attention we are discussing, the attention of all knowledge-acquiring processes, may perhaps be better understood and realized if it is regarded as *Concentrated Attention*.

Attention is that condition or attitude of consciousness in which its rays are *steadily and unintermittently centred* upon the thing being done or the subject of study. This may be presented to the consciousness by one or more of the special senses, or it may already be a content of the mind; the special element in the attitude being *the intentness with which the consciousness operates*. This intentness of gaze must proceed to such a degree that all other sensible or mental objects, except *the one*, become excluded from its range.

In the effort to do this—to *maintain* concentrated attention, the Will of the individual is brought into play, and its function in the process may be compared to that played by a burning-glass held between the sun and the surface of an object. If it is intended that the sun's rays shall produce, through the burning-glass, a definite and observable effect, the glass must be held in such a relation to the object that the rays of light converge upon *one spot*. This spot, or focus, then receives the whole force of the rays that pass through the glass; it alone, of all the surrounding surface, is brought out into relief and operated upon. In like manner the Will, in sustaining attention, focuses the rays of the consciousness, with all their inherent dynamic forces, upon one circumscribed area, physiological, mental, or moral, as the case may be, wherein lies the work to be done.

Thus we see that Attention is intentness of Mental Vision, concentrated and maintained by action of the Will. It is not a separate function or property of the mind, like perception, imagination, reason, etc., as some psychologists might lead us to suppose, but *a mode of action*—the true mode of the Will's action. In other words it is the *definite, efficient expression of the Volition or Will-force* of the individual.

The functions perception, conception, imagination, etc., are *instruments* of the Ego for operating upon the phenomenal world

and upon mental appropriations of that world; when one or more of these thus operates with all its force, undiverted from its employment by any surrounding object, then Attention is exhibited.

*Will* is the manifestation or action of the *real human Ego*; Attention designates the mode in which that manifestation is functionally exhibited, and by which alone permanent results are produced.

In relation to the psychological realm in which Attention is a feature, we may formulate the following scheme. This scheme may serve to make the general bearings of the subject clearer and to more definitely indicate the part played by Attention in all psychological phenomena.

The <i>source</i> of mental movement arises in	Emotion	=	the desire to know.
The <i>direction</i> of the movement lies with	Reason	=	how and what to know.
The <i>machinery</i> of the movement is provided by	The mental activities (Perception, etc.)	=	the means by which knowledge is gained.
The <i>maintaining force</i> of the movement resides in the	Will (the Energy of the Ego)	=	the mode by which continuity of operation is ensured.

The efficient relation of the two last groups of factors to each other, and their joint relation to the object under study, are expressed by our term Attention. The Will holds the mental activities employed *rigidly and persistently* to their work.

The Ego, through Volition, can only establish relations with objects external to itself *through the mental activities*, Perception, Conception, Judgment, Imagination, etc., and to effect this, the latter must be maintained in operation in a direct line between the Ego, represented by Volition, and the object to be studied; just as the gun of the sportsman must be held with exact

precision longitudinally between his eye and the object he desires to hit. If the gun be allowed to deviate in the least degree from the exact line of vision, the sportsman misses his object, so, also, if Perception, or Conception, or Judgment, or Imagination, whichever of these activities or faculties is in use, is permitted to lose its *direct* bearing upon the work in hand, absolute failure of purpose ensues. In this illustration the steady maintenance of the gun in precise position is a parallel to the psychological action of Attention.

When we grasp the full bearing of the truths here pointed out, we cannot fail to perceive the significant relation which the mental attitude of Attention holds to *all* educational processes and employments, nor can we assign it too prominent a position in laying down true and efficient methods of culture. Let Volition, the Mental Activities, the Light of Reason, the Physiological System of nerves and muscles, and vast mines of possible knowledge, all be provided; what intrinsic and permanent result can be accomplished amongst them if the manner in which they are used does not include Attention?

Modern Education fails, as evident to all thoughtful observers of human life, very largely because of its neglect to maintain this essential factor of personal evolution in its due place. The desultoriness, aimlessness and mental common-placeness of the general adult life around us, spring from this omission.

Modern Education, in its multitude of subjects, in its haste in passing from one subject to another, and in its lack of precise aim, exhibits *desultoriness* in employment of time and faculty.

Desultoriness is the antithesis of Systematic Attention.

Modern Education rules over an area from which nothing new arises as the fruit of *its* fostering care, it brings no new thing into being from out its world of chaos.

This results from its desultoriness of method and action.

The Human Will is, however, a natural *creator* when it operates through *Concentrated Attention*, but education fails in its true mission as a stimulus and guide to individual creative force, because of this unreasonable neglect of a fundamental principle.

*Every area of acquired skill is a new creation; it has a real,*

patent existence and is an object of possession and use in the world of human life, which did not exist previous to its evolution by the personal Will operating through the mental activities upon a physiological chaos.

To prevent possible confusion of thought in tracing out the subject, it may be remarked here that there is a mental attitude to which the term Attention is commonly applied. This may be termed *Passive Attention*.

