

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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### PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS OF KARMA

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KARMA is said to be one of the most difficult of the Theosophical teachings to understand, once we go beyond the simplicity of the statement: "That which ye sow, ye reap." Yet often we ourselves bar the way to understanding, because, under the test of events, we do not apply what we have intellectually perceived, and so fail to make practical application of the fact that "my own shall come back to me." It may, therefore, be of help to examine, in the light of this saying, certain typical reactions.

#### EXPECTING THE IMPOSSIBLE

Probably most people, at some time, have felt wrathful indignation (mingled, perhaps, with self-pity) at being asked or expected to do something that they couldn't possibly do—"No, quite impossible! Why on earth should people expect it? Why do they make such impracticable demands?"

Now if it were merely an error of judgment on the part of the person making the demand, and one knew that the thing *was* impracticable, then it would be a simple matter to say so, without fuss. If someone, not knowing you have never learnt French, asks you to translate something from that language, you do not normally get worried, but simply say, "Sorry, I never learnt French." But suppose you had acquired a smattering of it and given yourself airs, perhaps only in a daydream—one of those delightful phantasies in which, manipulating the flowing, plastic stuff of thought, you had moulded a flattering image of yourself as

receiving compliments on your grasp of the language, etc.; or suppose you had, at the back of your mind, such a high notion of yourself that your ignorance in this respect came as an unpleasant jolt; then how heated would be your feelings towards the inconsiderate demand that forced you to break the unconsciously cherished image of your day-dream, and to admit your incapacity!

The emotion affords an interesting clue and suggests two possibilities, in the light of the statement "My own shall come back to me." If what is expected of us is really not ours, we shall find it easy enough to say so without feeling. If there is feeling, it indicates a magnetic attraction or repulsion that links this "terrible task" with us. This may be owing to two things.

(1) Though the task may not be ours by virtue of *dharma* (natural duty) and development, we may have called it to us, made it ours illegitimately, so to say, because we have, at some time (it may even be in a past life) *played* with the idea of doing it. How many "play at being the Saviours of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting threatens them"!

We have thus created an image of phantasy, and that image serves as a magnet. The things we have "fancied" ourselves as doing (though now perhaps forgotten by the conscious mind) become a force and circle back, eventually, under Karma, to us, through the demand by others that we fulfil and carry out what we had originally "imagined." They will not know anything of the force that made them so demand, but it will be of our creation. And, since it arose from phantasy and has no basis in reality, we cannot accept the self-invited challenge and are obliged to avow our inadequacy, or, perhaps, more bitter still, we accept and fail completely. The emotional heat that is produced in either case comes from the forced disintegration of the cherished phantasy. If there were no false image to destroy there would be no heat.

The fact that few people examine themselves properly enough to be aware of the process is no argument against it. The tendency is to shut our eyes and throw the blame outwards on the person who expects from us actually only what we have visualized ourselves as doing. We always get what we desire. Thus we must have desired "the impossible task" some time or other. Instead of calling other people oppressive, unrealistic and unreasonable in their demands, we shall gain more if we acknowledge the Law of Karma, cast a humorous eye on the

“impossible” picture we made of ourselves, discard it, and get on with our work, determined to follow in future, as far as possible, the injunction: “First deserve, then desire.”

(2) The second possibility is again connected with phantasy. It may well be that “the impossible task” that has come to us is really part of our own *dharma*, by virtue of past achievements. What prevents us from recognizing it as our own is again a self-created phantasy that is the reverse side of the inflated attitude described above, and very often follows it. The swing of the pendulum from monstrous conceit to a humility that seems absurd to other people in its self-consciousness and in its demands for reassurance is quite a common phenomenon. Because we cannot achieve the impossible, we tend to go to the opposite extreme and fancy we can achieve nothing.

So it may well be that a task seems to us to be impossible because the phantasy of incapacity is clinging to us for dear life, and we are afraid to let it go. We have had to let go the phantasy of capability, and now if we kill its opposite it feels as though we shall be left as a mere nonentity, with nothing we can call “myself.” The conscious mind is not aware of this feeling, but honest self-examination will disclose it.

So other people, viewing the matter more objectively, may well recognize that we actually have the potentialities to cope with the task, or at least to make a good beginning with it. They expect it of us, because it is within our reach. But when their demand impinges on the negative phantasy in which we have encased ourselves, it is not emotional heat that is generated, but emotional cold that shrivels up and paralyses the will, thus drawing the imprisoning limitations we have imagined still more closely round us. Then the only thing to do is to warm ourselves by the faith other people have in us, call upon our Higher Self with whatever spark of will is still left unfrozen, and “TRY.” What do mistakes matter? “The only failure is ceasing to try.”

Actually, the criterion of success or failure has nothing to do with the task itself. One may fail in a particular task and yet succeed in acquiring powers for the future. Or one may meet with an immediate success, but develop nothing more than one had already. An intelligent teacher had a method of giving to pupils who found certain exercises too difficult the even more difficult exercises further on in the study book. The pupils inevitably failed in these, but, if the effort was made to do the best possible with them, then, on returning to the exercises originally too

difficult, it was found that these were now comparatively easy. We may, indeed, recognize sensibly that a piece of work is beyond our capacity, but a strong *feeling* in the refusal indicates some self-phantasy that needs to be dealt with, since it is obstructing our career of service.

### “TAKEN AWAY FROM ME”

How often, in factories, in businesses, or in professional organizations, one finds heartburnings, jealousies and recriminations, because someone has been passed over for promotion in favour of a younger, or newer, employee, or because a more dominant colleague is ousting the complainant from a task or a position that the latter feels to be particularly his (or her) own. The same thing is found in all groups, whether it be children in a family squabbling over some desired belonging, or members of a social circle, or voluntary charitable groups.

One often hears : “I’ve worked hard all these years, and now I’m just left on one side.” “That job is mine by right of seniority. Why do they bring that other fellow in?” “He wants to run the whole show. Why can't he keep to his job?” “I’ve offered to help, but they don’t leave anything for me to do.”

Yet here, again, when we apply the law “My own shall come back to me,” we find various interesting possibilities.

(1) The work or position of which we are dispossessed may really be one we should have outgrown, but all the conservative strength of the *skandhas* (our constituent aggregates) — with their tendency to reproduce the old attitudes of thought and feeling and the old habits of action — has pushed us down into the comfort of a familiar groove. This can give us no further stimulus to growth, and though the agent that throws us out of this rut may seem antagonistic, selfish and unjust, that agent is really our best friend. It is difficult to see it at the time, but countless are the cases of those who have proved that the barriers (whether physical disability, forbidding circumstances or human opposition) in the way of a particular desired goal often indicate far greater opportunities in a hitherto unsuspected direction, if we can seize them. Dame Fortune often approaches with frowning mien and with her gifts hidden. They are there for us, but if we refuse to look, still hankering after that which has been “taken away,” then we shall be like a poor earth-bound spirit which can neither go back nor move forward.

(2) The second possibility is once again connected with self-

phantasy. Are we *really* capable of dealing with the task or the possession we have woven our imaginings around? Have we any real idea of the responsibilities involved and the “tags” attached? Or have we only had a half view of the privileges and pride of possession? We may have been passed over, or shut out from the object of our desires, because we ourselves really do not provide the appropriate karmic setup for it. And woe betide us if, blinded by our inflated notions of self, we make illegitimate links of desire with that for which we are not ready, for they will bind us painfully in the future to the “impossible task.”

(3) There is yet another possibility. It may be that a particular line of work is part of our *dharma* and in it lies our natural course of development. Each one has a particular purpose to fulfil at any given time, in the great scheme of life.

Now it may well be, since men are free-willed beings, that another person does usurp a duty and a position that is naturally ours. But, since “my own shall come back to me,” that duty will, in time, return to us like a homing pigeon, *provided* we do not tangle up the magnetic currents of its return by resentment and resistance. These are sufficient, particularly if we air our grievances abroad, to confuse and block the way entirely, so that what was ours is ours no longer. Our angry thoughts and feelings connect it in our mind with the “usurper”; we no longer think of it as ours, and so we break the link (until we make further adjustments, perhaps lives ahead), and our natural line of growth is thereby hindered.

