

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

VOL. XXXI. No. 3

17th January 1961

## THE TREND OF OUR CIVILIZATION

This cycle is known as the dark one; in Sanskrit, Kali Yuga, or the black age. It is dark because spirituality is almost obscured by materiality and pure intellectualism. Revolving in the depths of material things and governed chiefly by the mind apart from spirit, its characteristic gain is physical and material progress, its distinguishing loss is in spirituality. In this sense it is the Kali Yuga. For the Theosophist in all ages has regarded loss of spirituality as equivalent to the state of death or darkness; and mere material progress in itself is not a sign of real advancement, but may have in it the elements for its own stoppage and destruction. Pre-eminently this age has all these characteristics in the Western civilizations. We have very great progress to note in conquests of nature, in mechanical arts, in the ability to pander to love of luxury, in immense advancements with wonderful precision and power in the weapons made for destroying life. But side by side with these we have wretchedness, squalor, discontent, and crime; very great wealth in the hands of a few, and very grinding poverty overcoming the many.

—W. Q. JUDGE

These are some of the signs of our cycle, and they go to prove the warning of H. P. Blavatsky that the highest and the most holy aspirations of our Spirit-Soul were becoming with every new generation more paralyzed and atrophied. She has further recorded that the qualities which conduce to man's success in life as an animal in the struggle for animal existence have been developed by modern life and materialistic teachings to a degree which is *abnormal* for the human being at this stage of his progress. Instead of their being recognized as downward tendencies, custom and selfishness have agreed to consider them respectable.

Modern thinking tends to consider competition and rivalry as necessary for getting ahead, and hypocrisy and dissembling as justified and, in such contexts as diplomacy and business rivalry, even desirable.

Selfishness is deified and, under its trinitarian aspect of sham, humbug and falsehood, called respectability, is as much in evidence in the political, social, scientific and religious spheres as in the lives of individuals. There is moral, mental and physical unrest. The earth herself has been showing signs of disturbance as is evidenced by the increasing number of natural cataclysms that have occurred during the past few decades.

The Theosophical Movement is in the world to counteract or to help reverse the degenerative tendency of modern civilization. One of the tasks of the Theosophical student-server is to assist in the sustaining of nobler currents of thought and of action, with a view to exerting a spiritualizing influence on human life; and this task is proceeding in different ways. To warn against the materialistic trend in 19th-century culture and civilization, which has continued into our own, H.P.B. published many articles, of which the one reprinted in this issue, in somewhat shortened form, is an example. "Our Cycle and the Next" was the opening editorial in *Lucifer* for May 1889. What was then the future is now our almost immediate past. The student of Theosophy will notice how clearly H.P.B. saw, and he can draw lessons from the article for his own practical purposes today. It was last reprinted in this magazine in August 1940.

Since the publication of the article, the world has witnessed two World Wars and is facing the threat of a third, which everyone fears will, if it comes, go far towards destroying modern civilization. However much we may boast of our scientific discoveries and inventions, of our literary and artistic achievements, these have not prevented the peoples of the world from flying at one another's throats and engaging in brutal carnage. Scientific discoveries have been put to destructive use and men of science themselves have not been able to resist the abuse by their governments of their knowledge and research. Writers and artists have in too many cases been dismissed as impractical idealists if their ideas have conflicted with accepted opinions and conventions.

To have a real glimpse into the nature of the present world situation, one has to look beneath the surface, and then what does one conclude? Greed for possession, for retaining place achieved or for attaining it by ousting its present occupant — these are the real causes of conflict, at the international as at the individual level. Faulty education founded upon materialistic science inculcates the belief that this world is a playground and that the death of the body puts an end to the man; while "revealed religion" absolves men from their responsibility for their actions by claiming to forgive their sins and to procure for them, at the price of repentance, an eternity of heaven. A very large portion of humanity has thus become entrenched in one or another false philosophy of life. "Nations, men and ideas," says H.P.B. in the reprinted article, "all are judged according to our preconceptions, and the lethal emanations of modern civilization kill all goodness and truth." And in another article she asked:—

Who loves truth in this age for its own sake? How many of us are prepared to search for, accept, and carry it out, in the midst of a society in which anything that would achieve success *has to be built on appearances, not on reality, on self-assertion, not on intrinsic value?*

And she added:—

We are fully aware of the difficulties in the way of receiving truth. The fair heavenly maiden descends only on a (to her) congenial soil — the soil of an impartial, unprejudiced mind, illuminated by pure Spiritual Consciousness; and both are truly rare dwellers in civilized lands. In our century of steam and electricity, when man lives at a maddening speed that leaves him barely time for reflection, he allows himself usually to be drifted down from cradle to grave, nailed to the Procrustean bed of custom and conventionality. Now conventionality — pure and simple — is a congenital LIE, as it is in every case a “*simulation of feelings according to a received standard*” (F. W. Robertson’s definition); and where there is any simulation *there cannot be any truth*. How profound the remark made by Byron, that “truth is a gem that is found at a great depth; whilst on the surface of this world all things are weighed *by the false scales of custom,*” is best known to those who are forced to live in the stifling atmosphere of such social conventionalism, and who, even when willing and anxious to learn, dare not accept the truths they long for, for fear of the ferocious Moloch called Society. . . .

Turn whichever way you will, and you find, from the top of the social ladder to the bottom, deceit and hypocrisy at work for dear Self’s sake, in every nation as in every individual. But nations, by tacit agreement, have decided that selfish motives in *politics* shall be called “noble national aspiration, *patriotism,*” etc.; and the citizen views it in his family circle as “domestic virtue.” Nevertheless, Selfishness, whether it breeds desire for aggrandizement of territory, or competition in commerce at the expense of one’s neighbour, can never be regarded as a virtue. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 17, pp. 5, 7*)

Are students of Theosophy free from all these vices? Enveloped by the lethal influence of our civilization, are they not apt to fall prey to pride, dogmatism and hypocrisy, perhaps in their more subtle forms? Their own human nature is no different from that of the race to which they belong, and consequently the same tendencies and weaknesses that they see and condemn in others have to be faced and conquered by themselves. The duty of every earnest student lies in shedding his own species of dogmatism and of hypocrisy. and then alone will the philosophy he promulgates strike deep root into the minds and hearts of men.

Neither in modern science nor in political and social programmes is there any remedy. A radical change in the thought of the world is necessary. As pointed out in the reprinted article, only in a spiritual,

altruistic philosophy of life will the men and women of our era find solace in the struggle for existence and the needed strength to rise from the moral and spiritual destitution which exists in every country of the world.

But there are hopeful signs. A spirit of inquiry is discernible amidst the prevalent unrest in the East as in the West. Orthodox science is fast losing its materialism, orthodox religion its dogmatism. Old dogmas, accepted formulas, are no longer worshipped as fetishes, regarded as chart and compass not to be questioned. Unity and brotherhood are no longer thought to be a Utopian dream but are regarded by an increasing number of men and women as urgent necessities for saner, happier living. The literature of the past few decades is full of Theosophical ideas; and terms such as "Karma" and "Reincarnation" are freely used. There is a greater interest in the mystical and the occult. The leaven of Theosophy has been working through the years, as a result of which the world of thought has been transformed considerably and significant developments have taken place along the lines of the Three Objects of the Theosophical Movement, however disappointing the showing in comparison with what should and might have been.

Great is the task the student of Theosophy has before him. Great is the contribution he can make to the world of thought, to prepare the race-mind for the cycle opening in 1975. To be in a position to do this effectively, he should not neglect his work in and upon himself, by the triple means of study, application and promulgation. Let him take to heart the advice of his Guru, H.P.B.:—

Theosophy alone can gradually create a mankind as harmonious and as simple-souled as Kosmos itself; but to effect this Theosophists have to act as such.

## OUR CYCLE AND THE NEXT

The world's great age begins anew,  
The golden days return,  
The earth doth like a snake renew  
Her winter weeds outworn.

—SHELLEY

My friend, the golden age hath passed away,  
Only the good have power to bring it back. . . .

—GOETHE

What had the author of *Prometheus Unbound* in his mind's eye when writing about the return of the golden days, and the new beginning of the world's great age? Has his poetical foresight carried his "Vision of the Nineteenth Century" into the "One Hundred and Nineteenth," or has that vision revealed to him in gorgeous imagery the things to come which are the things that were?

Fichte assures us it is "a phenomenon of frequent occurrence, particularly in past ages," that "what *we shall become* is pictured by something which *we already have been*; and that what we have to obtain is represented as something which we have formerly lost." And he adds, "what Rousseau, under the name of the state of Nature, and the old poets by the title of the Golden Age, place *behind* us, lies actually *before* us."

Such is also Tennyson's idea, when he says:—

Old writers push'd the happy season back —  
The more fools they — we forward: dreamers both. . . .

Happy the optimist in whose heart the nightingale of hope can still sing, with all the iniquity and cold selfishness of the present age before his eyes! Our century is a boastful age, as proud as it is hypocritical; as cruel as it is dissembling.

---

Oh ye, gods, how dissembling and truly sacrilegious in the face of every truth, is this, our century, with all its boastful sanctimoniousness and cant! Verily, "Pecksniffian" ought to be thy name, oh *nineteenth* of thy Christian series. For thou hast generated more hypocrites in a square yard of thy civilized soil than antiquity has bred of them on all its idolatrous lands during long ages. And thy modern Pecksniff, of both sexes, is "so thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of falsehood that he is *moral* even in drunkenness and canting even in shame and discovery," in the words of the author of "Martin Chuzzlewit."

If true, how dreadful Fichte's statement! It is terrible beyond words. Shall we then expect at some future recurring cycle to *rebecome* that which "we already have been," or *that which we are now*? To obtain a glance into the future cycle we have thus but to examine the situation around us in the present day. What do we find?

Instead of truth and sincerity, we have propriety and cold, cultured politeness; in one plain word, *dissembling*. Falsification on every plane; falsification of moral food and the same falsification of eatable food. *Margarine* butter for the soul, and margarine butter for the stomach; beauty and fresh colours without, and rottenness and corruption within. Life — a long race-course, a feverish chase, whose goal is a tower of selfish ambition, of pride, and vanity, of greed for money or honours, and in which human passions are the horsemen, and our weaker brethren the steeds. At this terrible steeplechase the prize-cup is purchased with the hearts' blood and sufferings of countless fellow-creatures, and won at the cost of spiritual self-degradation.

Who, in this century, would presume to say what he thinks? It takes a brave man, nowadays, to speak the truth fearlessly, and even that at personal risk and cost. For the law forbids one saying the truth, except under compulsion, in its courts and under threat of perjury.

Have lies told about you publicly and in print, and, unless you are wealthy, you are powerless to shut your calumniator's mouth; state facts, and you become a defamer; hold your tongue on some iniquity perpetrated in your presence, and your friends will hold you as a participator therein — a confederate. The expression of one's honest opinion has become impossible in this, our cycle. The just lost bill repealing the "Blasphemy Laws," is a good proof in point. . . .

