

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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TO "APPEAR AS NOTHING IN THE EYES OF MEN"

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That power which the disciple shall covet is that which shall make him appear as nothing in the eyes of men.

—*Light on the Path*

THESE words from *Light on the Path* have doubtless seemed to many "a hard saying," understandable as they are in the light of the first of the "Notes" included in that work of which it was written in *Lucifer* for December 1888 (Vol. III, p. 347):

This little book—a true jewel—belongs to, and emanates from the same school of Indo-Aryan and Buddhist thought and learning as the teachings in the SECRET DOCTRINE.

In that first note it was stated that "Ambition is the first curse: the great tempter of the man who is rising above his fellows." And it was added:

It is the simplest form of looking for reward. Men of intelligence and power are led away from their higher possibilities by it continually. Yet it is a necessary teacher. Its results turn to dust and ashes in the mouth; like death and estrangement it shows the man at last that to work for self is to work for disappointment.

Nevertheless, "A strange power indeed to covet!" will be the reaction to the opening quotation in this article on the part of the

A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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unthinking many, perhaps of the majority, including, paradoxically, not a few who have acquired that power without desiring it in the least; perhaps, indeed, without the slightest suspicion that others may be so regarding them!

To make one's mark in the world, to be recognized as "Somebody," if not as a Very Important Person, is almost certainly, however unconsciously to themselves, the hope behind the efforts of many a social climber, no less than of many a business magnate and many a politician, and even of not a few writers, composers and artists, however mixed in the better of these with the worthier motive of sharing their dreams and insights with the less sensitive majority.

Honest self-examination should reveal this weakness of the personality, in which so many share. Who does not feel a quick surge of resentment, even though unexpressed, at any evidence of others' regarding us with disesteem or—perhaps even harder for the sensitive to bear—with amused tolerance? Such a tell-tale sign should not be passed over by the sincere aspirant.

How many even of those familiar with the *Letters That Have Helped Me* have seriously put themselves to the test of trying to apply the directions given in the first of the extracts in the section entitled "On Occult Philosophy"? It is a serious test that Mr. Judge proposes and the difficulty experienced by one who tries it will show him how far he has so far been from coveting the power to appear in others' eyes as nothing. It is there suggested:

Begin by trying to conquer the habit, almost universal, of pushing yourself forward. This arises from personality. Do not monopolize the conversation. Keep in the background. If someone begins to tell you about himself and his doings, do not take first chance to tell him about yourself, but listen to him and talk solely to bring him out. And when he has finished suppress in yourself the desire to tell about yourself, your opinions and experiences.... Try to recollect that you are a very small affair in the world, and that the people around do not value you at all and grieve not when you are absent. Your only true greatness lies in your inner true self and it is not desirous

of obtaining the applause of others.

And how truly was it added:

If you will follow these directions for one week you will find they will take considerable effort, and you will begin to discover a part of the meaning of the saying, "Man, know thyself."

Unwise is the aspirant who, confronted with the result of this test, concedes the stronghold that this weakness has upon him but takes refuge in the delusion that it is after all a minor fault, even "an amiable weakness," as if there were any such! That the contrary is the case was indicated by Madame Blavatsky when she wrote in *The Key to Theosophy* that in almost every case the cause of people's turning against the Theosophical Society and its leaders in her day was "wounded vanity in some form or other.... Generally, because their *dicta* and advice are not taken as final and authoritative.... Because, in short, they cannot bear to stand second to anybody in anything."

In *Letters That Have Helped Me* "the word of Masters" was quoted: "He who does what he can and all that he can, and all that he knows how to do, does enough for us," and it was explained that "this task includes that of divesting yourself of all personality through interior effort, because that work, if done in the right spirit, is even more important to the race than any outward work we can do."

Frank self-praise is rather ludicrous, and has been held up to ridicule in the couplet:

I am the master of this college
And what I don't know is not knowledge.

This invites the smile of derision even from the hapless student of this paragon in his own eyes; but self-praise, in however poor taste it be, seems less contemptible than the self-depreciation that but too plainly looks for contradiction from the hearer. Both weaknesses, however, should reveal to him who has them the strength of his own *ahankaric* tendencies.

In “Some Words on Daily Life” included in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 22*, a Master of Wisdom called for forgetting SELF in working for others, and for heeding only the praise or blame of the God within one’s own soul, called “the HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS.”

The verdicts of the self-appointed “judges,” including, alas, some who, being students of Masters’ Teachings, should know better, can be impersonally considered for such truth as they may contain, applied when seen to be just, and otherwise ignored.

The humble and sincere aspirant leaves to the crowd such satisfaction as it may give them to proclaim, “Behold, I know,” as know perhaps indeed they do the “Doctrine of the Eye.” It is “they who in humbleness have garnered,” who low confess, “Thus have I heard,” the followers of the “Doctrine of the Heart,” who are named in *The Voice of the Silence* as “the elect.” These are they who have been able to “discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the everlasting...to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom.”

The Dharma of the “Eye” is the embodiment of the external, and the non-existing.

The Dharma of the “Heart” is the embodiment of Bodhi, the Permanent and Everlasting.

“Great Sifter” is the name of the “Heart Doctrine,” O Disciple.

And, among the worthless husks that are driven by “the wheel of the Good Law...from out the golden grain” must surely be the craving of the personality for notice and for praise.

Meanwhile the world of real Occultists smiles silently, and goes on with its laborious process of sifting out the *living germs* from the masses of men. *For occultists must be found and fostered and prepared for coming ages when power will be needed* and pretensions go for naught.

BACK of tranquillity lies always conquered unhappiness.

—DAVID GRAYSON

THE MEANING OF SUFFERING

THE commonest experience of life is connected with suffering. All men and women suffer; the pang of the heart, the agony of the mind, the disease of the body, are all too common. In ourselves or in others, suffering leaps to our eyes and strikes our ears at every turn. It is said that “the poor already ye have with you,” and that saying expresses the fact that suffering is ever present. But it expresses something more, namely, the common belief that poverty is the cause of sorrow and suffering. Further still, a reflection on the saying is indicative of human forgetfulness that not only sorrow and poverty are with us, but riches and wealth are also with us; and if poverty symbolizes suffering, opulence ought to symbolize happiness.

Let us pause for a moment on the universality and omnipresence not only of suffering, but of that which Emerson calls its “compensatory aspect,” *i.e.*, pleasure. Each one of us has sorrow in his life, but each also has his share of happiness and pleasure. If we harp on our poverty and misery and forget our joys and happiness, it is because of a psychological reason. We humans are awakened much more by our pains and sorrows than by our pleasurable experiences; we sit up and take notice when things go wrong; happiness for ourselves seems natural to us. Within our own soul there is Bliss or *Ananda*, and therefore it seems quite natural to experience joy, but this naturalness has bred a kind of apathy. We take our pleasures for granted and do not learn from them; but when pain and afflictions come, they awaken us.