It may be a comparatively short time, if we keep the way open, or it may be longer, before that which is our own returns to us. But, when it does return, it will often be found to be disencumbered of some of its previous difficulties, and we ourselves will be better able to cope with it.

Incidentally, the opposite process may work. Duties which we try to avoid and to pass on to others may also come back to us again and again, till we outgrow them.

Making use of the experience of being “dispossessed” means cultivating patience (which is only the expression of reliance upon Law) and inhibiting the instinctive animal-human reactions. We are not dogs deprived of a bone, but human beings trying our best to *work with* the Law.

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## DEATH IS REGENERATION

ON the 10th of March this year falls the festival of Mahashivaratri—the Vigil Night of Shiva, the third person of the Hindu Trimurti or Trinity consisting of Brahma, the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; Shiva, the Destroyer-Regenerator. Shiva presides over the death and dissolution of the universe, through it creating anew the materials for Brahma to use once more. This mighty work of his is not quite understood and Shiva is dreaded by the common people who see in death the end of things; but there are no ends in Nature. Life is always a new beginning; a new birth starts at the moment of death.

Festivals such as that of Mahashivaratri are useful reminders of ancient truths and facts of soul-life. Through their observance the Wisdom-Tradition is handed down from one generation to another. Men and women nowadays do not understand the real meaning of such festivals, but when Ancient Culture becomes the subject of real study once more, these festivals will afford a key to Wisdom.

Mahashivaratri—the Great night of Shiva—symbolizes the period which starts a new cycle. It brings to birth, out of the dark new moon, the beautiful crescent which adorns the forehead of the Mighty One. In the Cosmos, it symbolizes the night of *Pralaya*, the period of obscuration or repose, during which Shiva labours to usher in the dawn of Manifestation—*Prabhava*. For the human kingdom, the day also symbolizes that post-mortem period during which the highest Soul in man, the Shiva within, fashions new powers, new faculties, a new body as a sheath of the Soul. In Ancient Psychology, this earth-life is designated as death; as one of the Upanishads puts it, “Man goes from death to death.” It is also said that when a god dies in Heaven, a child is born on Earth, which is called Hell. This is the same concept that in Christianity is known as the “Fall of the Angels.”

According to Occultism, ordinary men and women are dead units; they are not quickened into life. Shiva is called the Patron of all Yogis because Yogis endeavour to emerge from the kingdom of the “dead” into the Kingdom of the Quick, the Alive. *Dwijā*, a Twice-born, is one who is born not from the womb of flesh and matter, but from the womb of Thought and Spirit. This is a *universal* fact. The Bible speaks of the Second Birth as do the Upanishads and the *Gita* and as did the Dravidians even in the pre-Aryan days.

In the Gospel according to St. John, we are told about Nicodemus, a known and respected personage in Israel of those days. He was a good man and wanted to live the righteous life, but had misgivings about his own temple priests and their rites and ceremonies. As the story goes, he went to Jesus by night—this was *his* Mahashivaratri, for each soul in reality meets with his own Dark Night. The darkness of *avidya*, ignorance, surrounds us and each soul recognizes it one day as Nicodemus did. He came to Jesus in secrecy, seeking for light to dispel the darkness within him. Nicodemus must have believed in an outside God and wanted his vicarious help, and so he said to Jesus: “Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God, for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.” Jesus got the purport of what Nicodemus was trying to say and replied, “Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” This was a puzzle to Nicodemus. “How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter the second time into his mother’s womb, and be born?” Jesus explained, “That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit.” “How can these things be?” asks Nicodemus. With a compassionate sense of humour Jesus answers: “Art thou a master of Israel, and knowest not these things?” To how many Hindus, to how many Brahmanas who consider themselves high-caste people, cannot a similar question be asked today: “Art thou a master of *Varna Ashrama Dharma*, and knowest not these things?”

Let us understand this mystery of the Second Birth, the birth of the Soul from the womb of Spirit, for in that will come to each one—Theosophist or non-theosophist, Hindu or Muslim or Parsi or Jain or Christian or Jew—the message of Mahashivaratri.

Let us go back to the Upanishadic idea—when a god dies in heaven, a child is born on earth, which is hell. It means that here on earth is the Kingdom of Death, and in it and from it Birth must take place. At the birth of the body, the Soul gets involved in matter; it suffers from the dead weight of matter and must learn to throw it off. This weight is the cross of the Christians. The Soul must rise from the death on the cross. This is Resurrection, Initiation, *Diksha*, which marks the Second Birth, the birth of the *Dwija*, the Twice-born.

So, as souls we are dead, we are asleep, while the body and its senses live and thrive. Again and again through the gate of flesh we enter the world of sense to suffer through sense-enjoyments. “Our birth is but a

sleep and a forgetting." From death to death we come here. It is difficult for us to understand this idea, but we can apply the key of analogy.

Think of a foetus, an embryo, in the womb of its mother. Imagine that embryo to possess self-consciousness, as we grownups possess. That unborn infant cannot conceive what life after birth means. To it the embryonic life where it gains sustenance is real; it knows itself as alive, knows of the coming event of separation and death when its life of nine months will be over. It cannot possibly conceive what life after that death will be, because it has no data to go by. All human beings of this earth are like embryos in the womb of matter. We cannot conceive what the Second Birth will bring us to. We fear and we hesitate; we doubt and we question; and yet time, the great miracle-worker, will compel us to go through that experience of Second Birth. It is not death of the physical body that we need to contemplate, for death of the body is but a shadow and a reflection of the great mystery of the death of the Soul. We should look forward to the Birth of the Soul, the Second Birth, which is the death of Death itself.

"Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." It is the mission of Theosophy to bring the knowledge of this Second Birth to mortals. The festival of Mahashivaratri symbolizes that very message. It reminds us of the mighty Power of Regeneration, the Power which gives Life and Wisdom and Love. Shiva represents the Motion, the Harmony of Life itself. It is the regenerative aspect of Shiva which destroys but to bring new forms of Life into existence.

Shiva is portrayed as the dancing god, and in his dances lies concealed the mystery of the process of the Second Birth. The whole Universe is a mass of motion, a rhythmic dance, a stupendous Harmony. It is like a mighty spiritual symphony in three parts, each of which is portrayed in one of the dances of Shiva.

First, there is the Nadanta dance—Shiva as Nataraja—the dance which begins the soul-life. What a sorry degradation has overtaken the art of dance! The dances of today, in East and West alike, are worthy of the *Kali Yuga*; they are the dances of Kama, of passion. In his dance as Nataraja, Shiva is portrayed with four arms, symbolizing his universal presence. Entwined around his rich braided and bejewelled hair is the Serpent, the symbol of Silent Wisdom, the jewels representing the shining and priceless Knowledge. Each human soul possesses these, but

in us the Wisdom-Serpent has become the passion-serpent, and the Knowledge-Jewels but earthly jewels! To remind us that these will perish, Nataraja carries a skull, the symbol of earthly death. One right hand holds a drum—the soul's call to each one of us; the other right hand makes a gesture, a *mudra*, signifying “do not fear; be courageous.” The third hand holds fire, the consumer of all passions and lusts, and the fourth hand points to a human demon, *Muyalaka*, on whom Shiva stands, crushing it with his right foot, while raising his left, ascending heavenwards.

This mighty symbol has a message for us. We must recognize the devil in us and stand on it with a firm foot; and not just rest thus but aim to go upwards. The process is dual. Let us not just try to get rid of our vices, but also attempt to bring to birth soul-virtues. The drum of Time, with its regular beats, gives us the message of regular performance of soul-duties. Let the God within awaken us, and we must not forget to respond to the call. We must have courage, and we must have the Fire of Knowledge. Nataraja is an archetypal symbol, not a human personification. The symbol has also a cosmic message, but the human message should suffice for us—live the life day by day in joyous rhythm, crushing vice, developing virtue, fearlessly and wisely, always and ever remembering to fight the devil—our own lusts and passions.

