

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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THE FUNDAMENTALS OF SELF-EDUCATION

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The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain.

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

—*The Voice of the Silence*, pp. 38-39

WITH world conditions as they are, it seems almost impossible to reform large numbers of the populace. Only individuals, a man here and a woman there, are inspired sufficiently so that they take themselves seriously in hand and endeavour to purify their morals and to enlighten their minds. The snares of the *Kali Yuga* are many; the evil influence of the Astral Light is very powerful. But individuals can and do free themselves from their passion-self.

What is most needed today are living Centres of Beneficence, nuclei of earnest men and women who are radiating the purity and intelligence gathered by the exercise of right morality and the acquirement of correct knowledge. Those who are educating themselves for the life of the soul and are making adequate use of the *siddhis*, soul powers, gained through such education, are the saviours of humanity in this day and generation.

What is required of us is not the doing of something remote from the duties with which we are born, but the discharging of

those very duties by a different method. Over and over again we are advised that we must take our evolution in our own hands, that no outside power, no known or unknown forces of nature will help us, that he who conquers himself is greater than the conqueror of worlds.

Self-education is fourfold: education of the mind, of the emotions, of the body, including the senses and the brain, and of the soul. Very few in our age, when life has become a contest of minds or a struggle for existence on the plane of economics and of the body, recognize the fact that they are souls. Concentration, intelligence, efficiency, capacity, the power to do things well, at times even character—these are demanded in the educational sphere, in the competitive world of business; but the soul is rarely taken into account, and when it is accorded a place it is generally a secondary place.

Mind without soul guidance is bound to go astray, and is only too likely to produce the atheist or the agnostic. Emotional expression without guidance from the soul is also bound to go wrong, as when it produces such an artist as is creative at times, and the rest of the time a parasite and worse. Physical education without soul guidance will produce an athlete; as mere brain and sense education, it may produce a fine businessman and competitor in the struggle of life, who will know how to overthrow his rivals in the same field of business or of life.

More than half of our troubles arise because our education is incomplete. Mostly education is dual—of the body and of the intellect. Culture of the emotions and soul culture are very largely neglected. The fourfold education of soul, mind, feelings and body is possible for all, for every individual has this fourfold nature. One need not wait; a beginning in self-education can be made wherever we are in space and time—in the home, in whatever country we live, and whatever the age of the body.

What will it profit one to undertake this education? Time was when people asked, “Is it profitable to be educated in ‘the three Rs’?” Some of the people for whom compulsory education had been introduced rebelled against it—and later fought for it.

Similarly, only those who have gone through the discipline of self-education are qualified to speak of its worthwhileness.

Self-education means, first and foremost, taking stock of what we are, not of what we are not; trying to find out, not how weak and mean we are, but how strong and noble we are or can be.

Secondly, each one lives in a particular environment and is responsible for the performance of his own duties in that environment, duties to himself, to his kith and kin and to the wider universe, in ever-expanding circles. No one can live an isolated life, for through our body, our emotional or feeling nature, our mind and our soul we are all the time affecting the whole wide world, which we need to understand and to penetrate. In terms of our knowledge of the beings who make up the universe, human, sub-human or super-human, the universe takes on a different meaning for us. Self-education is that process of education of the incarnated aspect of the soul which enables that soul to discharge its obligations to the great intellectual universe, to the great moral universe, to the great universe of form or of matter.

The soul’s reaction to the universe determines its duties. In our bodily aspect, in our feeling or moral aspect, in our intellectual aspect, we are reflecting the powers of the soul. Each one finds himself in a certain set of circumstances because of the necessities of the soul. One man is poor, another is rich; one man is intellectually advanced along one line, another is intellectually advanced along another line, and a third is not intellectually advanced at all—all find themselves where they are under Karma and for the purposes of the soul.

Recognition needs to be gained not only that we are what we are because we *deserve* it, but also that our *desires* in the past have created our present environment, both inner and outer. Our congenital duties are the effects that proceed from what we have desired in the past. We may not desire at the present moment to be where we are, but to try to change our environment by any forcible methods is to invite on ourselves unhappiness and suffering, mental, moral, bodily. The only right way to change our environment is by learning from it the best we can, and, in making use of it, we can

begin to alter it in terms of our own energy or desire in the present.

To feed, clothe and shelter the body is one aspect of our congenital duties. Next, each one has certain mental-moral duties. We have duties to our immediate surrounding, to our friends, to our work, to our city, to our country, to the world at large. Our daily life consists of a thousand things. How shall we learn to do them so that the soul, the mind, the moral character, the body with its senses and its brain, may gain for themselves the utmost advantage? No man is superior or inferior to another, from the soul point of view, by reason of the work he does. But a sweeper who performs his own duty well is, spiritually speaking, superior to a king who neglects his obligatory duties. There is no necessary work that is not honourable if the performer is an honourable person. All drudgery, if rightly performed, in the right spirit, becomes divine.

One of the things required of us in our present civilization is to perceive divinity in all tasks. We speak of efficiency, of the power of concentration necessary for successful business and in many other spheres of life. We cannot have these unless we have the right moral viewpoint that concentration develops most easily in those affairs that comprise our natural duties. Unhappiness is the outcome of not seeing that our proper function is the performance of our own duties by a particular method.

What is that method? All of us live in space and in time and we are all the time making causes. Our relationship to space, to time and to causation leads us to the consideration of three fundamental laws which should govern all actions. Once these three laws are understood and made part of ourselves, self-education becomes a continuous process.

First, in reference to space, there is the law of accuracy. Every significant or insignificant act of ours is performed in space. Accuracy in space sounds simple enough, yet innumerable difficulties present themselves once we begin to apply this basic law. All our laws, programmes, policies, methods of what we call efficiency in all walks of life are based on the idea enshrined in that simple-sounding phrase, accuracy in space.

Every action, moreover, has to be done not only accurately but also at the right time, and so punctuality in time is another fundamental law. We see its operation in all nature, and it is not difficult to conceive of the chaos that would result if the functioning of the natural order of things were based on anything but the law of punctuality. Man alone can and often does break that law—and he and often others also have to bear the resulting repercussions.

Whatever we do, whether it be the act of waking up or of going to sleep, of speaking or of listening, we are generating causes. The generation of a cause with a pure motive, or purity in causation, is the third fundamental law. In thinking, feeling, speaking, performing deeds, let us ask ourselves, “Is my motive pure?”

He who is not accurate, punctual and purely motivated in what he does is not educating himself, or is educating himself wrongly. He is generating discord, disharmony, and the resulting effect is not contentment and joy but suffering and pain. It is not what we do but how we do the least thing that really matters. It is not an ambition to do something different, but the ambition to do what we are doing in a still better way that will result in soul progress. By striving to do better and better till we become perfect in the particular line of our endeavour, we build for ourselves a more propitious environment for the future. It is this that constitutes self-education.

