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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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THE GIFT OF THE MAKARAS

Man will rebecome the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures — the terrestrial and the divine; after which he becomes impermeable to the lower titanic forces, invulnerable in his personality, and immortal in his individuality, which cannot happen before every animal element is eliminated from his nature.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 422

HUMAN EVOLUTION has a long past — longer than modern science, though it has pushed back the age of man considerably, would admit. Man is not descended from the ape, nor did civilization begin in savagery. Theosophy rejects all theories of evolution which look upon brain, body and matter as the producers of mind, soul and spirit. Assigning to thinking man the age of 18 million years, Theosophy traces the roots of human mind and self-consciousness to the sacrifices of a Celestial Hierarchy known by many names in the Hindu Puranas and other esoteric books. They are the mysterious beings that preside over the constellation Capricornus or Makara — beings about whom H.P.B.'s *Secret Doctrine* gives instruction more in the shape of hints than in detail.

These mind-born sons of Prajapati taught infant humanity its arts and sciences — agriculture, architecture, etc. They also incarnated in the mindless men, *i.e.*, men in form but not in mind. The differences to be found in the human kingdom should be traced to this psychological phenomenon. The mindless men were entities of different grades of bodily sensitiveness, and each attracted to itself what it deserved. Just as there is fire locked up in a piece of wood which blazes into flame when struck by lightning, so also those mindless human forms carrying within themselves the fire of mind were touched by the Fire-Fathers,

the Agnishwatta Pitris, and were lighted up into self-consciousness. The differences which arose after this process, divided humanity into groups. The incarnating entities themselves were of different degrees of intelligence.

In the beginning, immediately after the descent of these gods — the Fallen Angels of the Christian scriptures — the most advanced lived with the less advanced, teaching the latter, as said above. It was that Golden Age of the race when the whole of humanity was one family with one language and one religion. The elders tended and looked after the young, and selfishness and sorrow were unknown.

As ages rolled by and the less evolved members of the human family grew in intelligence, they were animated by the desires of the senses and the sense-organs and they became rebellious, like growing boys and girls who in their teens begin to think their fathers fools. This rebellion was itself but a Karmic reaction from previous action, about which much has been written in the second volume of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The Atlantean rebels were slaves to their own passion-nature. The powers of the lower self, Kama-Krodha-Lobha, the triad of passion-anger-greed, kept the embodied Spirit in a firm grip, and left it no scope to commune with the Father in Heaven, the Higher Divine Self. Thus arose in the human race intelligent, self-conscious entities who chose the path of vice and wickedness and led others astray.

Yet, all human beings carry within themselves, in however veiled a form at present, the Light of Wisdom and the Power of Compassion which they owe to the Fire-Fathers, the mysterious Makaras. In the present-day gloom caused by strife, competition, greed and carnage, we wonder where that Wisdom and that Compassion are to be found. Are they not dead? Esoteric Philosophy teaches that they are not dead though they are deadened. The materialism of modern science and the degrading influence of dogmatic religion have put to sleep man's divine intuitions. The mission of Theosophy is to shake men out of the jog-trot of existence and make them claim their divine heritage.

We must arouse ourselves to recognize the truth that what we should fear is not another world war, not the food shortage, nor our own impoverishment. These fears are born of the disregard of the truth that unless we fight our own lust, wrath, greed, vanity, pride, concupiscence, there will be international wars, class struggle, family feuds. Says *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 268):

The Third Race was pre-eminently the bright shadow, at first, of the gods, whom tradition exiles on Earth after the allegorical war in Heaven; which became still more allegorical on Earth, for it was the war between spirit and matter. This war will last till the inner and divine man adjusts his outer terrestrial self to his own spiritual nature. Till then the dark and fierce passions of the former will be at eternal feud with his master, the Divine Man. But the *animal* will be tamed one day, because its nature will be changed, and harmony will reign once more between the two as before the "Fall," when even mortal man was *created* by the Elements and was not born.

How shall we adjust our outer terrestrial self to our own spiritual nature? By adequate knowledge of the terrestrial and the spiritual and by the perception that the corrupted nature of the former and the non-recognition of the latter are responsible for the disharmony between the two. If "the animal *will* be tamed one day," why not make a serious and sincere attempt now, and accomplish the task in a speedier fashion? Why this obstinacy, almost amounting to perversity, in going the way of the animal?

The death and dissolution of the terrestrial, animal nature will naturally occur if we succeed in gaining the active guidance of the Self within. *Isis Unveiled* (I. 39) helps us:

It is our decided impression and conviction, that to become a genuine spiritual entity . . . man must first *create* himself anew, so to speak — *i.e.*, thoroughly eliminate from his mind and spirit, not only the dominating influence of selfishness and other impurity, but also the infection of superstition and prejudice.

Let us resolve righteously. The strength to carry forward our resolves will come with knowledge, which is to be obtained through regular study of our divine nature and its celestial parents.

HE alone is poor who has many desires.

—LEONARDO DA VINCI

THE CYCLE MOVETH

[Under this caption was published the editorial which opened the sixth volume of H.P.B.'s *Lucifer*, in March 1890. The article surveys the past and depicts the tendencies of the then present, both of course from the point of view of the esotericist. Seventy-eight years have wrought mighty changes on every plane of being, and yet the message of the article remains true. It was reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, December 1934.—EDS.]

“Let the great world spin for ever down the ringing grooves of change.”—TENNYSON

“The goal of yesterday will be the starting-point of tomorrow.”

—CARLYLE

THE GREAT MYSTIC of the eighteenth century, the ardent disciple of Jacob Boehme—Louis Claude de Saint Martin—used to say in the last years of his life: “I would have loved to meet more with those who guess at truths, for such alone are living men.”

This remark implies that, outside the limited circle of mystics which has existed in every age, people endowed with correct psychic intuition were still fewer at the end of the last century than they are now. These were, indeed, years of complete soul-blindness and spiritual drought. It is during that century that the chaotic darkness and Babylonish confusion with regard to spiritual things, which have ever reigned in brains too crammed with mere scientific learning, had fully asserted their sway over the masses. The lack of soul perception was not confined to the “Forty Immortals” of the French Academy, nor to their less pretentious colleagues of Europe in general, but had infected almost all the classes of Society, settling down as a chronic disease called Scepticism and the denial of all but matter.

The messengers sent out periodically in the last quarter of every century westward—ever since the mysteries which alone had the key to the secrets of nature had been crushed out of existence in Europe by heathen and Christian conquerors—had appeared that time in vain. St. Germain and Cagliostro are credited with real phenomenal powers only in fashionable novels, to remain inscribed in encyclopædias—to purblind the better, we suppose, the minds of forthcoming generations—as merely clever charlatans. The only man whose powers and knowledge could have been easily tested by exact science, thus forming a firm link between physics and metaphysics—Friedrich Anton Mesmer

—had been hooted from the scientific arena by the greatest “scholar-ignoramus” in things spiritual, of Europe. For almost a century, namely, from 1770 down to 1870, a heavy spiritual darkness descending on the Western hemisphere, settled, as if it meant to stay, among *cultured* societies.

But an undercurrent appeared about the middle of our century in America, crossing the Atlantic between 1850 and 1860. Then came in its trail the marvellous medium for physical manifestations, D. D. Home. After he had taken by storm the Tuileries and the Winter Palace, light was no longer allowed to shine under a bushel. Already, some years before his advent, “a change” had come “o’er the spirit of the dream” of almost every civilized community in the two worlds, and a great reactive force was now at work.

What was it? Simply this. Amidst the greatest glow of the self-sufficiency of exact science, and the reckless triumphant crowing of victory over the ruins of the very foundations—as some Darwinists had fondly hoped—of old superstitions and creeds; in the midst of the deadliest calm of wholesale negations, there arose a breeze from a wholly unexpected quarter. At first the significant afflatus was like a hardly perceptible stir, puffs of wind in the rigging of a proud vessel—the ship called “Materialism,” whose crew was merrily leading its passengers toward the Maelstrom of annihilation. But very soon the breeze freshened and finally blew a gale. It fell with every hour more ominously on the ears of the iconoclasts, and ended by raging loud enough to be heard by everyone who had ears to hear, eyes to see, and an intellect to discern. It was the inner voice of the masses, their spiritual intuition—that traditional enemy of cold intellectual reasoning, the legitimate progenitor of Materialism—that had awakened from its long cataleptic sleep. And, as a result, all those ideals of the human soul which had been so long trampled under the feet of the would-be conquerors of the world-superstitions, the self-constituted guides of a new humanity—appeared suddenly in the midst of all these raging elements of human thought, and, like Lazarus rising out of his tomb, lifted their voice and loudly demanded recognition.

This was brought on by the invasion of “Spirit” manifestations, when mediumistic phenomena had broken out like an influenza all over Europe. However unsatisfactory their philosophical interpretation, these phenomena being genuine and true as truth itself in their being and their reality, they were undeniable; and being in their very nature beyond denial, they came to be regarded as evident proofs of a life

beyond — opening, moreover, a wide range for the admission of every metaphysical possibility. This once the efforts of materialistic science to disprove them availed it nothing. Beliefs such as man's survival after death, and the immortality of Spirit, were no longer to be pooh-poohed as figments of imagination; for, prove once the genuineness of such transcendental phenomena to be beyond the realm of matter, and beyond investigation by means of *physical* science, and — whether these phenomena contain *per se* or not the *proof of immortality*, demonstrating as they do the existence of invisible and spiritual regions where other forces than those known to exact science are at work — they are shown to lie beyond the realm of materialism. Cross, by one step only, the line of matter and the area of Spirit becomes infinite. Therefore, believers in them were no longer to be browbeaten by threats of social contumacy and ostracism; this, also, for the simple reason that in the beginning of these manifestations almost the whole of the European higher classes became ardent "Spiritualists." To oppose the strong tidal wave of the cycle there remained at one time but a handful, in comparison with the number of believers, of grumbling and all-denying fogeys.