Passive Attention rules the consciousness when one listens to an eloquent speech or interesting lecture.

In such instances the Will is in abeyance, the consciousness being probably held entranced by forces which the Occultist might term *Mantramic*.

Passive attention also rules when the mind follows an absorbing train of thought. But this form is not that demanded for personal growth; educationally it is of slight value and without necessary relation to our subject.

Attention plays its necessary part in each one of the realms or planes of life to which the human individual belongs:

1. On the physical plane—in the physiological realm of the special senses and the nervous and muscular systems. Conscious action under its rule in this realm results in *skill*, the basis not only of all art and artistic performance, but of every nicely adapted movement of the human limbs and frame for practical purpose or for the display of agility and gracefulness.

2. On the mental plane—in the psychological realm of concepts, comparisons, judgments, deductions, speculations and ideals. On this plane intellectual energy under the control of Attention creates logical, systematic and consecutive forms of thought, true panoramic fields of vision out of detached intellectual details, and new emotional forms of power and beauty.

3. On the moral plane—in the spiritual realm of supreme truths, vital principles, gropings after the Infinite, the laws of human relationships, and the application of all these to the entire conduct of the personal life. In this supreme area the moral sentiments and spiritual aspirations after perfection of life, concentrate their attention upon *definite details* of personal thought and behaviour, the production of grace of spirit, reliability of

disposition, agreement of conduct with principle, altruism in all its effective forms, and the development of a personal influence ever tending towards the evolution of a vitalizing social harmony.

In the evolution of personal life, when the object of its action is an area or detail of any one of these realms, Attention may be termed *specific*, and when the control of the adopted *purpose of existence as a whole* is maintained through its means, establishing an efficient and well-ordered unity amongst the many divisions and details of that purpose, then we may designate Attention as *supreme*.

“Genius” has been defined as “an infinite capacity for *taking pains*.” The expression “taking pains” is merely a synonym for close attention to *minute details*.” “Close attention to details” makes each brick of which the “mansion for all lovely forms,” the structure of personal knowledge, capacity and ability, is to be built, and carefully places it in *its due position, cementing it here at once*. The structure so put together is substantial, capacious, beautiful, and efficient.

This structure, the result of infinite pains long continued, is that which the world wonders at and worships and calls Genius. Nearly all men, if first guided and supported along the toilsome track and afterwards urged along it by pressure of their own Wills, might develop some form of power and skill which would elevate them considerably towards that height from which Genius looks down, and thus render the ordinary world much less commonplace, monotonous and unskilful than it is at present. To sum up:

Concentrated Attention is the expression of the Will, and Will is the central, animating force proceeding from the Ego. Will, operating under the condition of Attention upon the chaos of its attendant world, and co-ordinating the energies, forces and movements of that world, converts it into a realm of form, power, and purpose, centring around the Ego.

This constitutes Personal Evolution resulting at length in a perfected Individuality, the *creation of its own Will*.

## ON BEING CONSCIOUS

WHAT do we mean by "being conscious," being something that we all are (if awake) throughout the day? Does it mean more than that our mind is functioning, served by eyes and ears and its prime attribute, memory? And does it enlighten or confuse us to be told further by someone so knowledgeable as Mr. Judge that "Consciousness is a condition of the monad as the result of embodiment in matter and the dwelling in a physical form"? (W.Q.J. Series, No. 5, p. 29)

When Mr. Judge pronounces, we *learn!* But we must give time and thought in order to do so. Naturally, the value of thought is primal. Careful, meditative thought is what is required of us. "Not speech but thought really rules the world," says Mr. Judge, though to do so thought must depend on speech or writing. It is there that our service to it comes in. We transmit it. Yet even so we come no nearer to defining it. Thought remains a mystery, however much we think *about* it, so to make good use of it is the best that we can do.

Some clue to thought and what it is we may partly deduce from Mr. Judge's statement that "below the spirit and above the intellect is a plane of consciousness in which experiences are noted . . . . This upper plane is the real register of all sensations and experiences" (*An Epitome of Theosophy*, p. 7). Such a plane, surely, is memory. When we enter it our consciousness is no longer "here" but "there." And that is a thought that brings with it a warning to ensure purity to a plane that can never be bypassed on our earthly pilgrimage, but which, if undefiled, consciousness should be happy to rest in from time to time, musing on what has been garnered along the way.

At times like these, times of meditation if we choose to call them so, we have the opportunity for what Mr. Judge advises, namely, "the study of the works of those who in the past have trodden this path and found out what is the real and what is not" (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 172-73). Awareness of such reality becomes more present to our consciousness and should be our aim. It, and only it, provides the vigour for fruitful living. Consciousness should be trained on it even as plants are trained on some

und, reliable support, for "we are apt," says Mr. Judge, "constantly to forget the existence of the great force and value belonging to our super-sensuous consciousness. That consciousness is the great register where we record the real results of our various earthly experiences; in it we store up the spiritual energy, and once stored there, it becomes immortal, our own eternal possession." (W.Q.J. Series, No. 17, p. 16)

Such, of course, is the action of the true consciousness, a very different thing from mere awareness, the latter having only, we might say, a photographic ability, its value depending on what it enables us to take in. Thus thinking of consciousness, does not it appear to us as neither more nor less than a state of being, a state, because as yet we have not experienced what lies beyond it, though we are able to recall what it has already done for us, namely, the stocking of our mind with those imprints that we call memories.

