

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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### ON CULTIVATING DISCERNMENT

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There must be in us a power of discernment, the cultivation of which will enable us to know whatever is desired to be known. That there is such a power is affirmed by teachers of occultism, and the way to acquire it is by cultivating concentration.

— W. Q. JUDGE

RTAIN rediscovered, or half-discovered, secrets of *Hatha Yoga* have given rise to many cults devoted to the attainment of one or another personal object through "concentration." There is indeed tremendous power in practising the art of concentration. Concentration of the right sort will lead one towards becoming a Buddha or a Christ; concentration of the wrong sort may result in one's becoming a medium or a black magician.

It would be profitable to ask ourselves what the discernment spoken of by Mr. Judge, in the passage quoted above, is, by the acquisition of which, through concentration, all knowledge comes ours, and in which part of our being it resides. If it were the power of the lower man, *i.e.*, of the man who lives and thrives on acquisitiveness, it should develop in all, for all practise concentration, consciously or unconsciously. We know it does not. The concentration of a businessman, for instance, selfish motive commonly plays a part while ethics may be ignored. Primary, therefore, is the question of motive. If the motive is to achieve

"health, wealth and happiness" for oneself personally, it is tainted with selfishness and detracts to that extent from the power of concentration. But if it is to fit oneself to be the better able to help and teach others, it requires the development of such control of thought, body and speech as will enable one best to perform all tasks, including the small, plain duties of life. It requires, because of the effect upon others as well as upon our own powers and clearness of perception, keeping out of the mind the things that should not be there, holding in the mind the things that should be there.

Obviously, then, the discernment which Mr. Judge refers to is not the fruit of ordinary concentration and must therefore pertain to some aspect higher than the acquisitive mind. Discernment results from the radiation of Buddhi-Manas in and through the lower mind. When the latter is turned without, it cannot profit by that radiation. It is when our normal thinking consciousness turns inwards that it hears the whisperings of Buddhi-Manas.

Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

As the perfume of a flower cannot be described to one who has no sense of smell, so the radiance of Buddhi remains but a name to him whose feelings and thoughts are wholly personal.

A Master has written that Wisdom springs up naturally within us when we lead the necessary life. This is the clean life which alone can open the mind to the wisdom from on high, while that mind is eagerly pursuing spiritual knowledge. Janaka, the philosopher-king of Mithila, exemplified that the spiritual life may be a life of active service in the world of affairs and requires no monastery or hermit's hut. The chief concern of one who leads the spiritual life is but to fulfil the duties of his calling. He has naught to do with the self-centred activities of the man of flesh, the man who craves possessions. The sense of personal possession was extinguished to such an extent in King Janaka that when he was told that his capital was on fire he is said to have exclaimed: "Even

if Mithila is burnt to ashes nothing that is mine is destroyed." He to whom gold and stone are the same is called in the *Gita* a man of spiritual discernment. The real strength and power of true discernment come from taking and maintaining the position of the One Self and evaluating all things from the point of view of that Self.

Real discernment depends upon depth of knowledge, accumulated experience and consciousness of the divine nature of man. It is a power that comes from within and manifests as an unveiled spiritual perception, the vision of the Soul. Our daily life is the best field for the exercise of the true power of discernment. The mission of Theosophy is to point the way to every prisoner-soul to the state of freedom and light, and the first glimpse of it manifests as spiritual discernment in the affairs of life and an ever deeper compassion for the Great Orphan, Humanity.

The wise injunction, "When in doubt abstain," is a most succinct presentation of the Law of Necessity as the proper criterion of discriminative action. The many side-roads that lead away from the Path of Necessity are set with pitfalls. In regard to action, the question "Why?" is always fundamental. Only after it is satisfactorily answered should arise the subsidiary interrogatives, "What?", "Where?", "When?", and "How?"

Our progress in unfolding discernment is in proportion to our effort in subduing the carnal man. It is recorded that when Alexander, miscalled "the Great," put to Aristotle the question, "Master, how can I reform the whole world?" he was answered, "Alexander, reform thyself." That is a line of action the necessity for which is easily demonstrable and which is always in order. Example is more potent than precept and every self-regenerated individual becomes a centre of spiritual action from whom and from whose own daily life radiate the higher spiritual forces which alone can regenerate his fellow men.

To discern, in the real sense of the word, the state of consciousness must be one of calmness. The ruffled surface of a lake even of crystal-clear waters reflects but broken images. The radiance of Buddhi-Manas falls on the brain-consciousness that is both pure

and calm.

In the *Bhagavad-Gita* the discerning power is equated with *Buddhi*, direct cognition, the highest intellection, the power of judgment. Its various degrees of activity flow from attraction to one or other of the three qualities found in nature, and are described as follows:

The discerning power that knows how to begin and to renounce, what should and what should not be done, what is to be feared and what not, what holds fast and what sets the soul free, is of the *sattva* quality. That discernment, O son of Pritha, which does not fully know what ought to be done and what not, what should be feared and what not, is of the passion-born *rajas* quality. That discriminating power which is enveloped in obscurity, mistaking wrong for right and all things contrary to their true intent and meaning, is of the dark quality of *tamas*. (XVIII, 30-32)

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WHATEVER else may be thought of Theosophy and its Movement, time has at least proved that it is not the ephemeron which the American and foreign press called it upon its first appearance. It seems to have come to occupy a permanent place in modern thought....The Theosophical Movement was a necessity of the age, and it has spread under its own inherent impulsion, and owes nothing to adventitious methods. It appealed to certain human instincts and aspirations, and held up a certain lofty ideal of perfectibility, with which the vested extraneous interests of society conflicted, and against which these were foredoomed to battle. Its strongest allies were the human yearnings for light upon the problem of life, and for a nobler conception of the origin, destiny, and potentialities of the human being. While materialism and secularism were bent upon destroying not only theology and sectarian dogmatism, but even the religious conception of a diviner Self, Theosophy has aimed at uniting all broad religious people for research into the actual basis of religion and scientific proofs of the existence and permanence of the higher Self.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE GREAT DEATH

### THE MESSAGE OF MAHASHIVARATRI

ON March 4, all the *yogis* and worshippers of Shiva will celebrate the great festival known as the Vigil Night of Shiva. Much superstition, and more than superstition, a good deal of corruption, prevails in reference to this concept of the God Shiva, generally known as the third personage of the Hindu *Trimurti* or Trinity. Superstition and ignorance have carnalized the pure ideal of that power in Nature which is regenerative. As Rudra, the God of Destruction, Shiva is dreaded. On the other hand, as creator and regenerator he is often identified by anthropologists and Western orientalists with crude and degrading phallicism. Sex has nothing whatever to do with the original pure concept of Shiva. H. P. Blavatsky has written that "the Lingam and Yoni of Shiva-worship stand too high philosophically, its modern degeneration notwithstanding" (*S.D.*, II, 588). There are many aspects, cosmic and human, spiritual and psychological, of the symbol or idea that Shiva or Mahadeva represents, but it is as false as it is blasphemous to assign to it any sex-relation. There is sufficient evidence for the discerning mind to see that only the bias of a missionary or the materialism of an orientalist can read into this grand concept such debasing things. It is most unfortunate therefore that some modern Hindus have given their support directly or indirectly to this false view. One of the Theosophical Mahatmas once wrote:

... the adept sees and feels and lives in the very source of all fundamental truths—the Universal Spiritual Essence of Nature. SHIVA the Creator, the Destroyer, and the Regenerator. As Spiritualists of today have degraded "Spirit," so have the Hindus degraded Nature by their anthropomorphic conceptions of it. Nature alone can incarnate the Spirit of limitless contemplation. "Absorbed in the absolute self-unconsciousness of *physical Self*, plunged in the depths of true Being, which is no being but eternal, universal Life, his whole form as immovable and white as the eternal summits of snow in Kailasa where he sits, above care, above sorrow, above sin and worldliness, a mendicant, a

sage, a healer, the King of Kings, the Yogi of Yogis," such is the ideal Shiva of *Yoga Shastras*, the culmination of *Spiritual Wisdom*.