Let us consider the idea held by so many that wealth is the womb of happiness and poverty begets suffering. False as it might seem, there is an underlying truth in this belief. We are apt, especially in this civilization when economics and politics are the dominating forces, to look upon wealth only from the point of view of bullion and stocks. We tend to overlook the important fact that the real value of money lies in the *use* we make of it—what we can purchase with it of comfort or what is loosely called

happiness. But there are other kinds of wealth. There is mental wealth as there is emotional purchase. For a small amount we can purchase a concert ticket and the joy and uplift we get out of a couple of hours of good music is almost disproportionate to the money we paid. Take a still more striking example: One can purchase a copy of the *Gita* or *Dhammapada* for a small amount of money, but the joy and inspiration one derives for days and months and years is almost illimitable. That of course depends on the purchaser's capacity to understand and enjoy such texts. So it is not just money that gives us enjoyment, but the power to use money to secure that which to us means happiness. This is an important idea and it is twofold: (1) Happiness depends not on money but on the use we make of money; (2) the capacity of using the money is *within* ourselves.

What is true of happiness is equally true of its opposite—suffering. Suffering is the result, not of economic poverty, but of lack of capacity to use that which we already possess and to obtain that which at present we do not possess. Next, the capacity of using our poverty is *within* ourselves.

We need not delay on this. The very common phenomenon of the rich who are unhappy, and of the poor who are contented and happy, further proves that the real source of happiness and suffering is within ourselves and that wealth is of many kinds—spiritual wealth of the heart, mental wealth of the head, and economic wealth which may be called the wealth created by the limbs of our body. These three kinds of wealth are related to three kinds of happiness and three kinds of suffering; but one thing is common to all three, and that is that the power or capacity to obtain and to use those wealths lies within ourselves. A person earns his living by the “sweat of his brow,” it is said; by his efforts he gets his food, clothing and shelter. But it is also said that one does not live by bread alone; one has to learn to create mental and spiritual wealth, and to make the right use of that wealth. To create wealth is one factor; to make the right use of it is another. There are many who earn good money, but they are not happy, nor have they banished misery and suffering

from their body, mind and heart.

The *Gita* teaches that “*light* and *darkness* are the world's eternal ways.” Good and evil are terms that can only be applied to the human kingdom. Nature as a whole is neither good nor evil. The light of day is not more or less valuable than the darkness of night; the flow of the tide is as valuable as the ebb; summer is as useful as winter, and so on. Spirit and Matter are not two different realities, but two poles of the One Life. Just as our globe, the Earth, has two poles, North Pole and South Pole, and without both there would be no globe, so also in the universe are Spirit and Matter. They are not good and evil; they are both necessary and useful.

Everywhere in Nature, in all things and all beings, Spirit and Matter exist. Representative aspects of both are present in every god and in every atom. Only the proportion of these aspects is different: in a god or *deva*, the Spirit aspect is more active than the matter aspect; in the mineral, the matter aspect is more active. In man, Spirit and Matter are both equally represented, are exactly balanced. As a result of this, there springs into being that which we call the thinking, reasoning, self-determining human soul. The Spirit aspect present everywhere is consciousness; the Matter aspect present everywhere is form or body. There is consciousness present everywhere in nature, as also matter in some form or another. But in man alone they reach a middle point, a balance position, and so the consciousness of man becomes self-consciousness. Spirit acquires the faculty of reflection, and thus man obtains that which we call free will. Because of the presence of free will, man has the power to choose and to determine. Being in that middle position, he can go in either of the two directions; he can soar spiritward or drift into the abyss of matter. It is man, and no one else, who is the creator of that which we call good and evil, happiness and suffering.

Man himself creates his own suffering. Why should man who desires happiness create suffering? The answer, simply put, is—because suffering is necessary. To understand and appreciate light, we need to experience darkness. To evaluate beauty, we need to contact ugliness. Similarly, to experience the supreme and sublime

bliss of *Nirvana*, we need to experience the sorrow and suffering of material existence. That is why we create suffering for ourselves.

How do we create suffering? Whatever suffering is ours today, was created by us in the past. We are reaping today the effects of seeds sown by us earlier. Weaknesses and ailments of the body, defects of character, limitations of the mind, are all the results of our own thoughts, feelings and actions. Past deeds, past desires, past ideas have produced our present body, character, mind, and also our circumstances and environment. By what precise method do we create these limitations? The Buddha answered that, and so does the *Gita*; and the answer of Theosophy is the same. The Buddha said that the cause of sorrow—the second of the Four Noble Truths—is desire; and the cause of desire is *tanha* or *trishna*. *Kama*, the force of desire, creates evil and suffering. Theosophy gives a full explanation. The very first idea to grasp, and which is often neglected, is that if *Kama*, desire, produces suffering and sorrow, its reverse must produce happiness and joy.

The force of desire is not wholly bad. In Hindu mystical philosophy, Kamadeva is the highest and noblest of manifesting or creating powers. Kamadeva is the first conscious, all-embracing desire for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy. “Desire first arose in It”—the Brahman—says the hymn of the *Rig-Veda*. In our minds some confusion arises because the *Kama* that is known to us is low and evil. Passions and desires of weak and wicked men and women are recognized by us all, but there is the higher aspect of desire. Let us call it Aspiration. Good, noble, unselfish desires elevate a person, just as low desires drag him down to hell. If *Kama*, *Krodha*, *Lobha*—desire, anger, covetousness—are the gates of Hell, as the *Gita* teaches, then Compassion, which is the reverse of passion, Patience, the reverse of anger, Generosity, the reverse of greed, are the gates to heaven.

So we create suffering by the force of desires, and we create happiness by the force of aspirations. Desires and aspirations are our two forces. Low desires the Greeks symbolized as Cupid.

Cupid, the god of love, is blind, so it is said that love is blind; it stands for lower desires or passions. But the Greeks had another god of love, Eros, and Eros is the compassionate Kamadeva; he is not blind. Aspirations have eyes; desires alone are blind. We create suffering by low desires, because of our ignorance and our obstinacy. In the life of each one of us there are two types of suffering—one kind due to ignorance, *Maya*; another kind due to obstinacy rooted in *Moha*. *Maya* is illusion; *Moha* is delusion. We make a mistake ignorantly and bring suffering upon ourselves. When we refuse to learn the lesson of our mistake and obstinately persist in it, we bring upon ourselves greater misery and suffering. Take an example: We come upon an experience which brings us pain; we come upon it because of our ignorance, but unless we find out and learn its meaning, we are bound to come upon it again. Alas! human beings go through the same experience and suffering a hundred times because they do not seek the meaning of their painful experience. This kind of suffering is the result of ignorance—*Avidya* and *Maya*.

But the second kind, rooted in *Moha*, comes upon us in a subtle way—“like a thief in the dark of night.” Because of ignorance of our own nature and of our human constitution, we are deluded by that which we call pleasure. Most men and women think of pleasure and happiness in terms of their five senses. For instance, what tastes good is eaten without any consideration of the value and virtue of the stuff; we indulge because it gives a thrill to our palate—then pain comes; we know it and yet continue to indulge in it. Thus evil tendencies are confirmed and roots of misery are strengthened.