We cannot escape the result of such action, for our "coming into the human stage," Mr. Judge reminds us, is precisely "for the getting of experience." (*Epitome*, p. 28). That this can come about is through our consciousness, hence the need to keep it, as an old hymn bids us, "pure and free from sin's alloy," in which effort meditation can do much to help since it enables us to see what is amiss or imperfect or simply *wrong*. It cannot, however, do all. "Our waking state is the one in which we must be regenerated; where we must come to a full consciousness of the Self within, for in no other is salvation possible." Such are the earnest words of Mr. Judge, demanding equally earnest thought from those of us who read them. (W.Q.J. Series, No. 11, p. 6)

Who would question the above? Is not our waking state the one in which we think, and thought, we know, leads to action which is indeed the basis of it. Such, we might say, are the two component parts of consciousness, but the latter (action) is wholly dependent on the former. Dependent, too, not merely on the physical level, but as concerns the value of what is to be done and said, with all its succeeding consequences.

Consciousness surely is our vital spot. It compels us to make decisions, to hold beliefs, to form relationships. In it and through

it our present incarnation fulfils itself, for good or ill as consciousness directs. Could we experience *being* if we lacked consciousness? To pose such a question is only a profitless juggling with words. But consciousness *per se* is well worth a period of introspective quiet thought. It might well be reckoned as one of creation's wonders instead of the "something" we take for granted day by day.

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### GOD IS LIFE

THE RELIGIOUS and moral confusion prevailing so widely in the world may be traced to the faulty concept of God which religious institutions have imposed upon the people. What is God according to ancient philosophy?—Life.

It is the omnipresent and impersonal Reality, containing all and everything. From one aspect it is the mysterious power of evolution; from another, the law of harmony, the immutable law of cause and effect under which evolution takes place. Attributes can no more be ascribed to Deity than to space, its symbol. Space cannot be excluded from any conception, but neither can one grasp the thought of boundless space. However far the mind goes out, there is always space beyond. But the space of ancient philosophy is not a void; it pulsates everywhere with motion which is life. The essence of every atom of matter is life, and Universal Life is Deity.

The whole universe is animated with Spirit, the real unseen Presence whose garment is nature. Matter is the illusory reflection of the Ever Unknowable. But though the Divine Presence cannot be intellectually grasped, it can be sensed within himself by the awakened soul, for the Supreme is "the Ego seated in the hearts of all beings."

Worshippers of such Divinity visit their heart as the only shrine, making their good actions the only priests, their evil intentions the only sacrificial victims, and their own Spirit the only mediator between them and the Universal Spirit.

The personal God of theology, outside the universe, above the law, appears in sorry contrast to the radiant Presence of which a man can only say, *It is and I am that.*

## RIGHT OF INDEPENDENT THOUGHT

Though man a thinking being is defined,  
Few use the grand prerogative of mind;  
How few think justly of the thinking few!  
How many never think who think they do!

—JANE TAYLOR

LEFT TO ITSELF, man's grasp of truth should grow apace with his moral and intellectual advance. Dogma, however, is the Procrustean bed. The position taken by any organized religion which claims infallibility and demands assent to its dicta is just that of the robber of Greek legend. Is any man too short for Procrustes's bed? Let him be violently stretched to fit it! Is it too short for those who have outgrown it? Cut off whatever part extends beyond it!

The attempt to make men think as they are told to think never has been a thorough success. The most rigidly enforced creeds have succeeded but in freezing the surface of the stream of thought. Even when conformity with the views of the majority has been enforced at sword's point, the swift current of private speculation has raced beneath the surface ice of lip-assent, breaking through here and there in the irrepressible rapids of heresies of greater or less moment.

The right of freedom of thought, however, has not been won without difficulty. Down the centuries the martyrs to the right to their convictions have laid down their lives rather than conform to the views of the majority. All honour to their courage and their stand, however little the views to which they clung commend themselves today. We owe them a great debt of gratitude that now we may think what we will and none may say us nay.

The Roman Catholic Church, to a great extent, and other organized creeds each in its own measure, holds in reserve the thunderbolts of its anathema to cut off heretics from hope of heaven, but happily the days of stake and rack are past. The anathema can terrorize only those who recognize the priestly power to make it effective. The sleep of the thoroughgoing here-

tic is disturbed no whit by any curse in prospect or in actuality.