The title of this article, "The Great Death," does not refer to the ordinary death of the body. The Great Death is that death which precedes the Second Birth. In the ordinary death of the body, the death of our lower, personal nature does not take place. Unless one changes radically from within, mere death of the physical body means little. Our lives lived in a humdrum way, without true self-energization, bring us back in our next birth to conditions more or less similar to this life. Our attitude to life and life's problems remains more or less the same. "We are our own *Pitris*; we are our own progeny," says an occult maxim. Men and women live their lives and go through their experiences, but most of the time they do not learn lessons from those experiences. And so it is in reference to the greatest lesson of life. The greatest of all lessons the human soul has to learn is this—dying the Great Death, the soul enters the World of Immortality. The one purpose, one aim and object of the evolutionary process in our human kingdom is to pass through this grandest of experiences—to die so that we may begin to live, to give up life and self so that we may know what Universal Life means, what the Great Self implies.

The life-process in the human kingdom is a complete circle, half of which is *Pravritti Marga*, the Path of Forthgoing, and the second half is *Nivritti Marga*, the Path of Return. The Path of Forthgoing is also known as the descent of the soul into matter, or as the fall of man; the human soul falls into matter, gravitates towards the Earth, reaches the lowest point; and then follows the process of returning Home, during which the soul extricates itself, sublimates itself, levitates itself to the spiritual regions.

Both *Pravritti* and *Nivritti* take up innumerable lives or incarnations. Life after life, incarnation after incarnation, through birth and death, the human soul continues its process of involution in matter or *Prakriti*. Then a balance is reached; and then the soul evolves out of matter, becomes spiritual. The *Purusha* by self-effort flowers into *Purushottama*, the Superior Man; *Atma* becomes

*Mahatma*; *Jiva* becomes *Jivanmukta*, one who has become emancipated. Man falls in ignorance and rises in knowledge; he falls because he is a slave to Nature; and when he rises it is as a triumphant Master of Nature.

Applying that teaching to ourselves, where do we stand? Are we on the *Pravritti Marga*, or are we on the second half, *Nivritti Marga*? Are our desires, attractions, for the things of this world? Is our mind devising and contriving plans of worldly success? Is our heart set on personal affections, and is it tied by love of wife or husband, children or home? If our answers, and they must be honest answers, are in the affirmative, then we know that we are still on the Path of Forthgoing. But if we have a longing to be free from these, if we aspire to sublimate our desires, to purify our mind, to enlighten our heart, then we have reached the balanced position, *i.e.*, we are between two stages, we are in the transition period. Most of us who seek spiritual knowledge and soul-peace, are in this transition stage of balance. There are only a few who have sufficiently conquered senses and brain, feelings and passions, mind and heart, and have thus already transferred themselves to the Path of Return, and are on their journey Homeward.

We shall not discuss the modes and methods of right life leading to progress on the Path of Forthgoing. But one thing must be said—it does not mean that people who are in that stage must be sinful or have to give way to weaknesses; it does not mean that they have to be materialistic, or atheistic, and so forth. There is adequate instruction and appropriate guidance for them too, and by honest and clean living they can make themselves ready for the next stage. Suffering purifies and makes for evolution. And in this we see one more explanation of the existence of pain, anguish and suffering for masses of humanity. Theosophy explains how to use suffering—not only how to accept it, but how to learn from it.

And so human beings enter the transition stage; they are at the crossroads. Conflict of duties, intense struggle, corroding doubt, on the one hand, and intense longing for soul-life on the other, is their lot. It is this stage in which most of us are; and it is this stage we must now study.

There are several kinds of death; most people are familiar with only one kind—death of the body. But just as there are minor and major changes continuously taking place in the body, and then there is the actual death of the body, so also there are numerous changes taking place in our human personal consciousness, not only during one lifetime but through many incarnations; and then comes the death of the personality. With the death of the personality, a new life begins for the immortal soul of man. This may loosely be called the Great Death, though really that title should be reserved for a still more mystical and mysterious death that takes place for the Adept in the great cremation ground of the Universe. But let us stick to our own stage of evolution. Those of us who are learning here and trying to practise the teachings of Theosophy are preparing ourselves for the death of the personality. That cannot be done on the Path of Forthgoing or *Pravritti Marga*; that death of the personality takes place during the middle stage of transition and balance.

Beginning at the point where most of us are, we are aware that we have a personality, a mask, in and through which our prejudices and passions manifest themselves. Through one cause or another, mostly through suffering, we recognize that the human personality must be fought, defeated, killed past resurrection. Simultaneously we recognize that none else can achieve that purpose for us; we ourselves by an inner resolve, by our own efforts, can enter that battlefield and kill the passion-self, or *Ahamkara*, the proud-self. Two factors should be noted; we must recognize that the personality has to be killed and that none else save ourselves can accomplish that task. This immediately leads to the birth of a new attitude, to a change of life. All the outer forms of life undergo a change of value and day by day we begin to live differently. This is the end of *Pravritti Marga*. The definite resolve to kill the personality and the sincere attempts daily made to achieve that purpose put the soul out of the Path of Forthgoing, and now its feet are set on the battleground that leads to *Nivritti Marga*, the Path of Return.

The moment the battlefield is entered, the soldier-soul must possess the knowledge of the art of warfare. Not possessing

knowledge, or more often, proudly fancying that they do possess it, many perish, *i. e.*, fail on the battlefield and hurl themselves back on the Path of Forthgoing. What saves is knowledge about the Great Gurus, those who can teach. If many perish without this knowledge, an equal number fall because they accept false gurus and their misleading knowledge. The sublime truth about Gurus and Guruparampara, the chain of Gurus, is lost today. The heterodox laugh at the idea, the orthodox misunderstand it; only a few have grasped the doctrine about the Immortal Gurus. We can live our lives with the help of kith and kin on the Path of Forthgoing; but when we begin to extricate ourselves from this very bondage we will end in failure and loneliness if we do not establish ourselves by the right method. Therefore in Theosophy we speak of the existence of Gurus, invisible to the eyes of flesh, but the openers of the Eye of Shiva. The true Gurus are known by several names, and among them is *Vidyadhara*, the Holder of Knowledge. They are all servants of Shiva, the Great Guru. Arjuna who stands on the middle ground between *Pravritti* and *Nivritti* has a Guru, Krishna; hence his success.

So, it is with the aid of the knowledge given by the Guru to whose bidding the life has to be consecrated, that the death of the personality occurs. On the Path of Forthgoing we have many teachers—parents at home, tutors at school, professors at college, friends and advisers in life. They all help us or spoil us; nourish us or overfeed us, like fond but foolish mothers. But all such are of no use when the soul faces itself and faces the world, to fight its snares and delusions. Then we need another kind of teacher, and he must be *Vidyadhara*, a Holder of Knowledge. In Hindu philosophy all *Vidyadharas* are servants of Shiva, because all true Gurus of Soul-Science serve the Maha Guru, the Guru of all Gurus. He is Maha-Yogi, the Patron-Saint of all yogis. Shiva-Rudra-Mahadeva represents the Head of all Gurus; he is the Archetypal Guru. When the true understanding about *Pravritti* and *Nivritti Margas* disappeared, there arose the conflict between the worshippers of Vishnu and of Shiva. For those who understand the truth, there is no conflict. On the battleground of the soul, which is neither

*Pravritti* nor *Nivritti*, both are worshipped. In the *Mahabharata*, Krishna—Vishnu incarnate—is reported to have worshipped Mahadeva for a whole cycle. Here is a mystery and it has several meanings. The *Gita* is the great scripture, not for the Path of Forthgoing, and those who have passed on to the Path of Return read the *Gita* with a new key; but as it is, it is the scripture for us who are establishing the soul on its own ground.