The meaning of suffering has to be traced by us, every time, to ignorance or obstinacy. This vice of obstinacy is subtle. An obstinate person thinks he has a strong will; he is apt to make his vices look like virtues. Theosophy teaches that he has to acquire knowledge and give up his obstinacy in terms of knowledge and he will understand the meaning of suffering and be able to overcome it. It is this force of obstinacy that manifests as conservatism, as habits, as set modes and methods which obstruct. “This is my way of

life,” says the person, and he does not analyse if it is the right way, or inquire if there is a better way.

How to overcome suffering? To put it positively and constructively—by acquiring knowledge and by adaptability. Knowledge helps us to overcome the force of evil within our own blood, and in that force of evil suffering resides. Adaptability enables us to control the forces which act as irritants and arouse the evil in us—the evil we are trying to curb and control. Every student-practitioner of Theosophy knows that when by study and meditation he has composed himself, something happens and his equipoise is shaken. Our resources are within ourselves and by knowledge we learn to use them in outer life—that is adaptability.

So the first lesson is that suffering is necessary; it awakens the soul, it educates the real man. Suffering results from ignorance, from failure to learn from a previous experience of suffering. Obstinate persistence in old and outworn ways which no more can teach us, and which we know to be wrong, brings us the bitterest suffering.

Secondly, by the force of desire in us we ourselves make our own suffering. It is not foisted upon us by some god outside, or by the people we contact.

Thirdly, because we ourselves create our own suffering we alone can overcome it. By the power of aspirations, the higher aspect of desire, we frustrate ignorance—illusion-*Maya* and delusion-*Moha*.

Fourthly, the womb of suffering is *Kama*-lust, *Krodha*-anger, *Lobha*-greed. The root of bliss and happiness is also triple—compassion or universal love; *Kshanti*, patience sweet, that nought can ruffle, and generosity which expands into altruism. We require knowledge to fight lust with compassion, to overcome anger by patience, and to defeat greed by developing generosity. Thus is misery ended, thus suffering is vanquished, and the Light of Joy burns steadfastly in our hearts. This practice is necessary for everyone.

The voice of flesh brings misery, the voice of conscience brings

warning, the voice of the soul brings happiness. One more thought: without deliberate practice no one can overcome pain and suffering; no one can bring about real joy of the heart and peace of the mind. We must work for our spiritual wealth which is *Ananda*, Joy, as we must labour to earn our livelihood. Theosophy gives us adequate knowledge for this great task; we must avail ourselves of that knowledge.

THE key to the spiritual life is the transmutation of Karma into Dharma. It is the ability to make of the past a prelude to a noble future. Evil is essentially the refusal to move toward the future. The ultimate meaning of Karma must be identified with an interconnectedness and interpenetration of all there is. Anything is possible because all there is, is a network of multidimensional relationships....

In the overview of life implicit in much of modern thought, the acceptance of Karma seems almost inevitable. In the emerging understanding of the universe as a living, dynamic self-organizing system, Karma definitely can find its rightful place as the dynamic and creative process that produces order out of chaos incessantly. The ramifications of the Karmic law might be endless and complex. But in its ultimate simplicity, the law is harmony, the perfect relationship that obtains between all things everywhere.

—PRABHATH P.

BE KINDLY DISPOSED TO OTHERS

THAT great Theosophist, Paul, the follower of the risen Christ, speaks to us, when we read his Epistles to his followers, just as much as he spoke to them in their time. Remembering what H.P.B. said, that he was an Initiate, let us take heed of his words as though he were addressing them to us in this century.

In his first Epistle to the Corinthians he wrote these well-known words:

Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

The dictionary meaning of the word charity is “universal love; the disposition to think favourably of others, and do them good.” Does not this remind us of what is said in *The Theosophical Glossary* under “Kamadeva”? Just as we have, today, limited *Kama* to ordinary love, so we have thought of charity as mere “almsgiving.” This is how Paul goes on to describe charity:

Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up;

Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

Charity never faileth...

Keeping in mind that we are students of the same ancient wisdom which Paul reiterated, let us see how we can apply his words to

ourselves. Let us try to realize, as a fact, that no matter what we say, no matter how eloquently we say it, no matter how much knowledge we possess, unless the foundation of our motive and our attitude is “to live to benefit mankind,” all our knowledge and words are useless to ourselves and to those who hear us. In other words, though we may be able to quote all that our philosophy teaches regarding life after death, reincarnation, karma, the ego, the Three Fundamentals, the Masters of Wisdom, etc., if we are puffed up, if our motive is to show off our knowledge to others and not primarily to help them, we are, as Paul puts it—“nothing.” It is the philosophy that matters, not our exposition of it. Jesus brought this out when he said to his disciples: “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.” Let us pass on the Teachings, pure and untinged by our motive or preference.

Are we willing to suffer long and still be kindly disposed to others? Are we really unenvious? Are we willing to keep out of the limelight? If we are, then we will behave ourselves in a seemly manner; we will not all the time be thinking of our rights and demanding this and that; we will not be upset over real or imaginary wrongs. More than this, we will not think evil.

What does it mean, not to think evil? It does not mean that evil is not to be seen where it is; it means that we do not *think* evilly. No untoward act or speech comes without thought behind it. If we never think evil, we shall not do evil. But there is another side to this also; we must not impute evil to others.

What a great psychologist Paul was! He tells us that charity “rejoiceth not in iniquity.” Can any one of us truly state that we have not, at one time or another, rejoiced at finding that someone had done wrong? If this were not so, there would be no gossip; and many would have to admit that to gossip is one of their greatest joys in life—only they never think of it that way!

How do we view our family and companions, our nation and the world? Are we genuinely sad when they choose the path of iniquity? Do we choose for ourselves what line we shall follow

according to our Teachings, or do we fight shy of mentioning what our Teachings say on any particular topic? Do we, indeed, often take sides with iniquity?

Does our belief in Karma make us *bear* all things, have *faith* in the Law, “hope still,” and be a firm rock in the midst of the storms that surround us?

“*Charity never faileth.*” What wonderful words these are! Though all else fails, charity remains because it is the foundation stone of the unchanging universe, the heart of Brahma, the compassion that wishes well to all. All else must pass from sight, blending into that one Unity whose Heart is Compassion Absolute.

There is that aspect of life which is permanent through all destruction, the silent, stable hub of the wheel of life. All things fade away in time; all disturbances cease; only harmony remains. The only changelessness that can exist within changes is that root of all which is in us—the all-embracing desire for the welfare of all beings.

The desire for Universal Good, Compassion Absolute, Charity, are all ONE.