Let us recapitulate the ethical meaning of this Dance of the Deity in man, which represents the stage to which all of us can come. Each one as a Soul is Shiva; all of us are dancing, but most of us are not dancing or living as we should. First and foremost we must look for and find the demon who is ruling our senses and flesh. Egotism—*Ahankara*—is that demon, and all our weaknesses and vices are its children. The message of the dance is that we should make a bundle of these weaknesses, and our whole life-activity, our entire effort, should be to put our foot down on them. Let us not live in fear of them, nor remain blind to them; but knowing our blemishes we should resolve to crush them. The symbol of Nataraja, the dancing Shiva, teaches us that we will not be able to do that unless we also endeavour to raise ourselves to spiritual heights. So, while with one foot we crush the lower, with the other we raise ourselves to supernal heights. This can be done by all—for Shiva exists in the hearts of all—and for this purpose we need the Fire of Knowledge. We must know how to subdue the devil and how to raise ourselves to the perfect freedom of Altruism. That, then is the message of the Nadanta Dance.

What will be the result? Our condition will change; we will die as ordinary men and women and will be born as wise Chelas. The Path to the Great Gurus, the Masters of Wisdom, lies through the soul-experience symbolized in the divine figure of Nataraja. When that soul-experience is ours, we shall find ourselves transformed into another aspect of Shiva, symbolized by the second Dance. Nataraja has become Bhairava or Virabhadra. It is the Dance performed in the cemetery, the burning ground. Shiva has now ten arms, symbols of the Ten Perfect Powers of the Chela when he becomes an Adept. He wears a necklace of skulls, symbolizing the memory of all earthly experiences. His head is crowned with matted hair, the symbol of strength, and in it crawl serpents, symbols of Wisdom. He dances again on one foot, in the burning ground, symbol of the voluntary incarnation of the Chela who chants the Tandava Hymn, made up of sounds, not words.

Each of us must recognize that this earth is like a cemetery where we come voluntarily and where the chant of Wisdom and the Dance of the Higher Life teach us mortals the truths of the Immortals. The symbol implies poverty, for, unlike Nataraja, Virabhadra wears no jewels and his body is smeared with ashes, for now Moyalaka the demon is dead and cremated and all that remains are his ashes, the lessons learned from the vices of many earth-lives.

This Tandava Dance has its own message. The burning-ground is this earth, the Hall of Ignorance. In it we see the light, we live and shall die. We mistake the fires of lust that burn in this Hall of Earth for the sunlight of life. How many of us mistake this world of death for something grand! It is not, says this symbol. Our lusts and passions and greeds bring us to this earth, which in Esoteric Philosophy is known as the greatest of all hells. Out of their Wisdom, their boundless compassion, the Great Gurus, Masters, come back to this sin-laden earth, and send out their Chelas for the service of humanity. And the Message that they bring to the race at large is full of profound, emancipating ideas. The work of the Chela is to play the drum and call all men, all women, of all races, to listen to its sound; regularly he must do it in and by life, dancing to the enchanting rhythm of the Higher Life. To many, all this might sound meaningless, but as we recognize the powerlessness of death and of hell, we understand the meaning of it all, and we are remade, we are as one newly born.

When passions die, when the devil in us is cremated, when poverty and dispassion become our garments, then alone we can dance the Soul-

Dance, the Tandava Dance. We have to learn not to be disturbed by the sorrow and suffering of the world, for only when undisturbed can we help that world and the great Orphan, Humanity. The Nataraja symbol represents the process of the embryonic life of the Soul, and the Second Birth is symbolized by the image of Shiva in the burning-ground. But life does not stop there; evolution proceeds, and out of the death of the personal self the Eternal Youth is born. Bala-Mahadeva, the child-form of Shiva, emerges from the Pillar of Fire, the Agni Lingam, in which lies hidden, invisible to all save his true devotees, the ever-young Mahadeva, the Child-Yogi. For those devotees, he dances in that glorious Fire, for them he comes out in his Body of Light, his Golden Robe, *Hiranyamaya Kaya*. Unless we become like little children we are not safe, "for of such is the kingdom of heaven," said Jesus; and as *The Voice of the Silence* says: "The pupil must regain *the child-state he has lost* ere the first sound can fall upon his ear."

Shiva as the Eternal Child dances in the heart of each. The heartbeats are like the sounds of Shiva's drum. Let us listen to our own soul's heartbeat, follow its rhythm with courage and perseverance, and we shall get, when our time comes, the vision of the great Child-God, the Patron of Yogis—Bala-Mahadeva.

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EACH one of us contains within himself the same possibilities as exist anywhere and everywhere in the universe. The lines that we have hitherto taken have brought us to whatever pass, conditions or surroundings that may obtain at the present time. But we might have gone another way and produced an altogether different environment. We ought to see that even now, however hampered we may be as the result of mistaken actions in the past, we have not lost and can never lose our power to set other and better causes in motion. The path toward all knowledge lies before us: "All nature lies before you —take what you can."

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## A REMINISCENCE

[Reprinted from *The Irish Theosophist*, February 15, 1895.]

ON Nov. 27th, 1888, there was a small gathering in a room at Charlemont Mall, Dublin, of a dozen earnest students of Theosophy. It was a memorable occasion, for although the Dublin Lodge of the Theosophical Society was chartered in April, 1886, its active public life may be said to have been really inaugurated on the Tuesday evening referred to. Among those present were two who had already laboured long in fields theosophic—William Q. Judge and Dr. Archibald Keightley. It may be interesting to recall the words then uttered, jotted down by one present. Their value remains undiminished, though the years roll past all too swiftly. Perhaps they may help some now as they helped others at the time. Mr. Judge said, in the course of his remarks:

“It had been the custom of many, both within and without the theosophical world, to suppose that the investigation of the psychic powers in man, and occult study generally, were the chief objects of the Society. These, indeed, were important, but not by any means the most so. The first and *vital* object of the Society was the establishment of the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. This had been thought to be a mere Utopian theory; very desirable, indeed, but wholly impracticable. He, however, had discovered—and it had been frequently asserted by the Masters—that we are really bound together by an invisible bond which could not be severed even by death.

“Of every being whom we meet in the street we perceive only the dense, or tangible part. This material body is surrounded by other portions of the real man, of which the aura was, perhaps, the least limited in principle. This aura extended to a greater distance than we could conceive. If a developed man wished to examine any distant object, it was by means of this subtle part of him that he would do so. Thus if we could realize that our auras were continually interpenetrating each other, it would become obvious in what manner we were really *one*, though focalized, as it were, in different centres. But our very bodies, even, were not altogether separated. For when we approached any ordinary person we could perceive the heat, and if of a sensitive nature, the magnetism of his body. Simultaneous sympathetic thought-action of different people in a room, or even at a great distance from each other, was another instance of this Oneness. He would ask us to enquire into this; and he

would refer us to the utterances of the Adepts in *Light on the Path*, which was dictated by one of them, for further examples. But the sooner we agreed, that we were not separated from each other, the better for humanity, for that was the true basis of Universal Brotherhood.

“The general tendency of our thought must, he considered, affect the arrangement of the atoms of our bodies. And, as with an individual, so with a society banded together for a common object, each member was like an atom in the body. Paul was very clear upon this point. Hence if one member of that society should *become dogmatic* or indifferent, it must necessarily affect every other member.

“The atoms of a man were affected by his surroundings. But if a man devoted himself to the highest line of thought every atom must tend in that direction. Now the Theosophical Society was founded in the year 1875. And in a period of fourteen years a change, for better or for worse, occurred in every individual. If a large number of Theosophists were now of the same opinions, were influenced by the same ideas, they would be capable of receiving from higher sources the truth for which they were seeking; they would be conscious of a wonderful awakening.

“The Theosophical Society, it should be remembered, was founded by the Masters, who were only men. How had they become more spiritual? Not by leaving home and friends; not by retiring into forest hermitages; but by believing in the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. What were they doing now? Enjoying themselves, as some people thought? They were working everywhere for humanity in the correction of evil and in the dissemination of good. As Theosophists we should concentrate our minds on the feeling of Universal Brotherhood. It was indeed a palpable truth that—Charity covers a multitude of sins.”