The performance of duty makes way for further growth. The soul comes to a realization of its own innate, divine nature in such a way that it awakens to a new life. The inner peace and bliss that are born of knowledge unfold, not through the pursuit of some kind of psychic practice or some kind of peculiar meditation, but by the performance of the daily duties of life accurately, punctually and with all the purity of thought, feeling, word and deed that we can command. That is the way of gaining new soul powers. The powers of the soul manifest themselves in a discordant, disharmonious way when the lower constituents of our being are not trained and controlled by the soul. No one ever entered the spiritual life save by the purification of the mind, the emotions, the senses and the body.

Just as the serpent tamers seize the serpent and remove its fangs, without killing it, so must we render harmless the serpent of the lower nature that exists in each one of us. We often feed it with honey and cake and think that by and by its poison will drain away; but it will not. There is only one way to remove that poison—by not giving quarter to the whisperings of the lower self. We shall not succeed at once; many will be the setbacks; but he who picks himself up each time and goes forward is on the right road.

Let each aspirant to the spiritual life learn to use the talisman named Duty. Let hopes for progress, desire for uncalled for service and all else be made subservient to the performance of duties—the small plain duties of life—but duties performed with knowledge of theosophical principles, and applying that very high standard of morality to each act. Thus will the soul be educated and strengthened. We have to perceive the real inwardness of the saying that “the Chohan in his place, and the atom in its place, do what they can—no more.” This perception results from the discharge of one’s own duties by the light of the Message of the true Saviours of the Race.

REMEMBER that every thought kept ever constant, leads to action and results will follow....These are all pictures of the mind or a voice from within which the wise take notice of and fools ignore. The only precaution to be taken is that some people paint wrong pictures and live in misery; others paint bright pictures and enjoy life. You have the colours, brush and canvas with you. You can paint heaven and in you can go; you can paint hell and in you can enter. The choice is yours.

So select carefully, use you mind productively so that life is worth living and you make this world a little better than before.

—T. G. L. IYER

SOUL-SERVICE IS TRUE SERVICE

THE ideal of social service arose with the decline of religion and the rise of science. Though involved in laudable projects, most advanced social institutions are, however, finding out that there is something lacking in many of their schemes—slum-clearance, housing for the poor, rehabilitation of prostitutes, rescue homes for homeless boys and girls, etc. Social-service experts are not yet unanimous as to the real cause of the problems they are trying to solve, but almost all are of the view that every effort to reform produces its own problems. Clear the slums, and immediately social problems of a new type arise; rescue prostitutes, and they offer new difficulties; build homes for abandoned children, and educational problems arise; have institutions for the mentally ill, and psychologists disagree as to what is to be done with them! On every hand people are finding out that to render service to the poor in mind or the maimed in heart is no easy task. The most ardent among social workers find that paucity of money is not their greatest difficulty. Social settlements and institutions, richly endowed and having help and guidance from experienced experts, yet complain of paucity of understanding, lack of soul-vision, ignorance of the true purpose of life and living.

Many among us are eager to serve our fellow-men; a hundred good causes surround us on every side, inviting our sympathy and our aid. But it must be realized first that mere change of outer circumstances without a change in inner attitudes will not solve the problems; that psychology is needed more than physiology for treating social issues; that even education of the mind does not help in finding a final solution, but only raises new problems. In other words, the problems of humanity are not merely economic. Passion, anger, greed are as much in the tenement houses we call chawls as in the villas we call bungalows. The university graduate has to wrestle with his own psychic nature, his own weaknesses, which are the same as those of the illiterate and the ignorant. More and more the attention of the thoughtful is directed to the supreme truth of ancient Indian philosophy, that for real, lasting and all-

round reform of human nature and of earthly conditions, each one must begin to grapple with his own soul. The ancient ideal of service was self-improvement, which brought each the power to help others. We are often incapable of rendering correct aid to others because we do not know the roots of the trouble; those roots are deep and invisible, and their very existence is not suspected.

The modern world is fast coming to accept the philosophical principles of the old world. Those principles are two in the main: (1) By serving the souls of others we render the best service. (2) By unfolding our own soul-powers we are able to render right service.

It is recognized that our mind plays an important part, but it also needs to be known that in our make-up there is something more than the mind and that to really transform ourselves we must touch that something. The realization is dawning that unless our very soul is lighted up, there cannot be a real and permanent transformation. But what is soul, whence it came, how it is evolving—modern science has not yet come to those inquiries. Ancient sages and philosophers, however, have the answers.

Real service is the service of human souls. It does not mean that we refuse to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to heal the ailing; or that we deny education to the mind and bar it from useful and necessary knowledge. But it does mean that we recognize the soul as fundamental and most important. Educate the soul, and the mind gets educated; renovate the soul, and the heart and character get renovated; and that education and renovation are permanent in their effects.

How to educate and to render help to human souls? Is there a method that will enable us to do this? Our second proposition answers these questions and offers the method: "By unfolding our own soul-powers we are able to render right service."

In this proposition we come across both a noble motive and a true method. We are not to evolve soul-powers for our own benefit, we are not to attempt soul-growth for our own salvation, but we are to improve ourselves with a clear vision of the goal—to render right service. We want to learn so that we may teach; we desire to

be strong so that the weak may lean on us; we aspire to unfold our soul so that we may serve all other souls. Unless this goal is ever kept in view, and this motive constantly remembered, we shall fail. Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain.

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

If Sun thou canst not be, then be the humble planet. Aye, if thou art debarred from flaming like the noon-day Sun upon the snow-capped mount of purity eternal, then choose, O Neophyte, a humbler course.

Point out the "Way"—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness. (pp. 38-39)

Here in this passage a whole philosophy of service is enshrined. We have to learn to point out the "Way" to those who are caught up in the darkness of their own sorrows; but unless we become like Venus, the evening star, and shine by our own inner light, we cannot remove the darkness of others.

Let us turn to the method of soul-development, never losing sight of the motive—service of human souls. The very first piece of instruction we need is that we *are* souls. The real "I," the soul that we are, being mistaken for what it is not, is an old, old problem. More than five thousand years ago, when Master Krishna began teaching his disciple, Arjuna, that was the very first problem he had to solve. The *Bhagavad-Gita* is the Song of Life, *i.e.*, the Song of the Soul. When fear overtook Arjuna, and when he refused to do his duty to his own people and to serve his own race, Krishna taught him the true philosophy. His very first teaching was: "I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be" (Chapter II). Each one of us, high or low, young or old, whatever his station in life, whatever his beliefs, is a spiritual being, an immortal soul which is birthless

and deathless. The body dies, the mind changes, the character undergoes a transformation, but the Spirit in the body never dies, never changes, never deteriorates. “It is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed.” That is the soul; it never came to birth; it never will collapse in death.

That is the first instruction. Naturally there arise in our mind the questions: Then what is death? What is evil? What is suffering? How does the soul evolve? Why is it here at all? It is here to learn, to overcome evil, to banish suffering, to radiate peace and joy—*Ananda*. Krishna next teaches that as the soul cannot achieve complete mastery and victory in a single life, we must learn to look at the great truth of many successive lives on earth. “As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, even so the dweller in the body, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new.”