A human being is a part of the whole, called by us “universe”—a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separated from the rest... a kind of optical delusion of consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to 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

LIFE—A DRAMA, A SCHOOL, A PILGRIMAGE

WE ask: “Is life meaningful, worthwhile, valuable?” Often, we are tempted to agree with Shakespeare who says in *Macbeth*: Life is “a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” But can we apply this value judgement to Life? The only alternative to life is “death,” and we then have to weigh the worth of living against the worth of dying. Mr. Judge says, “Life is better than death, for death again disappoints the Self.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, American ed., p. 34)

Some of us have hurriedly concluded that there is no meaning to life. To some, life is a repetitious, cyclic activity, which never comes to anything. We set for ourselves short-term goals. So long as we have some goal, we feel our life is meaningful. But almost all our goals are transitory. We realize one goal and then we are after another. We must realize that the quest for life's meaning is a spiritual quest, which each one has to undertake. There is no simple answer to the question: What is the meaning of life? Every life is meaningful, provided we change our attitude towards what life brings to us. Life of a teacher, a businessman or a sweeper could be meaningful provided each lives his life with the aim of self-actualization and self-transcendence.

Hence the importance of understanding life as a drama, a school and a pilgrimage—and man as an actor, a pupil and a pilgrim. But which “man”? It is the “Individuality,” the Ego, who is the actor, experiencer and also an Eternal Pilgrim. It is this Ego or actor who chooses the “stage” for performing the drama, before taking birth, *i.e.*, life's circumstances, the role he is going to play as well as the co-actors. In other words, it is the Ego who chooses the family, the parents, the personality and the circumstances of life in which to be born. The word “personality” is derived from “*persona*,” meaning a mask, which the actors used to wear. This mask carried the make-up of the role which the actor was going to play, so that behind the mask, the actor remained hidden and anonymous. These different roles done by the actor are our personalities. Just as, while

an actor performs the role of Hamlet, he is not fully conscious of the fact that in real life he is So-and-so, similarly, we are so absorbed in playing the role that we are seldom aware of our true Self.

In a given life we might be playing the role of mother, father, brother, daughter, clerk, officer, business magnate or sweeper. We must try to give the best performance, no matter how insignificant the role. Sometimes in a drama, we see that the performance of a supporting actor or actress is praised more than that of a hero or a heroine—an apparently insignificant role gains prominence. Our attitude towards the role and the work involved in playing our part must be such that people should want to emulate. Whenever we feel dissatisfied with our role or place in life, and long to play the lead role, we must remember this incident from the book, *A 3rd Serving of Chicken Soup for the Soul*, by Jack Canfield and Mark Hansen. It is about a little boy, Jamie, who had his heart set on taking part in a school play. His mother feared that he would not be chosen. On the day of the selections, the mother went to collect him from school, full of apprehension. When she reached there, little Jamie rushed up to her with his eyes shining with pride and excitement and said, “Guess what, Mum, I have been chosen to *clap and cheer!*” In a way there are no *insignificant* roles. It is our *attitude* which makes them so.

Success of the drama is dependent on *each actor* performing his or her role well. So also in the drama of life we are dependent on other actors performing their duty properly. An incident in history shows that when a battle was lost, an inquiry was set up to find out the cause. The inquiry revealed that the battle was lost because the soldiers were discouraged, as the horse slipped, killing the General of the Army. But why did the horse slip? Because the horseshoe came off, and that in turn was because the blacksmith had not nailed it properly. So the saying goes that “the battle was lost for want of the horseshoe nail.” Hence the importance of careful and cheerful performance of one's *Dharma* or duty in life. We know that a city is thrown into utter chaos when the garbage collectors or chemists or motormen go on strike.

We are assured that we will get the chance to play different roles—lead roles, insignificant ones as also the villainous roles. *Light on the Path* suggests:

And before you can attain knowledge you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike. Therefore, remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn with horror from it, when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. (pp. 16-17)

Life is also a school. There are certain archetypal experiences, like motherhood, poverty, etc., which each ego has to experience, in one life or the other. We are bound to come across those who play their roles so admirably that we are inspired. Perhaps the greatest thing we can learn from the school of life is the spirit of giving without expecting any return. One of the lessons we must learn in life is the “art of caring.” We hurry, rush and run, to save time. What do we do with the time we save? We are always too busy to care for others. A smile, a kind word, a friendly gesture—just a little caring—can work wonders in some person's life and he may be inspired to pass on the same warmth and care to others.

The process of learning is a never-ending process. In the school of life, too, we get all kinds of students. Some keep failing. Some fail and give up, while others fail but ever keep trying. As Mr. Crosbie says, “It may be a child's school, but it takes a man to go through it” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 11). Some are fast learners, who get double-promotion. They are great beings like Plato, Buddha and Shankara, who graduated from the school of life ahead of their batch-mates. Buddha and Shankara have been described as Sixth Rounders and Plato as a Fifth Rounder. Even in the Fourth Round they possessed knowledge, which average humanity will acquire in the Fifth or Sixth Round. As Mr. Judge writes: “You may go through the appointed course in 700 births, in seven years, or in seven minutes.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, American ed., p. 21)

For most of us, the process of learning is slow. We realize that

one life is not sufficient. Our present life is only a scene in the great drama, which stretches over several lives. Hence, life is compared to a pilgrimage and man is called an Eternal Pilgrim. Mr. Judge writes:

In the East the life of man is held to be a pilgrimage, not only from the cradle to the grave, but also through the vast period of time, embracing millions upon millions of years, stretching from the beginning to the end of a Manvantara, or period of evolution, and as he is held to be a spiritual being, the continuity of his existence is unbroken....Starting from the great All, radiating like a spark from the central fire, he gathers experience in all ages...ever engaged in a pilgrimage to the shrine from which he came. He is now the ruler and now the slave; today at the pinnacle of wealth and power, tomorrow, at the bottom of the ladder...but ever the same being. (*Echoes from the Orient*, XIII)

Like a bee gathering honey from the flower, the Eternal Pilgrim gathers experience from every life. Besides being a teacher, a mother, or a scientist, each of us is a pilgrim-soul on a pilgrimage. Man is a pilgrim as well as a wanderer. As wanderers, we drift through life, puzzled with many experiences; we try to dodge the karmic consequences by ceremonies and rituals. As soon as we become aware of the purpose of life—that life is for the evolution and emancipation of the Soul—we begin to take that evolution into our own hands.

We are not alone on this pilgrimage. No one can lift us out of the mire and put us into shine. However, we are helped by spiritual beings and by our own higher nature. We have to reach the “destination” in the company of other pilgrims and not by isolating ourselves. A religious man often refrains from giving or taking help, in order to avoid karmic bondage. Such people avoid entering into kindly relationship with other beings. The *Gita* advises that besides doing our duty, we must never abandon acts of Charity, Mortification and Sacrifice. Interdependence is an important aspect of spiritual progress, as Mr. Judge describes so beautifully in *Letters*

That Have Helped Me, Book 1, Letter 1:

THE reason you have had help is that in other lives you gave it to others. In every effort you made to lighten another mind and open it to Truth, you were helped yourself. Those pearls you found for another and gave to him, you really retained for yourself in the act of benevolence. For when one lives thus to help others, he is thereby putting in practice the rule to try and “kill out all sense of separateness,” and thus gets little by little in possession of true light.