But with the danger of thinking for oneself has passed, for many people, much of its zest. Heresy is no longer interesting. It makes no demands on courage. With the challenge to independent thinking on religious lines has passed much of its attraction. The stream of thought has passed beyond the stage of waterfall and rapids to settle into the slow swing of gentle current.

We need a renaissance of thought to divert to the conquest of ideas some of the energy devoted now to the advance of material civilization. Man is a thinking being. It is at the risk of stunting his intellectual growth that he takes the line of least resistance in his attitude towards any vital point. Woe unto him who accepts the anodyne of readymade creeds on such questions as relate to his own nature and place in the evolutionary scheme, the purpose of life, the goal, and how to reach it!

While bizarre concepts may mark a stage in original thinking, as in the crude, challenging radicalism of the youthful intelligentsia, sanity and balance characterize the outlook of those who think things through. Truth being one and clash between facts impossible, it stands to reason that open-minded search will lead at last to similar conclusions. Therefore those who lead the van of evolution, the great Teachers of every age and clime, are in fundamental agreement in their statements. But they know far better than to try to force acceptance even of their universal truths.

For the race at large that unanimity is ages hence. It will be hastened to the extent that the duty as well as the right of independent thought is recognized and exercised, cost what it may.

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THERE IS NO way to peace, peace is the way.

—A. J. MUSTE

# ROSIKRUCIAN LETTERS

## V

### THE ADEPTS

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In your answer to my last letter you expressed your opinion that the standard of *spirituality* (meaning morality and intellectuality combined, or in other words *spiritual intelligence*) set up by our system of philosophy is too high to be attained by man, and you doubt whether anyone has ever attained it. Let me then inform you that many of those whom the Christian Church calls saints, as well as many who never belonged to that church and whom it is customary to call "heathen," have attained that state and thereby acquired spiritual powers which enabled them to perform very extraordinary, so-called miraculous, things.

If you will examine the histories of the lives of the saints, you will find a great deal that is grotesque, fabulous and untrue, because those who wrote the legends knew little or nothing about the mysterious laws of nature; they recorded phenomena which happened, or which were believed to have happened, but they could not explain the causes which produced them, and they invented such explanations as seemed to them most probable or credible according to their own method of thinking. But among all this rubbish you will find a great deal of what is true, which goes to show that the mind of even an uneducated person can be illuminated by divine wisdom, if that person leads a pure and holy life. You will see how on many occasions poor, ignorant and—in the sense of the world—uneducated monks or nuns acquired such wisdom that they were consulted by popes and kings in regard to important affairs, and many of them acquired the power to leave their physical bodies to visit distant places in their spiritual bodies, formed by the substance of thought, and even to appear in a material form at distant places. Occurrences of this kind have been so numerous that if we read these accounts they cease to appear extraordinary, and it will be unnecessary to mention any such instances, as they are already

well known. In the *Life of St. Catharina of Sienna*, in that of *St. Francis Xavier*, and in many other books you may find such incidents described. Profane history is also replete with accounts of extraordinary men and women, and I will only remind you of the history of *Joan of Arc* who possessed spiritual gifts, and of *Jacob Boehmen*, the uneducated shoemaker, who was illuminated by divine wisdom.

We doubt whether there can be anything more absurd than the attempt to argue and dispute about such things with a sceptic or materialist who denies that such things are possible. Such an attempt would be like arguing and disputing about the existence of light with a person who is born blind, nor could any committee of blind people decide whether or not light exists. Nevertheless it existed and still exists, and we may *inform* the blind ones about it, but we cannot *prove* it to them scientifically, as long as they are blind and inaccessible to reason or logic.

In many parts of the world the people have already become so degraded by "modern civilization" that it has become perfectly incomprehensible to them that a person could perform any act whatsoever except for the purpose of obtaining money, comfort or luxury; the only object for which they live is to become rich, to eat, drink, sleep and eat again, and to enjoy all the comforts of external life. Nevertheless such persons are not happy; they live in a state of continual fever and excitement, ever running after shadows which disappear as they approach, or which create only still stronger desires after other shadows, if they are once caught and absorbed.

But fortunately there are still others in whom the divine spark of spirituality has not been smothered by the smoke of materiality, and there are some in whom this spark has been fanned into a flame by the Holy Ghost, emitting a light which illuminates their minds and even pervades their physical bodies, so that even the superficial observer may see that they are persons of an extraordinary character.

Such persons exist in various parts of the world, and they form a *Brotherhood* whose existence is known only to a few, nor is it desirable that any details about that Brotherhood should be

publicly known, as such information would at once arouse the envy and anger of the ignorant and evil disposed and call into activity a force which would not harm the Adepts, but which would harm those whose evil wills were aroused against the Adepts. As you are, however, desirous of knowing the truth, not from an object of idle curiosity, but from a desire to follow the truth, I am permitted to give you the following explanations.<sup>1</sup>

The Brothers of whom we speak live unknown to the world; history knows nothing about them, and yet they are the greatest of all mankind. The monuments which have been erected to the conquerors of the world will sink into dust, kingdoms and thrones will cease to exist, but these elect ones will live. There will come a time when the world will become convinced of the worthlessness of external illusions, and begin to esteem only that which is worthy to be esteemed; then will the existence of those Brothers become known and their wisdom be acknowledged. The names of the great ones of the earth are written in dust; the names of these children of Light are inscribed in the temple of Eternity. To these Brothers I will introduce you, and you may become one of them.