But the world, in our day, judges everything on appearance. Motives are held as of no account, and the materialistic tendency is foremost in condemning *a priori* that which clashes with skin-deep propriety and encrusted notions. Nations, men, and ideas all are judged according to our preconceptions, and the lethal emanations of modern civilization kill all goodness and truth. As observed by St. Georges, the savage races are fast disappearing, "killed by the mere contact of civilized man." No doubt, it *must be* a consolation to the Hindu and even the Zulu, to think that all their surviving brethren will die (thanks to the missionary effort) linguists and scholars, if not Christians. A theosophist, a colonist born in Africa, was telling us the other day that a Zulu had offered himself to him as "a boy." This Caffre was a graduate of a college, a Latin, Greek, Hebrew and English scholar. Found unable with all these achievements to cook a dinner or clean boots, the gentleman had to send him away — probably *to starve*. All this has inflated the European with pride. But, as says again the above-quoted writer, "he forgets that Africa is fast becoming Mussulman, and that *Islam*, a kind of granite block which in its powerful cohesion defies the force of the waves and winds, is refractory to European ideas, which, so far, have never seriously affected it." Europe may yet awaken one day to find itself Mussulman, if not in "durance vile" to the "heathen Chinees." But when the "*inferior* races" have all died out, who, or what shall replace them in the cycle that is to mirror our own?

There are those, also, who with a superficial eye to ancient as also to modern history, slight and disparage everything ever achieved in antiquity. We remember reading about heathen priesthods who "built proud towers," instead of "emancipating degraded savages." The Magi of Babylon were contrasted with the "poor Patagonians" and other Christian missions, the former coming out second best in every such comparison. To this it may be answered that if the ancients built "proud towers" so do the moderns; witness, the present Parisian craze the *Eiffel* Tower. How many human lives the ancient towers cost, no one can tell, but the *Eiffel*, unfinished as it is, has cost in the first year of its existence over one hundred workmen killed. Between the latter and the Babylonian Tower, the palm of superiority in usefulness belongs by rights to the *ziggurat*, the Planet Tower of Nebo's Temple of Borsippa. Between a "proud tower" built to the national God of

Wisdom, and another "proud tower" constructed to attract the children of folly — unless it is urged that even modern folly is superior to ancient wisdom — there is room for a diversity of opinions. Furthermore, it is to Chaldean *astrolatry* that modern astrognosy owes its progress, and it is the astronomical calculations of the Magi that became the groundwork of our present mathematical astronomy and have guided discoverers in their researches. As to missions, whether to Patagonia or Anam, Africa or Asia, it is still an open question with the unprejudiced whether they are a benefit or an evil which Europe confers on the "degraded savages." We seriously doubt whether the "benighted" heathen would not profit more by being left severely alone than by being made (in addition to treason to their earlier beliefs) acquainted with the blessings of rum, whisky and the various ensuing diseases which generally appear in the trail of European missionaries. Every sophistry notwithstanding, a moderately honest *heathen* is nearer the Kingdom of Heaven than a lying, thieving, rascally Christian convert. And — since he is assured that his robes (*i.e.*, crimes) are washed in the blood of Jesus, and is told of God's greater joy "over one sinner that repenteth" than over 99 sinless saints — neither he, nor we, can see why the convert should not profit by the opportunity.

---

"Who," asks E. Young, "gave in antiquity twenty millions, not at the bidding of an imperious monarch or a tyrannical priesthood, but at the spontaneous call of the national conscience and by the immediate instrumentality of the national will?" the writer adding, that in this "money grant" there is "a moral grandeur that sinks the Pyramids into littleness." O, the pride and the conceit of this our age!

We do not know. Had each of the subscribers to this "money grant" given his "widow's *two mites*," they might claim collectively to have *cast* "more than all," more than any other nation, and await their reward. England being, however, the wealthiest nation in the world, the intrinsic merits of the case seem slightly altered. Twenty millions in a lump represent indeed a mighty engine for good. But such a "money grant" could only gain in Karma, were it to pander less to national pride, and were the nation not to feel itself so exalted for it, in the four quarters of the globe, by hundred-voiced fame trumpeted by public organs. *True* charity opens her purse-strings with an invisible hand, and:

Finishing its act, exists no more. . . .

It shuns Fame, and is never ostentatious. Besides which, everything is relative. One million in specie, 3,000 years ago, represented tenfold more than twenty millions today. Twenty millions are a Niagara inundating with Titanic force some popular want, and creating, for the time being, as great a commotion. But, while helping for a

certain lapse of time tens of thousands of hungry wretches, even such an enormous sum leaves ten times as many unfortunate, starving wretches still unrelieved.

To such munificent bounties we prefer countries where there are no needy people at all, *e.g.*, those small communities, the remnants of once mighty races, which allow no beggars among their co-religionists — we mean the Parsis. Under the Indian and Buddhist Kings, like Chandragupta and Asoka, people did not wait, as they do now, for a national calamity, to throw the surplus of their overflowing wealth at the head of a portion of the starving and the homeless, but worked steadily on, century after century, building *rest-houses*, digging wells and planting fruit trees along the roads, wherein the weary pilgrim and the penniless traveller could always find rest and shelter, be fed and *receive* hospitality at the national expense. A little clear stream of cold, healthy water which runs steadily, and is ever ready to refresh parched lips, is more beneficent than the sudden torrent that breaks the dam of national indifference, now and then, by fits and starts.

---

Thus, if we have to become in the future cycle *that which we already have been*, let this be as in the days of Asoka, not as it is now. But we are reproached with forgetting "*Christian heroism*." Where will you find, we are asked, a parallel to the heroism of the early martyrs and that displayed in our day? We are sorry to contradict this boast like many others. If casual instances of heroism in our century are undeniable, who, on the other hand, dreads death more, as a general rule than the Christian? The idolater, the Hindu and the Buddhist, in short every Asiatic or African, dies with an indifference and serenity unknown to our Western man. As for "*Christian heroism*," whether we mean mediæval or modern heroes or heroines, a St. Louis, or a General Gordon, a Joan of Arc, or a Nightingale, there is no need of the adjective to emphasize the substantive. The Christian martyrs were preceded by the idolatrous and even godless Spartans of many virtues the brave sisters of the Red Cross by the matrons of Rome and Greece. To this day, the daily self-tortures submitted to by the Indian Yog and the Mussulman Fakir, tortures often lasting through years, throw entirely into the shadow the unavoidable heroism of the Christian martyr, ancient or modern. He who would learn the full meaning of the word "heroism" must read the "*Annals of Rajistan*" by Colonel Tod. . . .

"Render unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's" is a golden rule, but like so many others from the same source, Christians are the first to break it.

---

Pride and conceit are the two hideous cancers devouring the heart of *civilized* nations, and selfishness is the sword handled by evanescent

*personality* to sever the golden thread that links it to immortal INDIVIDUALITY. Old Juvenal must have been a prophet. It is *our* century that he addresses when saying:—

We own thy merits; but we blame beside  
Thy mind elate with insolence and pride!

Pride is the first enemy to itself. Unwilling to hear anyone praised in its presence, it falls foul of every rival and does not always come out victorious. "I am *the* ONE, and God's elect," says the proud nation. "I am *the* invincible and the foremost; tremble all ye around me!" Behold, there comes a day when we see it crouching in the dust, bleeding and mangled. "I am the ONE," croaks the private crow in peacock's feathers. "I am *the* ONE — painter, artist, writer, or what not — *par excellence*. . . . On whomsoever I shed my light, he is singled out by the nations; on whomsoever I turn my back, he is doomed to contempt and oblivion."

Vain conceit and glorification. In the law of Karma as in the truths we find in the gospels, he who is the first will be the last — hereafter. There are those writers whose thoughts, however distasteful to the bigoted majority, will survive many generations; others which, however brilliant and original, will be rejected in the future cycles. Moreover, as the cowl does not make the monk, so the external excellence of a thing does not guarantee the moral beauty of its workman, whether in art or literature. Some of the most eminent poets, philosophers and authors were historically immoral. Rousseau's ethics did not prevent his nature being far from perfect. Edgar Poe is said to have written his best poems in a state verging on *delirium tremens*. George Sand, her magnificent psychological insight, the high moral character of her heroines, and her elevated ideas notwithstanding, could have never claimed the *Monthyon* prize for virtue. Talent, moreover, and especially genius, are no development of anyone's present life, of which one ought to feel personally proud, but the fruition of a previous existence, and its illusions are dangerous. "Maya," say the Orientals, "spreads its thickest and most deceitful veils over the most lovely spots and objects in nature." The most beautiful serpents are the most venomous. The *Upas* tree, whose deadly atmosphere kills every living thing that approaches it, is — the Queen of Beauty in the African forests.

Shall we expect the same in the "coming cycle"? Are we doomed to the same evils then that befall us now?

---

Nevertheless, and though Fichte's speculation will have proved correct and Shelley's "Golden Age" will have dawned upon mankind, still Karma will have its usual way. For we shall have become "the ancients" in our turn, for those who will come long after us. The men

of that period will also believe themselves the *only* perfect beings and show scorn to the "Eiffel" as we show scorn to the Babel-tower. Slave to the *routine* — the established opinions of the day; what they of the next cycle will say and do, will alone be well said and done.

"Wolf! wolf!" will be the cry raised against those who, as we defend the ancients now, will attempt to say a good word for us. And forthwith the finger of scorn and every weapon available will be directed at him who falls off from the beaten track, and at the "blasphemers" who may dare to call by their right names the gods of that cycle, and presume to defend their own ideals. What biographies shall be written of the famous infidels of today, one can foresee in reading those of some of England's best poets; *e.g.*, the posthumous opinions passed on Percy Bysshe Shelley.

Yea, he is now accused of what he would have otherwise been praised for, because, forsooth, he wrote in his boyhood "A Defence of Atheism." *Ergo*, his imagination is said to have carried him "beyond the bounds of reality," and his metaphysics are said to be "without a solid foundation of reason." This amounts to saying that his critics alone know *all* about the landmarks placed by nature between the real and the unreal. This kind of orthodox trigonometrical surveyors of the absolute, who claim to be the only specialists chosen by their God for the settling of boundaries and who are ever ready to sit in judgment over independent metaphysicians, are a feature of our century. In Shelley's case, the metaphysics of the young author of "Queen Mab," described in popular encyclopædias as a "violent and blasphemous attack on Christianity and the Bible," must, of course, have appeared to his infallible judges without "a solid foundation in reason." For them, that "foundation" is the motto of Tertullian, "*Credo quia absurdum est.*"

Poor, great young Shelley! He who laboured so zealously for seven years of his too short life in relieving the poor and consoling the distressed, and who, according to Medwin, would have given his last shilling to a stranger in want, he is called an *Atheist* for refusing to accept the Bible *literally*! We find, perhaps, a reason for this "Atheism" in the *Conversations Lexicon*, in which Shelley's immortal name is followed by that of Shem, "the eldest son of Noah . . . said in Scripture to have died at the age of 600 years." The writer of this encyclopædic information (quoted by us *verbatim*) had just indulged in saying that "the measure of extreme presumption can hardly be withheld from a writer who in his youth, rejects all *established* opinions," such as Biblical chronology we suppose. But the same writer passes without a word of comment and in prudent, if not reverential, silence, the cyclic years of Shem, indeed he may!