It is the worship of Shiva, the Great Guru, the head of all true Gurus, which brings about the final death of the personality. Day corresponds to *Pravritti*, but the night to *Nivritti*. At night we sleep, seeking and keeping the company of the soul; during the day we are immersed in personal affairs. Those who live the soul-life seek and keep the company of the soul day and night, and the festival of *Shivaratri*, the Night of Shiva, means that very thing. All of us who are fighting to kill the personality with the help of the Mysterious Knowledge imparted by the Silent Guru are in that cycle or period which *Shivaratri*, the Night of Shiva, represents. Unless we have knowledge, our night is going to be overcast with the darkness of ignorance; but when the Guru is sought and found, another aspect of the night is seen—its mysterious depth and silence. Esoteric Knowledge imparted by the true Guru-Gnyani is both deep and mysterious.

Shiva is also called Pashupati—the Shepherd, the Lord of the Flock. All souls attempting to learn the esoteric truths are tended by Shiva. Madame Blavatsky says that Shiva is the God of Wisdom and the most intellectual of the Hindu gods. She also explains the mystery of how Shiva, by the fire of his Third Eye, reduces *Kama* to ashes, *i.e.*, to its primordial condition of *Kama-deva*, pure Compassion. The Egyptians knew Shiva under the name of Phtah—"he who opens," the opener of death which is life. When we resolve to give battle to our personality with the aid of the knowledge the Guru offers to us graciously, we so to speak invite the Lord of the Gurus to test and try us—this is Shiva in his capacity as *Pashupati*, the Lord of the Flock.

Shiva radiates the Fire of his Third Eye on to our words and deeds; that Fire shows him what we are; also that Fire consumes our

lower nature, in a longer or shorter period, according to our own choice and perseverance. That is why Shiva is called *Kalagni*—*Agni-Fire of Kala* or Time. Only when our passions are dead and our personality crushed by *Kalagni* are we able to glimpse the source of that Fire—Shiva's Third Eye, and we are able to see that source because we ourselves have opened the Third Eye in us. It is not the eye of the clairvoyant who sees the invisible, but the eye of intuition which understands the visible and the invisible alike.

If we could but master the fact that all of us are preparing ourselves for the death of the personality, and that in that glorious task help and guidance are available, we would have acquired a pearl of great price. If this year on *Mahashivaratri* a few among us truly resolve to give battle to our personality, to seek the power of Shiva within us, how happy would we be!

Shiva is said to reside in the cemetery of life. He has certain gifts to offer, but not of this world. He has something that cannot be found anywhere else—the Silence which speaks, Age which ever remains young, Death which gives Eternal Life. He is the storehouse of Wisdom and Power, of Peace and Compassion. These are his gifts. And one more—the supremest of all gifts—it is he who keeps alive the School of all schools, called in the Upanishads *Mahashala*, the Great Lodge, the Mighty Brotherhood of Great Ones. From him proceed rank by rank, file by file, all Gurus, all Teachers. *Yugas* and *Kalpas* come and go, races of men and kingdoms of Nature perish, but Shiva, the Immortal Youth, ever lives, and with him his *Vidyadharas*, the Custodians of his Wisdom. What greater gift, what better boon, what mightier magic do we need!

On us lies the first duty to wash clean the dirt and dust that have been heaped on this ideal, and in that task we will attract to us his power to heal. And with his aid we will restore the true worship of Wisdom. Between him and us stand like the full moon the Mahatmas, the true Gurus. May the effort of their Great Lodge descend upon us all and bring to us the dawn of a new cycle.

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The highest yoga is the control of the mind.

—*Srimad Bhagavatam*

## THE KINGSHIP OF THE SOUL

THE "Inner Ruler" is an expression every tyro in Theosophy is familiar with, yet the practical value of the teaching on this subject is often missed out. All students of Theosophy recognize the value of the spiritual life. They admit that there must be laws, rules, regulations, whereby the spiritual life should and could be lived. But very few have taken the trouble to find out those laws from a careful study of our books. Fewer still have taken the trouble to apply those teachings and find out for themselves how far they are true. If they begin to accept the teachings because they are given in a particular book, they are not any different from other people who accept other teachings because they are in their particular books. There is little difference between an orthodox religionist who accepts a tenet because it is in his scriptural texts and an orthodox Theosophist who accepts it because it is in a Theosophical text.

The central teaching of the philosophy of Theosophy is that man is a soul. This must be looked into because everybody believes, if not that man *is* a soul, at least that he *has* a soul. It is a word that is used in different senses by different people. As in many other instances, we talk a lot about the soul without knowing what it is. People discuss it without trying to apply the teaching on it, and thus miss the inwardness of the great truths.

People regard the soul from different points of view. To certain people it means some kind of a vague, distant influence, subjective, spasmodic in its manifestation and activity and dependent on the moods of the person. Another view is that it is an entity that enables us to carry on self-consciously the processes of feeling, thinking, willing. By the religiously inclined it is thought to be of the nature of a mist that God has created by his wonderful miraculous power. What this vaporous thing is, whether it is an entity or something else, is not looked into, for God and his mysteries are not thought to be proper subjects of inquiry. Many are the curious ideas that prevail in relation to the soul. Some think that they have contacted their soul when they have only contacted their emotions. We must, therefore, get a clear concept of what the soul is, for unless we look

into the matter we shall get into a very muddled state of mind.

The main characteristic of the soul is its activity as a ruler over a kingdom of its own, an inner kingdom. This definition would satisfy various types of minds, various classes of people, whose notions on this subject are hazy. There is an Inner Ruler in each being. But the expression of the Inner Ruler in the mineral kingdom is of a totally different kind from its expression in the vegetable or the animal or the human kingdom. Not only that, but it shines forth differently also in different units of the human kingdom.

There are certain characteristics or qualities of life or consciousness or force or vitality, by whatever name we call it, that express themselves in the various kingdoms. Thus, in the mineral kingdom, the power of the life principle is the power of cohesion. In the vegetable kingdom, the life principle, in addition to cohesion, has developed sensation and growth, and the animal kingdom has the further power of instinct. In the human kingdom, we find a new faculty added, the reasoning faculty. So also with the consciousness. In the human kingdom we have self-consciousness, which is the result of the reasoning faculty. Reasoning implies that we see the relationship between one object and another object, or one set of objects and another set of objects. And that implies self-consciousness, for we cannot compare one thing with another unless we compare our own experiences with the experiences of other people in relation to those things.

Each human soul has its own individual qualities. The artist, the philosopher, the religious man, the scientist, the ordinary man, have each their own conception of soul. The experiences which the artist gets in reference to what he calls the soul are similar in nature and character to the experiences that the philosopher gets, the mathematician gets, the religious devotee gets, the man in the street gets. The nature of those experiences is expansion and happiness. That thing which widens our horizon and brings happiness is to us soul.