Dr. Keightley, in the course of his remarks, said:

“There was one point in the observations of Mr. Judge which he considered to be of paramount importance. Next year would complete one of those periods of which an analogy, in the body of the individual, had been shown. In what way could the activity of the Society be best directed? Many seemed to think that nothing was worthy of investigation but the psychic powers of man. The Universal Brotherhood was said to be a myth. But it was this point that the Masters had emphatically insisted upon, as being the essential object of the Society; and he was glad to see that the Dublin Lodge had recognized the fact by placing the notable quotation from *Lucifer* (November, 1887)—which was the utterance of

a Master—upon its walls. [‘He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist.’] It was necessary to remember that we should be absolutely united in the furtherance of such principles as were contained in that utterance.

“An attempt of this kind had been made in every century up to the present time. It was an attempt to deal with the increasing materialization of spiritual thought. It was a revolt *against dogma*.

“The various centuries, it was to be observed, had drawn to a close under similar circumstances. The end of the sixteenth century was marked by the Rosicrucians and Bruno. The end of the eighteenth by the French Revolution and the Reign of Terror. The true originator of that Revolution was the Comte de St. Germain. He was an adept. The real object of that movement was quiet reform; but, owing to the unruly passions of men, this object was lost sight of, and the movement ‘got out of hand.’ The moral was overcome by the physical revolution. Still it was by no means a failure, for it overturned the old *régime* in France, and its influence was felt throughout Europe. We had now, he considered, entered upon a new order of things. Those of us who possessed true altruism would have to fight the selfishness of the age. If we held fast the movement would be far-reaching. The task was not one, however, to be lightly entered upon. The theosophical movement was one which, affected itself by the past, was affecting a great number in the present, and would affect a much greater number in the future.”

Mr. Judge, during a few remarks at the close of the meeting, explained the method of study adopted in America.

Each Branch, he said, formed itself into sections for the purpose of studying a certain subject, such, for instance, as the *Bhagavad-Gita*. When the study was completed the sections compared notes, and produced, subsequently, a general statement of decisions upon which they could all agree. Without such a system as this the movement could not have solidarity. Moreover, it was the system adopted by groups of Chelas under the direct supervision of the Masters.

When he first heard of the Dublin Lodge he felt that it “rang” in his

ears. When one heard of some Branches (and he was glad to think that they were few) the sound seemed to fall dully. In this case he felt that it was real. He hoped that it would become a living power in Ireland. He knew of no European race that was more naturally occult, especially the western Irish.

In conclusion, he said that he would counsel the Lodge to aspire to the principles of the Masters.

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EVERYONE entering the [Theosophical] Society is supposed to sympathize with the theory of essential brotherhood; a kinship which exists on the plane of the higher self, not on that of the racial, social, and mental dissimilarities and antipathies. These elements of discord pertain to the physical man and are the result of unequal development under the law of evolution. We believe the human body to be but the shell, cover, or veil of the real entity; and those who accept the esoteric philosophy and the theory of "Karma" (the universal law of ethical causation) believe that the entity, as it travels around certain major and minor cycles of existence with the whole mass of human beings, takes on a different body at birth, and shells it off at death, under the operation of this Karmic law. Yet though it may thus clothe and reclothe itself a thousand times in a series of reincarnations, the entity is unchanged and unchangeable, being of a divine nature, superior to all environments on the earthly plane. It is the physical body only which has racial type, colour, sex, hatreds, ambitions, and loves. So then, when we postulate the idea of universal brotherhood, we wish it understood that it is held in no Utopian sense, though we do not dream of realizing it at once on the ordinary plane of social or national relations. Most assuredly, if this view of the kinship of all mankind could gain universal acceptance, the improved sense of moral responsibility it would engender would cause most social evils and international asperities to disappear; for a true altruism, instead of the present egotism, would be the rule the world over. So we have written down as the first of our declared objects this altruistic asseveration, and have been working practically to bring about a beginning of the better law.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## CALMING THE TEMPEST

IT is recorded in the Gospel according to Mark that when the ship on which Jesus lay sleeping was threatened by a great storm his followers awakened him,

And he arose, and rebuked the wind, and said unto the sea, Peace, be still. And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm....

And they...said one to another, What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him? (*Mark*, IV, 39, 41)

This calming of the tempest is called a miracle—a miracle only to those who can conceive the possibility of transgressing the eternal laws of nature. It proves to others, if the incident is correctly reported—and it is given also in another Gospel—that the Christian Teacher possessed a knowledge of those laws and the power which knowledge gives.

Such knowledge and such power are not yet ours, but each of us can calm the tempest that arises ever and anon within ourselves. Do not our anxious and rebellious thoughts, our selfish, turbulent emotions and desires, sometimes rise to tempest strength, to threaten us with nervous, if not mental, shipwreck, or with loss of discrimination from which comes “loss of all”?

The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away...spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, II, 67)

“He that can compose himself,” said Benjamin Franklin, “is wiser than he that composes books.” If we find ourselves tossing at the mercy of agitated thoughts, tempestuous passions, should we not realize the need to calm ourselves and recall and use words of power to quell the turbulence within: “Peace, be still”?

Only with thoughts and emotions quieted can we hear the still, small voice of our spiritual consciousness, hear too the cry which the inner tumult silences, that of the sad world's woe. Then, seeing for what they are and in their due proportions our petty grievances, resentment, even spite perhaps, we can rise above them, calmed and comforted though shamed in retrospect, remembering how we let a small cloud overspread our sky until it hid the sun. Well has Mr. Judge written:

The great struggle must be to open up my outer self, that my

higher being may shine through, for I know that in my heart the God sits patient, and that his pure rays are merely veiled from me by the many strivings and illusions that I bring on outwardly. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, pp. 90-1)

If we find within us the power to quell the inner tempest when it rises—and we can prove we possess it the next time a mood of wounded pride or dark suspicion or an impulse to take revenge blows up an inner storm—can we not also try to spread around us an atmosphere of calm, peace and good will? The disturbance may be a local one, the state of tension one to which we may have contributed if only by withholding from another or from others true philosophic love, the living brotherliness which should evoke a response in kind. Come what may, no sincere aspirant can afford to neglect Mr. Judge's warning, "*Cast no one out of your heart.*"

We should also remember always that when we meet irritation with irritation we are lending aid and comfort to the enemies of our great Movement, doing those enemies' work for them. And let us not forget that the hands that smite us are our own. If we have a grievance, then let us ignore it and forget it as fast as we can, meanwhile resisting the temptation to fan the fire and spread it by seeking the salve of others' sympathy for our own wounded self-esteem. We are warned in "Musings on the True Theosophist's Path":

Do your sighing and crying within you. If you cannot receive the small events of life and their meanings without crying them out to all the world, think you that you are fitted to be trusted with the mysteries? (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 4)

Burying each offence against ourselves in peace, neither retaliating provocation nor provoking retaliation but "rendering for offence nothing but grace and good"—that is the true spirit of *Satyagraha*, making its appeal, if our own attitude is right, to the better nature of another. Even if the response is slow in coming or is not manifest to outward seeming, shall we conclude that it has no effect? In practising it we shall have poured the oil of patience upon troubled waters.

When we find ourselves thinking harshly about others, it may help us to remember the reply of President Lincoln during the Civil War in the U.S.A. to a critic who objected to his speaking kindly about the Confederates, his enemies, when he should rather destroy them. He

exclaimed, "What, Madam, do I not destroy them when I make them my friends?" It is not enemies but enmity that has to be destroyed, and by each in himself first of all.

It is helpful also to remember under provocation that Karmic reactions are in terms of the "*actual consequences*" of our actions, as we are told by Madame Blavatsky (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 204-5). The Karma of a wrong action, this appears to imply, will be proportionate to the suffering it causes, or the Karmic consequences of a good one, proportionate to the happiness and harmony which our action may have helped to bring about. If, therefore, refusing to nurse a grievance or even to feel "hurt," we let the wrongful acts or words of another fall on us—as far as our emotional reaction is concerned—as harmlessly as sparks upon a rock, shall we not thereby be protecting our brother from a worse reaction than he might otherwise receive?