---

Such is our century, so noisily, but happily for all, preparing for its final leap into eternity. Of all past centuries, it is the most smiling

cruel, wicked, immoral, boastful and incongruous. It is the hybrid and unnatural production, the monstrous child of its parents — an honest mother called “mediæval superstition” and a dishonest, humbugging father, a profligate impostor, universally known as “modern civilization.” This unpaired, odd team which now drags the car of progress through the triumphal arches of our civilization, suggests strange thoughts. . . .

*Emotionalism* and *conceit* — one, a nervous disease, the other that feeling which prompts us to swim with the current if we would not pass for retrograde fogeys or infidels — are the powerful weapons in the hands of our pious modern “sheep” and our learned “goats.” How many swell the respective ranks merely owing to one or the other of these feelings, is known to their *Karma* alone. . . .

Those who are not to be moved by either hysterical emotion or a holy fear of the multitudes and propriety; those whom the voice of their conscience — “that still small voice” which, when heard, deafens the mighty roar of the Niagara Falls itself — will not permit to lie to their own souls, remain outside. For these there is no hope in this departing age, and they may as well give up all expectation. *They are born out of due time.* Such is the terrible picture presented by our present cycle, now nearing its close, to those from whose eyes the scales of prejudice, preconception and partiality have fallen, and who see the truth that lies behind the deceptive appearances of our Western “civilization.” But what has the new cycle in store for humanity? Will it be merely a continuation of the present, only in darker and more terrible colours? Or shall a new day dawn for mankind, a day of pure sunlight, of truth, of charity, of true happiness for all? The answer depends mainly on the few Theosophists who, true to their colours through good repute and ill, still fight the battle of Truth against the powers of Darkness.

An infidel paper contains some optimistic words, the last prophecy by Victor Hugo, who is alleged to have said this:—

For four hundred years the human race has not made a step but what has left its plain vestige behind. We enter now upon great centuries. The sixteenth century will be known as the age of painters, the seventeenth will be termed the age of writers, the eighteenth the age of philosophers, the nineteenth the age of apostles and prophets. To satisfy the nineteenth century it is necessary to be the painter of the sixteenth, the writer of the seventeenth, the philosopher of the eighteenth, and it is also necessary, like Louis Blanc, to have the innate and holy love of humanity which constitutes an apostolate, and opens up a prophetic vista into the future. In the twentieth, war will be dead, the scaffold will be dead, animosity will be dead, royalty will be dead, and dogmas will be dead, but man will live. For all there will be but one country — that country the whole earth; for all, there will be but one hope — that hope the whole heaven.

All hail, then, to that noble twentieth century which shall own our

children, and which our children shall inherit!

If Theosophy prevailing in the struggle, its all-embracing philosophy strikes deep root into the minds and hearts of men, if its doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma, in other words, of Hope and Responsibility, find a home in the lives of the new generations, then, indeed, will dawn the day of joy and gladness for all who now suffer and are outcast. For real Theosophy IS ALTRUISM, and we cannot repeat it too often. It is brotherly love, mutual help, unswerving devotion to Truth. If once men do but realize that in these alone can true happiness be found, and never in wealth, possessions, or any selfish gratification, then the dark clouds will roll away, and a new humanity will be born upon earth. Then, the GOLDEN AGE will be there, indeed.

But if not, then the storm will burst, and our boasted Western civilization and enlightenment will sink in such a sea of horror that its parallel History has never yet recorded.

---

#### PROVERBS FROM THE HITOPADESA

Amongst all things, knowledge is truly the best thing; from its not being liable ever to be stolen, from its not being purchasable, and from its being imperishable.

No labour bestowed upon a worthless thing can be productive of fruit; even by a hundred efforts a crane cannot be made to talk like a parrot.

As one's life is dear to himself, so also are those of all beings. The good show compassion towards all living beings because of their resemblance to themselves.

From covetousness anger proceeds; from covetousness lust is born; from covetousness come delusion and perdition. Covetousness is the cause of sin.

Six faults ought to be avoided by a man seeking prosperity in this world: sleep, sloth, fear, anger, laziness, prolixity.

Fitting hospitality must be shown even towards an enemy arrived at the house. The tree does not withdraw from the wood-cutter the shade at its side.

The good show pity even to worthless beings. The moon withhold not its light from the hovel of the outcast.

"Is this one of our tribe or a stranger?" is the calculation of the narrow-minded; but to those of a noble disposition the world itself is but one family.

## UNFINISHED MAN

Many of us are aware, some tragically aware, of the lines of cleavage running through our natures and of the conflicts which result. Once these were understood in the West in terms of the conflict between God and the Devil, between the powers of goodness and light and the powers of evil and darkness. Today, when intellectual leadership has passed from the theologians to the scientists and psychologists, they are understood in terms of the conscious and the unconscious. Deep, irrational urges well up from the unconscious, over which rational, conscious man endeavours to exercise restraint according to the taboos imposed by society. Under conditions of great stress that restraint is apt to be swept aside. The delinquent is in revolt against the demands of society. Many a mentally sick person has failed to adjust himself to the outside world and has retired into an inner world of fantasy.

Undoubtedly this kind of approach to our conflicts has given many individuals a useful insight into themselves and many sociologists a useful understanding of such problems as juvenile delinquency. Its value, however, is circumscribed and, in the absence of a third factor, such an approach can be harmful. Using the same terminology, this third factor would have to be called the superconscious. The genius of a Kalidasa, a Shakespeare, a Tolstoy, or a Gandhi; those supreme heights of human achievement, the lives of a Christ or a Buddha, stand out to mark the existence of the superconscious. In a Tolstoy, the light from a higher region flickers; in a Buddha it burns clear and steady.

A glance at the lives of some of these figures may help our understanding of our subject, because often in a genius the lines of cleavage run deeper, the conflict rages fiercer. In Tolstoy, the inner light played upon a strong and unique personality and an exceptionally virile body. A lesser man might have indulged without pause his bodily appetites, or followed with no inward searching his inclination and lived in relative peace. Tolstoy could not do that. In him there was a constant endeavour to transmute mind and body in obedience to the promptings of the inner voice, and this inner conflict was reflected in some of his outer relationships. H.P.B. called his philosophic essay, "On Life," "a treatise on the Alchemy of the Soul." What success attended his own essays in such alchemy we cannot judge from the outside, but certainly in his art he did achieve a kind of transmutation. Where another would leave us in despair, overwhelmed with a sense of our impotence in the grip of blind and cruel forces, Tolstoy creates something which makes us feel the Man behind, which robs time's passing of its melancholy.

Gandhi was another who, in the heat of conflict between body, psyche and spirit, mastered in a degree the art of alchemy. This conflict took a form peculiar to an educated member of a subject people and out of his own victory was born the concept of *Satyagraha* for the nation, whereby it could harmonize the outwardly conflicting elements, desire

for freedom and non-violence, by a willingness to combat injustice at the hands of another by suffering in one's own person.

In what terms does *The Secret Doctrine* discuss the conflicts in man? In those of the three lines of evolution. On page 272 of the second volume occur these words:—

No sooner had the mental eye of man been opened to understanding, than the Third Race felt itself one with the ever-present as the ever to be unknown and invisible ALL, the One Universal Deity. Endowed with divine powers, and feeling in himself his *inner* God, each felt he was a Man-God in his nature, though an animal in his physical Self. The struggle between the two began from the very day they tasted of the fruit of the Tree of Wisdom; a struggle for life between the spiritual and the psychic, the psychic and the physical.

Pursuing analogy, note first something of the way in which these three lines of evolution manifest in a single human life. The cycle of physical life begins apparently with the fertilization of the ovum. In fact, the astral form is present before conception and it is round this that the foetus develops. The body reaches the peak of its power usually in the twenties and thereafter declines. Are we present in the foetus? Are we present in the baby crying for its mother's milk? Are we present in the adolescent in whom strange new emotions are beginning to stir? At no time are we fully present because the psychic is a distinct line of evolution even though it interweaves with the physical, so that turning points in mental development occur roughly at seven-year intervals in the life of the body. There is a greater degree of self-expression in the babe than in the foetus, in the adolescent than in the babe, but the peak of the inner unfolding does not usually coincide with that of physical development.

Where lies the line of spiritual development? In the third chapter of the *Gita* we learn that the wheel of life is kept revolving by sacrifice and that sacrifice is performed by action. In the fourth chapter we learn that the worshipper is purified from his sins by sacrifice, but that the spiritual man is the one who partakes of the perfection of spiritual knowledge arising from such sacrifice. In other words, if in our physical and mental life we do not perform those small sacrifices which keep the wheel of life revolving, if we follow our pleasure, then we live in vain because no spiritual awakening can work its magic upon us. Spiritual insight and power arise from the fires of sacrifice like an aroma or incense from the fire; and, whether the fire of our physical life or of our mental life be strong or weak, whether it blaze up or flicker before going out, the incense can be pleasing to our spiritual self. An experience can be little more than physical, as watching the death of a body might be to a doctor. To another it might be charged with emotion. To a third, as to the Buddha, it might be a spiritual one, moving him to the depths of his nature. Every experience should, in its own way, be a spiritual one. The prime of our bodily prowess, the height of our intellectual power, the

frustration of a hospital bed, the slow decline of old age, each should yield its spiritual harvest. Even our dying moment, if filled with a noble thought for others, can be pregnant with spiritual gain.

Now let us pass on to the definition of the three lines of evolution given on page 181 of the first volume of *The Secret Doctrine*. The monadic or spiritual is concerned with the growth and development of the Monad into still higher phases of activity in conjunction with the intellectual and physical lines. Note especially the words: "in conjunction with" and then consider these words taken from H.P.B.'s article on "Genius" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 13*):—

It is the very nature of the Spiritual Entity itself, of our *Ego*, which keeps on weaving new life-woofs into the web of reincarnation on the loom of time, from the beginnings to the ends of the great Life-Cycle. . . . For, though omniscient in its essence and nature, it still requires experience through its *personalities* of the things of earth, earthy on the objective plane, in order to apply the fruition of that abstract omniscience to them.

It would seem that the growth and development implied in the definition of spiritual development can only take place when the spiritual, psychic and physical proceed in harmony, a consideration to be applied by every "false pietist of bewildered soul."

The intellectual scheme of evolution, *The Secret Doctrine* states, is represented by the Manasa-Dhyanis who are the "givers of intelligence and consciousness" to man. Note here the use of the word "givers," implying sacrifice on their part. To this we shall return later.

The physical scheme is represented by the *Chhayas* of the Lunar Pitris. Round this, Nature has formed the present physical body as it forms the fœtus round the astral body in the womb. This body serves as the vehicle for the growth and transformations through Manas and — owing to the accumulation of experiences — of the finite into the infinite, of the transient into the eternal and absolute.