We must get this idea clearly established. When we speak of the individual soul, or the collective soul of a people or of a nation, we are using the same word for what mean to us different things. What

we have to do first is to differentiate between the real soul and all those entities, complexes, etc., that pass off as souls. The ruling quality inherent in us, once we make sure that it is the ruling quality, would bring to us the vision of the true soul distinguished from the not-true souls.

All are ruled by this inner entity. We *are* that inner entity who rules, but all do not recognize themselves as rulers. A kingdom has to have a king who rules. The character and behaviour of the king within are speculated upon, but it does not mean that we have experienced kingship. As long as we think that we are ruled by something instead of recognizing that we *are* the rulers, the real soul has not been touched. When the kingship of the king within is recognized, there will result an inner expansion producing happiness.

Most of us are not able to widen our horizon and produce happiness at will. We are creatures of environment, circumstances, moods, of what people think or say of us; we are governed by a thousand things that come from the outside, save the one thing that moves from within. Instead of thinking of ourselves as rulers, we, in the final analysis, regard ourselves as subjects. There is something that lies behind each experience we go through. We have not finally touched it. The best of creators, artistic, philosophic, scientific, or any other, often says, "I could have done better, but I did not know how." He has not touched the kingship of the soul, but he recognizes that there is something yet to be gained. In each of us the ruling quality works, determines our own evolution.

In each of us we find that there are certain things which pertain to the subject kingdom and others which pertain to the ruler. Applying it to our own lives, we find that there are certain things in which we are guided by ourselves. No law, no book, no teacher outside of us can affect them. For instance, in some places people are compelled by the law to give up alcoholic drinks. They would start drinking if the law was abolished. But there are others who would not drink even if they could; they did not drink when the law did not exist. They are guided by the ruling quality instead of by the subject quality.

The whole evolution of the soul, of the ruling principle, consists

in assuming the position of the ruler from the inner point of view, so that outer man-made laws and constitutions do not touch us. In matters of politics, sociology, religion, etc., so long as outside injunctions affect and touch us, we are in the subject kingdom and not in the kingdom of the soul. We come into the kingdom of the soul when nothing from outside touches us.

If we could do that, joy and happiness would be ours all the time. That is the characteristic of the Inner Ruler. He rules according to his own innermost nature and the laws which he has evolved from within, unhindered by outside laws, rules, constitutions. Theosophy teaches that it is possible for us to come to that point, to the realization of someone in us who is not only not affected by outside things, but affects all things, because he is the maker of laws, being the ruler.

This realization changes our attitude towards all things. It brings about a change, not in outside things, but in the inner world. No one stands in our way save ourselves. It is *we* who prohibit ourselves from becoming free. People in general have not understood that very simple proposition. It is often said that the spiritual life is the simple life. So it is, and its simplicity lies in the recognition of the fact that we make our own limitations in our kingdom and in our life. We have to find out what are the limitations that lie in our way at the present moment and that prohibit the ruler from assuming his own self-conscious responsibility over his subjects, and what has produced them.

In this age, constituted as we are at the present moment, that which disturbs us, that which produces limitations, binds us and enslaves us, is our lower mind. Time was in earlier ages when the limitations in our way arose from other parts of our being. At the present moment, in the present race, our limitations arise from our mind processes. There is a great deal of talk going on at the present moment of reconstructing the world. What needs reconstructing is not the world but our mental processes; and that is the function of the Inner Ruler.

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## UNDERSTANDING LIFE

ALL the great Teachers down the ages have taught man about life, what it is and how to live it, and the ways by which the goal of human evolution can be reached and man can become like one of Them. Time and again They have shown man how to unveil Life's mysteries and have indicated the means to break the binding fetters and become free physically, mentally and morally. The meaning and message of Life are wrapped up in the figure of a meditating Buddha or of a flute-playing Krishna. The first, equipoised in body and mind, points to the way of union with the Divine Life; the second, to the joyous, rhythmic expression of that Divine. All Life is a Song, a Dance, a majestic Drama, a *Leela* where different forms of Life exhibit their various powers; the forms continue to change, but the Essence of Life ever remains the same. Perfected Beings, Embodiments of Light and Law and Love Divine, having reached the summit of the Path to the glorious Light Nirvanic, stand as Pillars of Peace, inspiring and encouraging the tottering footsteps of mortal pilgrims to scale Their Immortal heights. Having conquered Nature and Nature's forces through Self-Knowledge, They hold Life and Death in Their strong hands. They come out from Their snowy heights to this world of ignorance and illusion, age after age and cycle after cycle, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness.

What is Life? How many can answer this question correctly? To most, it is the humdrum existence lived from day to day, from the cradle to the grave, and no more! Now enjoying, now suffering, some through starvation, others through self-indulgence, they care not to inquire into the whence and the why of Life. Hard-worked labourers and wealthy millionaires equally succumb to their fate. One of the best definitions of Life is given by Sri Krishna in the Seventh Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

There is none superior to me, O conqueror of wealth, and all things hang on me as precious gems upon a string. I am the taste in water, O son of Kunti, the light in the sun and moon, the mystic syllable OM in all the *Vedas*, sound in space, the

masculine essence in men, the sweet smell in the earth, and the brightness in the fire. In all creatures I am the life, and the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the spirit. Know me, O son of Pritha, as the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the wisdom of the wise and the strength of the strong. And I am the power of the strong who in action are free from desire and longing; in all creatures I am desire regulated by moral fitness.

Who thinks of Life according to Sri Krishna's profound instruction? Sun and moon, water and earth, sound and light, are the common things of Life—too cheaply obtained to give a thought to, much less to meditate upon! And yet Life is the eternal seed of all creatures, to which nothing is superior. This at once establishes its immortality and permanency in contradistinction to its ever changing expressions, which are tied to it as gems upon a string. How many remember the sanctity of life when tramping the earth or drinking water? How many show their gratitude for the light and the warmth of the sun, or for the silvery radiance of the moon? And how many look upon the fire with a true reverential attitude?

So much for the visible manifestations of Life. What about the inner, invisible planes? From the One Life is derived the power of concentration in those whose minds are on the Spirit. People complain about the wandering mind, the dull and barren mind, the ugly and evil mind. If control of the mind is desired, then it becomes necessary to place it constantly on the Spirit. Focusing the mind on that one centre, its direction and quality are changed. It then absorbs the wisdom of the wise and the strength of the strong. Tonics and vitamins are all hidden in that Life to make one strong. The ancient lore can be revived through true devotion to the One Life. Desire regulated by moral fitness is an essential quality of that Life. Just as low and impure desires degrade an individual, so also, when regulated from the moral point of view, they can uplift him. They are the motor force in man which has to be used rightly. It is the desire nature that pushes one forward and onward.

Thus, understanding different forms of Life, different kingdoms of nature, one is able to put oneself in attunement and harmony with the all-pervasive essence of Life. Then Life becomes a song of joy

and its meaning is gradually unveiled. "Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one on her creators and make obeisance." This is one of the means to understand Nature and put oneself in tune with its Divine ways and Divine Laws. Madame Blavatsky writes in *Isis Unveiled*:

The Rosicrucian theory, that the whole universe is a musical instrument, is the Pythagorean doctrine of the music of the spheres. Sounds and colours are all spiritual numerals; as the seven prismatic rays proceed from one spot in heaven, so the seven powers of nature, each of them a number, are the seven radiations of the Unity, the central, Spiritual SUN. (I, 514)

So Life can be called the Science of Numbers, mathematically accurate proportions. It is a symphony in sounds and colours. Man needs to acquire knowledge in order to understand Life and to live it in the right way. Madame Blavatsky, quoting a great Master, states in *The Secret Doctrine*: "Lead the life necessary for the acquisition of such knowledge and powers, and Wisdom will come to you naturally." What exactly is the "necessary" life? In one word, the life of Altruism. It means thinking of the good of others, acting for and as the Self of all creatures. "Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child," says *The Voice of the Silence*. Inner illumination arises spontaneously through the deliberate cultivation of Compassion. At present, mankind is victimized by its own passions of the lower order. The world is plunged in gloom and darkness because man is working in the wrong direction. From passion to compassion is a big step, a long way. One must exercise dispassion to steady one's mind and to clear one's heart; then compassion will unfold. So, proceeding from passions of a personal nature, of a selfish nature, to dispassion of discipline and unselfishness, one is ultimately led to selflessness, compassion and altruism. Such an one, instead of being bound down by a hundred cords of desire, becomes free, and engages only in the performance of duties and necessary actions.