"Blessed are the peacemakers," it was said in the Sermon on the Mount. Who are the true peacemakers? Not only or chiefly those who may offer their good offices as go-betweens to find a basis of agreement between conflicting parties, though these do have their place in tangled world affairs. Is not he a true peacemaker who has established peace in himself and radiates it, however obscure and unknown he is, in a harassed and troubled world? Does not such an individual, patient and modest, harmonious in thought, calm in action, quiet in speech, fill his current with influences potent for healing enmities and encouraging good will?

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IF there is righteousness in the heart, there will be beauty in the character. If there be beauty in the character, there will be harmony in the home. If there be harmony in the home, there will be order in the nation. When there is order in the nation, there will be peace in the world.

—*Tao Te King*

## ON WHAT SHALL WE PIN OUR FAITH?

WHAT is faith? Is it belief in something or someone? If so, can there be anyone absolutely without faith? The scientist has faith in his capacity to discover the laws of Nature, otherwise he would rest content with his knowledge and not be urged ever forward to gather more. The gangster has faith in his power to get away with his misdeeds. The ordinary man has faith in his survival. Everyone, without exception, has faith in those laws of Nature which have already been discovered and by means of which he carries on his life. But he does not think of this as faith.

It is when we speak of faith in the religious or philosophical sense that the difficulty arises, for we deal here with things that cannot be proved by the accepted method of proof, namely, by the senses. Nor can we argue about it except in terms of feelings, thoughts and ideas, or mental abstractions. We have the testimonies of philosophers, religionists and mystics, but in this age of scientific materialism they are not accepted.

Yet it is in this very age of scientific materialism that it is necessary to revive religious and philosophic faith. What is needed to bring about this revolution in thought is a different approach.

Religious faith and philosophic faith are almost dead because they have proved insufficient to withstand the growing scientific knowledge. As this is an age of science which deals with "facts" and draws conclusions from them, philosophic and religious faith have to be dealt with scientifically. What is capable of proof must be proved. It is also necessary to remember that the true scientist admits that only the outer fringe of matter has been pierced by modern science. There is, therefore, an unknown field which the scientist has yet to investigate. If beyond the proven facts of religious and philosophic faith the unknown field yet to be investigated were recognized, a great step forward would be taken.

The second great step is to recognize that scientists are trained persons in their own field. There have been great scientists like Newton and Einstein, as well as ordinary scientists. So in the realm of religion and philosophy there have been great philosophers, mystics and teachers, such as Christ, Buddha, Pythagoras, Plato and so on. These men have so far transcended others in their understanding of

life that they cannot be brushed aside. They must be accepted as scientists of the moral and mental universe.

As one versed in material science finds out the laws of matter and shows ordinary men how to use them, so the mental and spiritual scientists have found out the laws of the mental and moral universe and show men how to use them.

Just as the ordinary man can prove for himself the truth of many of the laws discovered by physical science, so can he prove for himself the truth of many of the laws discovered by the mental and moral scientists. The methods of proof differ, as the one deals in the main with what can be seen, felt, heard, and so on, on the material plane; the other with ideas, realized in the mind or the heart and seen in their outward effect on life. The latter deal with the unseen part of Nature and of man.

Man, living in the material universe and reacting to it, needs the help of the scientist, the religionist and the philosopher. The scientist searches for and knows the laws of matter; the philosopher searches for and learns the laws of conduct of the unseen universe; and the religionist keeps alive the flame of devotion to the real source and inspiration of life. The philosopher, with his faith in the unseen while living in the seen, gains a right appreciation of the seen. The scientist, if he has no faith in the unseen, loses the right appreciation of the seen. The religionist fails in his religion if he ignores the scientist; for, instead of living the true philosophy, he lives wrongly and hopes to escape the results by prayer. He understands neither the seen nor the unseen. Science, philosophy and religion are incomplete in themselves. Only a synthesis of all three can satisfy the whole human being.

What is life? We cannot see the life in a plant, for instance, but we know the difference between a living plant and one that is dead. We can see the effects of the life working in the plant, and we can know its nature and the laws of its growth. But we cannot see that which works in the seed and causes the growth and development from seed to plant and so on. Nor can we know from whence the first seed came. We cannot see the life that makes a body live. It enters the body and leaves it, and we cannot measure it or dissect it. Yet it is obvious that something besides the stopping of the physical mechanism takes place when the body dies. We cannot see love, admiration, hatred, sacrifice; we can only see their effects. We cannot see faith;

we can only see its effects. In fact what we cannot see is much more than what we can see.

The ancients worshipped the sun, or the life in the sun, or the being who used the sun as his eye, a being so great that all that men did could be seen and recorded by him. The barbarian worshipped the mysterious power of the totem-pole. The true Christian worships the God of the "burning bush," around whose pavilion is darkness, *i.e.*, pure light which, there being no material particles to reflect it, appears as darkness. But in time the power behind the Sun was degraded to the sun we see, which is worshipped today in the cult of sun-bathing! The God of the "burning bush" and darkness has become degraded to the level of a personal god sitting on a throne in heaven, or of the thundering Jehovah who urged his chosen to fight and steal the lands of others and demanded the crucifixion of his own son that he might be appeased. The God who is Spirit, and must be worshipped as such, has become degraded out of recognition. The Father of whom Jesus spoke has been lost in the "eye for an eye" doctrine which flourishes today.

The degradation of the God idea reached its greatest depth in the period of the Inquisition—unless it could be said that in this present century it has reached a greater depth in the Roman Catholic teaching that God so loved the Virgin Mary in her physical body that he had her transported bodily to heaven so that she could be near him!

It was to free the mind of man from the thralldom of the dead letter of religion that science awoke and proved so much of it to be false. How could the world be merely 5,000 years old when geological research showed its age to be billions of years? More and more facts of thousands of years ago are coming to light, and the immaterial basis of matter is being recognized gradually, so that scientists will be forced to acknowledge the "unknown" behind the furthest limits of their calculations.

It is time that the mind of man freed itself from the thralldom of science and said to the scientists: "You freed us from hell fire and brought freedom of thought to us, but the price has been nuclear weapons. What is wrong with your approach to knowledge? Is it that you have ignored the moral world? The life behind the forms? If so can you not alter your approach?"

The scientist needs the message of Carlyle and of Shakespeare, to

take two examples. Carlyle spoke of God in the spider's web. Shakespeare said that there is a special providence even in the fall of a sparrow. The lilies of the field are part of God's care. The love of God and the love of one's own brother are expressions of a moral approach to life. Science must make it clear that God is no person, no autocrat, no creator of something from nothing, but the Power through which all things are renovated and destroyed, by the action of every atom of life which is God. Surely today man realizes that he can destroy most of humanity and other forms of life on this globe, but even the greatest scientist admits that not *all* life will be destroyed! Man is trying to create life in ways not planned by Nature, but he can only create forms in which life can manifest; life itself he does not understand and cannot create. The ordinary man should now awake and ask: "Whither science?"

It is to be hoped that the swing of the pendulum will not take man back to the old idea which placed God beyond natural laws. Instead, he must learn to accept the laws of Nature and to watch with joy the unveiling of the mysteries of life. It does not lower the God idea to see the magnificence of the workings of the Divine Life in Nature, to see the earth as His footstool, Nature as His raiment, man as His son, a divine spark, for whom the earth is a school where he learns how to let the light of Spirit shine through his character and the matter of his body. We do not want to see the negation of life beyond the grave change back into the theological hell and heaven. More, we do not want to see the idea of man's responsibility for his actions and the idea of a moral law in the universe turn again into the theological conception of forgiveness of sins, penances and privileges bought for money!

The need today is for philosophy, for it gives us the laws of conduct in detail and the methods by which we can reach higher and higher in our understanding of the Godhead and go deeper and deeper into the knowledge of Nature and of man. The philosopher is the scientist of the unseen, and he uses his understanding to prove to himself whether the knowledge given out by the great Philosophers of all ages is true or not. Emerson, for example, was a practical philosopher, a scientific analyzer of things unseen. The poets glimpse a world back of the known one, and their words strike root in our hearts and bring beauty into life. But, unless they are practising

philosophers also, they do not help us to apply the knowledge.