Note how the three definitions taken together make clear the interdependence of the three lines of evolution. Next, let us consider the practical application, starting with the physical.

The body of senses needs to be purified by getting rid of the sense of possession. We want possessions for our own self-glorification and we want to hold on to them because in giving them up we suffer loss. But in holding on to them we become their slaves and surrender our freedom. Possessions have to be transformed into objects held in trust, to be used continuously for the good of others and for the glorification of those objects in themselves. Wealth as an object of possession is ignoble. Wealth held in trust is glorified. The creative powers of the body as objects of possession debase a man. Held in trust they are glorified. Our labour as a possession which our employer takes from us is brutish. Held in trust it is glorified. When objects are glorified, the physical line of

evolution begins to reach true fruition and at the same time begins to provide the milieu in which the intellectual and spiritual lines of evolution can reach fulfilment.

How can we transform objects of possession into objects of trust? By detaching the mind from its servitude to desire and pledging it to the service of the soul. In servitude the mind is required to plan the satisfaction of desire. In service to the soul it both retires within for sustenance and counsel and turns outward to sacrifice itself for the glorification of objects. At this point we face the difference between lust and love. Lust binds objects or persons to our pleasure. Love sacrifices that others may grow into freedom. In such giving we too grow free. With what did Gandhi busy his mind? With objects of desire? At first, to a large extent he did, but increasingly as the years passed, with thoughts of freedom for his people and the dignifying of their labour. So the soul in him developed into higher phases of activity and a light shone through him which touched the hearts of others. With what did Tolstoy occupy his mind? Sometimes with objects of desire but sometimes with that dual activity of looking within and communicating without with others in his books, and in that dual process lay the secret of his power.

As objects of possession become objects held in trust and as the mind is touched by the spirit of real self-sacrifice, something else begins to stir in the mind, the influence of the spiritual line of evolution. Man, hitherto incomplete because in him spirit, mind and body co-existed, moves towards final completion, the perfect harmonizing of the three.

Such a consummation is not to be achieved without a struggle. The human personality is like a beautiful wild horse. Let it follow its whim and while it will have its wild moments it will not deliberately fight us. But let it feel the touch of a will stronger than its own and it will rear in rebellion against us. If it were not sensitive to that touch and had not the spirit to rebel, it would not have its wonderful capacity to serve man and respond to his command. To train it properly we must love that spirit and not try to break it. We must love the strength and beauty of the horse, love it for what it is and not covet it as a possession. Also we will need patience and wisdom born of experience with horses.

Yesterday and today we have done such cruel things to one another that the spirit of many has been broken or almost broken. We grow almost to hate ourselves and would put down the wild spirit of man. We must be patient. We must seek wisdom born of knowledge and experience. We must also find a way through love. We must learn more to cherish the beautiful: the many small kindnesses, the hope that will not be finally extinguished, the fortitude in continuing disaster, and the songs of poetry, in prose, in music, in sculptured stone and in colour, for in this love is part of the going out of the mind in sacrifice.

---

## NOT LOOKING TO RESULTS

Firmly persisting in Yoga, perform thy duty, O Dhananjaya, and laying aside all desire for any benefit to thyself from action, make the event equal to thee, whether it be success or failure.

—*The Bhagavad-Gita*, II. 48

Again and again, with different turns of phrase, Krishna makes plain the double obligation (1) to do our duty, having determined what it is and (2) to perform it in the spirit of "Let come what may!" Mr. Judge has written:—

What... is the panacea finally, the royal talisman? It is *Duty*, Selflessness. Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga, and is better than mantrams or any posture, or any other thing. If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 72)

It is emphasized in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and elsewhere, however, that it is our own duty that we have to perform, not that of another; determining what our duty is requires thought before we act. We must be on guard in making this decision. All too often self-centredness writ large makes people try to justify concern with their own family or circle only. We do have most specific duties to our family and friends, but the Christian Teacher pertinently asked in the Sermon on the Mount whether there was any special merit in loving those who love us or in saluting our brethren only. "Do not even the publicans so?"

Does not many a person inclined to miserliness but perhaps ignorant of the weakness in himself salve his conscience with the old saying, "Charity begins at home"? But its implication clearly is that charity no more than duty ends there! Madame Blavatsky, writing on "Duty" in her *Key to Theosophy*, defines it as "that which is *due* to Humanity, to our fellow men, neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves." And she considers that we have not done our duty to humanity when we have failed to show to any "the same justice, kindness, consideration or mercy which we desire for ourselves." Such failure carries its own terrible penalty: spiritual insolvency and moral bankruptcy in our next incarnation.

The difficulty of determining one's duty properly calls for two qualities in which the average man of today is weak — discrimination and dispassion. If we lack them, however, can we in the Theosophical Movement rise to the "unbiased and clear judgment" which H.P.B. stressed in the concluding chapter of the *Key* as being of great importance to the future guidance of that Movement?

Now looking to the fruits of action does not imply rushing into an unconsidered course. We have to weigh most carefully the factors involved in any given situation and the probable results of doing this

or that. There should even be a glance at the effect of what one is about to say. Mr. Crosbie says that "this insures deliberation, and the speech carries with it *the force of the intention*." "The deliberation," he adds, "takes no appreciable time in practice — a thought towards it, a glance at effects; it is really an attitude of *purposive speech*." (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 17)

Purposive speech and action are desirable, provided the motive is pure, and not to benefit ourselves at the expense of others. It is without concern for how a given word or action shall benefit us personally that we must act. The Master laid down in the following words the principle which guides the action of Their Chelas as well as of themselves:—

To all, whether Chohan or chela, who are obligated workers among us the first and last consideration is whether we can do good to our neighbour, no matter how humble he may be; and we do not permit ourselves to even think of the danger of any contumely, abuse or injustice visited upon ourselves. We are ready to be "spat upon and crucified" daily — not once — if real good to another can come of it.

He who takes self-interest as his guide follows a will-o'-the-wisp that may lead him into a miry bog indeed. Whatever the outcome of an action, to put expediency before principles is to strengthen one's bondage to one's lower nature, to make it more difficult to see which way the right path lies.

The link between discrimination and dispassion is therefore worth considering. It may be noted also that in the description in *The Voice of the Silence* of *Viraga*, the fourth of the *Paramitas*, "indifference to pleasure as to pain" does not complete the definition. These words are followed by the phrases "illusion conquered" and "truth alone perceived." The causal sequence here should not be overlooked. As long as we are swayed by pleasure or by pain we are not free to choose, impersonally obedient to the behest of conscience or even the still, small voice of our spiritual consciousness. While we are still glamoured by one of the most powerful of the pairs of opposites, we cannot overcome illusion, and until illusion is overcome how can we perceive truth?

It is only "when *all* desires that are hid in the heart are let go" that as the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says, "the mortal becomes immortal and reaches the Eternal." And it is added that "when a man gains the vision of the godlike Soul, the lord of what has been and what shall be, he fears no more." It is easier indeed to rise above craving for pleasure than above the dread of pain. Therefore does *Light on the Path* say, "First he wears out pleasure; then he wears out pain — till, at last, his eyes become incapable of tears."

It is when the effort is made to meet the second requirement of the unnumbered rules which introduce *Light on the Path*, making the ear insensitive alike to harsh and comforting words,

that the fact of pain and pleasure being but one sensation become

recognizable by those who have before been unable to perceive it. For when the solitude of silence is reached the soul hungers so fiercely and passionately for some sensation on which to rest, that a painful one would be as keenly welcomed as a pleasant one.

And it is added that "when this consciousness is reached the courageous man by seizing and retaining it, may destroy the 'sensitiveness' at once." It is hard, perhaps, for one enduring physical discomfort (infinitely less painful though it be, at its worst, than the torture a violated conscience can inflict on a sensitive individual) to ignore his suffering and refuse to let it incapacitate him for service. But in answering a question on Chapter XIV of *The Ocean of Theosophy* the possibility was pointed out for a man

so to detach himself from the body while alive that, so far as he is concerned, it is as if he had no body. It is possible for a man so to detach himself while alive from everything we call pleasure and from everything we call pain, that they no more affect him than as if he were dead and out of our sphere of existence. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, XXIV. 64)

Is this not implicit in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (IV. 21-22)? There Krishna uses the words, "doing with the body alone the acts of the body... contented with whatever he receives fortuitously... free from the influence of 'the pairs of opposites'..."

Mr. Judge's letter to Jasper Niemand (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 40) when she was seriously ill also has its message:—

Am glad that although the body is painful, you yourself are all right. We have in various ways to suffer, and I do not doubt it is a great advance if we can in the midst of physical suffering grasp and hold ourselves calm and away from it.

Certainly if we can honestly say that we ask nothing of life but the opportunity to serve and to grow life cannot altogether disappoint us or prevent our being happy in the only true sense. It has been said that nothing holds fear for one who is prepared at any time to resign life, and certainly no convinced Theosophist should dread what he knows to be a recurring incident in an endless life.

Any man of good feelings will avoid wanton wounding of others' sensibilities or self-esteem, but the Theosophist will not be always trying to avoid criticism or win approbation from others. He will naturally avoid what would bring criticism unnecessarily upon Theosophy, with which he is known to be associated, but he will not feel under the necessity of explaining his every act.

A Chinese aphorism quoted in *Lucifer* for January 1889 seems pertinent here: "A sage does not say what he does; but he does nothing that cannot be said."

---

## “YOGA” AND THEOSOPHY

In the West, the mission of Theosophy has proved successful in various ways. One of these manifests in the fact that Eastern concepts and viewpoints are widely known and discussed. Words like “reincarnation,” “karma” and “yoga” find common usage in the speech of Westerners.

There has arisen, however, another sort of problem within the framework of Theosophic thought. Several popular views and uses of “yoga” run counter to the ideas and practices suggested in Theosophy. To discuss these differences is the purpose of our study. The following three points embrace the present situation.

First, in a category that has arisen in the West, are grouped many books under the heading “yoga.” Certain bookstores concentrate exclusively on these “yoga” books which contain descriptions of rules, postures and breathing exercises for the development, besides health, of certain psychic powers. To the general public these books come under the auspices of Eastern yogis and swamis; and when they learn that Theosophy also comes from the East, they assume that, naturally, it too will be discussing the same topics and advocating the same practices. When they discover that it does not, they wonder why.

Secondly, there are certain schools and mind-cults whose writings create confusion in the mind of a newcomer to Theosophy. In one of such books one may read an admirable, devoted exposition of an intimate Theosophical subject — the relationship between the teacher, the guru, and his disciple. Then, in the back of the same volume, where other publications are advertised for sale, one learns that several of them claim to give instructions as to the use of certain powers for the attainment of almost anything that the personal man desires — good health, an influential position, financial prosperity, etc. Theosophy is forcibly opposed to such uses of psychic power; this, too, requires discussion.