The next step is to realize that in each life, in all circumstances, whatever our conditions, we and we alone are the makers of our own destiny. The Hindus use the word Karma and the Muslims speak of Kismet. Karma means not just fate, but also action. Do not just sit down and say, “Karma!” but get up and act. That is the lesson the *Gita* teaches: “Stand up and fight”—fight the devil in you.

This devil has many faces, many aspects. First, there is the devil of conservatism. How many of us dislike to make any kind of a change—change of habit, or of mode of thought, or of opinion! To overcome conservatism means to give up mental lethargy. The devil of lethargy is powerful. In the Zoroastrian *Vendidad* this devil is described as having long hands and arms; it signifies that he is busy here, there and everywhere, putting people to sleep—the sleep of routine and conservatism. If by chance one awakes, then the devil puts on another face, and tempts the person to another routine, founded on imitation. “My friend did this, so must I; my neighbour has that, so I too must get it; this is in vogue now, and I must keep pace!” The enemy of the devils of conservatism and imitation is

reason. If we want to overcome our Kismet or Karma, we have to learn to fight conservatism and imitation, and the weapon to defeat them is reason. But reason implies knowledge. One cannot conquer fate, cannot carve one’s destiny, without a basis of right knowledge.

Here another difficulty arises. We are so enamoured of new books and new scientific knowledge that we do not even inquire if these new books are worthwhile, or, if science is right, why it is ever changing. That which is true is always and ever true. The first lesson, that each one of us is a soul, is ancient, universal, taught by every great philosopher and mystic; so is the second, that the soul incarnates again and again to learn lessons and to grow in perfection; and so is the third, that by self-effort humans evolve. Not by outer rites and ceremonies will our vices go; not by mere reading of books will our virtue increase; but we have to “raise the self by the Self,” says the *Gita*. Exactly the same teaching is given by the Buddha: “The Self is the Lord of self.” Right knowledge is to be found in the *Gita*, in the *Dhammapada*, in *Tao Te King*, in the *Gathas*, in the poems of the Sufis. All these texts teach the same truth, impart the same lessons.

These are merely outline thoughts, but the principle to keep in mind is that as each one of us purifies himself he purifies the world. Growing ourselves in wisdom, we make the world wise; allowing the radiance of the soul to stream forth in us, we increase the light of the world. Our purity and knowledge and radiance enable us to serve the race of souls. By awakening our own soul we shall most efficiently serve the souls of our fellow-men.

“ALTRUISM”...is the keynote of Theosophy and the cure for all ills; this it is which the real Founders of the Theosophical Society promote as its first object—UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE PERSONAL AND THE IMPERSONAL

Now if a man worship Brahman, thinking Brahman is one and he another, he has not the true knowledge.

—*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*

MAN stands perpetually between two fires. He burns himself badly at the fire of his personal predilections, but is fascinated by it as is the moth by his night lamp. The other fire is benign. It illumines; and for those who earnestly seek its light, it protects. This is the fire of the impersonal Self. Justice, truth, mercy, charity, faith and love flower under its warmth. But its light is inimical to the weeds and plants that grow under the heat of the personal flame. The man of mature mind can choose to bar entry to that light which for the moment he finds inconvenient, and can, as it were, draw a curtain shutting off the unwanted rays. Man can train himself to avert his eyes from the unethical and therefore the undesirable. He can, however, glut his eyes on the sensual, the unseemly and the evil. The choice is his to make.

When a person chooses to emplace his consciousness in the personal, he views himself as one apart from others and from the world outside. He groups this external world of his into two broad divisions: those who can help him satisfy his desires and those others who stand in his way. He is therefore constantly at war with his fellow men. He believes that the world is his to plunder and each circumstance an opportunity for turning to his own benefit. Thus, for sport he will slaughter without any compunction; for his so-called researches, he will maim and torture both men and animals; for his vanity, he will drag the names of others in the mire; for his glory, he will wade through slaughter to a throne. Inquisitions, burnings, fratricides, wars, genocides and artificially created and directed pestilences are but the natural outcome of a personality gone amuck, a mind that is poisoned and choked by the weeds of insatiable desires.

The personal touch is unclean. It defiles in each and every case. It may please at times and bring a contentment of sorts. But the

while it satisfies, it corrodes; and its inevitable companions of pain and destruction step in to claim their victims. The personal bias is to be eschewed because it lends to the animal the cunning and the power that human intellect can give. This bias cannot be transformed. The malignant cannot become the benign. It is therefore an abomination to say: "Let my desires be fulfilled this once and then I will become impersonal with the tremendous force that satisfied desires can generate." All desires are like soiling substances. They mar the surfaces they settle upon. No desires born of flesh can act as cleansing media and it were foolish to imagine that their touch will leave the mind untarnished. The impersonal does not grow out of the personal. The two cannot mix, nor can the one appear when the other holds one's undivided attention.

However, it were wrong to presume that the impersonal is so far removed from us as to be reached by the very, very few. The impersonal is at the elbow of the personal. It is the very source from which the ray that is to become the personal man was emitted. At birth, this ray enters and enmeshes itself in a capsule of matter and desires. The personal is, therefore, an offshoot of the impersonal. As it awakes to consciousness in the growing man, it is gripped fast by lust, anger and greed as they arise from unsatisfied desires. These in their fury course through the veins of the subtler body of man and force him to satisfy their hunger through mental or physical indulgence. Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "Heaven's dew-drop glittering in the morn's first sunbeam within the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire."

Neither the personal nor yet the impersonal can function without the instrumentality of the human mind. But the mind cannot be shared by both. The one must quit before the other can enter. The mind is the abode of the man, is definitely not the man himself. If it is to be used as a temple, the dirt and filth of ages must be swept clean away, the stench removed, the pollution eradicated. Traces of all selfish trends which are the progeny of the personality have to be removed and the spots susceptible of attracting dirt taken

care of. Translated in terms of daily living, it means that all upsurges of the personal have to be suppressed and the mind kept so concentrated on the impersonal that it is full and active and has no vulnerable chinks or neglected spots through which the cohorts of selfishness can enter and storm the citadel.

The struggle between the personal and the impersonal is hardly sensed in its true perspective by the average person. He sees life as a shifting kaleidoscope of blacks and whites, and so great is the illusion which dominates him that what he considers as virtue, he may acknowledge later as sin, and *vice versa*. When he has reached the stage at which he can distinguish between desire and aspiration, he reaches a new orientation in thought. Pleasure diminishes in its glamour, and starting with vague imaginings, he encounters that which makes its presence felt even though it remains beyond the reach and range of ordinary sensations. It is at this stage that he glimpses the continuous struggle that is going on within his own mind. He now sees that he is fighting something which is not outside of him but verily a part of himself. He seems to have two faces: that of his personal self held prisoner by the hundred cords of desire, and that of his impersonal self to which he reaches in moments of aspiration. It is now that the battle of the will-powers starts. Hard blows are given and taken and the fortunes of war sway from one side to the other. Here no devil nor angel can intervene. The individual becomes his own friend and also his own enemy. At each blow for or against, it is he alone who must bear the brunt and agony of it and so continue till the eyes become incapable of tears and the self is emplaced firmly in the true.