Thus was once more demonstrated that human life, devoid of all its world-ideals and beliefs — in which the whole of philosophical and cultured antiquity, headed in historical times by Socrates and Plato, by Pythagoras and the Alexandrian Neo-Platonists, believed — becomes deprived of its higher sense and meaning. The world-ideals can never completely die out. Exiled by the fathers, they will be received with opened arms by the children.

Let us recall to mind how all this came to pass.

It was, as said, between the third and fourth quarters of the present century that reaction set in in Europe — as still earlier in the United States. The days of a determined psychic rebellion against the cold dogmatism of science and the still more chilling teachings of the schools of Büchner and Darwin, had come in their pre-ordained and pre-appointed time of cyclic law. Our older readers may easily recollect the suggestive march of events. Let them remember how the wave of mysticism, arrested in its free course during its first twelve or fifteen years in America by public, and especially by religious, prejudices, finally broke through every artificial dam and overflowed Europe, beginning with France and Russia and ending with England — the slowest of all countries to accept new ideas, though these may bring us truths as old as the world.

Nevertheless, and notwithstanding every opposition, "Spiritualism," as it was soon called, got its rights of citizenship in Great Britain. For several years it reigned undivided. Yet in truth, its phenomena, its psychic and mesmeric manifestations, were but the cyclic pioneers of the revival of prehistoric Theosophy, and the occult Gnosticism of the antediluvian mysteries. These are facts which no intelligent Spiritualist will deny; as, in truth, modern Spiritualism is but an earlier revival of crude Theosophy, and modern Theosophy a *renaissance* of ancient Spiritualism.

Thus, the waters of the great "Spiritual" flood were neither primordial nor pure. When, owing to cyclic law, they had first appeared, manifesting at Rochester, they were left to the mercies and mischievous devices of two little girls to give them a name and an interpretation. Therefore when, breaking the dam, these waters penetrated into Europe, they bore with them scum and dross, flotsam and jetsam, from the old wrecks of hypotheses and hazily outlined aspirations, based upon the dicta of the said little girls. Yet the eagerness with which "Spiritualism" and its twin-sister Spiritism were received, all their inanities notwithstanding, by almost all the cultured people of Europe, contains a splendid lesson. In this passionate aspiration of the human Soul — this irrepressible flight of the higher elements in man toward their forgotten Gods and the God within him — one heard the voice of the public conscience. It was an undeniable and not to be misunderstood answer of the inner nature of man to the then revelling, gloating Materialism of the age, as an escape from which there was but another form of evil — adherence to the dogmatic, ecclesiastical conventionalism of State religions. It was a loud, passionate protest against both, a drifting towards a middle way between the two extremes — namely, between the enforcement for long centuries of a *personal* God of infinite love and mercy by the diabolical means of sword, fire, and inquisitional tortures; and, on the other hand, the reign, as a natural reaction, of complete denial of such a God, and along with him of an infinite Spirit, a Universal Principle manifesting as immutable LAW.

True science had wisely endeavoured to make away, along with the mental slavery of mankind, with its orthodox, paradoxical God; *pseudo*-science had devised by means of sophistry to do away with every belief save in matter. The haters of the Spirit of the world, denying God in Nature as much as an extracosmic Deity, had been preparing for long years to create an artificial, soulless humanity; and it was only just that their Karma should send a host of *pseudo*-"Spirits" or Souls

to thwart their efforts. Shall anyone deny that the highest and the best among the representatives of Materialistic science have succumbed to the fascination of the will-o'-the-wisps which looked at first sight as the most palpable proof of *an immortal Soul* in man¹—*i.e.*, the alleged *communion between the dead and the living?*² Yet, such as they were, these abnormal manifestations, being in their bulk genuine and spontaneous, carried away and won all those who had in their souls the sacred spark of intuition. Some clung to them because, owing to the death of ideals, of the crumbling of the Gods and faith in every civilized centre, they were dying themselves of spiritual starvation; others because, living amidst sophistical perversion of every noble truth, they preferred even a feeble approximation to truth to no truth whatever.

But, whether they placed belief in and followed "Spiritualism" or not, many were those on whom the spiritual and psychic evolution of the cycle wrought an indelible impression; and such ex-materialists could never return again to their iconoclastic ideas. The enormous and ever-growing numbers of mystics at the present time show better than anything else the undeniably occult working of the cycle. Thousands of men and women who belong to no church, sect, or society, who are neither Theosophists nor Spiritualists, are yet virtually members of that Silent Brotherhood the units of which often do not know each other, belonging as they do to nations far and wide apart, yet each of whom carries on his brow the mark of the mysterious Karmic seal—the seal that makes of him or her a member of the Brotherhood of the Elect of Thought. Having failed to satisfy their aspirations in their respective *orthodox* faiths, they have severed themselves from their Churches in soul when not in body, and are devoting the rest of their

¹ Let our readers recall the names of the several most eminent men in literature and science who have become openly Spiritualists. We have but to name Professor Hare, Epes Sarjeant, Robert Dale Owen, Judge Edmonds, etc., in America; Professors Butlerof, Wagner, and, greater than they, the late Dr. Pirogoff (see his posthumous "Memoirs," published in *Rooskaya Starina*, 1884-1886), in Russia; Zöllner, in Germany; M. Camille Flammarion, the Astronomer, in France; and last but not least, Messrs. A. Russell Wallace, W. Crookes, Balfour Stewart, etc., etc., in England, followed by a number of scientific stars of the second magnitude.

² We hope that the few friends we have left in the ranks of the Spiritualists may not misunderstand us. We denounce the bogus "spirits" of *seances* held by professional mediums, and deny the possibility of such manifestations of spirits on the physical plane. But we believe thoroughly in Spiritualistic phenomena, and in the intercourse between Spirits or *Egos*—of embodied and disembodied entities; only adding that, since the latter cannot manifest on our plane, it is the Ego of the living man which meets the Ego of the dead personality, by ascending to the Devachanic plane, which may be accomplished in trance, during sleep in dreams, and by other subjective means.

lives to the worship of loftier and purer ideals than any intellectual speculation can give them. How few, in comparison to their numbers, and how rarely one meets with such, and yet their name is legion, if they only chose to reveal themselves.

Under the influence of that same passionate search of "life in spirit" and "life in truth," which compels every earnest Theosophist onward through years of moral obloquy and public ostracism; moved by the same dissatisfaction with the principles of pure conventionality of modern society, and scorn for the still triumphant, fashionable thought, which, appropriating to itself unblushingly the honoured epithets of "scientific" and "foremost," of "pioneer" and "liberal," uses these prerogatives but to domineer over the faint-hearted and selfish — these earnest men and women prefer to tread alone and unaided the narrow and thorny path that lies before him who will neither recognize authorities nor bow before cant. They may leave "Sir Oracles" of modern thought, as well as the Pecksniffs of time-dishonoured and dogma-soiled lay-figures of Church-conventionality, without protest; yet, carrying in the silent shrine of their soul the same grand ideals as all mystics do, they are in truth Theosophists *de facto* if not *de jure*. We meet such in every circle of society, in every class of life. They are found among artists and novelists, in the aristocracy and commerce, among the highest and the richest, as among the lowest and the poorest. Among the most prominent in this century is Count L. Tolstoi, a living example, and one of the signs of the times in this period, of the occult working of the ever moving cycle. Listen to a few lines of the history of the psychospiritual evolution of this aristocrat, the greatest writer of modern Russia, by one of the best *feuilletonistes* in St. Petersburg:

... The most famous of our Russian authors, the "word-painter," a writer of Shakespearean realism, a heathen poet, one who in a certain sense worshipped in his literary productions life for the sake of life, *an sich und fur sich* — as the Hegelians used to say — collapses suddenly over his fairy palette, lost in tormenting thought; and forthwith he commences to offer to himself and the world the most abstruse and insoluble problems. . . . The author of the *Cossacks* and *Family Happiness*, clad in peasant's garb and bast shoes, starts as a pilgrim on foot in search of divine truth. He goes to the solitary forest *skits*³ of the *Raskolnikyi*,⁴ visits the monks of the Desert of Optino, passes his time

³ *Skit* is a religious hermitage.

⁴ *Raskolnik*, a Dissenter; hitherto persecuted and forbidden sects in Russia.

in fasting and prayer. For his *belles lettres* and philosophy he substitutes the Bible and the writings of the Church Fathers; and, as a sequel to *Anna Karenina* he creates his *Confessions* and *Explanations of the New Testament*.

The fact that Count Tolstoi, all his passionate earnestness notwithstanding, did not become an orthodox Christian, nor has succumbed to the wiles of Spiritualism (as his latest satire on mediums and "spirits" proves), prevents him in no way from being a full-fledged mystic. What is the mysterious influence which has suddenly forced him into that weird current almost without any transition period? What unexpected idea or vision led him into that new groove of thought? Who knoweth save himself, or those real "Spirits," who are not likely to gossip it out in a modern séance-room?