YOGA is not a physical, mental or psychic feat. It is life itself; not the kind of restless life swinging constantly between the two extremes of exhilaration and depression, indulgence and denial, sensuousness and asceticism, but the harmonious flow of the divine will along the wise middle path...On both sides of this subtle middle path there is danger, pain and suffering. Both extremes imply a strong identification of the body, mind and the personal ego with the self....The man who loves eating is a glutton; but the man who refuses to eat is an egoist. The former identifies the self (atma) with the body; the latter, with the vain ability to go without food. Both of them are confusing the body, mind and ego from the real self, while allowing God's nature to reveal itself through all these. In gluttony there is pain, as also in abstention. Pleasure is invariably followed by pain. Vanity is accompanied by fear or injured pride. The yogi who pursues the middle path is blissfully free from all these. Only he lives; others drag on in miserable existence.

—SWAMI VENKATESANANDA

ORIGIN AND DEVELOPMENT OF LANGUAGE

MR. JUDGE published in the October 1894 issue of *The Path* (Vol. IX, p. 226) an article by S. Kademal entitled “Would Universal Language Aid Universal Brotherhood?” In it, the writer put up a strong plea for a universal language, saying, among other things, that it would help men to progress to brotherhood, and that the Theosophical Society ought to have a “common medium of intercommunication.” He then advocated an invented international language called Volapuk.

Volapuk (corrupted from English “world-speak”) was invented in 1879 by Johann M. Schleyer, a priest of Constance, Baden. This language is partly original and partly made up of words of European origin, mainly English. It had a great vogue, and by its tenth year about one million people were using it. At its third Congress in 1889, held in Paris, everyone, including the waiters, spoke it. After this triumph, it began to decline rapidly, for reasons into which it is not necessary to go here, but chiefly through internal dissensions. So much for Volapuk.

The history of international languages is an interesting one. The *Encyclopaedia Britannica* tells us what a difficult task it is to construct one. The first attempt was made by Dalgarno in 1661 and was called “Ars Signorum.” The next was by Wilkins in 1668, and called “Real Character.” Neither of these was a success because the ground for such a language had not been prepared, but it is interesting to note that Wilkins's sketch of phonetics is still considered valuable. There seems to be a hiatus in further attempts; at least one is mentioned in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* until we come to Volapuk.

After this came Esperanto, widely known by 1907—an artificial language designed as a medium for persons of all nations, its vocabulary enriched by new words as they were needed.

There may have been other attempts to create a universal language, but now we might consider Mr. Judge's reaction as expressed in his “Note” to Kademal's article. It was republished in

The Heart Doctrine (“Would Universal Language Aid Universal Brotherhood?”, p. 202).

He points out in this Note that, as “violations of universal brotherhood grow out of the character and not the language of the violators, it would seem to follow that no new language would prevent the violation. We see that peoples who have one language are at war and kill one another.” Mr. Judge remarks that both sides spoke English in the American revolution, and that “it has character, idea, rule, regulation, and the like that made the occasion for conduct opposed to brotherhood.” He goes on to point out that when a race “is entirely raised up to a right level of morals, conduct, character, aspiration and ideal,” then, and then only, will it be profitable to have a universal language.

Mr. Judge ends his Note by saying that before one can use the universal, symbolic method of writing known in the Occult Lodges, one's whole character, conduct and ideal have to undergo a change. Such a language is in use today, Mr. Judge asserts, and a still older system was used in the very ancient records to some of which H.P.B. had access, but this could not be known by the average man of today.

Now let us see what Theosophy has to say on the subject of language in general.

First of all we have to understand the importance of sound; and language is, of course, a collection of sounds. H.P.B. tells us that, in the Sanskrit, as also in the Hebrew and all other alphabets, “every letter has its occult meaning and its rationale; it is a cause and an effect of a preceding cause and a combination of these very often produces the most magical effect. The vowels, especially, contain the most occult and formidable potencies” (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 94). Further, we read that

SOUND, for one thing, is a tremendous Occult power; it is a stupendous force, of which the electricity generated by a million of Niagaras could never counteract the smallest potentiality when directed with *occult knowledge*. Sound may be produced of such a nature that the pyramid of Cheops would be raised in

the air, or that a dying man, nay, one at his last breath, would be revived and filled with new energy and vigour.

For Sound generates, or rather attracts together, the elements that produce an *ozone*, the fabrication of which is beyond chemistry, but within the limits of Alchemy. (*S.D.*, I, 555)

This last statement leads us into deep waters, and much study and reflection on Sound and Language will be needed if we want to understand the relationship between the two.

Mantras are an example of the potency of sound, and in *The Theosophical Glossary* H.P.B. defines *Mantrika Shakti* as “the power, or occult potency of mystic words, sounds, numbers or letters” in the Vedic *Mantras*. She says that “the influence of melody is one of its ordinary manifestations” (*S.D.*, I, 293). Further, “*the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in, by the modern ‘sages’.*” Why? “Because sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients”; and because “such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be.” (*S.D.*, I, 307)

What about language itself? Languages “have their phases of growth, etc., like all else in nature” (*S.D.*, II, 662). They “have their cyclic evolution, their childhood, purity, growth, *fall into matter*, admixture with other languages, maturity, decay and finally death” (*S.D.*, II, 199). In a footnote on the same page, H.P.B. says that “*Language* is certainly coeval with reason, and could never have been developed before men became one with the informing principles in them—those who fructified and awoke to life the manasic element dormant in primitive man.” And elsewhere she states that the whole human race was at one time of one language, taught to it by Divine Instructors.

H.P.B. tells us that “it is almost certain that the great linguistic families pass through three stages” (*S.D.*, II, 662). And she enumerates these stages.

In the first stage, all words are roots and merely placed in juxtaposition, creating what are called radical languages.

Next, we reach the stage when one root defines another and becomes what is called a “determinative element.” This is the stage of agglutinative languages.

Finally, this determinative element (the determining meaning of which has long lapsed) unites into a whole with the formative element, and we have inflected speech.

So far this agrees with what science teaches about the origin of language, but here it stops, for it has no idea where the original roots come from. Therefore we have to see what Theosophy has to say about the potentiality of forming roots.

Monosyllabic speech, we are told, was used by

the first approximately fully developed human beings at the close of the Third Root-race...after their separation into sexes, and the full awakening of their minds. Before that, they communicated through what would now be called “thought-transference,” though, with the exception of the Race called the “Sons of Will and Yoga”...thought was but very little developed in nascent physical man, and never soared above a low terrestrial level...Language could not be well developed before the full acquisition and development of their reasoning faculties. This monosyllabic speech was the vowel parent, so to speak, of the monosyllabic languages mixed with hard consonants, still in use amongst the yellow races which are known to the anthropologists. (*S.D.*, II, 198-99)

It is necessary to know a little more about the early races, for a study of language cannot be properly undertaken without taking into consideration the evolution of man and of the races.