In the fight for mastery, the disciple oftentimes forgets that the impersonal can be reached only through the region of the higher mind. It is not to be contacted on the physical plane. It functions on the plane of ideas from where its influence percolates through and acts upon the physical, provided the physical is willing. The impersonal dwells on ideas that synthesize and bind. It seeks to add its force to any movement that exists anywhere in the world for the strengthening of human faith in the doctrine of Universal Brotherhood. Its own essence of ONENESS and solidarity precludes

it from desiring baubles for itself. Possessions, status, wealth have a value only when they are compared with the quantum possessed by others. They require the odious comparison of their being owned in larger or smaller measure by oneself vis-à-vis another.

Practice demands that at each turn the upsurge of the personal be held up to the scrutiny of the impersonal. In the preliminary stages, the student has to imitate in action the qualities and the marks of that impersonal. Such exercise is highly distasteful to the personality which, to escape the bridle, is liable to feign illness or to stampede and rebel and go through all the antics that an animal adopts when under the compulsion of training. It is then a question as to whose will shall ultimately dominate—that of the brute energy that is aroused to lashing point by the awareness that is being trapped into losing its freedom, or that of the trainer who refuses to consider defeat even though for long periods the animal proves intractable.

The impersonal has to be evoked, its habitat made ready to suit its functioning. You cannot be the possessor of a vast all-comprehending charity and still have the desire to live on the love of others. You cannot serve in the true sense until you have renounced all rewards. You cannot expect to have divine powers released to you as long as you do not so impersonalize the use of the powers you already possess that at no time will you by their use break or violate the laws of universal brotherhood. These considerations are preliminary and the truth which lies behind them has to be acknowledged before any search for the impersonal can be undertaken.

Now, the voice of the personal cannot reach to the impersonal until the personality is able to throw its voice on to that plane on which the impersonal resides. Every aspiration upwards, every effort at emulating the impersonal, establishes a bridge along which communication can be established. The impersonal has a voice, but the ears have to be tuned to its frequency before the first sounds can be heard.

Unless the student sees the impersonal within himself, he will fail to perceive it in others. To one who is steeped in personal

considerations, the acts of the impersonal appear jejune and futile, acts of sacrifice that can only end in suffering, a renouncing that would banish pleasure and leave no comfort behind.

How can one mount to impersonality? *Light on the Path* gives the answer in a series of paradoxes:

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|------|-------------------------------------|---|
| i | Kill out ambition. | But work as those work who are ambitious. |
| ii | Kill out desire of life. | But respect life as those do who desire it. |
| iii | Kill out desire of comfort. | But be happy as those are who live for happiness. |
| iv | Kill out all sense of separateness. | But stand alone and isolated. |
| v | Kill out desire for sensation. | But learn from sensation and observe it. |
| vi | Kill out the hunger for growth. | But grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. |
| vii | Desire power ardently. | But that power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men. |
| viii | Desire peace fervently. | But the peace you shall desire is that sacred peace which nothing can disturb. |
| ix | Desire possessions above all. | But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. |

The accredited agent of the Masters of Wisdom when referring to herself said that she was only the window through which the light came. This is impersonality *in excelsis*. This is an example that students can emulate.

THE LAND OF SLEEP

THROUGHOUT history and legend, many references have been made to dreams—generally to prophetic dreams or dreams of warning. Sometimes references have been made to dreams about a dead friend or relative, bringing comfort to the dreamer, and to allegorical dreams. Many of these latter are not always easy of interpretation. Man has from very ancient times realized that something happens to him during sleep. But what this is, he does not know. Let us ask a few questions and see if we can gain some light on the subject.

Where is man's consciousness focused at night?

What functions during sleep?

Why do dreams vary from the sublime to the ridiculous?

What use are dreams?

To answer these questions we have to consider the teachings of Theosophy on the subject of man and his constitution, and if we wish to learn through dreams we must practise the methods suggested.

First, man's awareness of his surroundings is possible only by his recognition of "myself and other things." What makes him think of himself as being separate from others is, first, his body with its openings or sense organs. If a man is blind, deaf, disabled, his environment is unknown to him to the extent of his disability. But man also has an inner nature. He is aware not only of the things he can touch, taste, smell, etc., but also of his feelings and thoughts. These he can, when awake, ponder over and discuss with others. He knows that his thoughts are subjective, that his feelings affect his thoughts and also his body. But, when he sleeps, his bodily senses do not send messages to him, thoughts induced by the outer world do not affect him, his outer environment is not felt or seen. (The exception to this is when some disturbance is sufficiently strong to awaken the sleeping man partly.) But where is his awareness when it has left the body? This brings us to our second question.

What functions in man during sleep? We know that the bodily

senses are not functioning, that the brain is not being used, that memory is latent; all except the automatic, organic functions of the bodily machine, such as circulation, heart beats, etc., are dormant and at rest. During waking life there is a constant telegraphic communication between the physical brain and the inner man or the Ego; and at night also such a telegraphic communication is open, though little used, since the brain is not a single organ of matter but has, like all other things, seven layers of receptivity. The will is inactive during sleep. When we are awake the voice of our Ego, the inner man, *can* reach the personality as the voice of conscience, but during sleep the Ego lives its own life and does not contact the outer plane. To understand this we shall have to see what Theosophy teaches about the state of sleep.

It is necessary to familiarize ourselves fully with the fact that the physical body we use is a machine. Machine parts wear out. Machine parts, when active, become heated and it becomes necessary to let them rest. Our body functions by means of the life force, *Prana*, which flows through it. We are told that at the end of a day our body seems, to a clairvoyant, to be surrounded by a mist of golden-orange hue, composed of atoms which whirl with an almost incredible spasmodic rapidity. This is because the person is too strongly saturated with *Prana*, the life force. If the body is to be healthy, therefore, it becomes necessary to stop the strain imposed on it during the daytime by the rest of sleep, so that it may recover its balanced relationship with the life force. To a clairvoyant it would appear, when refreshed by sleep, to be surrounded by rhythmical vibrations of the life currents, golden, blue and rosy. These are the electrical waves of Life, no longer jumbled, but harmonious.

During waking life other constituents of our make-up, besides the body, get worn out. Our desire and passional nature has been active and must rest; our thoughts have engrossed us; our will or aspirations may have been stretched almost to breaking point. These, too, must have rest. In the article on "Seership" we are told:

Jagrata—our waking state, in which all our physical and vital organs, senses, and faculties find their necessary exercise and development, is needed to prevent the physical organization from collapsing.

Swapna—dream state, in which are included all the various states of consciousness between *Jagrata* and *Sushupti*, such as somnambulism, trance, dreams, visions, etc.—is necessary for the physical faculties to enjoy rest, and for the lower emotional and astral faculties to live, become active, and develop.