And yet Count Tolstoi is by no means a solitary example of the work of that mysterious cycle of psychic and spiritual evolution now in its full activity — a work which, silently and unperceived, will grind to the dust the most grand and magnificent structures of materialistic speculations, and reduce to nought in a few days the intellectual work of years. What is that moral and invisible Force? Eastern philosophy alone can explain.

In 1875 the Theosophical Society came into existence. It was ushered into the world with the distinct intention of becoming an ally to, a supplement and a helper of, the Spiritualistic movement — of course, in its higher and more philosophical aspect. It succeeded, however, only in making of the Spiritualists its bitterest enemies, its most untiring persecutors and denunciators. Perchance the chief reason for it may be found in the fact that many of the best and most intellectual of their representatives passed body and soul into the Theosophical Society. Theosophy was, indeed, the only system that gave a philosophical *rationale* of mediumistic phenomena, a logical *raison d'être* for them. Incomplete and unsatisfactory some of its teachings certainly are, which is only owing to the imperfections of the human nature of its exponents, not to any fault in the system itself or its teachings. Based as these are upon philosophies hoary with age, the experience of men and races nearer than we are to the source of things, and the records of sages who have questioned successively and for numberless generations the Sphinx of Nature, who now holds her lips sealed as to the secrets of life and death — certainly these teachings have to be held as a little more reliable than the dicta of certain "intelligences." Whether the intellect and consciousness of the latter be *induced* and artificial — as we hold

— or emanate from a personal source and entity, it matters not. Even the *exoteric* philosophies of the Eastern sages — systems of thought whose grandeur and logic few will deny — agree in every fundamental doctrine with our Theosophical teachings. As to those creatures which are called and accepted as “Spirits of the Dead” — because, forsooth, they themselves say so — their true nature is as unknown to the Spiritualists as to their mediums. With the most intellectual of the former the question remains to this day *sub judice*. Nor is it the Theosophists who would differ from them in their higher view of Spirits.

As it is not the object of this article, however, to contrast the two most significant movements of our century, nor to discuss their relative merits or superiority, we say at once that our only aim in bringing them forward is to draw attention to the wonderful progress of late of this occult cycle. While the enormous numbers of adherents to both Theosophy and Spiritualism, within or outside of our respective societies, show that both movements were but the necessary and, so to say, Karmically preordained work of the age, and that each of them was born at its proper hour and fulfilled its proper mission at the right time, there are other and still more significant signs of the times.

A few years ago we predicted in print that after a short cycle of abuse and persecution, many of our enemies would come round, while others would, *en désespoir de cause*, follow our example and found mystic Societies. As Egypt in the prophecy of Hermes, Theosophy was accused by “impious foreigners” (in our case, those outside its fold) of adoring monsters and chimæras, and teaching “enigmas incredible to posterity.” If our “sacred scribes and hierophants” are not wanderers upon the face of the earth, it was through no fault of good Christian priests and clergymen; and no less than the Egyptians in the early centuries of the new faith and era, had we, from fear of a still worse profanation of sacred things and names, to bury deeper than ever the little of the esoteric knowledge that had been permitted to be given out to the world.

But, during the last three years all this has rapidly changed, and the demand for mystic information became so great that the Theosophical Publishing Society could not find workers enough to supply the demand. Even *The Secret Doctrine*, the most abstruse of our publications — notwithstanding its forbidding price, the conspiracy of silence, and the nasty, contemptuous flings at it by some daily papers — has proved financially a success. See the change. That which Theosophists hardly dared speak about with bated breath for fear of being called lunatics

but a few years ago, is now being given out by lecturers, publicly advocated by mystical clergymen. While the orthodox hasten to make away with the old hell and sapphire-paved New Jerusalem, the more liberal accept now under Christian veils and biblical nomenclature our Doctrine of Karma, Reincarnation, and God as an abstract Principle.

Thus the Church is slowly drifting into philosophy and pantheism. Daily, we recognize some of our teachings creeping out as speculations — religious, poetical and even scientific; and these noticed with respect by the same papers which will neither admit their theosophical origin nor abstain from vilipending the very granary of such mystic ideas — the Theosophical Society. About a year ago a wise criticaster exclaimed in a paper we need not advertise:

To show the utterly *unscientific* ideas with which the work (*The Secret Doctrine*) is crammed, it may be sufficient to point out that its author refuses belief in the existence of *inorganic matter* and endows atoms with intelligence.

And today we find Edison's conception of matter quoted with approval and sympathy by London magazines from *Harper's*, in which we read:

I do not believe that matter is inert, acted upon by an outside force. To me it seems that every atom is possessed by a certain amount of primitive intelligence: look at the thousand ways in which atoms of hydrogen combine with those of other elements. ... Do you mean to say they do this without intelligence? ...

Mr. Edison is a Theosophist, though not a very active one. Still, the very fact of his holding a diploma seems to inspire him with Theosophical truths.

"Theosophists believe in reincarnation!" say contemptuously our Christian enemies. "We do not find one word ever said by our Saviour that *could be interpreted against the modern belief in reincarnation ...*" preaches the Rev. Mr. Bullard, thus half opening, and very wisely too, a back door for the day when this Buddhistical and Brahmanical "inane belief" will have become general.

Theosophists believe that the earliest races of men were as ethereal as are now their astral doubles, and call them *chhayas* (shadows). And now hear the English poet-laureate singing in his last book, *Demeter, and Other Poems*:

The ghost in man, the ghost that once was man.
But cannot wholly free itself from men,

Are calling to each other through a Dawn,
 Stronger than earth has ever seen; *the veil*
Is rending, and the voices of the day
 Are heard across the voices of the Dark.
No sudden heaven, nor sudden hell for man,

Æonian evolution, swift or slow,
Through all the spheres — an ever opening height,
 An ever lessening earth. . . . [Italics ours]

This looks as if Lord Tennyson had read Theosophical books, or is inspired by the same grand truths as we are.

“Oh!” we hear some sceptics exclaiming, “but these are poetical licences. The writer does not believe a word of it.” How do you know this? But even if it were so, here is one more proof of the cyclic evolution of our Theosophical ideas, which, I hope, will not be dubbed, to match, as “clerical licences.” One of the most esteemed and sympathetic of London clergymen, the Rev. G. W. Allen, has just stepped into our Theosophical shoes and followed our good example by founding a “Christo-Theosophical Society.” As its double title shows, its platform and programme have to be necessarily more restricted and limited than our own, for in the words of its circular “it is (only) intended to cover ground which that (the original or ‘Parent’) Society at present does not cover.” However much our esteemed friend and co-worker in Theosophy may be mistaken in believing that the teachings of the Theosophical Society do not cover *esoteric* Christianity as they do the esoteric aspect of all other world-religions, yet his new Society is sure to do good work. For, if the name chosen means anything at all, it means that the work and study of the members must of necessity be Theosophical. The above is again proven by what the circular of the “Christo-Theosophical Society” states in the following words:

It is believed that at the present day there are many persons who are dissatisfied with the crude and unphilosophical enunciation of Christianity put forward so often in sermons and theological writings. Some of these persons are impelled to give up all faith in Christianity, but many of them do this reluctantly, and would gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths which should show them to be in harmony with the conclusions of reason and the testimony of undeniable intuition. There are many others, also, whose only feeling is that the truths of their religion mean so very little to them practically, and have such very little power to influence and ennoble their daily life and character. To such

persons the Christo-Theosophical Society makes its appeal, inviting them to join together in a common effort to discover that apprehension of Christian Truth, and to attain that Power, which must be able to satisfy the deep yearnings of the human heart, and give strength for self-mastery and a life lived for others.

This is admirable, and shows plainly its purpose of counteracting the very pernicious influences of exoteric and dogmatic theology, and it is just what we have been trying to do all along. All similarity, however, stops here, as it has nothing to do, as it appears, with *universal* but only sectarian Theosophy. We fear greatly that the "C.T.S." — by inviting

to its membership those persons who, while desirous of apprehending ever more and more clearly the mysteries of Divine Truth, *yet wish to retain as the foundation of their philosophy the Christian doctrines of God as the Father of all men, and Christ as His revelation of Himself to mankind*

— limits thereby "the Mysteries of the Divine Truth" to one single and the youngest of all religions, and *avatars* to but one man. We hope sincerely that the members of the Christo-Theosophical Society may be able to avoid this Charybdis without falling into Scylla.

There is one more difficulty in our way, and we would humbly ask to have it explained to us. "The Society," states the circular, "is not made up of Teachers and Learners. We are all learners." This, with the hope distinctly expressed a few lines higher, that the members will "gladly welcome a presentation of the old truths... in harmony with the conclusions of reason," etc., leads to a natural query: Which of the "learners" is to present the said truths to the other learners? Then comes the unavoidable reasoning that whosoever the "learner" may be, no sooner he will begin his "presentation" than he will become *nolens volens* a "teacher."

But this is, after all, a trifle. We feel too proud and too satisfied with the homage thus paid to Theosophy, and with the sight of a representative of the Anglican clergy following in our track, to find fault with details, or wish anything but good luck to the Christo-Theosophical Association.

THE WAR OF IDEAS

MASTER, why is it that the more we try to convey to another what to us is a self-evident truth, the more we get frustrated? Why do people, instead of seeing the falsity of their own ideas on a subject, try to find fault with the ideas that others present to them?