The agglutinative languages were spoken by the Fourth (the Atlantean) Race. In time they, too, decayed and are now used only by a few aboriginal tribes.

The next stage is that of the inflectional, highly developed languages by the Fifth, our Race. The root of Sanskrit, the mystery tongue of the Initiates of the Fifth Race, was the first inflectional language. The Semitic languages are “the bastard descendants of the first phonetic corruptions of the eldest children of the early

Sanskrit” (*S.D.*, II, 200). This brings us down to the present day, and we can trace, if we take the trouble, the source of our modern European languages, through Latin and Greek, to Sanskrit.

We can summarize thus the stages of the development of speech:

1. The First Race was speechless.
2. The Second Root Race communicated by chant-like sounds composed of vowels only.
3. During the second half of the Third Race, after the sexes had separated and mind was awakened, speech developed. This speech was, at first, monosyllabic.
4. The Fourth Race developed what is known as “*Rakshasi Bhasha.*”
5. In the Fifth Root Race our modern languages were developed.

What of the future language, then? Mr. Judge, in a short article entitled “Another Theosophical Prophecy” (reprinted in part in *The Heart Doctrine*, p. 204, from *The Path* for May 1886), asserts that “the Sanskrit language will one day be again the language used by man upon this earth, first in science and in metaphysics, and later on in common life.” Sanskrit words have for some time been appearing in the literature and the press of the day, as we can see for ourselves. Sanskrit, H.P.B. says, is “the language of the Gods because it can convey metaphysical ideas and early cosmogonical ones.”

Should we, then, rush out to learn Sanskrit? It would not do any harm, but until such time as there is more knowledge of the Ancient Philosophy, and more students of Theosophy to become familiar with such Sanskrit terms as are to be found in their books, it might be better to be more careful in the use of words in our *own*, languages, to use them accurately, to be quite sure of their meaning, and to see that the ones we do use are helpful, not harmful, full of kindness and good will. “Words are things,” said Mr. Judge. It is not easy to realize this fact, but thought along the line of potency of sound, especially, will be of inestimable value.

“WITH CALMNESS EVER PRESENT”

“GREAT man is he who is strongest in the exercise of patience,” wrote one of the Mahatmas. Another Master of Wisdom, speaking of the ungrateful and queer attitude of the very ones They had been trying to help, wrote that They were “well trained in patience.”

We see from the above how this all-important quality of patience is regarded by the Mahatmas. It is *Kshanti*, the third of the Seven Paramita-Keys that is needed to unlock the door of Wisdom. It is one of the most difficult to develop, and yet one of the most important, because without it nothing lasting can be achieved or learned.

Mr. Judge makes it clear in his *Letters That Have Helped Me*:

Nothing is gained, but a good deal is lost, by impatience—not only strength, but also sight and intuition. So decide nothing hastily.

Patience is really the best and most important thing, for it includes many. You cannot have it if you are not calm and ready for the emergency, and as calmness is the one thing necessary for the spirit to be heard, it is evident how important patience is.

The last sentence in the above quotation gives us perhaps the most important hint as to why this virtue of patience is so necessary. For, just as the ruffled surface of a pond cannot reflect accurately any image, so also our minds, if ruffled and rendered impatient by Kama-desire, flit from one idea to another, one emotion to another, and cannot receive or transmit accurately those ideas which reside in our Higher Nature, nor can the all-important quality of insight and intuition be developed. We can easily see this for ourselves when we try to answer a question or to solve a problem when we are upset or “off-balance.” The best plans may be shattered by one word that bespoke impatience of another's frailty or ignorance.

Therefore, inner contentment and repose are necessary, not only when the body is asleep, or when we are looking at a beautiful view, or when all around us is quiet, but when everything is wrong and nothing right.

We must take the position that each of us *is* a soul, not that we

have a soul. We must learn to regard the soul, and not the personality, as the steadying factor in our lives. Our personality is never the same for two minutes, and it would be an interesting and instructive experience if we could see ourselves in moments of irritation or anger, as in a mirror. We have to learn to regard ourselves “with the calmness of a stranger,” as a Mahatma has said, always remembering that the light must come from within to lighten our every thought, word and deed. Just as a darkened house cannot be lit from without, but requires someone from within to light it, so also we must call forth that light from within, but it needs a calm surface to reflect itself on.

It is interesting to note the qualities linked with patience in *The Voice of the Silence*. The candidate is asked to have not only patience, but with it perseverance “as one who doth forevermore endure.” Perseverance is defined in the dictionary as “steadiness.” *Kshanti*, “patience sweet, that nought can ruffle,” opens the gate of fortitude, or perseverance through strength and patience. Patience cannot, of course, be divorced from the other virtues, especially the two that precede it, namely, *Dana*—charity and love immortal, and *Shila*—harmony in word and act. These three, *Dana*, *Shila* and *Kshanti*, or love immortal, harmony and patience, form a triad. Love creates harmony, but without patience it is of no avail. The balanced offspring, whether a thought, a word, or an act, has for its father, love, and for its mother, patience.

Our race-mind has become so imbued with false and mixed notions regarding ethics that virtues have come to mean doing certain things and not doing others; in other words, positive or negative attributes or concepts. Theosophy, however, shows that real virtue—and patience is a virtue—can only come from a spiritually positive attitude, not only an attitude of thought, but of will and feeling as well. Conditions do not change of themselves, and while it is true that no effort is lost, still it requires real patience to make any change.

Mr. Judge said that life could be made a contest of smiles if we only knew our business, and H.P.B. said: “One little period

passed without doubt, murmuring, and despair; what a gain it would be!” It is essential that in performing any duty there should be, instead of complaints and murmuring, as cheerful and contented an attitude as possible, and this will dispel all doubts and bring enlightenment, and with it, patience. There is no merit in being compelled by Karma to be patient; it is only through self-induced and self-devised ways and means that real patience is developed.

Mr. Judge's words give us encouragement:

...keep right on, and try for patience in all the very smallest things of life every day, and you will find it growing very soon, and with it will come greater strength and influence on and for others, as well as greater and clearer help from the inner side of things.

This is the very least we can do if we are ever to acquire that calmness, perfect equanimity, equal-mindedness and consideration for others which together imply patience and which will grow apace with inner strength and a sense of responsibility. This can only come if we take the firm position of “one who doth forevermore endure.” In doing so, we will be able, as Mr. Judge says in his *Letters That Have Helped Me*, to

lean back and look on at the ebb and flow of life that washes to our feet and away again many things that are not easy to lose or pleasant to welcome. Yet they all belong to Life, to the Self.

It is a great truth, which you should seriously consider, that there is nothing in heaven or upon the earth which does not also exist in Man, and God who is in heaven exists also in Man, and the two are but One.