Thirdly, many have been originally introduced to Eastern thought through books carrying in their titles words such as “Vedanta,” “Buddhism” or “Yoga.” They have read doctrines that, to them, are identical with the Theosophic exposition of similar subjects. They say, at first, “Why, this is just the same!” But, later, when they find that Theosophic teachings are in many instances opposed to the convictions reached in their former reading, they are genuinely puzzled and ask, “But which, then, is the reliable authority?” This question, often asked, points to a serious lack of appreciation, on their part, of what Theosophy really represents.

Considering this last point first, let us look back a little into the history of the Theosophical Movement. The original Society was founded by H. P. Blavatsky and some co-workers in New York City, in 1875. She remained there until 1878, having, during that time, written *Isis*

*Unveiled.* She then left America to go to India, in order to establish a centre there. What was the condition of affairs in India at that time? First, there was evident a definite feeling of disharmony among the people. This was easily traceable to sectarian differences, resulting in rivalry, quarrels and bitterness in various degrees. Furthermore, the purity of the ancient religions had been all but forgotten by the people generally; while among the educated classes they were looked upon with neither favour nor understanding. The Brahmins, as a class, restricted to their own use any true knowledge they may have had. What they taught their followers led to a sort of superstitious ritualism. In this atmosphere a few branches of the Theosophical Society were established and quickly multiplied. In a short time, it is reported, unity and brotherhood had replaced the old disunity. To the annual Convention of the Theosophical Society came Hindus, Parsees, Buddhists, Mohammedans, Christians and Jews, all of them imbued with a spirit of unity which had been totally absent before the advent of Theosophy. This spirit spread to Ceylon, Burma, Siam and Japan. There were public expressions of admiration and gratitude by the representatives of the several groups for the work done by Theosophy in bringing back to their attention the significance of the ancient truths embodied in their religions, and in creating a basis for uniting the hitherto unfriendly and antagonistic sects. It is pertinent to point out here that these conventions became the basis and inspiration for the formation, later, of the Indian National Congress, which finally helped India achieve her political freedom.

For our purpose, now, the important question is: How did all this come about? What did, or could, Theosophy do that so radically transformed the condition of bitterness and bickering into an enthusiastic and co-operative harmony? The answer lies in one significant fact, which the world has either overlooked, misunderstood or ignored — the fact that every great religion and philosophy in the world's history has had two aspects: that given to the masses, the exoteric; and that given to the few, the esoteric. The great significance of this is discovered when we learn that while on the surface religions and philosophies differ and become antagonistic, under their superstructure the foundation and support is identically the same. This was and is the great Truth and thus an ineradicable bond for unity. In the works of pure Theosophy, one will find an enormous amount of material by which each one may check and prove for himself that this basic similarity does exist.

For example, consider the following. It is a well-known fact that every nation had its "greater" (secret) and "lesser" (public) Mysteries. Theosophy throws some light on this subject, so that now we may appreciate their purpose and performance. Their final purpose was to teach or initiate candidates into the secrets of Nature. Their method was to test the receptivity of the aspirants on many levels. The result

— only those found trustworthy as well as capable were given the final instructions, or initiated. The Kabala of the Jews represented the secret wisdom of the Hebrew religion; and it can be ascertained that its ideas are quite different from those in the popular or exoteric versions. In the East, among the Buddhists are the Mahayana (esoteric) and Hinayana (exoteric) Schools. While in the Hindu religion the Upanishads contain the secret keys that give meaning and understanding to the Vedas.

It was stated earlier that the secret teachings of all lands were basically the same. As an example, the terms "Logos," "Sephira" and "Brahma" were, respectively, used by the Greeks, Hebrews and Hindus. Each of these terms, in its own system, represents the same basic concept, *i.e.*, the function of the power of Life or Deity during the opening stages of a Manvantara or Cycle of manifestation. This is so despite the obvious fact that these communities were separated in time as well as by space. But there were more than just these three. Every important religion or philosophy in the world's history was grounded upon identical secret teachings.

The significance of this must be far-reaching, overwhelming to the perceptive mind. Think of it! In spite of the apparent opposition and divergence in concept and system among the many exoteric creeds, unanimity exists in the Teaching of widely scattered Sages and Philosophers — in their Esoteric line.

Here, then, we have a standard, a criterion for judgment. That Knowledge which is acceptable to *all* the great Sages and Great Souls of the world's history must be the Truth.

And so, returning to the starting problem — *here* is the standard whereby anyone may determine the worth of statements in Zen, in Vedanta, in Yoga books or anywhere else. Theosophy first called attention to this Great Fact. Theosophy is a portion of the Ancient Esoteric Teaching. In the Introductory of her *Secret Doctrine*, H. P. Blavatsky wrote: "I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them." For those who are confused we say — consult Theosophy. It is literally the Wisdom of the Ages.

Now let us consider the other two points mentioned at the outset and learn what the Great Ones advise us in regard to them. The prevailing mood in the West particularly is to take this life as the be-all and end-all of existence and to make it as pleasurable and comfortable as possible. And so "yoga" postures and breathing exercises for better health generally are in vogue. Books on the development of psychic powers are avidly read. The lady receptionist at a hall where mind-cult literature is available says sweetly: "God meant us to be successful and happy, so we learn to 'think in the right way' and thus receive these benefits from the God-principle." A Rosicrucian book advertises in its back pages: "This volume . . . points out the wrong and the right way for the use of metaphysical and mystical

principles in attracting business, increasing one's income, promoting business propositions. . . ."

What is wrong with these prospects? In a word, short-sightedness, ignorance. Let us elucidate.

Most people believe that just beyond the boundaries of the physical is necessarily the spiritual. To combat this naïve belief the Third Object of the modern Theosophical Movement enjoins: "The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man." It soon becomes evident as a result of such study that a veritable "no-man's-land" lies between the physical and man's cherished goal, the spiritual consciousness. Closest to man's physical consciousness in this "in-between" region is an astral graveyard, where the particles of man's lowest psychic constituents undergo disintegration after the death of the physical body. The only self-conscious intelligences awake there are those thrust out of life before their appointed time — suicides and executed criminals. The sensitive soul, venturing into this region, unprepared and unprotected, is almost certain to find itself a prey to self-conscious vengeful vindictiveness as well as to the general atmosphere of moral depravity. Surely, "fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Need a Theosophist feel contrite when he pricks the bright balloon of the innocent psychic dabbler's bright hopes of power and excitement? If one may accept the analogy, an older brother bears a responsibility toward the harm-producing pranks of his junior, at least to the extent of sounding a warning.

In another category lies the misunderstanding and misuse of psychic powers. It is a far cry from the bland assurance of the lady receptionist, and the Rosicrucian advertisements, to the definite pronouncement of *The Voice of the Silence*: "Give up thy life, if thou would'st live"; and the warning of H.P.B.: "*Siddhis* (or the Arhat powers) are only for those who are able to 'lead the life,' to comply with the terrible sacrifices required for such a training, and to comply with them *to the very letter. . . . true Occultism or Theosophy* is the 'Great Renunciation of SELF,' unconditionally and absolutely, in thought as in action."

What single factor marks the difference between these two views of the Occult life? The answer is — Knowledge, the soul-satisfying knowledge that the Great Ones have given us. Too many pseudo-occult writers gloss over or ignore the dangers of "no-man's-land," whatever their motives. Knowledge is precious. It is here to save men from unnecessary suffering, needless mistakes now and extending through Karmic effects into future lives. It requires merely that one view life anew, in the completer perspective of Theosophic Teaching.

It may be pertinent to inquire here: What then does a student of Theosophy do in regard to these questions? It has been intimated, for one thing, that he benefits from the advice of his Teachers and self-consciously refrains from the aforementioned practices. However, he, too, seeks the Bright Goal of spiritual awareness, the Higher Knowledge

with Occult Power as typified in the Mahatma. What then is his procedure?

His chief concern, after the purely theoretic acquisition of the necessary facts, is a programme of preparation. While this may be lacking in glamour, it is rooted in science. All of Nature, high and low, may be attracted to ourselves. But to reach the Higher, one must go through the lower; and the best way of doing that is to destroy whatever in one's nature may be an attraction for the lower. A diver who expects to emerge, after his plunge into the sea, will not carry weights on his feet. The occultist who would accomplish his high purpose must purge illusion, passion, self-interest from his nature.

The student of Theosophy takes the long-range viewpoint. Implicit, as a background to his hopes and plans, are the perspectives of Reincarnation and Karma. Just as Karmic residues from the past may intensify his present difficulties, so is it the same impersonal Karmic law which guarantees that he will retain all of his present accomplishment in the future. To know this is vital, for this task is not accomplished overnight.

The modern plans for space-travel involve an immense amount of careful thought and preparation, in order to be successful. The earnest student of Theosophy is also "not fooling"; he is no idle dilettante pandering to psychic titillation, but a serious research investigator into the Occult World of the Great Men of all time. Unlike our "space" friends, he is not entirely dependent on his own devices but follows a chart left behind by the Great Ones for his help and guidance. They, too, have travelled this Way, and so become what They are.

---

There is a wonderful tree, called Desire, in the heart of man. It is born of the seed of Error. Wrath and pride constitute its large trunk. The wish for action is the basin around its foot (for holding the water that is to nourish it). Ignorance is the root of that tree. Heedlessness is the water that gives it sustenance. Envy constitutes its leaves. The evil acts of past lives supply it with vigour. Loss of judgment and anxiety are its twigs. Grief forms its large branches. Fear is its sprout. Thirst (after diverse objects) that is (apparently) agreeable forms the creepers that twine round it on every side.

—*The Mahabharata*

# STUDIES IN THE SECRET DOCTRINE

THIRD SERIES

## VI.—THE LAW OF KARMA

[Reprinted from *Theosophy*, Vol. XIII, pp. 265-272, for April 1925.—EDS.]

The Universe of Law is accepted as a basic truth by all. The most superstitious slave of priestcraft, the believer in chance, coincidence, the "psychological moment," fatalism, and also the most abject materialist reared by modern science — all avow that the universe, physical, moral, mental, is — must be — governed by law. Law, however, assumes the aspect of a whimsical and mysterious personal god with some; with others, is locked up in the power of thought exerted by human free will; is the code of the partly discovered and the partly to be discovered "facts" of modern "exact science" with a third class. The truth that the "infallible laws" of materialistic science break down in conflict with moral problems does not disturb the upholders of those "laws"; on the other hand the advance of knowledge which has overthrown the "revealed will of God" makes little difference to the blind believer in the non-existent "Almighty."

That all humanity feels the presence of an unfailing power which works incessantly, and unmistakably producing results, is in itself the evidence that the universe *is* governed by Law. Further, in the material world, cause and effect have been related so often and with such unfailing resultants that instinctive human belief has taken a more substantial form and has become an intellectual belief with many. The nefarious influence of exoteric creeds and religions is so great that in spite of that intellectual perception, men and women fail to apply its lessons when confronted with moral problems and perplexities. For example, the intelligent person who utilizes the knowledge of medicine to cure a bodily ailment will forget that every cause is related to its effect and pray to the mysterious god who "in his infinite wisdom called home through the gateway of death" the ailing friend or relative!