Sushupti state comes about in order that the consciousness of both *Jagrata* and *Swapna* states may enjoy rest, and for the fifth principle which is the one active in *Sushupti*, to develop itself by appropriate exercise. (*The Heart Doctrine*, p. 92)

We note here that the fifth principle, *Manas* or mind, is the one that functions in *Sushupti* and, we are told, can "develop itself." The difference between the mind and its vehicles or avenues of expression should be noted. In sleep, the mind leaves the *Jagrat* state (waking consciousness in the body), leaves *Swapna* (the dreaming consciousness) and, so to say, enters into its own world where it is unhindered and may "develop itself by appropriate exercise."

The words "appropriate exercise" and "develop" are arresting. What exercise? How can the mind be developed? In *Sushupti*, Mr. Judge says, "there are subjective and objective states, or classes of knowledge and experience." Since the language of the Ego is that of colour, we need to learn that language in order to understand it. In the deep-sleep condition or *Sushupti*, the personal mind free from *Kama* is on a plane analogous to that of *Devachan*, that of illuminated mind, and is helped and purified even if it does not understand to the full what is happening, being in a half-dazed condition.

With this in mind we can try to understand in general what dreams are and why they vary from the sublime to the ridiculous.

Ordinary confused dreams, called idle visions, are caused by the desires awakened into chaotic activity by the slumbering reminiscences of the lower *Manas*. During sleep, *Kama* and lower *Manas* receive and send out electric shocks from and to the various

nerve centres. The brain hardly registers them, unless the impression is strong enough, and they are stored in the memory without order or sequence. On waking, these impressions fade out gradually.

Real dreams are stray pages torn out from the life of the inner man, the higher Ego. Our dim recollections of these thoughts and deeds of the inner man during the deep-sleep condition are distorted on waking by our physical memory. The Ego, the real man, lives its own life when it becomes free from the trammels of matter, but the personality, with its brain and thinking apparatus, is paralysed more or less completely. Therefore the physical man cannot be conscious during dreams.

Real dreams are sometimes of a prophetic nature or are dreams of warning. If the Higher Self wishes an idea to reach the waking consciousness, then it impresses it deeply on our memory, and when we awake we are able to recall it. If the sympathetic tie between the Ego and the personality and the brain is not sufficiently strong for this to be done, then the message or the warning may be impressed on another person, whose brain is porous enough.

We must now take note of the effect of memory on dreams, the effect of thoughts, desires, emotions; for, just as bad digestion or mental troubles will produce nightmares and chaotic dreams, so desires and thoughts which have filled our waking consciousness and disturbed our astral counterpart will distort our dreams.

The memory of the sleeper, H.P.B. has said,

is like an Aeolian seven-stringed harp; and his state of mind may be compared to the wind that sweeps over the chords. The corresponding strings of the harp will respond to that one of the seven states of mental activity in which the sleeper was before falling asleep. If it is a gentle breeze, the harp will be affected but little; if a hurricane, the vibrations will be proportionately powerful. If the personal Ego is in touch with its higher principles and the veils of the higher planes are drawn aside, all is well; if on the contrary it is of a materialistic animal nature, there will be probably no dreams; or if the memory by chance catch the breath of a "wind" from a higher plane, seeing that it will be impressed through the sensory ganglia of the

cerebellum, and not by the direct agency of the spiritual Ego, it will receive pictures and sounds so distorted and inharmonious that even a Devachanic vision would appear a nightmare or grotesque caricature.

The higher memory of the spiritual Ego is imprinted in the *Akasa*. The memory of the animal man is impressed in the Astral Light, the dregs of *Akasa* or the Universal Ideation. The Astral Light is the medium between that Ideation and our thought-faculties. For this reason we see the need for purifying our thoughts and feelings so that they are not impressed on the lowest plane of the Astral Light, that storehouse of all human and especially psychic iniquities.

It is necessary to remember that if the Astral Light is the medium between the higher and the lower and we have to pass through it before awakening, as also on our way to *Sushupti*, we must cut a channel through it so as to remain unaffected by those iniquities. This channel is made during waking life by directing our thoughts towards the Ego. Especially when we get ready for sleep should our brain be impressed with a spiritual idea, our emotions given a devotional bent and our thoughts placed on the highest that we know.

Why should we bother about dreams? What use are they? What use is knowledge about them? Bad dreams teach us to look after our thoughts and feelings and to view the coming day with extra care. Good dreams have to be analysed to see whether they are of value—whether they are deceptive and soul-stupefying, or really inspiring.

It is not by asking others to interpret our dreams that we learn. Each man has his own symbols through which he expresses himself, and he alone can interpret his dreams.

There is no one who has never dreamed. With most of us, dreams vanish suddenly upon waking, which only means that whatever happened during the hours of sleep did not impress itself on the brain sufficiently to be remembered.

TRUE DETACHMENT

“Be *in* the world but not *of* the world.”

FOR all student-practitioners of the Wisdom-Religion, the above words are very important and significant. Theosophy exists today to enable men and women to live *in* the world, but above and beyond the ways *of* the world. Theosophy condemns the idea of running away from the world, neglecting all duties and obligations, in the belief that thus one may be free from the yoke of karma. Such a selfish choice can never bring true spiritual freedom. Theosophy always emphasizes the right performance of every duty, to be free from the subjection of the lower, personal consciousness and kamic propensities; for this alone can free one from the bondage of personal existence. Otherwise, as soon as one returns to the world from his seclusion he would have to face again the enemies within and without. So it is best to live wherever and however one happens to be situated, follow the true precepts of the ageless wisdom, and fulfil one's responsibilities to the best of one's ability.

St. Paul advised his followers to “come out from among them and be...separate.” This does not mean a sense of superiority over others, nor isolation from them; it rather implies the giving up of a mode of thinking and of living which is world-oriented. *The Voice of the Silence* teaches us: “Give up thy life, if thou would'st live.” One has to change completely one's mode, one's attitude, one's way of life, and adapt oneself to the spiritual precepts given by all the great Teachers down the ages. Living *in* the world but not being *of* the world means becoming thoroughly detached from the lower self and living more and more in communion with the Divine Parent, the Higher Self, the ray of the Supreme Self. The lower self has to become a perfect instrument, a proper channel for the work of the Spirit within, for then only can it become the friend of the Higher Self and the conflict between the two will stop. What higher Lord can there be to give true guidance, solace and comfort?

It is essential to kill out all sense of separateness through a right understanding of the unity of the One Life, so naturally we look

upon a criminal, a drunkard, or a wicked person as an unfortunate brother; but brotherliness does not mean that one has to follow their habits. Similarly, a priest with his rituals and ceremonies, and a rank materialist denying spirit and soul in man, though brothers, are entirely opposed in their ideas. Similarity of aim, purpose and teaching is the necessary basis for the formation of a true brotherhood of those who live *in* the world yet are not *of* the world.