—PARACELSUS

WILL—A CREATIVE FORCE

Both will and desire are absolute *creators*, forming the man himself and his surroundings. But will creates intelligently—desire blindly and unconsciously. The man, therefore, makes himself in the image of his desires, unless he creates himself in the likeness of the Divine, through his will, the child of the light.

His task is twofold: to awaken the will, to strengthen it by use and conquest, to make it absolute ruler within his body; and, parallel with this, to purify desire.

Knowledge and will are the tools for the accomplishment of this purification.

—*Lucifer*, October 1887

WE speak of Will as a *creative* force. Everything that exists, is the result of the Will of the Spirit in action. Just as every element and characteristic of the whole ocean is contained in every single drop that composes it, so the Will that has produced all is reflected in man. It is the offspring of the Divine, the God in man.

Intellectual understanding of this idea, as of any other, is one thing and practical application another. It is not lack of knowledge from which we suffer most; we suffer chiefly from weakness of will and of determination to apply what we already know. How are we to make the creative aspect of will work in the performance of daily duties?

Creation does not mean making something out of nothing. Every sort of making implies material from which it is made. With canvas and paints, or from a lump of clay or a block of stone, the artist creates; he transforms whatever material he uses into a beautiful work of art. We, too, are called upon to be artists in life; to use our will to change the colour of our acts and make them beautiful.

True it is that the artist is bound by what his medium can or cannot be made to produce—the laws that govern it and the possibilities inherent in it. “You cannot make a silk purse out of a

sow's ear,” as the saying goes. But this fact does not make the artist less of a creator. The genius, the truly creative worker, is the one who takes the old material as he finds it and fashions it into something new. By the use of his godlike faculty he forms, as Browning puts it, “of three notes, not a fourth, but a star.” The same old notes that bore us when we hear them as a finger exercise, hold us spellbound in certain combinations devised by the master-musician. The same old words that sound dull and banal in one connection are inspiring in another. That “tincture” (“for Thy sake”) of which the 17th-century George Herbert wrote—

A servant with this clause
 Makes drudgerie divine:
 Who sweeps a room, as for Thy laws,
 Makes that and th' action fine.

—refers to the really creative element in action. This can be applied in the little acts and events that go to make the sum-total of a man's life.

Each of us is doing something every moment: we are reading a newspaper or studying *The Secret Doctrine*; we are engaged in work or in recreation; we are sitting or walking, eating or talking. We have to learn to be attentive to each of these functions. In all our activities there is an objective, outer process and a subjective, inner process. The drab, the prosaic, the unromantic aspect of daily life changes when we learn that the deeds we perform are not done by the body but are done by the Soul in and through the body.

Metaphysically speaking, every type of action, including our routine, prosaic and worldly duties, proceeds from and is rooted in an archetype. Every day and as often as we can we should try to recall what action of the Supreme our own functions represent. Whatever our walk in life, whether we be clerks or professional men, manual workers or creative thinkers and writers, we should learn to look for the inner meaning, the spiritual reality, the invisible glory, behind all our visible, mundane and often irksome duties. This is what makes the prosaic poetic, makes the worldly romantic and holy. Our power of Will, Imagination, Thought, Aspiration or

Higher Feeling helps us in endowing our works with sacramental value. This is the real meaning of dedicating all our actions to the Krishna within us:

Whatever thou doest, O son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX, 27)

The routine of hourly existence is not merely our own personal concern; it affects for good or ill our family, friends, co-students. To stem the rising tide of passion, to cut off at the root the sapling of irritation ere it grows into the tree of anger, to check the small greeds lest they develop into veritable giants of possessiveness, to take care of minutes lest hours be misspent—this is what we owe not only to ourselves but also to our fellow beings. In these small efforts we can attain great results.

Students of Theosophy need to aim not only at becoming more efficient as speakers and writers, but also more efficient in doing every task, whether personal duties or the routine work of the Movement. In such performance of plain duties—using our will to transform the mundane into the divine—the world is served and saved and through that performance the student of Theosophy is able to purify himself, to develop the inner spiritual will, and to raise his mind to the level where the Light of Wisdom can shine into it.

MAN is the microcosm in the strictest sense of the word. He is the summary of all existence. There is no creature that is not recapitulated in man. There is nothing in the universe lower than body or higher than soul.

—JOHANNES SCOTUS ERIGENA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Certain observations regarding stars and galaxies have led scientists to take a fresh look at Gravity—the most mysterious and pervasive power in the universe. Scientists were forced to conclude that Newton's laws work fine on our earth and solar system but not beyond. It has been observed that four spacecrafts—*Pioneer 10*, *Pioneer 11*, *Galileo* and *Ulysses*—as they pulled away from the sun, slowed down *much faster* than expected, covering significantly less space than they should have (*Discover*, October 2003). In other words, these spacecrafts seemed to be pulled back to the sun by an unknown force. The effect shows no sign of getting weaker as the spacecrafts travel deeper into space. Such behaviour seems to violate Newton's laws of gravitation, which posit that as the distance from the sun increases, the gravitational pull must decrease. What could be the unknown force slowing them down?

Another anomaly has been observed regarding the movement of galaxies. Since gravitational force at a distance is less, objects at a distance must move slowly as per Newton's second law of motion. However, observations have shown that stars and gas clouds moving around the centre of the galaxy continue to move fast (at speeds higher than expected as per Newton's laws) even when their distance from the galactic centre increases. Anything that has a mass exerts the force that we call gravity. Since the mass concentrated at the centre of the galaxy cannot account for such high gravitational pull and resulting speed, scientists are forced to assume the existence of an immense amount of invisible, mystery matter, called “dark matter,” in and around the galaxies, exerting gravitational pull and raising their speed. While an overwhelming majority of astronomers accepts the existence of dark matter, a few suggest modification of Newton's laws.

Milgrom, a physicist at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, feels that there is something wrong with our understanding of gravity. He argues that perhaps different rules apply to movements of galaxies. He finds it unnecessary to assume

the existence of “dark matter,” but seeks to explain the mechanics of galaxies by postulating a theory called Modified Newtonian Dynamics (MOND). He explains that gravity accelerates things, *i.e.*, increases speed. When we jump off a cliff, we are pulled down by earth's gravity at an ever increasing speed—a speed that increases every second at a rate of 32 feet per second. However, this “speed increase” or acceleration observed in the movement of our sun and other stars towards the centre of the Milky Way galaxy is very nominal—just one 10-billionth the acceleration we feel from gravity on Earth. He proposed that Newton's laws might change at such low accelerations.

Scientists may be forced to modify Newton's laws—as has happened in the past—in case they are unable to prove the existence of “dark matter.”