Friend, you forget a fundamental teaching of Theosophy, namely, that *ideas* are living, vital entities, with a life of their own. All forms, including thought forms, have an "elemental" inhabiting the form. Break the form, and the elemental ceases to be. Ideas are mental forms with a life of their own. When a new idea is suggested to us, the old one gets new vitality, as it were, to fight the new "enemy," for its own life depends on the destruction of that "enemy." Remember, all is vibration, and when one vibration strikes another, discord or harmony results.

This "war of ideas" is often very subtle. It lasts until the old idea is destroyed or blended with the new.

Master, how should we, then, greet a new idea?

Friend, let us first realize that it is only when we already have an idea on a subject that we do not welcome another idea. Only when the mind is free from preconceived ideas do we welcome new ideas. If we fight against a new idea, it means that the idea we hold itself needs analysis. When we fight the new, we do so by restating the old one. Let us *listen* to the new idea and say, "How does it work? Does it fit the universal basis? Does it clarify difficulties? Does it sound reasonable, or does reason reject it?"

But, Master, I thought that reason "shuts out man's spiritual perceptions," as we read in *Isis Unveiled*. So why should I reason about a new idea?

True, Friend, but without reason we have only feelings, likes and dislikes, to guide us. In the animal, instinct works perfectly, but in our own animal nature where instinct used to function, our own feelings now hold sway, and without the use of the added faculty of mind—reason—we go wrong. Reason is the application of the knowledge we have to new conditions. We may not get true conclusions, but we go a

step beyond feeling. We must go beyond reason and, freeing the mind from Kama, we must seek the Universal Ideas which give us Truth, Harmony, Bliss. Hence we must seek the Universal frame in which true ideas are fixed. H.P.B. asks us to use the law of analogy all the time, and by this law we can prove whether the new idea fits into the Universal Pattern of Life. Even if we *feel* we have a true idea, we must use our reason to prove that it is true.

Master, then can I never trust my own opinions? Must I always be changing them? There seems to be no security for me!

Friend, unless we constantly change our opinions, we can never grow in knowledge. An opinion is always personal and never grows into truth. Only full knowledge can bring to us any security, for it is based on universal laws. Hence the great Masters have no two opinions on any subject, for they teach Universal Law. When such knowledge is acquired and assimilated, it leads to realization; it becomes a part of our being. Everything fits into a perfect structure.

Master, then we must listen carefully to all ideas and see if they are true, if they fit into the pattern.

Friend, our whole life, all manifestation itself, is a pattern. There is the paper — mind — on which we draw the pictures. These must fit into the Greater Mind on which the Archetypal Ideas were etched at the dawn of manifestation. We ourselves make a pattern in life by our actions, feelings, thoughts. All is motion, colour, sound, form. The picture drawn of all our lives must blend in perfect harmony with those archetypal pictures. This makes for perfection — the perfection or harvest of our long line of lives. Personal opinions with their personal colour and form and sound disappear and we become the reflection of the white Light and the Spiritual Sound.

Let us then voluntarily close our mind to personal preconceived ideas and opinions and learn to strive towards the True where reason does not function, but where the realization of the True is tested in the light of reason.

SOCIAL SERVICE

Better to swallow a heated iron ball, like flaming fire, than that a bad unrestrained fellow should live on the charity of the land.

—*Saying of the Buddha*

FOR CLOSE ON A CENTURY NOW, great minds of the West have been thinking along the lines of "the greatest good of the greatest number." Many a sociological and political pattern has emerged from a genuine desire to put this precept into practice. Yet, even with the holocaust of two World Wars behind us, we have neither outlawed war nor removed want and penury from large sections of mankind. In most cases, not only did the envisaged salvation fail to materialize, but the effort at good produced only — evil. Tyranny, mass murders, hatred and hunger have dogged the footsteps of the reformist; they were not extraneous to his effort, but were the fruits and results of that effort.

The "good" of mankind has remained as elusive today as it was a hundred years back, or as it was during those centuries of religious fervour which are now remembered mostly because of the inquisition, witch-burnings and tortures by which those in seats of power sought to achieve what they felt was the ultimate good. Hitler in modern times visualized a German Utopia built on the pyres of countless victims. The political purges of Stalinist Russia tried to achieve what he thought was the greatest good of the greatest number. He was as misguided as are the rulers of today who by diabolical engines of warfare are seeking to ram their ideologies down unwilling throats. The League of Nations and the United Nations owed their birth to noble sentiments. Both were packed to capacity with politicians and therefore their decisions were governed by politics. Both compromised with wars and tyranny in the name of non-interference and righteousness. They saw the black races being trampled down by the whites, and both these organizations quietened their conscience by passing resolutions and thereafter by meticulously refusing to take any action which would right the wrong. Even where there was near unanimity, the record of their achievements has shown hardly any action by which humanity in the mass was blessed. Neither social security nor yet social justice has been secured either in Moscow or Peking, New Delhi or Washington.

This is necessarily so, because modern thought has been forced into narrow grooves by a science which refuses to see in man anything

but physical reactions and biological urges. Science has failed to recognize that there is no "good" which can be doled out at so many ounces per head or which can be forced upon men in the manner of bitter medicines on unwilling children. Unless the soil is made ready, no amount of sowing will produce a harvest. Since the "good" either in its abstract or concrete forms eludes the microscope and the scalpel, science can neither measure it nor produce a synthetic variety. Its realm of mischief is matter and that too of certain densities. Beyond this is the realm of conjecture and ignorance. In verity scientists are today as ignorant of the bad as of the good. They are afraid of bringing ethics or metaphysics into their researches. They do not have passports to the "good." They have not even located it. The only "good" that can be permanent, the only "good" that has the power to exalt a man can come from nowhere save from within the man himself. It has to be evoked and drawn out from the reservoirs of the man's soul.

The study of the Hermetic philosophers or even a superficial acquaintance with the works of Pythagoras, Plato and Iamblichus is no longer a criterion of culture for the gentlemen of the West. The inner Kabala no longer rules the thoughts of men—how then can they be judges whose discrimination cannot be trusted to sift the good from the bad? To arrive at true socialist patterns, the student has to carry his search into the realms of soul and spirit, for the simple reason that the good is not rooted in environment and possessions but in that secret part of the man which reacts to environment and possessions. If by any endeavour men in the mass could be made to retreat within themselves and place their reliance on what Jesus and his Apostles called the "Father in Heaven," then indeed would we have on earth an arcadia of lofty souls who by precept and example would leave evidence of how the good can really be achieved. But, in the stifling atmosphere of a crass materialism, the Gospels have now ceased to reveal and the Epistles are classed as letters of good but predominantly ignorant men!

We have arrived at this poor stage because for several centuries now men have deliberately chosen the temporal as opposed to the spiritual; the results of human intellection as opposed to the divine Wisdom that cometh from above. The intellect of man, even though it be the keenest, cannot penetrate beyond the mortal aspects of man and Nature. It is not equipped to penetrate the mystery of the soul. Therefore, in order to comprehend that which is basically and intrinsically good, we have to cut across the realms of intellect and retreat into that secret and unaccustomed part of us which is immortal and universal. Our men

of science will scoff at the idea that in each man there is THAT which is ubiquitous and which in its own measure is of the nature of the eternal and the omniscient. It is this spiritual potency which alone is the arbiter of the man's good, for it is under the behest of this Glory that the incarnation is undertaken.

Poverty and hunger — to mention only two of the social ills of mankind — are not causes. They do not generate themselves. They are effects which attach themselves to such men and nations as have invited them. They can be removed with safety only when the causes which produced them have been worked out in full. If a boil starts on the body, you do not cut it until it is ripe to be cut. Poverty too has to ripen before it can be safely removed. A hasty eradication may prove catastrophic. So, where the enthusiast wants to fling caution to the winds and start distributing largesse, the student of life views the situation with the greatest concern. Poverty has valuable lessons to impart. The impoverished — has he garnered that which poverty was meant to teach? Has he gathered the bitter-sweet fruits which grow upon its tree? Fortitude, tolerance, magnanimity, sacrifice and service are readily learnt in poverty, provided of course that the man casts off his obsession about his limitations and extracts from those very limitations the answer that they hold for his advancement. The reformer and the revolutionary have but too often failed to understand the mercy of Nature in its meting out of poverty to individuals and nations. The limitations of poverty have in most cases made it impossible for the impoverished to go into the highways and byways of evil which riches have the power to open.

Our twentieth-century socialist is, however, little concerned with this. To him the call comes for banishing poverty and he devotes himself to that task. He plans to impoverish the rich forcibly; he plans for a legalized pilferage. He cares not if he breaks treaties, if he violates moral codes and sets the example of a lawless living. He may get an emotional following and be thus able to poison the thought of multitudes. The wrongs which whole nations have in the name of socialism visited upon men, races and countries during the past fifty years show that wrong ideologies have been sown in men's minds while a disregard of moral values and ancient usages has been inculcated under threats of torture and death. All this is being done in the name of liberty, peace and freedom from want!