An excellent exemplar of such an attitude to life was King Janaka, who, though outwardly engaged in the affairs of State, was so detached from the worldly ways that he could lead the spiritual life of a Rajarishi. “He too, while *in* the world, was not *of* the world.” (See *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 12*, pp. 5-6)

“The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real.” So the beginning must be with the mind. It can enable one to go forward or backward, to be constructive or destructive, to do good or evil, etc. The seeds of Karma are generated in the mind, peace and war start in the mind. Therefore in the human kingdom it occupies an important position. The gift of mind was given to mindless men by the mind-born sons of Brahma in order that human beings may become divine beings, fully illuminated and enlightened, with hearts open to the suffering of others. The roots of suffering are in *trishna-tanha*, thirst for personal existence. When that is put out, the mind can occupy its own place in the human constitution, and with the divine light of Buddhi can become a power by itself.

Emerson says: “It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who, in the midst of the crowd, keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.” It is usual with the majority of people to live after the world's opinion, whether it be right or wrong, without any serious thinking or positive choices, just behaving like a flock of sheep. So one has to question the why and wherefore of any step and then make a decision. It is also easy to be in solitude and lead a quiet life according to one's own ideas. The difficulty comes when one lives in the world, amidst pleasure and pain, tests and trials, contacting other human beings, facing conflicts, disturbances of one kind or another, and yet keeping perfectly calm and independent.

Then it is that we live *in* the world but are not *of* the world. Where is the merit in keeping calm and peaceful in solitude? When everything is pleasant, it is easy to stay happy, but one has to be of good cheer in spite of the difficulties in the way.

This earth is known as the Hall of Sorrow and also as the Hall of Ignorance. It is in such a world that one is born, lives and dies. Herein are laid the traps to ensnare one's Ego by various types of delusions, the chief of which is the sense of separateness; therefore it is also known as the Hall of Ignorance. People are not aware of the true nature of the Ego and of the human constitution, and therefore they do not distinguish between the real and the unreal, the permanent and the transitory, the immortal and the mortal. Thus moves the wheel of life from the cradle to the grave, man ever following impulses from without instead of following the true guidance from within in accordance with the principles of the divine Instructors. Through deliberate ideation and action, the Hall of Sorrow can be transformed into the Hall of Joy, and the Hall of Ignorance into the Hall of Wisdom. These are states of consciousness and the man of mind alone can change, can raise his consciousness to a higher level, advancing step by step to the snow-capped mount of purity eternal. This cannot be done overnight, the great task is to be performed steadfastly and diligently through sustained daily efforts, and therefore are patience and perseverance so essential for the spiritual aspirant. This is what is meant by living *in* the world without being *of* the world.

To help nature and work on with her, understanding her great laws—the law of cause and effect, the law of cycles, the law of unity and harmony, the law of necessity—means to live *in* the world yet not be *of* the world. To rise above the pairs of opposites—success and failure, love and hate, heat and cold, pain and pleasure—and keep oneself equipoised, well balanced, is not to be *of* the world, though living *in* it.

Each one at his own stage, in his own circumstances, with his own make-up, physical, mental, moral, spiritual, can come out and leave behind this world of darkness and try to live in the world of light and truth, of wisdom and compassion, of peace and joy.

THE EVOLUTIONARY LAW

The philosophy of that law in Nature, which implants in man as well as in every beast a passionate, inherent, and instinctive desire for freedom and self-guidance, pertains to psychology.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 484

...the great evolutionary Law...must finally prevail because it is the Law of the Deity, an expression of the nature and being of the Unknown, which nature is towards manifestation, self-realization, and re-absorption.

—*Letters That Have Helped Me*

IN these two quotations is epitomized the whole history of evolution, material, mental, spiritual. But to understand them as a practical guide to daily living, the help of H.P.B.'s first book, *Isis Unveiled*, is needed. There we have the key which will help us in the understanding of many things which are otherwise puzzling. The first important truth we learn is that Law works throughout Nature. The corollary to this, "There is no miracle," has to be accepted at least as a hypothesis.

The question then arises: How does this Law work, and why? It works because there is but one common vital principle which pervades all things. This common vital principle can be controlled by the perfected human will.

In order to begin this task, it is necessary to know the vital principle and its field of operation, which includes not only the human being but also Nature *in toto*. Hence H.P.B. gave the second and third Items in *Isis Unveiled*, showing the threefold aspects of Nature and of Man.

To understand further the practical aspect of this information it is necessary to turn to the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*, where the manifested Universe is said to be composed of Spirit, Matter and Fohat. It is the knowledge of Fohat as "the dynamic energy of Cosmic Ideation...the animating principle electrifying every atom into life," which gives the key to progress.

What has man to do with Fohat? A more thorough familiarity with what is said under “Kamadeva” in *The Theosophical Glossary* is necessary. “Desire first arose in IT, which was the primal germ of mind.” Kama in its pure form is that desire which is “for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE.”

It is this same Desire which “Sages, searching with their intellect, have discovered in their heart to be the bond which connects Entity with non-Entity,” or Manas with pure Atma-Buddhi. Make Desire, Fohat (the intelligent medium, the guiding power of all manifestation) and Will a three-in-one, a unity, and we have the secret of success.

The Universal Mind manifesting as human consciousness has to seek within the heart for universal good and love, and has to learn how to help all beings and to become part of that infinite tender compassion and mercy as a self-conscious unit.

What is consciousness? It is that which passes through the lower kingdoms of Nature, urged on by natural law which ever strives towards perfection, and which in the human kingdom has to work by self-induced ways and means. But wrapped up as it is in the material form evolved in those past ages when the tamasic element of cohesion as also sensation and instinct came to birth, it has to elevate these faculties by turning them towards their proper uses in their new environment in the human kingdom. The human faculty of self-awareness has to understand its material vehicle, its astral counterpart, and the power of the Spirit functioning within, namely, the will, which is said to be Spirit in action. All of man’s faculties and vehicles must be brought under the control of his true will; that is, the desire to know and understand the goal of evolution has to be the foremost driving force. He is now his own creator. Wisdom says he must follow natural law if he would create aright; therefore he must learn how that law functions in all the constituents of his being.

Knowledge of Nature and of man in their inner aspects is said to be the science of magic; its application in practice is the art of magic. Used rightly, spiritual wisdom is born; used wrongly, black magic is the result. Right use requires an “*all-embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness.” But knowledge is also required so that right application may result—knowledge of magnetism and electricity and their effects on all matter, especially on the animal kingdom and man. Wrong desire leads to wrong action which is the opposite of “infinite tender compassion and mercy”; that is, any feeling of selfishness or self-centredness—“myself against the world”—taints all action.

The real field of action is the invisible region, primarily the astral. Says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 644):

It is a law of occult dynamics that “a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence.”

There are three stages of growth: manifestation, self-realization and reabsorption. The impelling force is the inherent, instinctive desire for freedom and self-guidance. Reabsorption cannot mean the giving up of self-guidance or of freedom; it must surely mean that self-guidance has become All-SELF guidance, freedom has become union with the ALL, because the individual unit has realized his oneness with the great universal Life and has become a channel for the Law of that Life.