The message of Life is contained in all the great Scriptures of the world, which contain the Teachings given out by the Teachers

according to the needs of the cycle in which they appeared. It is contained in the Path of *Ashoi*, Purity, of Zoroaster, based on the trinity of pure thoughts, pure words, pure deeds; in the Path of Duty of Sri Krishna, the performance of duties after renouncing the fruit of action; in the Path of Love of Jesus, returning good for evil and loving one's neighbour as oneself; in the Path of Brotherhood of H. P. Blavatsky. "The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims." Each individual can choose the means he will use to tread the Path; the difficulty is in continuing to tread it. The Source from which all have come is one, and it is the same goal towards which every pilgrim-soul is wending his way. The motive from the beginning to the end of the Path should be renunciation of the peace and bliss of *Nirvana* to guide and uplift those whose feet have stuck in this valley of darkness. In the first of her *Five Messages*, H. P. B. describes the transformation to be effected:

Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all.

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IN order to offset the terribly cold effect of perceiving the littleness of human affairs, one must inculcate in oneself a great compassion which will include oneself also. If this is not done, contempt comes on, and the result is dry, cold, hard, repellent and obstructive to all good work.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## THEOSOPHICAL WORK AND DUTY

Until a man has become, in heart and spirit, a disciple, he has no existence for those who are teachers of disciples. And he becomes this by one method only—the surrender of his personal humanity.

—*Light on the Path*

TO the sincere associate of the United Lodge of Theosophists who aspires to become a practitioner of the Wisdom-Religion, certain duties present themselves for acceptance. These are not thrust on him as adjuncts to his association. His enrolment application clearly states that his choosing to associate himself with the purposes of the Lodge does not impose on him any obligation other than that which he himself determines. There have been those who have deferred their choice of obligations over long periods of time. Yet, even in the formal act of seeking enrolment there is the tacit avowal that the soul seeking entry needs the kind of companionship the U.L.T. offers, and that the newcomer seeks to lend his support and co-operation, if only by his signature, to the purposes of the Lodge. The support and co-operation may take the form of an expression of sympathy for the policy of the Lodge, but that itself is enough. For, force follows the declaration of one's avowal if it is sincere and is made with a purified will and intent.

As days start pouring their experience into months, years and decades, the student no longer considers himself separate from the U.L.T. Its aspirations are his aspirations; its aim and its teaching his also. When he sees the mental and moral benefits that he has received through his association, when he realizes that the U.L.T. has opened to him vistas which erstwhile had been closed or neglected, then the student begins to read the Declaration of the Lodge in a new and more penetrating light. Simultaneously, it dawns upon him with greater clarity that, the world over, ardent workers with no profit motive have banded together and have engaged themselves as U.L.T. workers. He sees others still putting extra effort to reach souls staying far away from centres of U.L.T. activity and bringing the message of hope and cheer to outlying

places. He sees all this and desires to be of their fraternity so that he too can contribute his little towards the co-operative effort. It is often thus that the Associate starts to formulate consciously his own duty to his Lodge and his companions. He takes time to determine the extent of his own responsibility; and if wise in the ways of Karma, he will have put in a considerable amount of deliberation before binding himself to any particular course of action. In this effort at choosing responsibilities, considerable value has to be put on an accurate self-assessment. It is possible for the student during a moment of emotional enthusiasm to assume a duty to give when in that particular sphere he may be very near to spiritual bankruptcy. Equally dangerous is it to resolve to adopt a course of living which in its rigour is beyond his power of a sustained endurance. In such matters, patience is a great virtue, for patience as an active force is dynamic, and foolish indeed would be he who strains it by building up in himself forces that are antagonistic to calmness.

From a somewhat deep study of the U.L.T. Declaration, it would appear that for any Associate the primary duty would be the dissemination of the fundamental principle of Theosophy; the dissemination moreover to be invested with the force that comes through a truer realization of the SELF and an ever expanding and deepening conviction of a living Universal Brotherhood. Not much knowledge is required for the discharge of this so far as the metaphysical teachings are concerned. The fundamentals are simple propositions that are not likely to overwhelm the mind of even the least intelligent from among the Associates. This duty of propagating the fundamental principles cannot but be for all Associates who desire to become active co-workers of the Lodge. Each has to become a pupil-teacher and the limited task of teaching the fundamentals of the Doctrine helps him to make a beginning. There can be no better service than to present Truth to as wide a circle of inquirers as possible, and the Lodge provides the platform, the journals and the opportunity. Where one may falter, the combined many may achieve. The Associate has to be sure that he is not withholding his support to the joint activities of his Lodge. By putting on record that he desires to become an Associate, he does

forge a link with the others and becomes that link. It is his minimum duty to see that the link strengthens, not weakens, that chain.

Once that the duty to disseminate is assumed, the student is expected to make his presentation in the verbal garments of normalcy. He has to give his subject the dignity that truth anywhere deserves, while at the same time he has to be careful to see that his effort is not taking away interest from the subject and diverting it to himself. In this work there is also the danger that endless repetitions of a theme are bound to produce an apathy in the speaker and by way of reaction a listlessness in the audience. This danger is averted in each case by a progressive and continuous effort at achieving what the Declaration calls "a truer realization of the SELF" and "a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood." It is no excuse for the Associate to say that dissemination is already in the safe hands of others and that himself may devote the time saved to some other Theosophical task. By such an attitude, co-operation receives a setback. But a greater potential harm can be seen in the fact that the student is not considering that by his attitude he is losing a valuable opportunity to enlarge his ability to impress others—an ability which may be crucial for his tasks in succeeding incarnations. Karma may not view the Associate's self-complacency in the light in which *he* sees it. This simple effort at lisping the language of the soul may become merely mechanical, lose its charm and produce no appreciable results in the enlarging of companionship unless the words carry that firm conviction which comes only from the awakened Self. Realization of that Self does not come easily, but each passing year must see an ever-widening horizon till that longed-for time when full communion is reached. As this power stirs and awakens, it makes the dissemination purposeful and convincing, attracting to itself inquirers, students and the afflicted who seek solace and guidance.

Whilst reviewing the merits and demerits of each day's actions, one has to assess the opportunity created or lost for carrying out such a dissemination. And such opportunities do present themselves at all moments. They may come in sport, in recreation, in repose, at meals, in private or in public. A daily frank and fearless

appraisal of the methods to be employed to induce others to search for Truth yields valuable lessons in one's psychological reactions to the various modes in which truth is presented to them. Prejudice dies hard and care is to be taken to see that no great emotion is aroused in the listener.