Theosophy explains that gravitation is half the law, the other half is levitation. Mme. Blavatsky writes:

Astronomers who see in gravitation an easy-going solution for many things, and an *universal* force which allows them to calculate thereby planetary motions, care little about the Cause of Attraction. They call Gravity a law, a *cause* in itself. We call the forces acting under that name *effects*, and very secondary effects, too. One day it will be found that the scientific hypothesis does not answer after all; and then it will follow the corpuscular theory of light and be consigned to rest for many scientific *aeons* in the archives of all exploded speculations. Has not Newton himself expressed grave doubts about the Nature of Force and the corporeality of the “Agents,” as they were then called? So has Cuvier, another scientific light shining in the night of research. He warns his readers...about the doubtful nature of the so-called Forces, saying that “it is not so sure whether those agents were not *Spiritual Powers* after all.” (*S.D.*, I, 490)

Spiritual freedom is detachment from the ego and its fears,

anxieties and desires. Awareness is the first step towards achieving such freedom. Andrew Cohen suggests that making a conscious effort to be aware of all that we do, constitutes one kind of awareness. But as we learn to surrender more and more to our desire for freedom, we will begin to discover a more mysterious awareness, *i.e.*, the awareness of the true Self. We can never hope to understand the profound mystery of our own Self only with the mind. Thus:

The true, spiritual conscience, is experienced as caring. And this caring is painful—a painful emotional experience—but it's this caring that finally liberates us, slowly but surely, from the attachment to the ego and its endless fears and desires.

It is the emergence of this conscience that gives us the energy, strength and inspiration to give ourselves to the most important task that there is. So if we want to be free, it's very important to ask ourselves: How much do I care?

The degree to which we are able to liberate ourselves from self-concern will be the degree to which we are able to recognize that our true nature as human beings is love.

The nature of this love is not personal...Love is literally liberated from the depths of our own being and just emerges of its own accord. Anybody can know this miracle if they really want to. (*The Times of India*, September 19)

The Voice of the Silence describes Self-knowledge as the child of loving deeds. Mr. Crosbie says, “Knowledge of the Self is beyond relativity; relativity cannot be known by relativity, but only by that which is beyond all relativity. ‘To blend thy Mind and Soul’ is to make the Mind subservient to the purposes of Soul, an instrument for use, not a cage of relativities in which to imprison ourselves.” (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 51)

Every night we surrender to the mysterious power of sleep. Why? Unlike eating and breathing, the real function of sleep still eludes science. However, “the reasons that we sleep are becoming

less enigmatic,” writes Jerome M. Siegel, professor of psychiatry and a member of the Brain Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles Medical Center (*Scientific American*, November 2003). It has been found that lack of sleep gives rise to a rare brain disease called fatal familial insomnia, gradually leading to death. Studies have shown that bigger animals need less sleep, while smaller animals like voles, rats and cats spend most of their time sleeping. Smaller animals have higher metabolic rates than larger animals, and high metabolic rates generate “free radicals”—extremely reactive chemicals that damage or even kill cells. It is believed that reduced temperature and metabolic rate during quiet sleep or dreamless sleep, known as “non-REM sleep,” may give these damaged brain cells a chance to repair themselves.

The cell-repair hypothesis, it is claimed, explains the function of non-REM or dreamless sleep. But what could be the significance of REM sleep? REM (Rapid Eye Movement) sleep is marked by most vivid dreams, wherein, brain cells are as active as during the waking state. The function of REM sleep remains largely a riddle for scientists.

However, experiments with sleeping subjects have revealed that REM sleep helps learning and mood regulation during waking hours. Moreover, it is said to equip the brain to cope with waking experiences. Michel Jouvet, the pioneering sleep researcher, believes that REM sleep helps to establish the genetically programmed neuronal connections that make so-called instinctive behaviour possible.

Brain researchers hope to acquire, in future, a more comprehensive and satisfying understanding regarding sleep and its functions.

In *Transactions*, Mme. Blavatsky explains that just before going to sleep, we are too strongly saturated with Life, and we must “seek relief in the shadowy side of that essence, which side is the dream element, or physical sleep, one of the states of consciousness.” Thus:

[The process of going to sleep] is said by Occultism to be

the periodical and regulated exhaustion of the nervous centres, and especially of the sensory ganglia of the brain, which refuse to act any longer on this plane, and if they would not become unfit for work, are compelled to recuperate their strength on another plane or *Upadhi*. First comes the *Svapna*, or dreaming state, and this leads to that of *Shushupti* [dreamless sleep]. Now it must be remembered that our senses are all dual, and act according to the plane of consciousness on which the thinking entity energises. Physical sleep affords the greatest facility for its action on the various planes; at the same time it is a necessity, in order that the senses may recuperate and obtain a new lease of life for the *Jagrata*, or waking state, from the *Svapana* and *Shushupti*.... Sleep is the shady nook in the sunlit valley of life. (pp. 70-71)

Can religion improve health? It may be a moot question for medical schools, but patients are beginning to have more faith in religion and prayers than in medicine. It is well known that a person's mental state has bearing on his health. Medical establishments are seeking effective ways of combining patients' spiritual beliefs with high-tech treatment. Millions of dollars are being spent to support projects that aim to explore the nature of God or “mind-body” relationship. “There's been a tremendous shift in the medical profession's openness to this topic,” says Dr. Andrew Newberg, a neurologist at the University of Pennsylvania who is studying the biological effects of meditation and prayer on the brain. (*Newsweek*, November 17)

What is the role of prayers? Although prayers are a source of comfort to patients and their family members, prayer studies have not shown any clear effects. An experiment conducted with 750 patients undergoing angioplasty or heart catheterization, revealed that the group of patients who were prayed for, did not fare better than those who were not. How do you measure the power of prayer? “Studies prompt questions that no one will ever be able to answer:

Can one extra prayer mean the difference between life and death? Can prayer be dosed, the way medicines are? Does harder praying mean better treatment by God?"

Studies have shown that religious beliefs can interfere with the recovery. In an experiment conducted with 600 patients—with diseases ranging from gastrointestinal disorders to cancer—it was found that those who thought that God was punishing or abandoning them, were up to 30 per cent more likely to die over the next two years.

Thus, the role and place of religion in healing remains controversial, concludes *Newsweek*.

"The influence of mind over the body is so powerful that it has effected miracles at all ages," observes Mme. Blavatsky. She attributes many cures to faith and the will of the patients. Thus:

Healing, to deserve the name, requires either faith in the patient, or robust health united with a strong will, in the operator. *With expectancy supplemented by faith, one can cure himself of almost any morbid condition....*In thousands of instances, the doctor, the priest, or the relic has had credit for healings that were solely and simply due to the patient's unconscious will. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 216)

Mr. Judge mentions in *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (pp. 139-40), that prayers recited by millions of people, asking various favours—to stop the earthquake or end the dryness—go unanswered. It is "perfectly impossible" to prove the efficacy of such prayers. He observes that when prayers are offered to an unseen and unknown God, the faith of the person is not firm, whereas for an idol-worshipper, the presence of the image is an aid to constancy in faith. "All this applies of course to prayers for personal and selfish ends. But that prayer or aspiration which is for spiritual light and wisdom is the highest of all, no matter to whom or what addressed."

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The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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