Since the days of Plato the correct understanding of the laws of Nature has been obscured till their very existence has become forgotten and unknown. The tyranny of the church drove men to unbelief and modern science gradually uncovered the fact that the laws of nature are infallible while the gods of the temples, the churches and the mosques are fragile and breakable idols. It was, however, left to Theosophy to proclaim the interdependence of the worlds of Spirit and Matter, to assign to the soul its proper place, from which both religion and science had dethroned it, and to give to the body its right position in the scheme of things — the lowest, most shadowy and transient of coverings, in which the immortal soul of man is sheathed, but

which can be transformed into a veritable Temple of God, *i.e.*, of Man who has reached the Stature of Perfection. Through the channel of the greatest Theosophist of the modern age was once again the message given:—

...it suffices to ask these pretended agents of the three gods of the Trinity, how they reconcile it with the most rudimental notions of equity, that if the power to pardon sinners for sinning has been given them, *they did not also receive the ability by miracle to obliterate the wrongs done against person or property.* Let them restore life to the murdered; honour to the dishonoured; property to those who have been wronged, and force the scales of human and divine justice to recover their equilibrium. Then we may talk of their divine commission to bind and loose. Let them say, if they can do this. Hitherto the world has received nothing but sophistry — believed on *blind* faith; we ask palpable, tangible evidence of their God's justice and mercy. But all are silent; no answer, no reply, and still the inexorable unerring Law of Compensation proceeds on its unswerving path. If we but watch its progress, we will find that it ignores all creeds, shows no preferences, but its sunlight and its thunderbolts fall alike on heathen and Christian. No absolution can shield the latter when guilty, no anathema hurt the former when innocent.

Away from us such an insulting conception of divine justice as that preached by priests on their own authority. It is fit only for cowards and criminals! If they are backed by a whole array of Fathers and Churchmen, we are supported by the greatest of all authorities, an instinctive and reverential sense of the everlasting and ever-present law of harmony and justice. (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 544-45)

There is no "chance" in Nature, wherein everything is mathematically co-ordinate and mutually related in its units. "Chance," says Coleridge, "is but the pseudonym of God (or Nature), for those particular cases which He does not choose to subscribe openly with His sign manual." Replace the word "God" by that of *Karma* and it will become an Eastern axiom. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 653)

... we consider it [*Karma*] as the *Ultimate Law* of the Universe, the source, origin and fount of all other laws which exist throughout Nature. *Karma* is the unerring law which adjusts effect to cause, on the physical, mental and spiritual planes of being. As no cause remains without its due effect from greatest to least, from a cosmic disturbance down to the movement of your hand, and as like produces like, *Karma* is that unseen and unknown law *which adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably* each effect to its cause, tracing the latter back to its producer. Though itself *unknowable*, its action is perceivable. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 158)<sup>1</sup>

Learn that no efforts, not the smallest — whether in right or wrong direction — can vanish from the world of causes. E'en wasted smoke

<sup>1</sup> Indian edition, p. 199.

remains not traceless. "A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again." (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 35)<sup>2</sup>

Man is a triple being — he is the energizing spiritual Monad, plus the guiding intelligence (Manas), plus the gyrations of Matter (Karma). The impartite One Self or Atman energizes the Self-conscious Intelligence to gain knowledge and experience, to garner wisdom out of it, and thus to master the universe of matter. This triple work of (1) mastering matter, (2) by understanding its laws, so that (3) the march of the Monad continues, is neither the work of a designing God nor the result of a designless concurrence of atoms, as theology and science assert. *The Secret Doctrine* says:—

The ONE LIFE is closely related to *the one* law which governs the World of Being — KARMA. Exoterically, this is simply and literally "action," or rather an "effect-producing cause." Esoterically it is quite a different thing in its far-fetching moral effects. It is the unerring LAW OF RETRIBUTION. To say to those ignorant of the real significance, characteristics and awful importance of this eternal immutable law, that no theological definition of a personal deity can give an idea of this impersonal, yet ever present and active Principle, is to speak in vain. Nor can it be called Providence. For Providence, with the Theists (the Christian Protestants, at any rate), rejoices in a personal male gender, while with the Roman Catholics it is a female potency, "Divine Providence tempers His blessings to secure their better effects," Wogan tells us. Indeed "He" tempers them, which Karma — a sexless principle — does not. (I. 634)

This Law — whether Conscious or Unconscious — predestines nothing and no one. It exists from and in Eternity, truly, for it is ETERNITY itself; and as such, since no act can be co-equal with eternity, it cannot be said to act, for it is ACTION itself. . . . Karma creates nothing, nor does it design. It is man who plans and creates causes, and Karmic law adjusts the effects; which adjustment is not an act, but universal harmony, tending ever to resume its original position. . . . KARMA is an Absolute and Eternal law in the World of manifestation; and as there can only be one Absolute, as One eternal ever present Cause, believers in Karma cannot be regarded as Atheists or materialists — still less as fatalists: for Karma is one with the Unknowable, of which it is an aspect in its effects in the phenomenal world. (II. 304-6)

Karma is Action and, from the standpoint of the metaphysician as well as that of the student of Occultism and Esotericism, that Action is devoid of any personality. Karma gives birth to beings but its movement is *sui generis*, and it is above its creatures. Its intelligence is like that of a river — its waters find their own levels, make their own channels, and, however weary their journey, they wind surely to their des-

<sup>2</sup> Indian edition, p. 37.

lined sea. Its justice "knows not wrath nor pardon," and is exhaustless in nature. Says *The Secret Doctrine*: "Karma is a mysterious law and no respecter of persons."

Karma is the perpetual motion in the Absolute and its character is dual — cause and effect, Spirit-Matter, the primal pair in the manifestation of the One Life. There is no such thing as a causeless effect; there is no effect which does not become in its turn a cause; no Spirit without Matter and no Matter without Spirit. Thus we come to the third element of Karma — Fohat, the relation between Cause and Effect, Spirit and Matter. This is the totality of the beings which compose "Nature." Says *The Secret Doctrine*:—

The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards a *higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces. The whole process of evolution with its endless adaptations is a proof of this. The immutable laws that weed out the weak and feeble species, to make room for the strong, and which ensure the "survival of the fittest," though so cruel in their immediate action — all are working toward the grand end. The very *fact* that adaptations *do* occur, that the fittest *do* survive in the struggle for existence, shows that what is called "unconscious Nature" is in reality an aggregate of forces manipulated by semi-intelligent beings (Elementals) guided by High Planetary Spirits (Dhyan Chohans), whose collective aggregate forms the manifested *verbum* of the unmanifested LOGOS, and constitutes at one and the same time the MIND of the Universe and its immutable LAW. (I. 277-78)

The "Great Breath" in which the triune differentiation lies concealed in latency is the Law of Attraction-Repulsion, of Cause-Effect. As its ideative or spiritual tendency impels, through its Fohatic or energetic nature (daiviprakriti), its substantial or material nature (mulaprakriti), manifestation (manvantara) occurs; when it withdraws the impulsion, the material nature is absorbed, and pralaya ensues.

In the long series the same law produces reflections of reflections and shadows of shadows — the innumerable sub-manvantaras, followed by equally innumerable sub-pralayas. Sleep, death, pralaya of man and of nature, materially, mentally and spiritually, is by and under the one unvarying law of attraction-repulsion, of cause-effect, which is called the Law of Karma or Compensation.

By this Power sidereal universes, each with its many solar systems and each of the latter with its planets, come into being; they all are held together in their movements by this Power inherent in them; this same Power will in process of time and motion bring them back to a higher homogeneity. (Cf. *The Secret Doctrine*, I. 101-3.)

The Kingdoms of Nature on earth are formed by this Law of the triple nature of the One Life — elementals and elements, vegetables and animals, and ultimately Man — with his unique opportunity and possibility.

Thus Monads or Atma-Buddhis of varied degrees of unfoldment gain for themselves the power of an independent conscious existence; having passed through every elemental form, each has acquired individuality, *the root, seed, or germ of self-consciousness* which sprouts, grows and evolves into the state or condition of Self-consciousness. This is the axial point in evolution, the arrival at the human stage.

It is the sphere of final evolutionary adjustments, the world of Karmic scales, the Hall of Justice, where the balance is struck which determines the future course of the Monad during the remainder of its incarnations in the cycle. (I. 182)

Evolution is *an eternal cycle of becoming*, we are taught; and nature never leaves an atom unused. Moreover, from the beginning of the Round, all in Nature tends to become Man. All the impulses of the dual, centripetal and centrifugal Force are directed towards one point —MAN. (II. 170)

This individual or entity in whom the germ of self-consciousness was unfolding is a "good rupa, which could stand, walk, run, recline and fly. Yet it was still but a chhaya, a shadow with nosense," says the Stanza. (II. 102)

It has already been stated that, to become a Self-Conscious Spirit, the latter must pass through every cycle of being, culminating in its highest point on earth in Man. Spirit *per se* is an unconscious negative ABSTRACTION. Its purity is inherent, not acquired by merit; hence, as already shown, to become the highest Dhyan Chohan it is necessary for each Ego to attain to full self-consciousness as a human, *i.e.*, conscious Being, which is synthesized for us in Man. (I. 192-93)

The process which is so graphically described by Mr. Judge as the lighting up of Manas follows. *The Secret Doctrine* repeatedly speaks of the gift of the Rebels or Fallen Angels — the Luciferian Host. These "mind-born sons of Brahma" project their radiant shadow or spark and give birth to the future inner man, who is described as the Conscious Entity; this radiance projected "later on becomes the Human Higher Self owing to the *personal exertion of the individual.*" (II. 95)

This "Conscious Entity" Occultism says, comes from, nay, in many cases *is*, the very entire essence and *esse* of the high Intelligences condemned, by the undeviating law of Karmic evolution, to reincarnate in this manvantara. (II. 248)

Rudimentary man . . . becomes the perfect man . . . when, with the development of "Spiritual fire," . . . he acquires from his inner Self, or Instructor, the Wisdom of Self-Consciousness, which he does not possess in the beginning. (II. 113)

Thus the Law of Karma or Action comes into a new phase in its operation. Its blind intelligence adjusts the disturbed equilibrium in kingdoms other than human. The relation between Cause and Effect is neither accidental, nor the result of deliberate conscious planning, but,

so to speak, happens. In what happens, however, there is not an error or a mistake, nor any miscarriage of any kind whatever, for the Fohatic Will works without the aid of reasoning intelligence. Hence is there no moral "evil" in non-human kingdoms.

*There is no Devil, no Evil, outside mankind to produce a Devil. Evil is a necessity in, and one of the supporters of the manifested universe. It is a necessity for progress and evolution, as night is necessary for the production of Day, and Death for that of Life — that man may live for ever. (II. 389)*

If man perceives evil, cruelty and wastage — in short, Nature reeling in tooth and claw — it is because man is ignorant of the Fohatic aspect of the One Life. Human mind views the activity of consciousness in other forms in terms of its own powers and knowledge, imposes its own limitations and also its modes and processes on other grades of conscious life. The Emancipated Soul of the Master, through a definite development of his self-conscious intelligent nature, does not see the universe as mortals do who cast their own gigantic shadow on the screen of the universe and behold it as a glorified reflection of themselves. The Mahatma sees the universe as it is; it is reflected in Him. He is it; as an ancient verse has it, He has become "the Supreme Purusha who pervades the universe of the moving and the non-moving and whose form is a sphere."