The realization of the Self of which the Declaration speaks progresses only by an arduous effort without any break in the conscious pursuit of the objective. This Self is sensitive and its harmony gets thrown into confusion by discord, suffering and sin. Therefore, the first steps towards progress are "negative" in the sense that the initial effort has to be directed towards a removal of such impediments as make progress impossible. Disciplining of oneself is never an easy task, yet in it slumbers the germ of an infinitude of possibilities. For, even in the early stages, who is it who presides over the effort and even enforces compliance? Who is it who assesses results and suits the training to the occasion? The higher mind as Teacher comes for an early recognition; and the more the Guru-Chela relationship between the higher and the lower mind is established, the speedier will be the results. Here again daily self-assessment is important, for it fosters an awareness throughout the waking period, keeping the student on his guard to maintain a constant struggle against his lower nature and prevent it from injecting its lethal virus into his efforts at service and sacrifice. In the daily review, the success or failure of this exercise has to be judged impartially and plans formulated against the time when similar impediments may be expected to arise in the future under the law of cycles.

The Declaration in one of its almost mandatory clauses says that the Lodge "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." An aspirant who is in accord and who has the stated desire cannot be denied association. He brings with him those germs of ideation which will prosper and grow in the manure and the rich soil that the U.L.T. provides. He is invariably welcomed. In this clause of the Declaration lies the test of the Associate—a test, moreover, which

can be applied over the days and the years. Has he, for instance, made any concrete plans, set himself a schedule and formulated a course of study and conduct, asceticism and poise, as would enhance his fitness to serve? More important still, has he undertaken the discipline because he sees a rise in his own stature? Does he carry on because he gets a kick out of it? Not so can he be either loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement or to the avowed objective of devotion to the interest of others. He has to HELP and he has to TEACH; and if this goal of endeavour is fixed, so too are the instruments and the modes of service. The instruments of service are the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and following closely upon these, the exemplification in practice of those selfsame principles. In the intelligent use of both these instruments lie the norms to judge how far practice lags behind precept. The modes of service are the maintaining with the U.L.T. and other Associates of a similarity of aim, purpose and teaching and the refusal during acts of service to make any distinction between race, creed, sex, condition or organization. These both are basic to true effort and any adulteration to serve an expediency only encourages divisive tendencies.

The profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood which the Declaration advocates can come only when one begins to understand in ever-widening perspective the presence of an inner unifying principle that binds all things and creatures and which is recognized as the substratum of all that is manifested. Of the common material essence, Judge speaks in his Preface to *The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*. Says he:

It is first required that the existence, use and function of an ethereal medium penetrating everywhere, called Astral Light or Akasa...should be admitted. The Universal distribution of this as a fact in nature is metaphysically expressed in the terms "Universal Brotherhood" and "Spiritual Identity." In it, through its aid, and by its use, the qualities and motions of all objects are universally cognizable....The Easter Islander comes of a stock which has left its imprint in this Astral Light, and carries with him in indelible writing the history of his race. The ascetic in

concentration fixes his attention upon this, and then reads the record lost to Science.... For Patanjali and his school, such feats as these relate to matter and not to spirit.

In the closing paragraph of that Preface, Judge says that explanations to all phenomena will be found in the Theosophical doctrines relating to man as a Spirit; to the Spirit in nature and to the identity of all spiritual beings.

The earnest Associate will find that his efforts must invariably rest on the three solid supports of study, application and promulgation which stabilize and integrate his service to the Cause. No two out of the three can suffice. There are no two-legged stools in the Universe. Study and promulgation without application will always lack the fire of conviction which can come only as one truth after another is confirmed in life. Study and application without promulgation will lead to a stagnation of undigested knowledge. The power that is not used to lighten another's burden becomes a selfish power—one that will remain with the person and die with him. Its beneficence does not spread. It, in a sense, is a denial of Brotherhood and limits all efforts so that they reach one individual only. The many are sacrificed for the glorification of a single unit. Application and promulgation without study preclude any widening of human horizons. The student has acquired a limited knowledge which he practises and which he preaches. This is to the good. But when he stops further study, he begins to mark time. With a stultified growth, his promulgation becomes monotonous, listless striking of the same note endlessly till frustration overpowers him and his service deteriorates into a mere form of ritual.

The true Associate who remains steadfast to the Declaration will find that in his own ways he is helping Nature and working on with her. Once he sees himself as part of a great whole, he sees in his work an act of beneficence and enters into a partnership of joy with all those who are similarly engaged. He no longer sees himself as himself, but as a unit which with other units forms a healthy nucleus. In moments of insight he touches divinity, and the strength that flows from such a communion never really deserts him.

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## THE ALL-EMBRACING SYNTHESIS

IF Theosophy, the Ancient Wisdom, is the synthesis of science, philosophy and religion, there must be certain general propositions that would enable us to understand all the three aspects of the Wisdom.

Let us consider the method of science, and, in doing so, ask ourselves what science is. Science is built on knowledge gained by study and research; laws are discovered and tested over and over again. Scientists are active today, trying to find out new laws in the universe and testing their knowledge by comparing it with the researches of other well-trained scientists. This has been going on for a long time and H.P.B. tells us in *The Secret Doctrine* that what we know as the Ancient Wisdom is the well-tested and verified tradition of old—verified by those who are trained and fitted for the task. Therefore we have a system of knowledge in which there are "no two opinions" on any point.

To master any science, therefore, we have first to learn—as did the ancient scientists; then apply the knowledge gained and prove to ourselves its accuracy. So the testing and checking go on from age to age. Some of the fundamental propositions of this science, known to students of Theosophy as the Three Fundamentals, have been given to us in the Proem to *The Secret Doctrine*. They are fundamental because on their clear comprehension depends the understanding of all else. But scattered throughout *The Secret Doctrine* are other "fundamental laws," and a study of these is very illuminating.

One such law is especially related to our present topic :

The fundamental Law...the central point from which all emerged, around and toward which all gravitates, and upon which is hung the philosophy of the rest, is the One homogeneous divine SUBSTANCE-PRINCIPLE, the one radical cause. (*S.D.*, I, 273)

It therefore follows that "the one fundamental law in Occult Science" is

the radical unity of the ultimate essence of each constituent part of compounds in Nature—from Star to mineral Atom, from the

highest Dhyān Chohan to the smallest infusoria, in the fullest acceptance of the term, and whether applied to the spiritual, intellectual, or physical worlds. (*S.D.*, I, 120)

In these two fundamental laws we have the basis of Unity, especially when we consider what H.P.B. says further about the "Substance-Principle," referred to in the first of the above quotations:

It is called "Substance-Principle," for it becomes "substance" on the plane of the manifested Universe, an illusion, while it remains a "principle" in the beginningless and endless abstract, visible and invisible SPACE. It is the omnipresent Reality: impersonal, because it contains all and everything. *Its impersonality is the fundamental conception of the System.* It is latent in every atom in the Universe, and is the Universe itself. (*S.D.*, I, 273)

It is therefore obvious that all is one unity, a unity of units. How are we to understand this unity of the units? Says H.P.B. :

From *Gods to men*, from Worlds to atoms, from a star to a rush-light, from the Sun to the vital heat of the meanest organic being—the world of Form and Existence is an immense chain, whose links are all connected. (*S.D.*, I, 604)

This is all very well as a mental concept, but how does it affect us in our daily living? How can we use the knowledge to understand further the Universe around us? We have been given another law to help us understand: "The law of Analogy is the first key to the world-problem."

Using this law, let us first begin at the root.