If in sowing these poisonous seeds so much misery has been visited

on mankind, what will the harvest bring? Men who were wedded to poverty so that they could devote their time and attention to their souls and the souls of others — men who were high and holy mendicants and who were in no sense the beggars and parasites of society — were forced into labour camps, pressed into communes and beaten to death in the name of social progress. The world has read of these atrocities and has with callous indifference passed on to other items of news. Do we think that causes will not produce their effects or that God can be mocked or deceived? The fixed arithmetic of the spheres cannot be made to deviate by orgies of blood, nor by “liquidation” of races (what Hitler did to the Jews is but one example), nor by brain-washing of vast multitudes of men.

Since the real “good” in man cannot be poured into him but must be evoked by processes which bestir the soul to activity, the truly socialistic state must have at its helm sages who have a gaze which is penetrating enough to understand, not the superficial, but the fundamental wants of a race, a nation or an individual. How is it then that obscure individuals were suddenly acclaimed experts in the art of bringing solace to the multitudes? Such must have been the paucity of thought among the nations that they elevated (nay, rather, recruited) these persons to the highest office; endorsed, nay, acclaimed, their dubious actions, and in the onrushing rivers of blood saw what they thought were the portents of a heaven on earth. A politician is essentially a man of convenience — one who when faced by two crowds will shout with the largest. He is sworn to side with his party even though he recognizes that the stand taken is erroneous. He will not stop to think how many millions will suffer by his actions so long as *his* people will thrive. He sleeps soundly because he parted with his conscience ages ago. He has not only pretensions to grandeur — he wants to become the mentor of humanity. He writes books! Because of pernicious ideologies that he seeks to stamp in blood upon the meek is he unfit to head a sociological advance. He has all the makings of a bull in a china shop. He is come, not to fulfil but to destroy. He wrecks and glories in the wreckage. Hitler did just that until his disintegrating world fell with hideous clangour round his soul. He existed, as replicas of him exist today, because the people deserved him and in more sense than one desired him. Let us forgive him and as soon as possible forget him.

What instruments do we need to equip ourselves for a search of that Truth which blesses — a Truth which can bring joy to the minds and hearts of men? Can we — the mortals of a day — reach up to that

knowledge which was the heirloom of only those initiated into the divine mysteries? In his letter to Mr. A. P. Sinnett of August 5, 1881, the Venerable Master K.H. wrote:

It is the common mistake of people that we willingly wrap ourselves and our powers in mystery. . . . The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of Illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most *if not all* of the Secrets are *incommunicable*. The receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct. The illumination *must come from within*. Till then, no hocus-pocus of incantations, or mummery of appliances, no metaphysical lectures or discussions, no self-imposed penance can give it. . . . And this was and has been *no secret* for thousands of years. Fasting, meditation, chastity of thought, word and deed; silence for certain periods of time to enable Nature herself to speak to him who comes to her for information; government of the animal passions and impulses; utter unselfishness of intention. . . . have been published as the means since the days of Plato and Iamblichus in the West, and since the far earlier times of our Indian *Rishis*.

The Avatars, the Rishis, the Prophets and the King-Initiates of centuries and millennia past were each engaged in the task of the uplift of the human race. They practised the true Socialism. They came, not to destroy, but to fulfil. None tried to achieve the divine aim by compulsion, terror, despotism or decimation. What did they teach? Their doctrines may be summed up in the words in which they were put in *The Idyll of the White Lotus*:

Hear me, my brother. . . there are three truths which are absolute, and which cannot be lost, but yet may remain silent for lack of speech.

The soul of man is immortal, and its future is the future of a thing whose growth and splendour has no limit.

The principle which gives life dwells in us and without us, is undying and eternally beneficent, is not heard or seen or smelt, but is perceived by the man who desires perception.

Each man is his own absolute lawgiver, the dispenser of glory or gloom to himself; the decreer of his life, his reward, his punishment.

These truths, which are as great as is life itself, are as simple as the simplest mind of man. Feed the hungry with them.

The Wise Ones have taught that no administering of physical rem-

edies will cure a malaise originating on planes which are higher than the physical. The good which we desire all men to share is not within the capacity of the physical man to give or to take. It is no doubt true that some men in their ignorance try to reach to the spiritual planes by practices undertaken on the terrestrial plane. They break the fundamental law, "from within, without," and like the Hatha Yogis will in their degree of mischief be rendered accountable. Our work for men and civilizations has to be done silently and from behind the scenes. To reach to a man's Soul, we have to approach him through our own Self, aided by that power which alone is potent on the planes of *Akasa*. To reach to the plane of Universality where alone the real cures for human ills can be found, the mind must have learnt to look without shrinking into the causes of suffering, injustice, selfishness. When one burrows deep into the mysteries of Karma and Reincarnation, when one sees the purity of causation in all things and realizes the link by which life is joined to life, then ignorance begins gradually to yield place to knowledge. In such persons only as have passed through the fiery ordeals of initiation can there be the seeds of that knowledge which can bring salvation. If we study such actions of Jesus and Buddha as are revealed to us by texts which are extant, we find that they gave out a graded doctrine — for the Apostles and the Arhats; for the disciples or *lanoos*; for the *hoi polloi* and the masses. They respected the freedom of human thought and planned their patterns of society on lines which could be followed by the saint and the sinner; by the intelligent and the dullard; by the rich and the poor; by the fallen woman and the thief.

Anteceding the Biblical age by thousands of years, among civilizations whose names are no longer remembered by history, there existed among men a Lodge of White Adepts. It exists still — a Brotherhood of beings who practise the highest altruism by trying to influence the Souls of men for their good. From them have come these words of advice:

There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of self and forgetting all other selves. . . . The Universe groans under the weight of such action (Karma), and none other than self-sacrificial Karma relieves it. . . . Oh, men of the West, who would play at being the Saviours of mankind before they even spare the life of a mosquito whose sting threatens them, would you be partakers of Divine Wisdom or true Theosophists? Then do as the gods when incarnated do. Feel yourselves the vehicles of the whole of humanity, mankind as part of yourselves, and act accordingly.

“THE GITA” — KARMA YOGA OR THE YOGA OF ACTION

A BOOK that has retained for such a long period of time the power to move us towards the “right performance of action” based on the “right perception of existing things” and “devotion to the welfare of others,” needs to be treated as a personal book of instruction, the application of which requires the true discrimination that arises from meditation and devotion, and which blends these two with a force and energy which only the Heart Doctrine can provide.

In this series of three articles we shall therefore consider Krishna’s instructions as a personal advice to be acted upon, meditated upon, and cemented by a devotion which has the ideal of Universal Brotherhood as a basis for true service.

The first six chapters of the *Gita* expound the various concepts of action in terms of duty, and then in terms of the school of thought we are naturally born into and therefore tend to follow.

We find in the first two chapters that Arjuna, after reviewing the armies arrayed against him and seeing so many of his friends and relatives in them refuses to accept his natural duty as a warrior, and putting down his bow and arrows says to Krishna: “I shall not fight, O Govinda.” This declaration of his permits Krishna to utter those immortal words which so dispassionately distinguish the “sentiments of the expounders of the letter of the law” from the teachings of “those who are wise in spiritual things” and who therefore “grieve neither for the dead nor for the living.” Krishna in this passage continues:

I myself never was not, nor thou, nor all the princes of the earth; nor shall we ever hereafter cease to be. As the lord of this mortal frame experienceth therein infancy, youth, and old age, so in future incarnations will it meet the same. One who is confirmed in this belief is not disturbed by anything that may come to pass.

This whole passage bridges the gulf between the mortal and the immortal, and distinguishes between the finite body of any one incarnation and the soul which inhabits it and which never was not nor shall ever hereafter cease to be. Then we find Krishna exhorting his disciple in these words: “Wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve to fight.”

Here we find a clear distinction between the passive acceptance of dogmas and beliefs according to scriptural traditions, and the vitalizing,

active soul force behind Krishna's words. And thus Arjuna is led slowly but surely to the positive perception of an immortal soul. Once aroused to an inner perception of itself, it bestirs the desire nature and leads it to the realization of the necessity to "fight."

This inner perception of ourselves as warrior-souls forces us to assume our responsibility as such and to fight out the glorious battle between the higher and the lower self in us. Once the resolve to fight is made, no more can we return to the negativeness of established beliefs and prescribed dogmas, based upon the dead-letter acceptance of scientific, philosophical and religious systems, systems from which the vitalizing spirit or soul force has long since departed, leaving only the husks or shells which get a fictitious semblance of life by the repetitive thoughts and acts of their heedless followers.

So now, having ventured as Arjunas upon a fight "which only fortune's favoured soldiers may obtain," our next concern is with the concept of right action. Krishna leads us to perceive that "he who having subdued all his passions performeth with his active faculties all the duties of life, unconcerned as to their result, is to be esteemed." And he exhorts us with these words: "Do thou perform the proper actions: action is superior to inaction."

Once again duty is stressed as the true way of life. This performance of our own duties, without attachment to the result, will lead us to the goal. Thus Krishna reveals to us the Doctrine of Action, emphasizing first those actions or duties that are naturally ours, because they come to us under Karmic law.

Our tendency usually is to consider that our own duties are irksome, and that if we were placed in the circumstances and position of another we would be much happier. Krishna warns us against such a misconception when he tells us that "it is better to do one's own duty, even though it be devoid of excellence, than to perform another's duty well." "The duty of another," he adds, "is full of danger."

The continuity of Teachings and the long line of Teachers is brought to our attention in Chapter Four, and the different types of duties and modes of action are explained by Krishna. All members of the human family have their distinct duties, according to the natural distribution of the actions and qualities. Each has to find his own place in the scheme of things and perform those works for which he is naturally suited.