These Brothers are initiated into the mysteries of religion, but you must not misunderstand me and suppose that they belong to some external secret society, such as are in the habit of desecrating that which is sacred by the performance of external ceremonies, and whose members call themselves "Initiates." No! It is only the spirit of God which can initiate man into divine wisdom and illuminate his mind. Man can only direct man to the altar where the divine fire is burning; the latter must go there himself if he desires to become initiated; he must render himself worthy of obtaining spiritual gifts, he must himself drink from the fountain which exists for all, from which no one is excluded except those who exclude themselves.

While the Atheists, Materialists and Sceptics of our modern civilization misuse the term "Philosophy" for the purpose of palming off the vagaries of their own brains as divine wisdom, these Brothers live quietly in the influence of a higher light and

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<sup>1</sup> The original letter, from which the following extracts are taken, was written by *Carl von Eckartshausen* at *Munich* (Bavaria) in the year 1792.

are building a temple for the eternal spirit, a temple which will continue to exist after more than one world will have perished. Their work consists in cultivating the powers of the soul; they are unaffected by the turmoil of the external world and its illusions; they read the living letters of God in the mysterious book of nature; they recognize and enjoy the divine harmonies of the universe. While the learned ones of the world seek to drag everything sacred and exalted down to their own low level of intellectuality and morality, these Brothers rise up to the plane of divine light, and find in it all that is good, true and beautiful in nature. They are the ones who not merely believe but who know the truth by spiritual contemplation or *Faith*, and their works are in harmony with their Faith, for they do good for the love of good and because they know it to be good.

Do not believe that a man can become a true Christian by professing a certain belief or by joining a Christian church in an external sense of the word. To become a true Christian means to become a Christ, to rise above the sphere of personality and to include and possess within one's own divine self all that exists in heaven or upon the earth. It is a state which is beyond the conception of him who has not attained it; it means a condition in which one is actually and consciously a temple wherein the divine Trinity with all its powers resides. Only in this light or principle which we call the Christ, but which other nations call by some other names, can we find the truth. Enter that light and you will learn to know the Brothers who live in it. In that sanctuary reside all the powers and so-called supernatural means by which weak humanity can be strengthened, and the broken link which formerly united man with the divine fountain from which he originated, restored. If men only knew the dignity of their own souls and the capabilities of the powers residing therein, they would be struck with awe and desire nothing else but to find their own divine selves.

There is only one God, one truth, one knowledge and one way to arrive at it, and this way is called religion; and therefore there is only *one* practical religion, although there may be a thousand different theories. All that is required to obtain a

knowledge of God is contained in nature. All truths which the religion of truth can teach, have existed ever since the beginning of the world and will remain unto its end. Among each and every nation upon this globe the light did always shine into the darkness, although the darkness did not comprehend it. In some places this light was brighter, in others less bright, according to the receptivity of the people and the purity of their will. Wherever it found the greatest receptivity, there it appeared the brightest and was perceived in a more concentrated state according to the capacity of men to perceive it. The truth is universal and cannot be monopolized by any man or organization of men. The greatest mysteries of religion, such as the *Trinity*, the *fall* or differentiation of the human monad, its *Redemption* by Love, etc., are found in ancient as well as in modern systems of religion. Their knowledge is the knowledge of the universe; in other words, *Universal Science*, a science which is infinitely superior to all the material sciences in the world, each of which enters merely into some little detail of existence, but leaves the grand and universal truths, upon which all existence is based, out of consideration and perhaps even treats such knowledge with contempt, because their eyes are closed to the light of the spirit.

External things may be examined by the external light; intellectual speculations require the light of the intellect; but the perception of spiritual truths requires the light of the spirit, and an intellectual light without spiritual illumination will lead men into error. Those who desire to know spiritual truths must seek for the light within themselves and not expect to obtain it by any external forms or ceremonies; only when they have found the Christ within themselves, will they be worthy of the name of Christ.<sup>2</sup>

This was the practical religion, the science and the knowledge of the ancient sages long before the appellation "Christianity" was known; it was also the practical religion of the primitive Christians, who were spiritually illuminated people and true followers of the Christ. Only in proportion as Christianity be-

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<sup>2</sup>In the German language "a Christ" means "a Christian" and also one who is an incarnation of the Christ-principle; the two words are identical and no distinction is made between "a Christian" and a "Christ."

came a popular and consequently misunderstood system of religion have the true doctrines given way to misinterpretations, and the sacred symbols lost their true meaning. Church-organizations and secret societies have appropriated to themselves the external forms and allegories; priestcraft and mysticism have assumed the place of religion and truth; men have dethroned God and put their own selves upon the throne. The science of such men is not wisdom; their practical experiences are limited by their corporeal sensations; their logic is based upon arguments which are fundamentally wrong; they have never known the relations existing between the infinite Spirit and finite Man; they arrogate to themselves divine powers, which they do not possess, and thus by inducing men to seek from them the light, which can only be found within one's own self, they delude man with false hopes, and thus guide him to perdition.