Material science teaches us to "eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die." Philosophic science teaches the practical application of the moral law that "as we sow, so shall we reap"; that "each man's life the outcome of his former living is"; that "bygone right breeds bliss"; that "the robber steals to render"; that a king "may wander earth in rags for things done and undone," and so on. Nothing but the application of the teaching of reincarnation, rebirths on earth in accordance with actions in the past, will help man today. He also needs the vision of perfection, which is the goal of human life. He has to follow either science, or the blind faith of the religionist, or the true teachings of all great Teachers of humanity. Each of these teachings he can prove for himself. What cannot be taken away from him is his responsibility for his actions, feelings and thoughts. Hidden as this responsibility seems to be—just as life itself is hidden—it cannot be shirked or left out of account. Man is the pivot of the workings of law. Law cannot be changed; it can be used, but it remains constant. Law, natural law, is not the decree of a lawgiver; it is the relationship of atom to atom, thing to thing. Man can consciously use it; he can wield it, but he cannot alter it.

On what, then, can man pin his faith today? On law—material, moral and spiritual. The wise man seeks the knowledge of this law. He puts his faith either in material science, or in religion, or in philosophy, or in a combination of all three. Should men say, "We do not know if there is any after-life or rebirth," one can answer, "You do not know if there is not. You take the word either of the materialist, or of the religionist, or of the philosopher. If you take one or the other you will live by one or the other, whether you know it or not." Material science, materialized religion and materialized philosophy have no vision. Seek that vision in Beauty, Truth, Wisdom, for "where there is no vision, the people perish."

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COURAGE consists not in hazarding without fear, but being resolutely minded in a just cause.

—PLUTARCH

## TRUSTING THE LAW

HOW shall we transfer the teaching of Karma—cause and effect—from the realm of mind to that of assimilated knowledge in our whole being? Theory is one thing; practice, another. When the two go hand in hand we get the third: assimilation or realization.

Emerson in his essay on “Compensation” states that “all infractions of love and equity in our social relations are speedily punished. They are punished by fear.” He also tells us:

Men suffer all their life long, under the foolish superstition that they can be cheated. But it is as impossible for a man to be cheated by any one but himself, as for a thing to be and not be at the same time.

He makes a graphic statement: “Men call the circumstance the retribution.”

It would appear, therefore, that the first thing we need to realize is that we can never be cheated save by ourselves. In Theosophical parlance, we must trust the Law. If in any circumstance we do feel cheated, by other people or by life itself, then we deny that the universe is governed by Law. We deny that “every act rewards itself.” If we can see that action and reaction make one whole, much of the feeling that we did not deserve the effects we have received would die out.

It is difficult for us, at our stage, to get entirely rid of the idea that bad or painful circumstances are a punishment, often unjust. The result is only one side of an action; we may have no knowledge of the other side, the causal side, which has brought the result. The Good Law “knows not wrath nor pardon.” Seeming punishment is just “a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of the pleasure which concealed it.” The time element between cause and effect is not important.

Cause and effect, means and ends, seed and fruit, cannot be severed; for the effect already blossoms in the cause, the end pre-exists in the means, the fruit in the seed.

Why should this be? Because “a perfect equity adjusts its balance in all parts of life....What we call retribution is the universal necessity by which the whole appears whenever a part appears.” No one rewards us; no one punishes us. “Every act rewards itself.”

This is the logical, reasoned approach to the problem of compensation. Without it we fall a prey to fear because we know that we have done

wrong and we instinctively know that we will get the fruit of the act in time. We are filled with fear only when we do wrong, when, as Emerson says, we infract the law of love in our social relationships. It is interesting to note what he goes on to say, that the punishment we get for such infractions is fear of the consequences.

As soon as there is any departure from simplicity and attempt at halfness, or good for me that is not good for him, my neighbour feels the wrong; he shrinks from me as far as I have shrunk from him; his eyes no longer seek mine; there is war between us; there is hate in him and fear in me.

The only possible way of achieving freedom from fear is to love all men and all circumstances, to act rightly all the time, to accept what comes as what we deserved and even desired, to remember that the Law never lets us down, but that each trouble offers us the opportunity for growth. “Our strength grows out of our weakness....Blame is safer than praise,” Emerson tells us, because we sit still when life seems good to us; we exert ourselves and overcome our weaknesses when life is hard. “In general, every evil to which we do not succumb is a benefactor.”

Conditions may sometimes seem very hard; we may have to serve an ungrateful master. If so, writes Emerson,

serve him the more. Put God in your debt. Every stroke shall be repaid. The longer the payment is withholden, the better for you; for compound interest on compound interest is the rate and usage of this exchequer.

“Fear,” says *The Voice of the Silence*, “kills the will and stays all action.” Why should we fear? Let us rather learn that “no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes...for rigid Justice rules the World.”

What else shall we put in the place of fear? Love, right action. We should bear in mind what may seem to some a rather terrible thought, that not only our friend but also our enemy is chained to us in this life because of our former actions. “Act thou for them ‘today’”—and that includes even the criminal and the enemy, for we have a responsibility towards them. In this way liberation from fear, from the erosive thought that others can cheat us, can be achieved. And only when we are “liberated” can we act for them truly.

So long as we are attached to any circumstance we cannot render help.

Love is the liberator. That is why Jesus gave us the two commandments: to love God with all our heart and mind, and to love our neighbour as though he were our very self. We must learn to love everyone and all circumstances before we can truly gain from them. Only then can we become integrated beings. Body (action), feeling (motive) and mind-soul (knowledge)—the integration of all three produces Compassion-Bliss-Wisdom.

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WHAT we most need is such a theosophical education as will give us the ability to expound Theosophy in a way to be understood by the ordinary person. This practical, clear exposition is entirely possible. That it is of the highest importance there can be no doubt whatever. It relates to and affects ethics, everyday life, every thought, and consequently every act. The most learned, astute, and successful church, the Roman Catholic, proceeds on this basis. Should we refrain from a good practice because a bigot takes the same method? The priests of Rome do not explain, nor attempt to explain or expound, the highly metaphysical and obscure, though important, basis of their various doctrines. They touch the people in their daily life, a knowledge of their own system in all details enabling them to put deep doctrine into every man's language, although the learning of the preacher may be temporarily concealed. With them the appeal is to fear; with us it is to reason and experience. So we have a natural advantage which ought not to be overlooked.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## THE DIVINE PROTOTYPE

From the first-born the thread between the Silent Watcher and his Shadow becomes more strong and radiant with every change. The morning sun-light has changed into noon-day glory.

—*The Book of Dzyan*

COMMENTING on this Sloka 6 in Stanza VII of the account of "Cosmic Evolution" in *The Book of Dzyan*, on which Part I of Volume I of *The Secret Doctrine* is based, Madame Blavatsky explains that "the first-born" means here "*primitive, or the first man*" and that by "every change" is to be understood every "*reincarnation.*"

The Third Fundamental Proposition of the Secret Doctrine throws light upon the "Silent Watcher" in referring to

the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—a spark of the former—through the Cycle of Incarnation (or "Necessity") in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term. (*S.D.*, I, 17)

The same paragraph refers to the acquiring of individuality by the purely spiritual Buddhi (divine soul), which, in order to have an independent (conscious) existence, has to pass through a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations. For Buddhi, although the vehicle of Atman, from which it gets its light of Wisdom, is unconscious on this plane, "*unless the divine Duad is assimilated by, and reflected in, some consciousness.*" (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 133)

Cosmic Ideation focussed...through...*Manas*...wells up as Mind-Consciousness; through the more finely differentiated fabric...of the *Buddhi* resting on the experience of *Manas* as its basis—as a stream of spiritual INTUITION. (*S.D.* I, 329 fn.)

To bring that spiritual intuition, or intuitive omniscience of the Spiritual divine Soul—Buddhi—to bear steadily upon our lives demands achieving an inseparable union of Buddhi and *Manas*. It is only the combination of the two that becomes the "Spiritual *divine* Ego."