Krishna admits that the path of action is obscure. We have to learn

to see inaction in action and action in inaction. If we can do that, we become true devotees and perfect performers of all action.

To renounce all desire in the results of our actions is the highest form of action. Our concern should be, not with the results, but with doing our best, offering each act as a sacrifice to the Supreme. Coupled with this should be the setting of our hearts upon the acquisition of spiritual knowledge, and one who is perfected in devotion finds spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously within him. If our hearts and minds are devoted, they will automatically tend towards the acquisition of spiritual knowledge, and we shall gain a new insight into our field of action. Knowledge dispels doubt, and we engage in the performance of action with ever increasing understanding.

We begin to see that there is no conflict between the ideas of renunciation of action and the right performance of action, because, as Krishna tells us, "to attain to true renunciation of action without devotion through action is difficult." Our daily duties in life must be performed, and if they are performed as a sacrifice to the Supreme Spirit, without self-interest, we shall be led to perceive what really is meant by "renunciation of action."

Duty demands action at all times, whether of a physical, mental or moral nature, because it is the inherent law of our being. As H.P.B. so beautifully expresses it in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Duty is 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.

Herein lies the secret of right performance of action and right renunciation of action; the object of doing our duties is not the attainment of our own personal happiness, but rather the giving of happiness to others. This is the fulfilment of right action, for the sake of right, and not for what it may bring to us as a result. That few indeed reach this perception of duty in action leading to true renunciation is shown by H.P.B. when she says:

Those who practise their duty towards all, and for duty's own sake, are few; and fewer still are those who perform that duty, remaining content with the satisfaction of their own secret consciousness.

He who has renounced the fruits of action is dedicated to the service of others. Not for himself does a true Arjuna live; he has made of

himself a defender of the spiritual rights of all who struggle on the Path towards spiritual enlightenment. Krishna promises us that those

whose sins are exhausted, who are free from delusion, who have their senses and organs under control, and devoted to the good of all creatures, obtain assimilation with the Supreme Spirit.

Such assimilation brings direct knowledge of the true Self.

In the sixth chapter of the *Gita*, Krishna informs us that "he who, unattached to the fruit of his actions, performeth such actions as should be done is both a renouncer of action and a devotee of right action." By easy stages Krishna leads us through all phases of action, showing us how as warrior-souls our duty lies in welcoming the fight for the attainment of spiritual knowledge. The mind needs to be freed from the karmic bonds of personal attachment to the results of action, and, in the process, brought to the point where it can pursue the path of meditation without involvement in the results.

From this point, Krishna informs us that

he who has attained to meditation should constantly strive to stay at rest in the Supreme, remaining in solitude and seclusion, having his body and his thoughts under control, without possessions and free from hope.

With this, Krishna prepares us for the further instructions found in the next six chapters of the *Gita*, and which may be considered as the Yoga of Knowledge, or *Jnana Yoga*. Having considered the Yoga of Action or *Karma Yoga* in the first six chapters, Krishna strikes the keynote for the next six chapters with these words:

... the devotee who, striving with all his might, obtaineth perfection because of efforts continued through many births, goeth to the supreme goal. The man of meditation as thus described is superior to the man of penance and to the man of learning and also to the man of action; wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve thou to become a man of meditation.

A hint is given to us in the last sentence of this sixth chapter also about the Yoga of Devotion or *Bhakti Yoga*, which is considered in the last six chapters, and this sentence states:

... of all devotees he is considered by me as the most devoted who, with heart fixed on me, full of faith, worships me.

THE HISTORY OF THEOSOPHY DOWN THE AGES

A CYCLIC ATTEMPT is made by the Preservers of the knowledge of Theosophy — the age-old Divine Wisdom or Wisdom-Religion — to present it to the world of men. Theosophy is declared by them to be as old as thinking man, *i.e.*, it has been taught on earth since man became a self-conscious thinker and chooser, over 18 million years ago, and thus reached an important stage in his evolution. The knowledge of Theosophy could only be given to beings having the light of mind. Before the lighting up of Manas, this knowledge was in the custody of those beings who had perfected themselves in previous cycles of evolution.

The purpose of evolution, as far as the macrocosm is concerned, is for each globe to become a man-bearing globe. There are therefore in the cosmos two types of worlds: those on which there is no human evolution proceeding, and those on which intelligent beings are evolving. Our earth is not the only man-bearing world; there are others also. And so the Divine Wisdom and Divine Ethics are not the monopoly of our earth.

There are two ways in which the wisdom of Theosophy can be gained: (1) from the inner planes of being — intuitively; and (2) through the unadulterated record of the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion, given out at certain definite cyclic points. Sometimes a portion of these teachings has been given out openly; at other times, in a veiled manner. Always there have been the exoteric and esoteric aspects of the teachings — the one for the laity, the other for the intimate circle of disciples. The Buddha and Jesus, for example, taught the multitude by means of simple ethical precepts, allegories and parables, but the deeper mystic teachings were reserved for the “inner circle.”

The teachings of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, given out by Sri Krishna 5,000 years ago, just when *Kali Yuga*, the black age, was about to begin, contain the ethics and the metaphysics which are needed for the whole of the *Kali-Yuga* cycle of 432,000 years. Theosophy as given to us by H.P.B. for this era is also as complete a system of ethics and metaphysics as could be given to our present era. The teachings are given according to the needs of the cycle. We human beings make the cycles and the Masters of Wisdom respond if we put forth the effort and our Karma as individuals, or as a Race, permits.

When Manas was lit up, the first great instalment of Theosophia or the Wisdom-Religion was presented. The one, universal Wisdom antedates the Vedas. It is referred to in *The Secret Doctrine* as the "ancient Lemuro-Atlantean Wisdom." The Fourth-Race Atlanteans misused it and went mad with pride, bringing destruction to their civilization. The few who were "saved" set themselves apart, so to say, and spent their time in learning and verifying the system, not in teaching. They became the Instructors of the early Fifth, the Aryan Race.

From those saved from the great Atlantean cataclysm, two great branches, two great efforts emanated: one took root and flourished in India (the India of those days was very different in its geographical boundaries from the India of today), and the other in and around Persia. Sanskrit and Avesta are two sister languages, born of the mother language, *Senzar*, which is now lost to the outer world. Of these two surviving branches, very little of the wisdom of ancient Persia is known today; from this fragmentary record we cannot now reconstruct the whole of the original system.

In *Isis Unveiled* (II. 123) H.P.B. has written:

We can assert, with entire plausibility, that there is not one of all these sects — Kabalism, Judaism, and our present Christianity included — but sprung from the two main branches of that one mother-trunk, the once universal religion, which antedated the Vedaic ages — we speak of that prehistoric Buddhism which merged later into Brahmanism.

Here is a direct assertion that Hinduism emerged from prehistoric, pre-Vedic Buddhism, or rather *Bodhism*, the doctrine of the Wise Ones in whom Bodha-Wisdom manifested, both in terms of compassionate acts and in terms of discriminative wisdom.

The Vedas were first taught orally for thousands of years and later reduced to writing. The Great Teachers and reformers that the world has produced, all taught *Bodhism*. Of this secret, eternal and universal doctrine, H. P. Blavatsky wrote:

... the secret doctrines of the Magi, of the pre-Vedic Buddhists, of the hierophants of the Egyptian Thoth or Hermes, and of the adepts of whatever age and nationality, including the Chaldean kabalists and the Jewish *nazars*, were *identical* from the beginning. When we use the term *Buddhists*, we do not mean to imply by it either the exoteric Buddhism instituted by the followers of Gautama-Buddha, nor the modern Buddhistic religion, but the secret philosophy of Sakyamuni, which in its essence is certainly identical

with the ancient wisdom-religion of the sanctuary, the pre-Vedic Brahmanism. . . . By *Buddhism*, therefore, we mean that religion signifying literally the doctrine of wisdom, and which by many ages antedates the metaphysical philosophy of Siddhartha Sakya-muni. (*Isis*, II. 142-43)

This pre-Vedic Buddhism as also pre-Vedic Brahmanism existed long before the Rig-Vedic hymns were chanted on the banks of the Ganga millennia ago. H.P.B. makes the position clearer by saying:

We repeat again, *Buddhism is but the primitive source of Brahmanism*. It is not against the primitive *Vedas* that Gautama protests. It is against the sacerdotal and official state religion of his country. . . . Gautama Buddha's philosophy was that taught from the beginning of time in the impenetrable secrecy of the inner sanctuaries of the pagodas. (*Isis*, II. 169)

Buddhism as taught by Gautama the Buddha was a protest against Brahmanical orthodoxy. He taught the masses the original and pure philosophy without any intermediaries. His disciples went East and West. In the West, they were responsible for movements of reform in Egypt and Judæa. The Essenes and the Nazarenes were taught by Buddhist reformers; from them Jesus learned, and from his teachings has Christianity been derived.