Such a state of affairs is the necessary outcome of the external power which the modern churches have obtained. History shows that in proportion as a church increases in external power, it will decrease in internal power. If a point expands into a circle, the larger the circle grows, the less concentrated and weaker will be the centre. The more men live in externals and are engaged in external things, the less energy and time will they have to apply to internal things. What the church has gained in external influence, she has lost in internal power. She can no longer say, "Silver and gold I have none"; and she can also no longer say to the sick, "Rise and walk."

Unless a new life is infused into the old systems they are sure to decay. Their dissolution is only too apparent in the universal spreading of the pernicious superstitions of materialism, scepticism and libertinism. Such a new life cannot be given to religion by strengthening the external power and authority of priestcraft, but it must be infused into the centre. The central power which gives life to all things and which moves all is *Love*, and only if religion is penetrated by love can it become strong and enduring; a religion based upon a universal love of humanity would contain the elements of a universal religion.

Unless the principle of love is practically recognized by the

church, there will be no Christ, Adepts, or true spiritual guides developed within the church, and the spiritual powers which clergymen claim to possess will exist merely in their own imagination. Let the clergy of the various denominations cease to stir up the spirit of intolerance. Let them recognize the fact that all men, no matter to what nationality or system of belief they may belong, have only one common origin and one common destiny, and that they are all fundamentally one, differentiated merely in their external conditions. Then, when the time comes when the interest of humanity will be thought more of than the external interest of the churches, will mankind be convinced that beyond the sensual realm of material illusion there is a higher, divine and universal power, which enables those who possess it not merely to call themselves divines, but to be divine and to perform divine acts.

True religion consists in the recognition of God, but God cannot be recognized anywhere except in his manifestation, and although all nature is a manifestation of God, yet the highest state of his manifestation is the divinity in man. To make all men divine is the ultimate object of religion, and to recognize the universal Divinity (the Christ) in all, is the means to that end. The recognition of God means the recognition of the divine and universal principle of love. He who fully recognizes this principle, not merely in theory but in practice, will have his interior senses opened and his mind will become illuminated by the spiritual Divine Wisdom. When all men have attained that state, then will the divine light of the spirit illuminate the world and be recognized in the same way as the light of the sun is universally seen; men will knowledge take the place of opinion, faith the place of belief, and the love of all the place of the love of self. Then will the majesty of the universal God and the harmony of his laws be recognized in Nature and Man, and in the light of the spirit will be seen the jewels which adorn the throne of the eternal, and which are known to the Adepts.

—F.H.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The popular belief that anger ought to be expressed to preserve one's health is being challenged by American psychologist Dr. Carol Tavris, author of *Anger: the Misunderstood Emotion*. After studying hundreds of angry people, Dr. Tavris found that those who gave vent to their rage got angrier, not less so.

"Talking out an emotion doesn't reduce it," she says. "It rehearses it." She is one of a growing number of medical people who question the conventional view that bottled-up anger causes ulcers, heart attacks, headaches, overeating and festering relationships. Studying her patients, Dr. Tavris found that anger was often more destructive when it was allowed to erupt than when it was suppressed. And outbursts of anger—what a psychiatrist has called "a form of public littering"—rarely relieve whatever caused it and usually aggravate the situation. Reciting of grievances makes the emotional arousal build up again, making the person feel even worse than he did when the infuriating event first happened. Redundant workers who were encouraged to air their resentment actually became more hostile towards their employer, and children who were asked to express their anger towards another child who had frustrated them ended up liking the child less than children who were not allowed to express criticisms.

The case studies showed that in marriage the "let it all hang out" approach can prove disastrous because rage vented by one partner can provoke it in another. Dr. Tavris advises:

*Any emotional arousal will eventually simmer down if you just wait long enough. This is why the classic advice for anger control—count to ten—has survived for centuries . . . .*

As the catharsis studies show, sometimes the best thing you can do about anger is nothing. Let it go, and it will often turn out to be unimportant and quickly forgotten. Keeping quiet also gives you time to cool down and decide if the matter is worth discussing . . . .

Ray Novaco of the University of California works with people who have problems with chronic anger, teaching them three things: how to think about their anger; how to control arousal;

how to behave constructively. Anger is often inflamed by the statements we make when we are provoked: "Who does he think he is to treat me like that?" "What a vile and thoughtless woman she is!" Novaco teaches people to empathize with the provocateur's behaviour, trying to find justification for it and ways to deal with it: "Maybe he's having a rough day," or "She must be very unhappy if she would do such a thing."