To return more specifically to our opening quotation, we are told in the commentary of H.P.B. that the "Watcher," or the divine

prototype, whose "Shadows" are as many as the reincarnations for the Monad,

is at the upper rung of the ladder of being; the shadow, at the lower. Withal, the *Monad* of every living being, unless his moral turpitude breaks the connection and runs loose and "astray into the lunar path"—to use the Occult expression—is *an individual Dhyan Chohan, distinct from others, a kind of spiritual individuality of its own*, during one special Manvantara. (*S.D.*, I, 265)

She makes it clear that, although "its *Primary*, the Spirit (Atman) is one, of course, with *Paramatma* (the one Universal Spirit)...the vehicle it is enshrined in, the *Buddhi*, is part and parcel of that Dhyan-Chohanic Essence."

H.P.B. calls the first sentence of the opening quotation a "psychological mystery," the explanation of which, she indicates, is to be found in Volume II. A relevant statement in a note on p. 632 of that volume, having pointed out the precise correspondence between *Manas* and *Seb*, the Egyptian fifth principle (the "ancestral Soul"), continues: "...that portion of *Manas*, which follows the two higher principles, is the ancestral soul, indeed, *the bright immortal thread of the higher Ego* [italics ours] to which clings the Spiritual aroma of all the lives or births."

Further light is thrown in *The Theosophical Glossary* on this "bright immortal thread," or "Sutratman," which is defined as, literally, "the thread of spirit, the immortal Ego, the Individuality which incarnates in men one life after the other, and upon which are strung, like beads on a string, his countless Personalities."

Its synonym, "Pranatman," she describes as "the eternal germ-thread" on which, like beads, the Ego's personal lives are strung.

In *The Secret Doctrine* we are told that "*Buddhi*" becomes conscious by the accretions it gets from *Manas* after every new incarnation and the death of man." (I, 244)

Hence, whether the "thread" is strengthened much or little by any given incarnation will naturally depend in no small measure on how much of the harvest of that particular life is assimilable by the Soul. And this in turn will be partly in terms of the stage of development and the knowledge and sense of responsibility of the incarnated consciousness. Its ability to free itself from the desires and the passions and to open itself to guidance from within, and its submission

to such direction when received, all play their part in determining an incarnation's real success, its credit balance, so to say.

How different the world would be if all men's actions were guided by the Spiritual Soul in each we cannot at this stage of evolution even dream. But we can form a very clear idea of how different our own lives would be, as well as other lives that closely touch our own, if we sincerely, humbly and devotedly attempted to bring all our thoughts and feelings, words and deeds, exactly into line with the best insight that is ours today and the high ethics of Theosophy! And we have the assurance that

the closer the approach to one's *Prototype*, "in Heaven," the better for the mortal whose personality was chosen, by his own *personal* deity (the seventh principle), as its terrestrial abode. For, with every effort of will toward purification and unity with that "Self-god," one of the lower rays breaks and the spiritual entity of man is drawn higher and ever higher to the ray that supersedes the first, until, from ray to ray, the inner man is drawn into the one and highest beam of the Parent-SUN. (*S.D.*, I, 638-9)

We have not touched upon the closing sentence of our quotation from *The Book of Dzyan*. What is "the noon-day glory" into which "the morning sun-light" will have changed when the goal of all our striving shall have been reached? What, indeed, but "that golden light in which the Victor bathes," from the deep unfathomable vortex of which light,

ALL NATURE'S wordless voice in thousand tones ariseth to proclaim:

JOY UNTO YE, O MEN OF MYALBA.

A PILGRIM HATH RETURNED BACK "FROM THE OTHER SHORE."

A NEW ARHAN IS BORN.

*PEACE TO ALL BEINGS.*

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THROW moderation to the winds, and the greatest pleasures bring the greatest pains.

—DEMOCRITUS

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Can a Society that is entirely science-based satisfy the needs of man? Bryan Appleyard is among those who believe that it cannot. Such a society, he observes in *New Perspectives Quarterly*, though full of rationality and discovery, fails to shed any light on the “reason to live,” and therefore cannot work. Values and virtues are outside the scope of science. There has therefore to be a “post-scientific society,” an “extra-scientific framework of meaning.” There are, he admits, many reasons for deriving satisfaction from the new developments and more mature attitudes in science—quantum physics, for instance—yet, he stresses, “something must come before science.” Ultimately we must define ourselves in non-scientific terms:

Science is not an innocent commodity which can be employed as a convenience by people wishing to partake only of the West's material power. Rather it is spiritually corrosive, burning away ancient authority and traditions. Science, which pretends to be all-knowing, cannot coexist with alternative belief systems. It insists upon a universally open-ended view of the world that rejects any absolute convictions and embraces only the permanent possibility of change and progress.

A spiritual mood of cool, flaccid neutrality thus characterizes science-based liberal societies. Unable to hold to any stable conviction or positive virtue, tolerance becomes apathy....

Science inspired a vision of the universe, of the world of man that was utterly opposed to all preceding versions. Most importantly, it denied man the possibility of finding an ultimate meaning and purpose for his life within the facts of the world. If there were such things as meanings and purposes, they must exist outside the universe describable by science.

This precipitates a philosophical crisis, first defined by Descartes. This crisis was one of knowledge. In a cold, meaningless universe, how did man know anything, science included? More urgently, the success of science also precipitated a religious crisis....

In our century, however, science has been subject to new doubts. Its more malign creations like the atom bomb have made people doubt its value and question its virtue. In environmentalism the progressive values of the society that science created have been rejected and replaced by a new code of benign coexistence with Nature....

But science is mobile. Its very nature is constant flux and change. One generation's certainty is quite likely to be overthrown by the next....Nevertheless, the project of hard science continues and still dominates our culture. Progressively, science is becoming the culture of the entire world, now even taking upon itself the task of unravelling and altering the workings of life and death of the human self.

Whether such a development is morally good or bad cannot be decided within science. That is the point. Science and the liberal societies rooted in the scientific method are simply inadequate for coping with the soul of man, which requires explanations and guides for living they cannot offer....

Science is still dominant and our liberal societies are still scientific in their approach. But we are clearly in a decadent phase, and, I think, a terminal one. The decadence arises from the obvious failure of liberalism to transmit any value other than bland tolerance. It cannot defend itself and it cannot celebrate itself. Education is in permanent crisis because neither pupils nor teachers have any faith in what is to be taught. Teenagers have been taught to value only plurality and tolerance and, as a result, think it is a virtue not to make up their minds about anything....

For these reasons all attempts at a liberal definition of values and virtue have failed. How could plurality and tolerance alone provide a basis for concepts like "justice" or "the good"?

For ourselves we can begin to define our lives in the terms in which we do anyway when left to our own non-scientific devices. We can have irreducible affections, values and convictions. And the most fundamental of these need not be defended further because they will express only our kinship with our culture and that kinship will be beyond appeal.

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"After all, we don't really know very much about the facts of life." This might sound like a particularly odd comment coming at a gathering of eminent scientists, doctors and intellectuals, including four Nobel Prize winners; nevertheless it was received with an almost unanimous nodding of heads. It provides a good indication of the complexity of the issue of genetic manipulation or engineering that they had gathered together to discuss. Genetic engineering is tinkering with the genome, or genetic map that is said to determine the characteristics of each of us,

and that lies at the centre of every cell.

The meeting, held over September 15 and 16, was the first session of the International Bioethics Committee, established by UNESCO in a bid to cut a clear path through the still largely unknown terrain of the human genome and its impact on society. The Committee's task is to promote discussion and the diffusion of information on the ethical questions arising from developments in genetic research on a global level, and in the longer term, to prepare an international convention on the protection of the human genome.

*Unesco Sources* (October 1993) outlines what emerged at the Committee's first session:

The international study of the human genome with which UNESCO is co-operating, has led to the identification of the genes responsible for a range of illnesses, such as Hemophilia, Cistic fibrosis and Thalassemia. It has provoked research into the genetic origins of certain types of cancers and their possible cure through the use of gene therapy. But it has also opened the door to a myriad of "doubtful hypotheses," according to Committee Chairperson Noelle Lenoir of the French Constitutional Court, linking, for example, alcoholism or even criminal violence, to our genetic make-up.

The knowledge at our fingertips has fabulous potential for humanity, but it could also prove to be an ethical pandora's box.