The present Theosophical Movement is in line with these great movements of the past. It presents to the logical, reasoning mind of today the philosophy and mysticism, myth and legend, theogony and ethics of the ancients. Wrote H.P.B.:

What we desire to prove is, that underlying every ancient popular religion was the same ancient wisdom-doctrine, one and identical, professed and practised by the initiates of every country, who alone were aware of its existence and importance. To ascertain its origin, and the precise age in which it was matured, is now beyond human possibility. A single glance, however, is enough to assure one that it could not have attained the marvellous perfection in which we find it pictured to us in the relics of the various esoteric systems, except after a succession of ages. A philosophy so profound, a moral code so ennobling, and practical results so conclusive and so uniformly demonstrable is not the growth of a generation, or even a single epoch. Fact must have been piled upon fact, deduction upon deduction, science have begotten science, and myriads of the brightest human intellects have reflected upon the laws of nature, before this ancient doctrine had taken concrete shape. (*Isis*, II. 99)

We have been given the priceless opportunity, as well as the profound responsibility, to see that this record is preserved, sustained and perpetuated. It has been reiterated, not for our sole advantage, but also for the benefit of future generations of men, who, it is hoped, will be inspired, as we are, by the scope and the grandeur of the WISDOM-RELIGION.

THE MAJORITY OF FOLK-LORISTS regard the folk-tales as survivals of the imaginations of primitive humanity. . . . I have my doubts about that scientific conception known as "primitive humanity." . . . Is it not more likely that the world has seen civilization after civilization appearing and disappearing times beyond calculation, and that what we know as myth and folk-tale is not primitive at all, but the decayed fragments of once mighty religions or literatures shrunk from their living richness to be mere skeletons of themselves, yet with the articulation of the bones preserved ready for the imaginative poet or story-teller to clothe them once more with life and renew their original shapeliness? The *Prometheus* of Æschylus and the *Prometheus Unbound* of Shelley are examples. But who can say that that primitive myth was not the shrivelled residue of what was once mighty religion? . . . This cultural origin of myth or folk-tale seems to explain better than the primitive babbling theory the profound spiritual element we discover so often in myth and folk-tale, and which makes them a treasure-house for the poet.

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WHY THE "VAHAN"?

[This article by H.P.B. appeared originally as the opening editorial in the first issue of *The Vahan*, a small periodical started in December 1890. The article was last reprinted in this magazine in October 1941.—EDS.]

BECAUSE, the word means a *Vehicle*. In Theosophical metaphysics this term denotes a *basis*, something, as a bearer, more *substantial* than that which it bears; e.g., *Buddhi*, the spiritual Soul, is the *Vahan* of *Atma* — the purely immaterial "principle." Or again, as in physiology, our brain is the supposed physical vehicle or *Vahan* of superphysical thought.

Thus, this little fortnightly paper is destined to serve as the bearer of Theosophical thought, and the recorder of all Theosophical activities.

The enterprise is no financial speculation, but most decidedly an additional expense which our meagre funds can ill afford, but which our duty urges us to undertake. The journal is to go free of charge to our British Branches and "unattached" Fellows. It is also meant for those who are unable to subscribe to our regular magazines, but the wealthier will profit along with the poorer, for the following reasons. The Karma of those who could, but *will not* subscribe for the organs of their Society, whether from indifference or any other cause, *is their own*; but the duty of keeping all the Fellows in touch with us, and *au courant* with Theosophical events — is ours. For, many of those who being virtually cut off from almost everything that goes on in the Theosophical centres, lose very soon their interest in the movement and continue henceforward "Fellows" but in name.

It has been always held that a true Theosophist must have no personal ends to serve, no favourite hobby to propagate, no special doctrine to enforce or to defend. For, to merit the honourable title of Theosophist one must be an altruist, above all; one ever ready to help equally foe or friend, to act, rather than to speak; and urge others to action, while never losing an opportunity to work himself. But, if no true Theosophist will ever dictate to his fellow-brother or neighbour what this one should believe or disbelieve in, nor force him to act on lines which may be distasteful to him, however proper they may appear to himself, there are other duties which he has to attend to: (*a*) to warn his brother of any danger the latter may fail to see; and (*b*) to share his knowledge — if he has acquired such — with those who have been

less fortunate than himself in opportunities for acquiring it.

Now, though we are painfully aware that a good number of members have joined the T. S. out of simple curiosity, while others, remaining for some time out of touch with the movement, have lost their interest in it, we must never lose the hope of reviving that interest. Many are the Fellows who, having failed at first to help on the cause, have now become earnest "working members," as they are called. Therefore, we say today to all: "If you would really help the noble cause — you must do so now; for, *a few years more and your, as well as our efforts, will be in vain.*" The world moves in cycles, which proceed under the impetus of two mutually antagonistic and destroying Forces, the one striving to move Humanity onward, toward Spirit, the other forcing Mankind to gravitate downward, into the very abysses of matter. It remains with men to help either the one or the other. Thus, also, it is our present task, as Theosophists, to help in one or the other direction. We are in the very midst of the Egyptian darkness of *Kali-yuga*, the "Black Age," the first 5,000 years of which, its dreary first cycle, is preparing to close on the world between 1897 and 1898. Unless we succeed in placing the T. S. before this date on the safe side of the spiritual current, it will be swept away irretrievably into the Deep called "Failure," and the cold waves of oblivion will close over its doomed head. Thus will have ingloriously perished the *only* association whose aims, rules and original purposes answer in every particular and detail — if strictly carried out — to the innermost, fundamental thought of every great Adept-Reformer, the beautiful dream of a UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD OF MAN.

Verily, of philanthropical, political, and religious bodies we have many. Clubs, congresses, associations, unions, refuges, societies, each of them a social protector of special men and nations, special arts and sciences, or a bulwark against this or that evil, spring up daily, each of these moved by its own party or sectarian spirit. But which of them is strictly *universal*, good for all and prejudicial to none? Which of them answers fully to the noble injunction of the Buddhist Arhats and also of King Asoka? "When thou plantest trees along the roads, allow their shade to protect the wicked as the good. When thou buildest a Rest-House, let its doors be thrown open to men of all religions, to the opponents of thine own creed, and to thy personal enemies as well as to thy friends." None, we say, none save our own Society, a purely unsectarian, unselfish body; the only one which has no party

object in view, which is open to all men, the good and the bad, the lowly and the high, the foolish and the wise — and which calls them all "Brothers," regardless of their religion, race, colour, or station in life.

To all these we now say: As "there is no religion higher than Truth," no deity greater than the latter, no duty nobler than self-sacrifice, and that the time for action is so short — shall not each of you put his shoulder to the wheel of the heavy car of our Society and help us to land it safely across the abyss of matter, on to the safe side?

—H. P. B.

THERE ARE no fundamental differences among the peoples of the world. They have all the deep human feelings, the craving for justice above all class interests, horror of bloodshed and violence. They are working for a religion which teaches the possibility and the necessity of man's union with himself, with nature, with his fellowmen, and with the Eternal Spirit of which the visible universe is but a manifestation, and upholds the emergence of a complete consciousness as the destiny of man. Our historical religions will have to transform themselves into the universal faith or they will fade away. This prospect may appear strange and unwelcome to some, but it has a truth and beauty of its own. It is working in the minds of men and will soon be a realized fact. Human unity depends not only on past origins but on future goal and direction, on what we are becoming and whither we are tending.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A subject which is of considerable interest to students of Theosophy is the future of English in Indian education. English has its own importance as it is fast becoming an international language, and it has, besides, played a role in bringing about the unification of the country since it was introduced here by the British rulers. Those who talk of "ousting" English show utter disregard of the consequences and would have us take a backward step at a time when people the world over are seeking to acquire this language.

William Benton, U.S. member of the executive board of UNESCO, Paris, and chairman of the board of the Encyclopædia Britannica, writes of the remarkable growth of the English language around the world in recent years, in his article "English Spoken: Here, There, Everywhere" (*Think*, January-February 1967). The propagation of the English language, he feels — and there are many who would agree with him — is in the world's interest, and not merely that of the English-speaking nations.

In our own time, English has supplanted French as the principal language of diplomacy, and German as the language of science. In commerce, communications and technology, it plays today a leading role. In aviation, in shipping, in sports, English is already a near universal language. Inventions that make communications between nations easier have inevitably lent themselves to the spread of English. In Paris, about two-thirds of UNESCO's work is now conducted in English. It has also become the most useful language to the traveller throughout most of the world.

In the years following World War II, English has advanced farther than in the entire preceding century. It is estimated that some 70 per cent of the world's mail is written in English and 60 per cent of the world's broadcasts are in English. Its study is compulsory in secondary schools in a growing number of countries. There are 41,000 teachers of English even in the Soviet Union. Of the 12 main existing languages spoken by three-quarters of the world's population, English and Chinese with its various dialects are the two most widely spoken. The remaining quarter of the earth's population speaks nearly 3,000 so-called natural languages. In the words of Ambassador Benton:

Here is indeed a tower of Babel, and this figure dramatizes the need of mankind for a single tongue of universal intellectual

discourse. Seven hundred languages, in total, have been invented to provide the single tongue, but none has taken hold. What is the choice before the world? Short of a world conquest by the Russians or the Chinese, it is a clear choice: English.

Should we deplore the tendency of newly-independent nations to seek the development of an indigenous language, as a primary language, even if it is spoken by only a handful? Perhaps this desire is a temporary aspect of an ardent nationalism. . . . Some observers believe an indigenous language is psychologically indispensable to the cohesion of new nations; there have been bloody riots on this issue in India and Ceylon. Some educators believe that the early years of school are best taught in the language the child hears at home. This may be true. Nevertheless, English is becoming indispensable at the higher levels of education. . . . There is a practical reason for this: nearly everything important is either written in English or translated into it. The books are available.