THE ROOT OF LIFE WAS IN EVERY DROP OF THE OCEAN OF IMMORTALITY (*Amrita*) AND THE OCEAN WAS RADIANT LIGHT, WHICH WAS FIRE AND HEAT AND MOTION. (*S.D.*, I, 69)

*It is that LIGHT which condenses into the forms of the "Lords of Being"—the first and the highest of which are, collectively, JIVATMA, or Pratyagatma (said figuratively to issue from Paramatma. It is the Logos of the Greek philosophers—appearing at the beginning of every new Manvantara).* (*S.D.*, II, 33)

It is from this that all issues forth. But, "the ocean (of matter)

does not divide into its potential and constituent drops until the sweep of the life-impulse reaches the evolutionary stage of man-birth" (*S.D.*, I, 178). So, "the root of every atom individually and of every form collectively, is...the one Reality." (*S.D.*, I, 18)

As an abstraction, we call it the ONE LIFE; as an objective and evident Reality, we speak of a septenary scale of manifestation, which begins at the upper rung with the One Unknowable CAUSALITY, and ends as Omnipresent Mind and Life immanent in every atom of Matter. (*S.D.*, I, 139)

It is "from the Unknown One, the infinite TOTALITY," that "the manifested ONE, or the periodical, Manvantaric Deity, emanates; and this is the Universal Mind" (*S.D.*, I, 110). And it is because of this Universal Mind that

the Secret Doctrine teaches the progressive development of everything, worlds as well as atoms; and this stupendous development has neither conceivable beginning nor imaginable end....Our "Universe" is only one of an infinite number of Univeres, all of them "Sons of Necessity," because links in the great Cosmic chain of Universes, each one standing in the relation of an effect as regards its predecessor and being a cause as regards its successor. (*S.D.*, I, 43)

The "why" and "how" of this unity can be understood. From the earliest times the Mysteries of Nature were recorded in geometrical figures and symbols. The keys thereto were passed from one generation of Wise Men to the other. Some of the symbols were brought from the East to the West by Pythagoras, who was not the inventor of his famous "Triangle." Says H.P.B. :

The *ten points* inscribed within that "Pythagorean *triangle*" are worth all the theogonies and angelologies ever emanated from the theological brain. For he who interprets them—on their very face, and in the order given—will find in these seventeen points (the seven Mathematical Points hidden) the uninterrupted series of the genealogies from the first *Heavenly* to *terrestrial* man. And, as they give the order of Beings, so they reveal the order in which were evolved the Kosmos, our earth, and the primordial elements by which the latter was generated. Begotten

in the invisible *Depths*, and in the womb of the same "Mother" as its fellow-globes—he who will master the mysteries of our Earth, will have mastered those of all others. (*S.D.*, I, 612-13)

We are further helped to see the "links" between all parts of manifestation when we learn of the connection between the sun and man. We are all familiar with this in our daily lives. We are also familiar with the effect of the moon on us and on the earth, so that it ought not to surprise us to learn that there is an intimate interrelationship between our earth and its inhabitants and the other planets within the solar system.

*Every sin committed on Earth is felt by Usanas-Sukra [Venus-Lucifer]. The Guru of the Daityas is the guardian Spirit of the Earth and Men. Every change on Sukra is felt on, and reflected by, the Earth....* Archaic tradition ... states that ... whatever takes place on the one takes place on the other. (*S.D.*, II, 31-32)

Therefore for our practical use we can reflect on the statement that "our destiny is written in the stars!" "Only, the closer the union between the mortal reflection MAN and his celestial PROTOTYPE, the less dangerous the external conditions and subsequent reincarnations." (*S.D.*, I, 639)

In conclusion, we can turn to the following:

...the Universe...manifests periodically, for purposes of the collective progress of the countless *lives*, the outbreathings of the One *Life*; in order that through the *Ever-Becoming*, every cosmic atom in this infinite Universe, passing from the formless and the intangible, through the mixed natures of the semi-terrestrial, down to matter in full generation, and then back again, reascending at each new period higher and nearer the final goal; that each atom, we say, *may reach through individual merits and efforts* that plane where it re-becomes the one unconditioned ALL. (*S.D.*, I, 268)

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LIFE is perennial search of truth.

—Yajur Veda

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

As we enter the year 2000, there is no dearth of forecasts and predictions about future trends in various spheres. In the realm of science and technology, above all, a fresh explosion of discoveries is expected. Fast-moving science befuddles predictions, says Hans A. Bethe, as is evidenced by recent discoveries and developments that would have been unimaginable a hundred years or even a few decades ago. Bethe, who is professor emeritus of physics at Cornell University and the recipient of the Nobel Prize for physics in 1967, writes in *New Perspectives Quarterly* (Summer 1999):

No more than a scientist at the end of the 19th century or a monk at the end of the first millennium can I forecast the developments of the 21st century or the third millennium, and how they will affect the daily lives of people alive in 2099 or 2999....

The three scientific discoveries of the 20th century with the greatest effect on our understanding of the universe both great and small were quantum theory, relativity theory and the biochemistry of genetic information—the chemical structure of DNA. Each of these ranks with Newton's law of motion which in the 17th century was the real beginning of the scientific exploration of modern times....

With more scientists working today than have worked through all the time man has been on earth, equipped with tools far more powerful than could have been imagined in 1950 let alone 1900, there will be new scientific principles discovered. There will be new technologies with unimaginable effects on how we live and work, on where we live and work, on our health and wealth and the quality of life. Not all of the changes will be "good," but taken together they are likely to make lives more comfortable.

More comfortable, maybe, but will the new developments make life richer in the true sense? Many thinkers and scientists themselves are concerned about the ethical issues arising out of recent scientific researches—*e.g.*, in the realm of genetics and cloning. Science is a double-edged sword, as scientists are realizing. Sir Josiah Stamp, speaking many years ago on "The Impact of Science Upon Society,"

stated:

What shall it profit a civilization if it gain the whole world of innovation and its victims lose their souls?...We have spent much and long upon the science of matter, and the greater our success the greater must be our failure, unless we turn also at long last to an equal advance in the science of man.

Science, to render lasting and constructive service, will have to accept the real morality which, rooted in the essence of Nature, is not a matter of religious emotion, but a cosmic necessity. It is yet far from such a radical change. Sometimes some scientific statement mirrors a moral verity or some professor utters words that reflect universal truths. But this is not enough. A change in the inner attitude of science can be conceded only when such statements are made deliberately in full awareness of their universal philosophical background and of their ethical implications. They must, moreover, be presented by genuine scientists in an able and convincing way, in order to gain the general acceptance of their colleagues.

*The Secret Doctrine* contains many teachings that were denied by the science of H.P.B.'s day but were subsequently proved true, and it is quite possible that it contains hints of other truths that have yet to be accepted. Only the future will tell.

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Hectic activity is going on around the world to probe the secrets of the gene. Most of the body's trillions of cells contain a nucleus with 46 chromosomes, say the scientists, each one made of a long, coiled-up strand of DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). Thousands of sections along every strand represent genes, which are coded instructions for making the proteins needed to construct a complete human organism. Scientists engaged in deciphering the code and mapping our genetic universe are holding out the promise of curing diseases and solving the mysteries of forensics and evolution, among other possibilities; but at the same time thorny ethical questions are arising. For instance, sperm-sorting technology improves parents' chances of choosing a child's sex, but is this desirable, and where will it lead us?

"Are we ready for the gene age?" And, "To what extent am I my genes?" asks James Shreeve, who is working on a book about the race to uncover the human genetic code. "Such questions," he writes in *National Geographic* (October 1999), "are hardly new":

They are the essence of the nature versus nurture debate that has perplexed thinkers for centuries. But now we are on the verge of having finite answers. Without much time to consider the implications, scientists have developed the ability to tap into the code of life and bring its power to bear on our daily lives, the way one might conjure up a spirit to intervene in some earthly affair. This eruption of genetic information is transforming the way medicine is practised, crimes are solved, and the very nature of life is understood. But its power is frightening too, even to those who understand it best. Who has a right to know the secrets written in our genomes? How much do we want to know ourselves?