"Anger is the passion of fools . . . the destruction of all that man obtains; it becometh not a wise man," says the *Vishnu Purana*. If wrath is bad for the ordinary man, it is one of the greatest of hindrances for him who attempts to live the higher life. The violent shaking up caused by anger in a practising neophyte is spoken of by W. Q. Judge in his "Culture of Concentration" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18*). He concludes: ". . . anger must be strictly avoided, and it cannot be avoided unless charity and love—absolute tolerance—are cultivated."

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Much has been written about boredom and its consequences, its antidotes or preventives. Eminent scholar Robert Nisbet discusses its history and sociology in his essay "Reflections on Boredom" (*Dialogue*, No. 62, 1983). Man with his highly developed nervous system is apparently unique in his capacity for boredom, one of the most insistent and universal among the forces that have shaped human behaviour. Nisbet, a professor emeritus of Columbia University and author of many books, writes:

Work, more or less properly attuned to the worker's aptitudes, is undoubtedly the best defense against boredom. As scientist Dennis Gabor emphasized, work is the only visible activity to which man may be safely left . . . . In the modern day, chronic joblessness, especially among youth but in other strata as well, not overlooking the retired elderly, produces its baneful results, ranging from the mindless violence of youth on the streets to the millions of elderly who, jobless and also functionless, lapse into boredom which all too often becomes apathy and depression . . . .

The sense of emptiness of life is pronounced in almost any onset of boredom. Samuel Johnson, for all his prodigious expenditures of energy, was in almost constant dread of what he called

the "vacuity of life." Second only to his fear of the disease of envy was his fear of the psychic affliction under which one sees everything as meaningless, futile or superfluous....

As for the future of boredom, astronomer and educator Harlow Shapley ranked boredom third in a list of possible causes of the destruction of civilization, a list that included nuclear war, natural catastrophe and pandemic disease. And philosopher Bertrand Russell concluded: "If life is to be saved from boredom relieved only by disaster, means must be found of restoring individual initiative not only in things that are trivial but in the things that really matter."

It might seem a harsh statement that those who do not *work* at something form the "useless portion of mankind." Those who allow themselves to drift and become passive, ultimately lose their self-control and open their nature to whatever low and dangerous influences can enter therein. The best antidote to boredom is to realize that life has a purpose, and that whatever circumstances one finds oneself in are best suited for the fulfillment of that purpose. If men were to think for themselves and to meditate upon birth and death, as the *Gita* advocates, they would be able to find a soul-satisfying answer to the *raison d'être* of existence.

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The *Bulletin of the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture* for December 1983 makes the following editorial "Observations" on the subject of equality:

It has always been man's dream to have a society where there is no inequality—social, political, or otherwise. Many models have been considered, but so far none has been found which completely rules out discrimination on grounds of birth, race, religion, or political views. The ideal has remained as elusive as ever. In reality, there is inequality everywhere, at all levels, in varying degrees, and sometimes disguised, sometimes blatant....

The question is, What is meant by equality? If it means equality of rights and privileges, it is possible only in theory, it can never be a reality. No two individuals are the same; so also no two groups of people, classes, or communities. It is impossible to

imagine equality among people in respect of intelligence, character, ability to do things, or moral development. Even if opportunities are the same, not all people can utilize them to the extent that some people can . . . .

Does it then mean that equality is an impossible ideal? Is it not true then that all men are born equal? The answer is that potentially all are equal, but they are never alike. There will always be people who will be more intelligent than others. Society will always be divided into unequals, but injustice can be prevented only if a sense of oneness governs human relationships. If I hurt you, I, in fact, hurt myself. We are only many variants of the same Spirit.

Modern learning has yet to find a satisfactory explanation of the inequalities of intellectual capacity, of birth and social position, obtaining among individuals, nations and races. Esoteric philosophy, however, accounts for the fact that human beings, in spite of having one common origin, yet differ in their potentialities and mental capabilities, and even in their outward physical forms and characteristics. As explained in *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 161), at the time of the lighting up of Manas in the middle of the Third Race, when man in form became man in mind, the incarnating Powers had to make their choice between, and take into account, the past Karmas of the Monads, between which and their bodies they had to become the connecting link. Thus, some of the Divine Intelligences incarnated in the human vehicles that were "ready," and became the first class of Arhats or Sages on this our Earth. Others projected a spark in the "half ready," i.e., the average humanity, which has to acquire its intellectuality during the present Manvantaric evolution. Still others deferred till the Fourth Race as Monads who were the latest arrivals "were not ready" at all; these remained the "narrow-brained." Thus Manas, the fifth principle, the human or intellectual soul, is at different stages of unfoldment in the majority of mankind.