The attainment of this master-hood is possible for every son of man. This possibility lies in the right use of Karma. With the birth of self-consciousness cause and effect do not "happen"; Will is now joined to Intelligence; instinct and impulse have made room for reason. The creative power of Will has become active, when hitherto it worked passively. Having received the gift of the gods, the Creative Fire of Intelligence, man comes under a new phase of Karmic operations: the creative fire has to energize him, to induce him, to Action or Karma. Now, man has to find ways and means, to devise efforts, to move from within. Hence the following:—

The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations. (I. 17)

... there are no such privileged beings in the universe, whether in our or in other systems, in the outer or the inner worlds, as the angels of the Western Religion and the Judean. A Dhyān Chohan has to become one; he cannot be born or appear suddenly on the plane of life as a full-blown angel. . . . Gods, created as such, would evince no personal merit in being gods. Such a class of beings, perfect only by virtue of the special immaculate nature inherent in them, in the face of suffering and struggling humanity, and even of the lower creation, would be the symbol of an eternal injustice quite Satanic in character, a

ever present crime. It is an anomaly and an impossibility in Nature.  
(I. 221-22)

This is the martyrdom of Self-conscious existence with which the problem of human evil and human suffering — one the cause, the other the effect — is related. *Buddhi per se* is a passive and latent principle, and only in conjunction with Manasic Self-consciousness it becomes the Higher Self in Man (*cf. The Secret Doctrine*, II. 231). To live the Religion of Responsibility — *the one and only true religion for any man* — one has to become convinced of the existence of a personal spiritual entity within the personal physical man. He has to recognize that there are external and internal conditions, which affect the determination of his will upon his actions. Further, he must reject fatalism which implies a blind course of some still blinder power, and perceive the fact that from birth to death he is weaving, thread by thread around himself, his own destiny, as a spider does his cobweb.

The conscious and will-full actor is Man. As such he is at the starting of a new path of evolution. Action or Karma guided by intelligence and energized by will is his special prerogative. The indulgence and use of it begets the sense of duty in him. *Dharma*, which is the characteristic property on the plane of effects in non-human kingdoms, becomes the sense of duty. When in the progress of evolution through the performance of duty, man comes to glimpse that self-consciousness means not the consciousness of one's self but that of the One Self, *dharma* assumes for him the still higher phase of *yagna* or sacrifice. Performance of one's own duty leads to family-dharma, to nation-dharma, to race-dharma with their respective virtues of protection, patriotism, humanitarianism — the giving of one's self to others. Thus the human soul grows. It will be seen that our individual Karma affects and is affected by family, nation and race Karma. Causes generated by a group of individuals, and in which all of them have concern, because of their complex nature, take a longer period of time to produce their due effects. Thus cycles are formed in which reactions take place to previous actions, and a return of effects to the centre of causation marks the completion. Hence the human soul has to free itself not only from cycles of individual Karma but also of group Karma. Freedom, salvation, liberation, *mukti*, is dependent on the knowledge of the workings of cycles. There are voluntary incarnations and avatars of emancipated beings as there are Karmic returns of nirvanees of long ago. When through the knowledge of the Law of Cycles and Yugas an individual learns to apply the Law of Sacrifice and Yagna to his own growth he acquires the *true* virtues of tyaga-renunciation and vairagya-dispassion; he knows himself not as one of the many who perform action but as the One Actor. In the Esotericism of the *Bhagavad-Gita* this is called Krishna-yoga.

Thus there are three stages of the path of the Human Soul — (1) the living of his individual life through and till the payment of debt

incurred by himself; (2) the living of his corporate life through and till the payment of debt incurred by him and all those souls he directly contacted, without shouldering the burden of universal suffering; (3) the living of his universal life through all manifested Nature. In the first two instances the Intelligence is *drawn* into the vortex of evolution caused by cycles. In the third the Individual remains the Servant and therefore the Master of the revolving wheel of time. Therefore it is that we have (1) Pratyeka Buddhas or Buddhas of Selfishness (2) Buddhas of Liberation and (3) Buddhas of Renunciation to whom reference is made in *The Voice of the Silence*.

Theosophy advocates the Great Path of Renunciation. The discipline of the Path lies through self-learning, self-correction, self-realization and self-expression; to educate, to energize ourselves, so that ultimately we come to know ourselves as the One Self-Actor whose service is Perpetual. In the *Bhagavad-Gita* this path of Karma, which sets man free from the *bondage* of Karma, is fully taught. Enough for our purpose to quote a few words:—

All actions are effected by the qualities of nature. The man deluded by ignorance thinks, "I am the actor." But he, O strong-armed one! who is acquainted with the nature of the two distinctions of cause and effect, knowing that the qualities act only in the qualities, and that the Self is distinct from them, is not attached in action. (p. 26)

Five thousand years after Krishna repeated these words on the same battlefield of Kurukshetra, H.P.B. once again spoke them thus in *The Voice of the Silence* (pp. 53-54)<sup>3</sup>:—

Thou hast to be prepared to answer Dharma, the stern law, whose voice will ask thee at thy first, at thy initial step:

"Hast thou complied with all the rules, O thou of lofty hopes?"

"Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind? For as the sacred River's roaring voice whereby all Nature-sounds are echoed back, so must the heart of him 'who in the stream would enter' thrill in response to every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes."

—B. P. WADIA

---

<sup>3</sup> Indian edition, pp. 55-56.

## WHY PRAY?

*What is prayer, any prayer?*

As popularly understood, it is either an expression of gratitude, thanks, or a petition, a demand, a request. Sometimes it is spoken out loud, at other times silently, within the mind-heart. Sometimes it is clearly expressed; at others, vaguely. At times prayers are offered jointly with others and at other times in private.

*But why pray?*

Well, because of many reasons: If out of gratitude, that is one thing; if it is a demand, then usually it is for oneself or for another person.

*To whom is a prayer addressed?*

Generally to a personal God, a powerful personage of man's creation, or to an unseen presence within oneself, or to any of a variety of mind-formed or superstition-inspired beings. To the one who prays, these are made real in terms of his own concepts.

*When is a prayer generally offered?*

Here again a variety of answers can be given. If one assumes that prayer is inner communion, or union with the Highest, then it has to be a continuous process. It requires constant attention, awareness and concentration on the ideal, through gentle words, noble feelings and compassionate thoughts.

*Then prayer is not always addressed to God?*

It depends on our definition of "God." Does "God" mean to us a Being outside of ourselves, our environment? The act of petitioning implies that power of some kind is feared or propitiated. God is then synonymous with "power." But power or law is known to be everywhere in Nature. God is one with Nature — also with ourselves, who are a part of Nature. Hence, there can be no separation between God, Nature and ourselves. God is not *a* being, because any being, however mighty, must be less than the Whole, of which we are a part. God is not separate from ourselves. We think we are separate because the God within, sitting in impartial judgment on our thoughts, feelings, words and deeds, discerns unerringly that which is harmonious with its true nature and that which is disturbing to the general harmony of brotherhood, kindness, loyalty, truth and generosity in Nature and among men. We eternally judge ourselves, and condemn or approve of all that we do.

*Does it mean that men are of two natures, one noble and the other ignoble, and that the ignoble prays to the noble?*

Partly yes and partly no. We all have these two natures, but that

which is ignoble is also intelligent. That which is called the voice of conscience — the memory of past experiences, consciously or unconsciously recalled — shows that we carry with us the link to the noble to the God within — our Higher Self. Why else should there be so much of similarity between the laws of all countries? It can only be derived from the central Truth of all things, the Wisdom of the Law of the Universe, the Great Divine Power, extensive as Space, regular as Law and Motion, eternal as Duration, limitless as Light.

*God, then, is not a great Being whose favour is to be sought, but Universal Presence, within and without us?*

True, indeed. How else would there be justice for all, a sure basis for universal morality, religious unity, cultural accord, international amity? Our only true prayer would be the leading of a pure and altruistic life constantly regulated by equal regard for others; a curb on harsh and bitter words; an abandonment of selfish and acquisitive feelings; a positive concentration of mind on great ideals; an acceptance of all circumstances in life as opportunities for repayment of what we owe to Nature and to men. True prayer, therefore, is the active generation of good thoughts, speaking of good words, doing of good deeds. The basis for true goodness must be wisdom; wisdom comes from study and compassion and an understanding of the true nature of the Divine Principle in all. How then shall we pray? By true acts which we need not hide and of which we are not afraid; by true words which cause pain to no one and are not hypocritical; by true thoughts which do not hurt the minds and lives of others. If we are a part of the Divine, then let us act divinely, universally, as brothers, friends, companions to all.

---

It is this pernicious doctrine of ever relying upon extraneous help that leads to the collapse — physical, mental, moral and spiritual — of well-meaning, but weak and unbalanced minds. It slays the patient of the mesmerizer and the mental healer, the neophyte of the sorcerer, and the dilettante of Reform. Neither success nor safety is to be found outside self-development.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## EXTRACTS FROM UNPUBLISHED LETTERS

Your valiant stand and your right resolve, as also your desire to tread the Right Path, for which purpose you have sacrificed much, is a force which makes you a member of a Mighty Company. We put ourselves on probation as personalities by such resolve and sacrifice. This means that there is a new orientation in your life; you are on the Bridge which H.P.B. called *Antaskarana* and which Zoroastrianism calls the Chinvand Bridge. This Bridge bridges the deep waters which separate this from the Occult world. The latter is the world of the Ego. The purification of the personality by life means reverses to it and these naturally produce irritation, non-understanding, depression, suffering, and through them all — Realization. Each time pain transforms itself into a faculty — a spiritual faculty, and gradually produces Clear Vision. This Clear Vision has a double aspect; it not only is the Vision of the Ego, but he sees the worlds through clarified and purified emotions and feelings as also thoughts and reasonings. Therefore the Ego does not see colours — it sees through colours; it does not hear sounds — it hears through sounds; thus all colours and sounds and their forms and shapes are mere symbols which weave themselves into emblems which the Ego fully understands.