"There are a tremendous number of ethical issues involved," says Steve Fodor, biotech company Affymetrix's CEO and guiding force. "People are stepping very softly in order not to blunder into an area and do things that are irreversible."...

In most of our genes—99.9 percent of them—every human being alive is exactly the same. Moreover, most of the variations in the remaining one-tenth of a percent don't bunch up into geographic regions or racial groups but instead are spread around the globe. Put another way, the snips and snippets of code that taken together make one person unique are scattered about in other unique genomes all over the world, binding all of us in a splendid tangle of interrelationship.

That tangle doesn't begin at our evolutionary branch but spreads up from far below. All the anatomical differences between human beings and chimpanzees, and even the hallowed uniqueness of human cognition, may in fact arise from slight changes in a few genes regulating fetal development.

Nine-tenths of our genes are identical to those of a mouse.... More than a third of the genes of the lowly nematode worm *Caenorhabditis elegans* are shared with the exalted primate *Homo sapiens*. Genomically speaking, even bacteria are our cousins in code.

The last and most powerful secret revealed by our genes, in fact, is the indisputable unity of everything alive.

This is an extremely important finding. Geneticists have been saying for some time that when we look at genes we find that people all over the world are amazingly similar. Now they are going further still and asserting the unity of *all* life.

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One of the predictions for the future is that world cultures will become more and more homogenized. Globalization with its promises and perils is a trend to be reckoned with in the 21st century. Modern technology extends human life spans and levels of comfort, but it also destroys thousands of remote cultures. Loss of traditional cultures means loss of knowledge, loss of languages, loss of unique perspectives on life and of insights into nature that still defy modern science.

Francis Fukuyama, professor of public policy at George Mason University and author of *The Great Disruption: Human Nature and the Reconstitution of Social Order*, gives two important reasons why globalization is here to stay:

First, there remains no viable alternative development model that promises better results than globalization....The second reason why globalization is not likely to be reversed has to do with technology. Contemporary globalization is underpinned by the information technology revolution that has spread phone, fax, radio, television and the Internet to the most remote corners of the globe. These changes empower individuals and are profoundly democratizing on a host of levels. Today, no country can ever truly cut itself off from the global media or from external sources of information; trends that start in one corner of the world are rapidly replicated thousands of miles away. (*New Perspectives Quarterly*, Summer 1999)

Globalization, as Erla Zwingle states in *National Geographic* (August 1999) has been going on since long; the difference now is in its speed and scope. He dwells mainly on global culture and what

it is all about:

Linking: This is what the spread of global culture ultimately means. Goods will continue to move.... People move.... Ideas move....

Change: It's a reality, not a choice. But what will be its true driving force? Cultures don't become more uniform; instead, both old and new tend to transform each other....

Global culture doesn't mean just more TV sets and Nike shoes. Linking is humanity's natural impulse, its common destiny. But the ties that bind people around the world are not merely technological or commercial. They are the powerful cords of the heart.

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Way back in 1798, Thomas Malthus, the English political economist, predicted a gloomy future for humanity. Our population, he said, would grow until it reached the limits of our food supply, after which famines and disease would result. The issue is still being debated.

His forecast was ahead of its time, but will Malthus be proved right in the third millennium? asks Niles Eldredge, a paleontologist at the American Museum of Natural History (*Time*, November 8, 1999). He submits that we must work now to prove Malthus wrong:

What's missing from the debate is an understanding of the changing relationship between humanity and nature. For it is how humans fit into the natural world that will settle whether Malthus was right or wrong.... Our position in the natural world is once again undergoing a sea change....

In an economic—if not a political—sense, we have become a single, enormous population. The system in which we are living, extracting our energy and other supplies, is global: the totality of Earth's atmosphere, its waters, its soils and crust, and all its living things. This is the sum total of all the world's local ecosystems—ecosystems we have allowed to decay as we have chosen (quite successfully!) to live outside them.

We have converted woodlands and prairies to farmland virtually all over the globe. Our cities, suburbs and malls have

paved over natural communities, and pollution and overfishing are rapidly destroying our rivers, lakes and oceans. As these ecosystems go down, we are losing perhaps 30,000 species of animals and plants a year, out of perhaps 10 million total species, even though we still deeply rely on at least 40,000 species for food, shelter, clothing and fuel. We rely on natural products to replenish genetic diversity in our crops and to produce new medicines. We rely on pristine ecosystems to replenish oxygen, regulate water cycles, control erosion, cycle essential nutrients and restock critical fisheries. We still need these things to sustain life—our life. The irony is that our rampant success in living outside the world's ecosystems has put them all, and thus ourselves, in jeopardy....

The tide is running back toward Malthus. We are still not fully realizing that our own survival hinges on reducing the damage we do to Earth's natural systems. We may not drive ourselves to the complete oblivion of biological extinction, but I fear that the Malthusian spectres of famine, warfare and disease will rise in the comparatively short run (the next few centuries), coupled with an accelerating loss of human cultural diversity and, ultimately, quality of life.

Unless. We can, I think, find the inner will to wake up to our current situation, to see the grimmer outlook around the corner and to choose to do something about it.... We can, if we choose to do so, prove Malthus' direst prognostications wrong.

Those who are alarmed at the "increase" in population take it for granted that human reproduction is an uncontrolled biological process following the Malthusian law. Students of Theosophy, however, know that the changes of population are cyclic and that the number of egos belonging to this globe is fixed. As the period between two births is, for the average individual, many times greater than the life period, a fluctuation of, say, three to four per cent in the average reincarnation cycle would double the population for a time—or nearly eliminate it—with a corresponding swing to the other extreme after some time. History and archaeology show that such fluctuations do occur in accordance with cyclic law.

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At one stage or another, in one manner or other, pain and suffering is experienced by all. The suffering may be at the physical, emotional or mental level, but our attitude to it makes all the difference to us. Anjali Singh's observations on "The Mind's Conquest of Pain and Suffering" (*The Times of India*, December 21, 1999) offer some food for thought:

Suffering is a healer. Its occurrence in the life of a person need not necessarily be a negative factor. Sorrow is the outcome of the negative latent tendencies in one's subconscious, finding their way into the open. If allowed to be dealt with, not only does suffering equalize our past wrong actions, it actually cleanses us at our unconscious level within and makes us aware of our futile attachments, which cause the sorrow in the first place. All sorrow in the mind is caused by some kind of attachment or dependence on something or someone, an event or a happening that is not fulfilling itself in our expectations. It can be a trivial thing but the intensity of sorrow depends on the intensity of our wanting it. If we use the phase of suffering in our life to evaluate our relationship with the world, it can become a means for a total change in us. There is a simple exercise that can be done by the mind that can lift us out of our sorrow.

The thought pattern during the suffering hinges around *I am unhappy*. The exercise is to stand apart as a mere witness of the pain, if it is at the body level; of sorrow at the emotional level; and insult or non-acceptance of our ideas by others at the intellectual level. With a little continuation of this self-effort one disassociates the "I" from the unhappiness.... How long will the thoughts remain unhappy without the co-operation of the "I"? It is the mind that suffers, not I. The "I" has become a witness....

When suffering comes in our life, we can use this chance to raise ourselves to a higher level.... If we do not make the effort to get out of the state, it will be used by others to influence our way of thinking and behaving and our dependence will continue. If we make the effort, there is no way of not succeeding. The choice is ours.

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