Mankind is obviously divided into god-informed men and lower human creatures. The intellectual difference between the Aryan and other civilized nations and such savages as the South Sea Islanders, is inexplicable on any other grounds. No amount

of culture, nor generations of training amid civilization, could raise such human specimens as the Bushmen, the Vedddhas of Ceylon, and some African tribes, to the same intellectual level as the Aryans, the Semites, and the Turanians so called. The "sacred spark" is missing in them and it is they who are the only *inferior* races on the globe, now happily—owing to the wise adjustment of nature which ever works in that direction—fast dying out. Verily mankind is "of one blood," *but not of the same essence*. We are the hot-house, artificially quickened plants in nature, having in us a spark, which in them is latent. (*S.D.*, II, 421 fn.)

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Much is made of today's new physics by its advocates. Indeed it sweeps away many outmoded concepts and much of the traditional imagery of a God "out there," embedded in absolute time. It is now claimed by some physicists that the new ideas, abstract and sometimes bizarre, can provide an explanation of the meaning of life and dictate the shape of religion in the generations to come.

Paul Davies, Professor at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, expresses himself as follows in the *Telegraph Sunday Magazine* for August 7, 1983:

The decline of traditional religion has not removed the need for men and women to find a deeper meaning behind existence. Why is the world the way it is and how do we, as conscious individuals, fit into the great scheme?

There is a growing feeling that science, especially what is known as the new physics, can provide answers where religion remains vague and faltering. Many people in search of a meaning to their lives are finding enlightenment in the revolutionary development at the frontiers of science. Much to the bewilderment of professional scientists, cults are being formed around such unlikely topics as quantum physics, space-time relativity, black holes and the big bang.

How can physics, with its reputation for cold precision and objective materialism, provide such fertile soil for the mystical? The truth is that the spirit of scientific enquiry has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past 50 years. The twin revolutions of the theory of relativity, with its space-warps and time-warps, and the quantum theory, which reveals the shadowy

and unsubstantial nature of atoms, have demolished the classical image of a clockwork universe slavishly unfolding along a pre-determined pathway.

To study the new physics is to embark on a journey of wonderment and paradox, to glimpse the universe in a novel perspective, in which subject and object, mind and matter, force and field become intertwined.

Many physicists are deeply impressed by the harmony and order which pervades the physical world. Seeing laws of the universe dovetailing together so felicitously, they are forced to the conclusion that there is "something behind it all." But to arrive at that "something," the physicist must perceive with the eye of the mystic.

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Swami Jitatmananda's article, "The Quest for the Ultimate Building Block of the Universe" (*Prabuddha Bharata*, December 1983), goes to show that the holistic and mystical approach of modern physics has been compelled to accept today was anticipated by the millennia-old Upanishadic and Vedantic texts. The theory of relativity has established the relative nature of matter; quantum physics has shown that matter has no purely objective reality; particle physics has demonstrated that a particle of matter as a separate, independent reality does not exist. What we see as isolated matter is intrinsically interconnected at a deep level with the whole universe of space-time. Twentieth-century physics has already stepped into the domain of metaphysics. "The biggest is reflected in the smallest," says the *Katha Upanishad*. Each atom, says Vivekananda, reflects the whole universe. Vivekananda reiterated the ancient Vedantic view in the last century, when the new physics of this century had not even been dreamed of. He said:

One atom in this universe cannot move without dragging the whole world along with it. There cannot be any progress without the whole world following in the wake . . . . That the whole universe is one is scientifically demonstrable. What the metaphysicians call "being," the physicists call "matter," but there is no real fight

between the two, for both are one. Though an atom is invisible, yet in it are the real power and potency of the universe. That is what the Vedantist says of Atman.

Physics is bounded on both sides by metaphysics. If we push inquiry far enough in the world of perception, we must reach a plane beyond perception. Only for the infinitesimal portion of the universe, which comes into some perception, are we able to find a reason; never can we give the reason for any fundamental principle . . . .

Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter; and Advaita (unity) is the necessary conclusion with my other counterpart, soul.

Swami Jitatmananda comments in his article:

Thousands of years ago the Upanishads realized this fundamental truth—the entire universe is one, interconnected and interpenetrated by the ultimate reality which they termed Brahman. “That Reality, O Gargi, has interpenetrated the whole universe,” says the sage Yajnavalkya. And the ultimate nature of Brahman is eternal (and therefore all-pervading) existence, eternal (and therefore all-penetrating) knowledge, eternal (and therefore interpenetrating the entire universe, including the mind of man and his consciousness) bliss. The *Mundaka Upanishad* begins with the question of a student to his guru: “What is it, O adorable sir, which having been known, all this becomes known?” After a lengthy discourse the teacher concludes: “Know that ONE Atman which has interpenetrated the earth, the subtler world of thought, the cosmic heavens, the mind and the vital energies of all living beings. Give up all other vain talk. That is the way to Immortality.” The interrogation of *kasmin* (by what) is answered by the emphatic assertion of *yasmin* (by that) which is Brahman . . . . The right vision is to perceive the whole in the so-called isolated entity. This is what the Vedantist means by the statement “Brahman alone is real.” . . . Physically, mentally and spiritually reality is *whole*.

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# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

**T**HE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professed attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too long to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profound conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however constituted, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

*"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."*

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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