Now, what are called tests on the Path and trials of the neophyte are as truly self-engendered as the resolve we make or the sacrifices we offer. We put ourselves on the Path and thereby precipitate our own tests and bring forth our own trials. These tests and trials *seem* to us to be rooted outside of us — but this is due to misunderstanding of the Law of Karma. The Law operates within us and through us on others; within others and through them on us. Think on this and you will gain some illumination. To continue — being what you have made yourself by your noble resolve and beautiful sacrifice, and standing on that Bridge, you must perforce meet your Kurukshetra. You are *between* the two armies: the abyss of the material world is behind you; you can try to walk back into it, which will be equivalent to a boy of seven trying to make himself an infant of three; he will only disfigure himself if not destroy himself, for it cannot be done. Having passed the abyss, you must be prepared to go through the *Yoga* of Despondency. Remember, please, it is not the despair of the world; it is a *yoga*; see the title of the first Discourse of the *Gita*. Read carefully that first discourse and remember that Krishna is the Ego — your own Real Self — the Charioteer who has placed you in the midst of the two armies because *you*, Arjuna, the Reincarnating Self-Personality, asked Krishna to take you there. Therefore, Arjuna-like, you have to survey the armies, and *which* Arjuna during these millions of years has not thrown down his weapon in the despondency caused by that first survey?

We are all the same and if I write this it is to remind you that Krishna is near — nearer to you today than last year, nearer to you

than your friend can ever hope to be, or, for the matter of that, anyone. We all of us become Krishna, *are* Krishna. Therefore do not delude yourself that your moods are something of a speciality of abomination. There is a danger that lurks in that. Our subtle *Ahankara* forces itself forward and if we cannot be an especially good someone then we want to be an especially bad someone. Do you see the Personality — how it stealthily comes forth? Remember therefore not to grieve for your mistakes any more than to extol your good deeds. On to the Bridge, in the midst of the two armies, the activities which we pursued in the World of Matter follow us and overwhelm our march forward to the World of Spirit.

Be wise in living — look not behind, nor far away into the Golden Age, yet to be. Do what is nearest at hand as a real warrior — chivalry, courage, love are our virtues and the sword of knowledge destroys doubt, fear and the binding limitations of matter.

What a long, grandfatherly sermon!

---

An important surgical anniversary is being observed by scientists. It was in the sixties of the last century that the first evidence was found that "Stone Age" surgeons operated on the living head. A nearly worldwide pattern of such skulls has now been unearthed (*The New York Times*, October 23rd). From the evidence, many of these ancient operations were successful, in that many patients survived.

In Europe, about 400 such skulls have been found and are dated from 3,000 to 200 B.C. Dr. T. Dale Stewart, curator of the Smithsonian Institution's division of physical anthropology, holds that a major surgical centre developed about 1900-1500 B.C. in southern France. He believes that this centre led to a second centre near what later became Paris and probably is directly connected with the beginnings of modern surgery in Europe.

According to Dr. Stewart, the earliest known examples of skull surgery in Peru date back to the fifth century B.C. There are also scattered finds in the Pacific, in Asia and Africa.

No mention is made of the fact that in ancient India there were surgeons who had perfected themselves in brain surgery at least 6,000 years ago, as revealed by the Mohenjo Daro and Harappa excavations. More than one authority has given belated justice to old India by acknowledging that centuries ago she produced thoroughly scientific physicians and surgeons. Incidentally, both Charaka and Sushruta mention the ancient use of anæsthetics.

---

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Warnings have from time to time been sounded that a blood transfusion can sometimes kill a patient, and this risk should prevent surgeons from indulging in this practice too freely; but a new study reported at the annual meeting of the American College of Surgeons shows otherwise. Doctors are now pouring blood into human bodies at the unprecedented rate of 5,000,000 pints a year, "much of it for no good medical reason."

Earl Ubell, Science Editor of *The York Herald Tribune*, in the issue of October 12th, reports Dr. Robert S. Myers, executive assistant director of the College, as warning his colleagues assembled at the meeting that it is "irrational and dangerous" to use blood routinely for patients with normal blood levels, or who have suffered no unusual loss of blood. There are numerous instances, he stated, in which the patient would be safer if he were denied transfusion.

The risk of death comes from accidentally mismatched blood. Injection of such blood produces a chemical reaction in the body that kills the red blood cells. This does not always lead to immediate death, but a mismatched transfusion can sensitize a patient to a future transfusion that can lead to a prompt fatality. The sensitization can also sterilize a young woman. Studies indicate that 19 out of 1,000 patients suffer transfusion reactions of some kind.

Some of the other risks mentioned by Dr. Myers are: overloading of the heart, massive germ infections, injection of a bubble of air that gets into the brain and infectious hepatitis virus that inflames the liver.

Adverse physical reactions are not the only arguments against blood transfusion. If one turns to the Theosophical knowledge on this subject, regarding the blood as a stream carrying — besides its physical properties — all the invisible psychic diseases, germs and characteristics belonging to the individual, one can understand the horror of such a practice which must be classified as one of unconscious black magic. Science indulges, without adequate knowledge, in the performance of deeds which sorcerers use consciously and deliberately to injure their fellow beings. The danger of relying exclusively on material observations and discoveries and refusing to consider the realms invisible even to the finest microscope is evident to the student of Occultism. This science of the generally unknown exists and has its savants. It is only in that Sacred Science that can be found the explanations and warnings on such practices as the above.

---

In the October issue of *Think*, under the title "Science Is Heresy," Garrett Hardin, a biologist, explores the implications of a provocative word: "heresy." Presenting a strong, persuasive case, he argues that science, without its heretics, would die.

As the author points out, it is being recognized by an increasing number of people, many of them men in influential positions, that "all great new advances must come through the door marked heresy." That is not to say that all heretical ideas are good, but all good ideas are heretical — at first. The true scientific spirit requires that no ideas be rejected without proper investigation.

The very word "heresy" in Greek means choice, the implication being that any idea the individual chooses for himself is *ipso facto* wrong (and probably wicked). The Arabic word *bid'a* means both novelty and heresy — that which is new is to be shunned. One could go on through dozens of languages, pointing out the identifications of the new, the novel and the unconventional with wickedness.

What is remarkable about modern life is not the extent to which it is "other-directed," but the extent to which it is not. It is because an appreciable minority of men are not bound by traditional ways of thought that we have science in all its glory and power, and the progress that springs from it. Historically, we can see that the rise of modern science and the increase in the tolerance of heresy came hand in hand. The association was no accident. Nor was this development without pain.

When Copernicus and Galileo asserted that the earth moves around the sun, their theory was declared heresy, which it remained until 1822. A conflict over alternative scientific theories is not, however, the commonest source of heresy. Much more common is a conflict over the proper domains of science and theology. For example, disease, physical or mental, was held for many centuries to be divinely caused; its presence was regarded as evidence of heavenly displeasure with man's actions, and attempts to treat the physically or mentally ill by rational means were regarded as attacks on established religious beliefs. In such an environment, any physician who tried to treat disease as a natural phenomenon, or talked of the science of psychiatry, ran the risk of being labelled a heretic.

"The orthodoxies of recent times," Mr. Hardin states, "have not been quite so orthodox," and the rapid change brought about by heresy-engendered progress has made the intellectual climate more favourable for new heresies. Nevertheless, conflicts between innovators and those wedded to the ancient ways continue to arise. For example, not too long ago, the use of chemical anæsthetics was considered immoral.

There is also the other side of the picture. There should not only be acceptance, after due investigation, of the true and the good but also rejection of the false. Much that science once accepted as valid and true has later been disproved. H.P.B. was much criticized because of her penetrating judgment on the subject of the fallibility of science in general and of some scientists in particular. Much has happened since *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* were published to confirm H.P.B.'s

view that the science of her day consisted mainly of hypotheses of uncertain validity and doubtful value. Fortunately for the enlightenment of the race, there have always been those in the scientific world who have had the courage to challenge accepted modes of thought and hasty generalizations. Among such was Dr. Edward L. Youmans, who is quoted in *Isis Unveiled*:—

We are not to regard past theories as mere exploded errors, nor present theories as final. The living and growing body of truth has only mantled its old integuments in the progress to a higher and more vigorous state. (I. 405)

---

The responsibility of the scientist has become a much-discussed topic; for, while latest discoveries have brought the necessities and the comforts of life within the reach the common man, the shadow of a total catastrophe also looms large over mankind.

As Shri Jayaprakash Narayan pointed out in his address delivered at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, on October 30th (*Sarvodaya*, November 1960), there is a special opportunity for scientists in India to show that the advance of science need not necessarily follow the path that it has followed in the West. Prime Minister Nehru and others occupying high positions in this country have time and again reminded us that science must be subordinated to spiritual values, and that if this is not done science will become a great source of danger to mankind. A co-operative society in which these human values will be preserved will have to be created, and this can only be accomplished when the conflicts between man and man, race and race, class and class, caste and caste, nation and nation, have been reduced to the fullest possible extent.

Gandhiji's concept of Sarvodaya was based on his belief that human values are of paramount importance and that they should be preserved if a social order free from want, from strife and from exploitation is to be built up. How to preserve these values is a problem that Sarvodaya seeks to solve.

The question is often asked: Is industrialization good for India? Shri Jayaprakash is of the opinion that industrialization without taking into account the basic values of life will lead the human individual towards robotism, towards a structure of society into which he has to fit. He becomes a cog in the wheel of mechanization and starves morally and spiritually. It is not enough to give the common man the means to produce material goods, necessary as they are. Of what use will this be if man becomes the slave of the machine? Science and technology should be able to help in finding out a better device which would increase the productivity of man but would still remain under his control.

Scientists are apt to think that the problems of man and his existence

are for the sociologists to think about and that they as scientists are not concerned with them. But scientists cannot dissociate themselves from these problems. It is possible to harness scientific knowledge for the good of the common man.

---

Along the same line as Shri Jayaprakash, Dr. Jacob Bronowski presents the problem of the morality of science from the scientist's viewpoint in the November 12th *Saturday Evening Post*, under the heading "A Moral for an Age of Plenty." This morality, the author suggests, has grown from the principle that "the community of scientists shall be so organized that nothing shall stand in the way of the emergence of the truth." The search for truth imposes a morality on those who share in it and tells them how they ought to behave if they are to succeed in their quest. Science and morality, knowledge and goodness, therefore, cannot be separated. This means that "the body of scientists has to create a code of behaviour which shall tame the prejudices, the foibles and the vanities of individuals for the sake of reaching the truth, not by dictatorial imposition but by the agreement of free minds."

Human beings need justice [Dr. Bronowski continues] and they also need affection. These are two different sets of values, and neither set of values is complete without the other. We have associated the more kindly values with religion and art, and have behaved as if somehow they belong to a different life from the sterner values of science. But this is an unbearable division, and our society will perish if it persists in it.

The moral problem of our century is to make the values of science as much a part of our lives as are the values which religion and literature have long glorified. We must learn to build a complete morality, in which love no longer fights against truth in our unconscious thoughts. For our weakness is that we think that love and even goodness are threatened by truth, and that it is kinder and more comforting to be dishonest. It is this opposition between what we think of as the kindly values of family and national life on the one hand, and the stern values of science on the other, which threatens to demoralize society in the age of plenty....

There are two things that make up morality. One is the sense that other people matter: the sense of common loyalty, of charity and tenderness, the sense of human love. The other is a clear judgment of what is at stake: a cold knowledge without a trace of deception, of precisely what will happen to oneself and to others if one plays either the hero or the coward. This is the highest morality: to combine human love with an unflinching, a scientific judgment.

---