Though all has to be gained by self-effort, there is the dark side. The urge towards freedom and self-guidance often leads to complete lack of restraint and separates man from Nature and from his fellow men, as also from his own spiritual heart. The material and lower part of man is an animal. The inner man has to “domesticate” it as he does some species of the animal kingdom. Through the “blows” of Karma man learns how to domesticate his animal vehicle to some extent, but when he loses all restraint over it he falls even lower than the animal. It is necessary to learn the laws of life, to

know what our goal is and what is the quickest way to reach it. Then comes the hard task of disciplining the lower in terms of the higher, with compassion, not with the whip!

Step by step Nature proceeds, and so does man. To “adapt our thought and ideas to our plastic potency” it is necessary to begin now with the small duties and events of life, with the eradication of the little faults and the development of the little virtues. With the ideal before us and proceeding step by step, we shall see how evolution works outwardly and inwardly. For the silent, steady working of the inner change in thought and knowledge we have to have trust and reliance in LAW. The painter or sculptor has to have a design first in his mind. To reproduce it in outer materials, time and patience, effort and knowledge are needed. Thus we can recreate ourselves according to any pattern we desire.

THE laws and principles of existence—the true rationale of life—are presented by Theosophy; hence, each man’s contact with it is alike an opportunity and a responsibility, to which he has been brought under Karma. He can make the most of it, or he may neglect it so as to fail to obtain or extend benefit. His refusal to take advantage of it now will make him less determined in some other life to carry out the purpose of his nature, which is defeated presently if he neglects, *under any circumstances or pressure*, that which he sees to be leading him in the right direction. But always there are those who will test Theosophy out in their own lives, and learn what it is, and will carry on the work to the last end. They in their good time must come to be the leaders and pioneers of humanity, which must learn, even though the learning takes centuries of suffering. If the light of pure Theosophy is kept burning clear, it will be the saving light of the whole world. That must be. But the question is, who will be the light-bearers?

—ROBERT CROSBIE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The recognition of the spiritual dimension of health by the World Health Organization (WHO) is a landmark event, writes Dr. Alok Pandey in his Editorial in *Namah* (October 15, 2002). Yet the full import and significance of this fundamental aspect of human existence has still to be grasped, he says:

The reason is very simple. The spiritual dimension is still a concealed possibility in the race as a whole. Even though its emergence is the inevitable next step in Nature’s scheme of things, yet it is a slow emergence. There have been individuals, no doubt, who have experienced a greater spiritual consciousness. It is also true that such individuals have cut across the barriers of race and gender, language and culture. Yet for the majority of humankind, the spiritual dimension still remains a possibility which many do not care to explore....

We can attempt to define the spiritual dimension as the highest perfection man is capable of through self-evolution....The Sanskrit word for health, “*Swasth*,” literally means “rooted in the (true) Self.” That is to say, true health exists only when man’s consciousness is firmly fixed in the spiritual self, the “*Sva*.” Short of it, there can be absence of disease, or physical prowess and fitness, but not health. Dr. Bisht rightly pointed out in his recommendation to the WHO, “there is something more in man which marks him apart,” and that “something more” is not just the maximum development of his mind through education and learning, but the wisdom and power of his soul....

The task therefore before us is not just the relief of symptoms but to seek deeper into the layers of our psychology where the roots of health and illness lie. The illness is a crisis point which leads us, as if by Nature’s irony, to the doors of our own concealed possibilities. We suppress one form of illness but another returns. It is so because we have failed to take note of the hint and refused to learn from the wisdom of Mother Nature. We can avoid this responsibility of learning what Nature intends to teach, only at our own peril. We can ignore the lesson

and the leading, only to face the threat of extinction. But if we are not only to survive but to progress and evolve beyond our religions and our bombs, then we must open the doors to this greater and vaster spiritual consciousness and allow its influx in us. It is in this spiritual emergence that lies our hope and future as a race. The spiritual dimension holds the key to the enigma called man and the solution to the paradox called life.

Students of Theosophy who know of the electric and magnetic nature of the astral body, the model for the physical, cannot but be struck by what present-day researchers are beginning to say. It has been proved that the body's inner, natural electric fields play a key role in its ability to heal itself. Researchers are now concentrating on enhancing these natural fields in order to speed up healing.

Cell migration and division plays a key role in development and healing, and several studies have shown that applying even external electric fields can affect and boost the healing of wounds, spinal cord injuries, etc. Enhancing the *natural* field, however, is more effective. The findings of Colin McCaig's team at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland are reported in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*. The team found that healing was faster when the electric field was boosted, and slower when it was decreased. Stronger fields also encourage cells to divide. "It's a big step forward to help biologists believe that the fields are important," says McCaig.

Electricity is Life itself, the Primal Cause of all, the vivifier of all things (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 258). It has long been known that life and electricity are indissolubly connected. The electricity generated spontaneously by living beings as part of their natural life processes is fascinating scientists, and researchers today have come a long way towards understanding the intricate chemical processes through which it is released in the living cells of humans, animals and plants.

Whatever the uses to which biological electricity may be put, there looms on the horizon of present scientific knowledge a

problem which will require investigation along *metaphysical* lines: Whence this electric power, and what is the ultimate nature and essence of the electric fluid? Is the electricity generated by a living body the result merely of chemical actions? In its highest aspect it is *Anima Mundi*, "the divine essence which pervades, animates and informs all, from the smallest atom of matter to man and god." In its lowest aspect it is Astral Light.

Study of twins, especially identical twins, continues to intrigue scientists, and the nature-nurture debate goes on. The Twins Days Festival held each year in Twinsburg, Ohio, U.S.A., is a unique event that includes parades, contests, and draws a lot of attention—even from medical researchers who come there to perform physical and psychological studies on twin subjects. Last August, over 3000 sets of twins showed up at the festival.

Kristin Ohlson writes in *New Scientist* (5 October 2002) about the popularity of the festival and the ongoing research in this field:

Ten teams had set up stalls to sign up volunteers for twin studies, the classic way of investigating whether a particular medical or psychological trait is determined by nature or nurture. It's a research tool that is enjoying a burst of popularity. Now twin studies are being used to calculate the heritability of everything from breast cancer to right-wing political views. Last year, for example, researchers at St. Thomas' Hospital in London declared that a key aspect of musical ability, pitch perception, was 76 per cent down to our genes....

But not everyone is so enthusiastic about twin studies and some people are downright hostile. Critics claim that the whole nature-nurture debate is wrong-headed—prompted by people who want to prove that social inequalities are down to our genes, not our culture. And they challenge it on more fundamental grounds too. To ask whether a feature is down to nature or nurture is meaningless, they argue, as nearly every trait you care to mention is affected by both. Are twin studies, a late

19th-century invention, sophisticated enough to investigate such complex interactions in the era of molecular biology and the Human Genome Project?...