In 1950, a Gallup poll showed that 76 per cent of the people polled in the United States, Canada, the Netherlands, Norway and Finland favoured the teaching of "one language in all the world's schools — from kindergarten up — so that the new generations would grow up with the ability to speak and understand, in addition to their respective national languages, one tongue that would have universal currency and validity." Only 15 per cent of the people interviewed were opposed to this, and nine per cent were undecided. The number favouring a universal language would probably be even higher today.

The world public understands the problem, and the opportunity. . . . In these terms, is not this task of teaching English one of the most important before us?

Madame Blavatsky, born a Russian, took the trouble to learn English so that she could record the message of Theosophy in a language best understood the world over. In this she showed the greatest foresight, for she wrote not only for her age and generation, but for ages and generations to come, and English has come to the front rapidly since her day.

Under the title "Is Modernization Westernization? What About Easternization and Traditionalization?" a paper was presented by Santosh Kumar Nandy at the Sixth World Congress of Sociology in Evian,

France. A slightly revised version of the paper is published in *The Visvabharati Quarterly* (Vol. 31, No. 3). The subject of "modernization" has assumed great importance particularly in relation to the controlled social change taking place in developing countries. The connotation of the term, however, has not always been clear. It has often been used synonymously with terms like industrialization, urbanization, bureaucratization, and the much-used but often confused term "Westernization." Also the "modern" has often been placed in contrast with the "traditional" in the study of social structure and social change in developing countries.

In recent centuries, as the West has influenced the social-intellectual life of the East, the term Westernization has come to be extensively used. But, says Professor Nandy, modernization cannot be equated with Westernization.

The western way of life has not been accepted in its entirety in the East. In the process of modernizing their societies, many of the eastern countries have accepted the ways of the West with calculation. Many of them have sought to combine the ways of the East and of the West in a manner consistent with the needs of the time. These needs have been domestic and international, the latter arising in a world of increasing international interdependence. Thus, modernization has often been characterized by a synthesis of the eastern and the western....

Alongside westernization has been taking place a process which can be called "easternization." The process here is the "Easternization of the East." In the process of westernization, especially during colonial rule, many of the eastern countries felt the loss of their heritage. This loss has been sought to be made up in the course of planned social change or modernization....

It is also possible to conceive of "Easternization of the West." This process is not yet so prominent, in so far as the policy of planned social change is concerned. But, given the time and the process of modernization in a world of increasing interdependence of peoples, the process of "Easternization of the West" is bound to set in in times to come. World history has passed through longer periods of easternization of the West; the "decline of the East" which occurred for a few centuries is now in the process of being made up for; and, once again, the process of easternization of the West is foreseen, at least in some distant future. At the present stage of world-historical development, easternization of the East has to precede easternization of the West.

Modernization is not necessarily against tradition. In the process of nation-building in many of the old societies, there appears to be an effort at combining the merits of the old and the new, of the eastern and the western, and of the traditional and the modern. The modernization of our times is, as Professor Nandy points out,

unique in many ways — in extensity and intensity of interaction among peoples and in the rapid and radical societal transformations resulting therefrom. In a world that is drawing closer than ever, a time may come when the “universal” more than the traditional and the modern will be of greater significance. We may call that process “Universalization.”

Some scientists believe that the earth's surface once consisted of two super-continent, before the two began breaking up millions of years ago and the pieces drifted apart. The two are called by them Gondwana and Laurasia: the first, it is believed, was composed of Australia, Antarctica, India, South America, Africa, Madagascar and various submerged fragments; the second, of North America and Eurasia. A team of American and Australian scientists are conducting extensive surveys which, they expect, will shed new light on this two-continent theory (*Think*, July-August 1967). Their targets will be the continental slopes off western and southern Australia.

Dr. Robert S. Dietz, geological oceanographer with the Institute of Oceanography in the United States, who heads the group, believes that the survey “will help define the true limits of the Australian continent. Are these adjacent underwater plateaus composed of oceanic or continental rock?” In probing the question, the scientists hope that they will be able to determine whether there is a similarity in the geologic structure of Australia, India and Antarctica. The goal, Dr. Dietz says, is “to match the continents at a point half-way between the surface and the deep sea. . . . The 2½-mile-high continental slopes, which connect the continental shelves with the deep sea floor, are the true geologic boundaries of the continents.”

It is beyond question that continents rise and fall, appear and disappear under cyclic law, modified and guided by forces few of which are as yet known to science. The fabulous “Gondwana Land” which present-day scientists believe once existed, was part of the ancient

Continent of Lemuria, which, it is said, "not only embraced a vast area in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but extended in the shape of a horseshoe past Madagascar, round 'South Africa' (then a mere fragment in the process of formation), through the Atlantic up to Norway" (*S.D.*, II. 333). Present-day Australia is a relic of this gigantic Lemurian Continent.

In *The Secret Doctrine* it is shown that there were four prehistoric Continents. The first was situated in the Arctic circle, and is said to have been the cradle of the first Race. It is stated that this Continent has never been submerged beneath the ocean, as has been, and will be, the fate of all other Continents, but will remain from the beginning to the end of life on this planet. The Second Continent, named the Hyperborean, "stretched out its promontories southward and westward from the North Pole to receive the Second Race, and comprised the whole of what is known now as Northern Asia." The Third Continent, as said above, was Lemuria. It has now almost wholly disappeared beneath the waters of the Pacific, leaving here and there only some of its highland tops which are now islands. The Fourth Continent is named Atlantis, and is now for the most part beneath the Atlantic Ocean. The famous island of Plato of that name was but a fragment of this great Continent.

The sequence of the great Continents shows the order of evolution of the Races, from the First to the Fifth, our Aryan Root-Race. *The Secret Doctrine*, which does not follow the modern geographical distribution of land and sea, affirms that, since the day of its earliest teachings and the destruction of the great Atlantis, the face of the earth has changed more than once through upheaval and submersion.

From time to time, each of us is caught by a sense of his outward, daily life having been lived so quickly that his inner self has not kept apace. Anxiety and nervous restlessness then enter us. We see that the daily and busy life we have been living has not given us the contentment we expected from our activity.

Finding we lack a centre of self, a fear may grow that our life has been spent in vain, our days wasted. Some will turn to an increase in personal pleasures, to even more activity, concealing this fear from themselves. But it will return eventually, at the first moment's pause.

Thus Joseph Fasciani, who writes on "Two Selves in One" in *Fellowship* for September 1967. The writer, a young essayist and peace worker who lives and works in the industrial slums of Oakland, California, refers to the two lives each of us lives: our outward, workaday life, and our inner life, the life of our inner self, of which most of us know so little. "It is only in achieving a balance between these two," he says, "that our contentment, peace and purpose lie." To find our balance point, he suggests,

there are several aids that may be of help, but their effectiveness depends upon steady practice. If we understand that these two halves — these two lives — are really equal in our total life, then we also see that what occurs in one affects the other. Our balance point is as a two-sided mirror, each side reflecting what takes place on the other. What appears to be outward unrest and disorder may reflect our inner state, and when we find ourselves inwardly distressed or troubled, its causes may lie in our outward, daily life. In each of these areas we live so as to add or detract in the other. . . .

On going outside ourselves, in leaving our self behind, we will find its very centre in other people. By being at peace with others, we come to be at peace with ourselves. If you would see an end to the wars between men, then end the war within yourself, the battle of denying one half our life at the expense of its other half. These are the equal halves of the one life we live, alone and in the human family.

Theosophically speaking, it is true that since we have two natures — material and spiritual, terrestrial and celestial, temporal and eternal, there will be found in our consciousness two lines of life's meditation — the personal and the inner. In the generality of men and women, the lower, personal one is to the fore and according to it the incarnation is spent. But the earnest and devoted aspirant, instead of wavering and shifting from one to the other, should learn to eschew the terrestrial line and to focus his consciousness, with all the strength he can muster, on the higher line, until the two become one. But not without struggle does man become an integrated being.

The recent earthquake in western India, leaving as it did a trail of woe and destruction in and around Koynanagar, has once again caused many people to talk. While modern scientists know little about

the forces which produce earthquakes and other natural cataclysms, and therefore are unable to predict and to warn, those religiously inclined wonder why God, the All-Merciful Father, permits such calamities to occur. What has Theosophy to say?

It needs to be recognized that these phenomena are but effects produced by causes; the effect is wrapped up in and is not succedent to the cause. All phenomena which affect the human kingdom, however terrifying or ugly they may appear, are but the legitimate and rhythmic outcome of the battle between good and evil, God and Devil, taking place, not outside of man, but within each human heart. This explanation that the suffering people through their own Karma are responsible for the earthquake may sound to the modern mind fanciful and even fantastic; but rigid justice rules the world, and an earthquake is but a channel through which Karmic law adjusts the disturbed harmony. The following "Aphorism on Karma" explains the process by which such Karmic precipitations take place:

Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through the mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought.

Besides, an earthquake is a means whereby Karma affords an opportunity to all concerned to learn — each sufferer his own lesson — and there are as many experiences and lessons as there are sufferers. But, as another of the "Aphorisms on Karma" puts it:

Egos who have no Karmic connection with a portion of the globe where a cataclysm is coming on are kept without the latter's operation in two ways: (a) by repulsion acting on their inner nature, and (b) by being called and warned by those who watch the progress of the world.