We may be tempted, for example, to reduce people to the sum of their genes," warns Dr. John Fleming, Director of the Southern Cross Bioethics Institute in South Australia, "and then divide them up into the good guys and the bad guys—those with good genes and those with bad genes."...

Dr. Fleming tells of a recent debate that flared in Australia when the idea that homosexuality may be gene-linked hit the headlines. "The question was seriously raised as to whether embryos with such genes should be aborted!" A problem has already arisen in India with the amniocentesis procedure, a standard prenatal genetic screening that reveals abnormalities in the foetus. It also allows mothers to know the sex of their baby. "A disturbing number of women in India are aborting female embryos because boys are far more valued in Indian society than girls," explains writer and poet Anees Jung, "to the point where authorities have now begun outlawing abortions on the basis of the embryo's sex."

"And this is just the start," says Dr. Fleming. "What about embryos, for example, that show an inherited predisposition to a

lower I.Q. or some characteristic that we think is unacceptable? Who will decide, and on what basis, those characteristics that are better or worse?

The issue of eugenics, or selective breeding, is as old as Plato.... While it has known periods of popular support, and has even been written into the legislation of various countries at times, recent surveys indicate a certain reticence to what is perceived as "playing God." In Japan, for example, 74 percent of the population thought such manipulation "unacceptable" in a 1991 survey carried out by Darryl Macer from the Institute of Biological Sciences in Ibaraki. A 1987 survey in the United States, carried out by the Office of Technology Assessment, found that 46 percent of the population agreed with the statement that "we have no business meddling with nature."

While the idea of abortion based on sex was generally abhorred by those surveyed, the same people said that they would support specific applications of genetic engineering—*e.g.*, its use in locating and switching off harmful genes in order to decrease the incidence of diseases in which genetic predisposition plays a role. However, genetic manipulation has such alarming potentialities that even some distinguished scientists are of the view that tampering with life at its most fundamental physical level is likely to cause more suffering than any success could offset. The all-important question is not whether a thing *can* be done, but whether it *should* be done.

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Traditional criminal laws can punish deliberate actions to harm persons or property, but take no count of the environmental offence. But things are now changing with homage being paid to "green values." In many countries there is a move to introduce environmental laws and to make crimes against nature punishable. Pollution is such a crime, for a polluter has violated the rights and the sanctity of the largest living organism on earth—the environment.

Professor Upendra Baxi's essay, "On Creating Eco-Laws," in the July-September issue of *WWF India Quarterly* (Newsletter of the World Wide Fund for Nature - India) makes the point that "in the final analysis, the struggle to protect the environment is a struggle to enhance democracy and extend the rule of law."

In a post-Rio world, one thing is clear. Governments may not

remain proudly insensitive, in their pursuit of "development" projects, to mounting environmental destruction and degradation. They cannot callously disregard the well-being of project-affected peoples. Sensitivity is growing, albeit modestly, among some Indian politicians and bureaucrats, towards the rights of environment as well as of human beings affected by purely economic and technocratic conceptions of "development."

A wider diffusion of this sensitivity among ecocrats (policy-makers who make decisions affecting environment and living beings) is the prime challenge before those who would innovate state policies in the direction of public accountability. Such a task requires partnership among people in struggle, activists, ideologues and scientists committed to protection of environment and human rights.

Today, law is searching for a new definition. There is a need to evolve wholly new models for environmental legislation based on the notion of law as a programme of social action at micro level. This entails people's participation and co-operation.

Finally, we need to lay the foundations for environmental jurisprudence in India, building on nascent activist trends, whether in legislation, adjudication, administration or struggle. But it is hard to ignore certain vexing philosophical questions. For instance, whether environmental entities have rights. Does the Ganges have a right against pollution? Or do the Himalayan ranges against the Tehri Dam? Does the Taj Mahal have a right against oil refineries? Do flora and fauna have rights against species-extinction?

The challenge is manifold. A construction of environmental jurisprudence would require us to profoundly revise not just our world views generally, but our moral and political theory. Our pluralism notions will have to be enhanced by an inclusive concern with rights of nature. Our models of law as social technology will have to be radically transformed. And we will have to learn that "environment" is a metaphor for the foundations of a just political and legal order.

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That feelings are an essential part of one's being and do really shape the way we look at life and at others seems to be dawning on executives in the sphere of business and industry. The belief that home is where feelings have a place and that work is a worldly, physical activity where feelings have no place is no longer tenable, observes Sudhir Vaishnav, himself the Chief Executive of a business establishment.

Writing in *The Times of India* for December 4, the author tries to clear the misconception bordering on dogma that it would be harmful for a business organization if work and issues even remotely concerned with feelings were allowed to mix:

Let us understand one thing clearly. Sensitiveness for feelings is not sentimentality, and certainly, sentimentality is not "feelings." To equate sensitivity, consciousness of others' feelings, with sentimentality is like equating a human rights activist with a street politician. The two are far apart in their purpose. One is a worker of conscience and the other works for his pocket; for one the issue is a matter of principle and for the other it is an opportunity for personal aggrandizement....

Feelingness, being sensitive to feelings, being conscious of others' feelings, is like playing tennis, being conscious of every action and reaction. Being totally work-oriented, to the exclusion of feelings, is being like a carriage-horse with blinkers on, pulling a tonga....

Why is open acknowledgement of feelings essential in the work environment?

"Man is a social animal" is a very relevant cliché here. Everyone wants recognition, encouragement, wants to be understood, wants to share his/her joys and griefs with someone who understands. To believe, or worse still, to pretend that one is beyond these "human needs" and that one does not care about receiving or giving these "strokes" is deceiving one's own self....

We are not computers that we can switch on and off various software as the situation demands; the "work" software in the office and the "party" software in the party and the "home" software in the home. We carry our reactions to events within us. The more honestly we acknowledge these covert pulls and pushes, the easier it will be to handle the overt.

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The study of laughter and humour, long neglected by psychologists, is now coming into its own. With laughter in one's life, avers K. V. Patel, India's sole practising "laughologist," it is possible to have "a happy, healthy, harmonious existence in the midst of 20th-century angst." Forty years of research and personal experience have made him something of an authority on the subject of *Hasya Yoga*. Apart from the psychological benefits of a cheerful acceptance of the human condition, says Patel,

laughter has a relatively unexplored fund of therapeutic benefits, for “it is a detoxicant.” The world of medicine is inclined to think so too, as brought out in Farah Baria’s article in *The Sunday Observer* (Bombay):

“Laughology is indeed a persuasive doctrine,” concedes naturopath Dr. Meherwan Bhamgara, “and so popular in the United States that many hospitals are hiring professional clowns and humourists to entertain their patients back to health!” Dr. I. J. Dagli, an obstetric anaesthetist, agrees, attributing the miracles of mirth to the exhaustively researched mind-body connection.

“Negative emotions are known to have negative effects on the body,” says Dr. Dagli, “so it should follow that positive ones have positive effects. ‘Laughter the best medicine’ is no longer a cliché, it is an acknowledged fact.”...

How does it happen? Studies have found that laughter has a galvanizing effect on the cardiovascular system: The chest and the abdomen expand, increasing the inflow of oxygen into the lungs. Heart rate, breathing and circulation are speeded up to produce what Norman Cousins facetiously referred to as ‘internal jogging.’ When the spasm of laughter subsides, the pulse rate drops below normal and the skeletal muscles become deeply relaxed.

There is also evidence to show that laughter stimulates the release of endorphins—natural painkillers that reside in the human brain—serving as a safe and effective analgesic. “Moreover, it seems to have a strengthening effect on the body’s defence mechanisms,” says Dr. Dagli. “I am convinced that people who laugh more are less likely to fall prey to illness.”... He noticed that patients undergoing chemotherapy for ovarian cancer were less likely to suffer from side-effects if they watched a funny movie before the session; vomiting, gastric attacks and hair loss were significantly reduced.

But the wonders of mirth are not restricted to the sickroom; laughter is now being advocated as the newest antidote to stress.

Laughter is said to be a safety-valve for disagreeable emotions. It can help one to shed one’s aggression, ambitions, inhibitions, illusions, delusions, obsessions and compulsions. It clears the selfish minds and feelings of men and women of their mists; it opens, for a while, a pathway to higher perspectives.

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