Just because new molecular techniques to study genetics have arrived on the scene, that doesn't mean twin studies are behind the times. In fact, they are proving more powerful than ever. Researchers can now use new forms of twin studies to learn the precise mechanisms that lie behind individual differences. "The stuff we're doing now involves looking at the DNA in more detail," says Tim Spector, director of twin research at St. Thomas Hospital in London, which has Britain's largest medical register of twins....Twins are emerging as the ideal tool for probing complex gene-environment interactions.

Science recognizes nothing except material heredity and environment to explain the similar characteristics of twins. While it is true that the personalities of some sets of identical twins seem to be almost the same, no amount of research will yield satisfactory answers along the mechanistic lines of heredity and environmental influences. Apart from mere physical likeness, there seems to be an amazing affinity between the sequences of events which mark the journey of the twins through the years. Identical twins, even those separated from birth, seem to have elements of their psychic nature in common, which enables communication on the astral plane in a manner not customary for the average person. Mental telepathy between such twins is not uncommon, and there are cases on record where a mishap suffered by one twin inflicts pain and suffering on the other, regardless of the distance separating them at the time. It is undoubted that the destiny of identical twins is closely linked by Karma—the result, perhaps, of an intimate rapport established in prior lives. The explanation of similar life patterns and close psychic affinities in terms of Karma and Reincarnation requires thought.

"In nature, function and design are interblended," says Bittu Sahgal,

Editor of *Sanctuary* magazine. He goes further and states that "the dividing line between science and art is thin," as anyone who has observed nature as it should be observed will confirm. Everything is connected, and all designs have their own stories to tell:

Some, such as the scales on insects, or the claws of birds, have been used in the animal world for millions of years. They have endured precisely because they work so well. The exoskeletons of bugs and beetles and crustaceans, for example, are elegant in their functional simplicity. Or consider the domed carapace of the turtle, smooth yet hard, virtually impregnable yet streamlined. In nature, function and form go hand in hand and colour is a part of the design, often a survival imperative in a world populated by enemies.

Perhaps the most exquisite example of functional also being beautiful is that of the butterfly....Equally beautiful, provided you can see it that way, is plain, ordinary sand on a beach....Or consider the fish. Its scales protect a soft body. Scale shapes vary according to the species, but they will invariably be positioned one overlapping the other like the tiles on a roof. Experts can tell the age of a fish from their scales....

The next time you see a leaf, examine it under a magnifying glass. The leaf is life itself. Leaves are organic solar collectors. They are designed to act as the food factories of living plants.

There are designs in nature all around us. All of them are functional. And all are beautiful. All we need to do is tap into this beauty to enrich our lives.

What causes these designs in nature? The whole of nature, animate and seemingly inanimate, evolves on parallel lines, we are told, and "draws its attributes from above as well as from below." Every physical particle "corresponds to and depends on its higher *noumenon*—the Being to whose essence it belongs." (*S.D.*, I, 218 fn.)

We see Cosmic matter scattering and forming itself into elements; grouped into the mystic four within the fifth element—Ether, the lining of Akasa, the Anima Mundi, or Mother of Kosmos. "Dots, Lines, Triangles, Cubes, Circles" and finally "Spheres"—why or how? Because, says the

Commentary, such is the first law of Nature, and because Nature geometrizes universally in all her manifestations. There is an inherent law—not only in the primordial, but also in the manifested matter of our phenomenal plane—by which Nature correlates her geometrical forms, and later, also, her compound elements; and in which there is no place for accident or chance. (*S.D.*, I, 97)

In an Editorial Note in *The Theosophist* for January 1882, H.P.B. stated: “In connection with the archaic legend of the Asian Sea and the Atlantic Continent, is it not profitable to note a fact known to all modern geologists—that the Himalayan slopes afford geological proof, that the substance of those lofty peaks was once a part of an ocean floor?”

How did the Himalayas arise? *Panda Bulletin* (No. 14), published by World Wide Fund for Nature—India, has this to say:

Approximately 20 million years ago India was connected to the southeastern tip of Africa. Stresses in the earth’s crust resulted in the development of a rift between them. India broke free and began drifting north as part of the Indo-Australian Plate. The leading edge of the plate was oceanic crust. Several millions of years later this leading oceanic edge collided with the Eurasian Plate and began to be thrust upward. Eventually, the deep sea floor of the Indo-Australian Plate rose above sea level, and the Himalayas were born! Today, India continues its push northward. The Himalayas, once the deep sea floors of the ancient Tethys Sea, are now a majestic terrestrial mountain range. Imagine the surprise of geologists when they discovered the fossilized remains of ancient sea creature at the top of the world....

The continents were said to have formed a single mass at one point of time. From this single mass, today’s continents have “drifted” apart from each other over a period of millions of years....

About 250 million years ago, all the earth’s land was a single

super-continent called Pangea, which was surrounded by a large ocean. Around 200 million years ago (also known as the Middle Permian Period), an extensive sea stretched along the latitudinal area presently occupied by the Himalayas. This sea was named the Tethys. Around this period, the super continent Pangea began to gradually split into different land masses and move apart in different directions.

The Earth’s geography has changed many times as the result of cataclysmic changes. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

Violent minor cataclysms and colossal earthquakes are recorded in the annals of most nations—if not all. Elevation and subsidence of continents is always in progress. The whole coast of South America has been raised up 10 to 15 feet and settled down again in an hour. Huxley has shown that the British islands have been four times depressed beneath the ocean and subsequently raised again and peopled. The Alps, Himalayas and Cordilleras were all the result of depositions drifted on to sea-bottoms and upheaved by Titanic forces to their present elevation. The Sahara was the basin of a Miocene sea....*Why may not a gradual change have given place to a violent cataclysm in remote epochs*—such cataclysms occurring on a *minor scale* even now? (II, 787 fn.)

It is not politicians, or those at the helm of affairs in the nations, who can bring about right human relations—individual, communal, national and international—but the men and women of goodwill everywhere. A pamphlet distributed by World Goodwill, *The Challenge of International Unity*, outlines the principle of unity and offers guidelines for action:

We, humanity as a whole, are learning the hard way that we all go up together or we all go down together. International unity is fast becoming a necessity even for the strongest nations....

The key to humanity’s trouble over the past two hundred

years has been to take and not to give, to accept and not to share, to grasp and not to distribute. This is contrary to all accepted standards of behaviour in an increasingly interdependent world....

People in every land are beginning to realize that they are largely responsible for what is wrong, and that their inertness and lack of right action and thinking has led to the present unhappy state of affairs.

The word “spiritual” does not belong only to the churches or to the world religions. The churches are themselves in some cases great capitalistic systems....It is no longer possible to separate human affairs from spiritual reality and selfless living. The changing of the old order, the awakening of humanity to new possibilities and the purification of the political and economic arena, are today the factors of the greatest spiritual value....

Men and women of goodwill form a world group, standing for right human relations. They thus create a world public opinion. Steadily and regularly the public should be taught in internationalism and a world unity which is based on simple goodwill and on co-operative interdependence.

A HUMAN being is part of a whole, called by us the “universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest—a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few people near us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN