

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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HUMAN AND DIVINE WILL

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THE MYSTERIOUS POWER of Will is at once the friend and the foe of the neophyte. It has relation with his thought, his feeling, his faith; an aspect of the Will manifests in the body also.

Stubbornness is mistaken for Will; also wishful thinking; and a sentimental reliance on the Deity, on the Masters, on the Self, is mistaken for submission to the Divine Will.

W. Q. Judge, in one of his letters addressed to certain neophytes, and published for proper use by all earnest ones, states:

The essential to all true progress is a wish to conform utterly to the Divine Will, we being certain that we shall be helped in proportion, as is our need.

The statement is not so simple as it sounds. To begin with, what we consider “our need” may not be so considered by the Divine Will. That Will works in terms of the infallible Law of Justice and knows neither wrath nor pardon. It has no favourite, no foe.

Next, it is said that we must be “certain” about the help to be received. This implies that we recognize fully and rely faithfully on the Law which ever moves to righteousness. And that we can do only when we understand that the Law is intelligent and unerring in its motion. The Omniscience of the Deity manifests as the Law of Harmony, and ever adjusts every disharmony, which is always man-made. Our Will to live, our longing to acquire, our yearning to grow Godward, create conflicts.

It should be noted that there are two kinds of conflicts. One is the war between our own members. In our body, our heart is attacked

sometimes by our stomach, and one limb hinders the life of another limb. Our feelings of worry cause ulcers in the body. Our vanity corrupts our brain on the one hand and our mind on the other. There is the other kind of conflict: between our own self and the Self of the universe; between our own mind and the Divine Mind; between our likes and loves and the Impersonal Love of the Universal Heart.

Knowledge of Theosophy as recorded in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky, and in those of such faithful translators of her teachings as W. Q. Judge and Robert Crosbie, offers the only panacea for the neophyte's difficulties. Modern psychologists and psychiatrists have wrong philosophical formulae, and the earnest neophyte will waste his time by running after their expositions. For example, the very basic truth of the psycho-spiritual life is ignored by men of modern knowledge; it is to be found in these words of Mr. Judge:

One has to dissipate and conquer the inner darkness before attempting to see into the darkness without; to know one's self before knowing things extraneous to one's senses.

Modern knowledge plays with the inner darkness of the lower personal man, regarding his consciousness as the child of his senses. Modern knowledge does not distinguish between the Soul, who creates senses, organs and body, and its creations; further, it also does not distinguish between the Higher Mind, which is the Creative Thinker, and the lower, which is an assemblage of various and varied thoughts resulting from cerebration. Contrary to this modern notion, Mr. Judge recommends that we should "know the distinction between the intellect and spiritual mind." We are advised by him to ignore the lower mental attitude and find out our Spirit-Will.

The fruits of modern knowledge in corporate life are seen in expressions of war, *e.g.*, in bombs; in diplomacy which labours to gain for its own nation, by exploitation and the use of violence, if need be; in superstitions about vaccination and vivisection and viruses; in anti-social propaganda about birth control and family planning, etc., etc. Modern knowledge is often very destructive and touches at many points the entire international world.

Its fruits in the personal lives of men and women are seen mainly in three phenomena: growth in lust, greed and egotism. These flourish and are excused and exonerated as ills to which the human body, temperament and mind are heir, through heredity and atavism. Sex passion

and aberrations; quick money-making by hook or by crook; upholding one's "dignity" and maintaining one's "pride"; feeding egotism by every species of machination — these are evils to be fought and destroyed. Modern knowledge, however, excuses and even supports men and women in indulging in them.

The act of procreation of human children is now surrounded by degradation, which modern "knowledge" has supported. H.P.B. states that the Indian descendants of the early spiritually-minded progenitors degenerated, but even in their degeneration

have down to the present day retained a veneration and respect for the creative function, and still regard it in the light of a religious ceremony, whereas the more civilized nations consider it as a mere animal function. Compare the Western views and practice in these matters with the Institutions of Manu in regard to the laws of Grihastha and married life. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 209-10)

Similarly, money-making in our civilization is the basic vehicle for the force of greed and possession, and mostly it is indulged in for the sake of obtaining more subtle possessions — fame and influence, etc.

Both lust and greed are born of pride and egotism and the second name of personality is selfishness.

These three act against the Divine Will and produce chaos in the entire human kingdom. The Divine Will is harmless and compassionate and helpful, for it arouses unselfish affection and love in the human heart. The Divine Will is generous and bountiful in its largess — giving, never grabbing. The Divine Will is selfless and altruistic in manifesting the powers of Being and of Life.

The morality founded upon modern knowledge enhances selfishness and strengthens egotism which crushes others.

Theosophical Ethics are ancient and teach us to create the power to heal and to protect ourselves and others, and to spread beneficence all the time and everywhere.

THE MOTIVE BEHIND SERVICE

Do not work merely for the Theosophical Society, but *through* it for Humanity.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

MAN is for ever acting. Physical indolence or inertia does not stop this activity, nor does sleep or even a state of coma. Automatic and reflex actions go on regardless of what the mind is engaged upon. The mind itself moves in strange ways and at times obeys and at other times defies the will of man, its obsessions with desires giving it a strength and momentum all its own.

What mystifies students is that even after duties are performed, works of charity and sacrifice carried out, austerities undertaken and fulfilled, there is seemingly no progress and no greater urge to enter the service of the Self. Looking at life over the years, one comes to the startling conclusion that spiritual stamina and the strength to sustain high endeavour are not necessarily the outcome of good works if they are not done for and (if a more correct word be used) in the presence of the Lord within.

Of the dedicated man, it is said that all work is initiated, continued and accomplished with an invocation and a sustained remembrance of the Self. The typist at his instrument may thump out articles, essays and books of profoundest wisdom, may even be the medium through whom words of power may be conveyed to others. But if he works not with an awakened devotion fully active at the time of his work, it will profit him nothing. The first flush of enthusiasm, if not continuously fed, is bound to be depleted in time. A frightening experience this, and the student in his frantic effort to recapture the initial moment of rapture may try to seek solace by transferring his allegiance elsewhere and bending his knees to lesser gods.

Where does the average student falter? What is it that makes his enthusiasm go down to its lowest ebb? The answer may perhaps be found in the advice given by Krishna in the fourth chapter of the *Gita*: "Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error. *By this knowledge thou shalt see all things and creatures whatsoever in thyself and then in me.*" By this knowledge is demonstrated the immanence of

Deity through the arousing of the Buddhi faculty that cuts across all errors. It is this same knowledge that the student of Theosophy seeks. Following the advice of Krishna he usually starts with service; but he being the child of the arrogant 20th century lacks the will and the humility to prostrate himself either before the chosen Guru or before the more abstract scripture. Throwing himself whole-heartedly in service, he thinks that the search and the questioning which brought him so far would surely suffice once that service is entered upon. The strong search and questioning which could exercise the Buddhi and make it active are thus gradually but progressively abandoned. The seed is sown in good soil but the providing of water and sunlight becomes haphazard and soon comes to be neglected. The first impetus will no doubt under cyclic law induce the student to fitfully search the scriptures and of course his inner self, but the power to sustain is gone and the effort becomes capricious and weak in time. So, error continues to prevail and, worse still, Krishna remains unattainable and all things and creatures remain as they previously were, distinct and separate, whose well-being and salvation could be of no great concern to the student. All too often this pathetic end comes of a resolve nobly formulated and boldly undertaken.

Not all students are victims of this casual approach. They hold grimly on. But thus holding on, they too often fail to expand their field of service and of endeavour. Not understanding that responsibility needs must expand *pari passu* with a growth in knowledge, they remain as mere decorations on the outer walls of the halls of knowledge. They may not know it but it becomes their duty by reason of their stronger moorings to help their weaker brethren. A word of encouragement or warning, the extending of a helping hand, the delaying of one's own pilgrimage in order to stay beside a brother who needs companionship and help, the taking of the scriptures to those in need of their warmth, the refreshing of one's own knowledge and the recharging of spiritual batteries become duties, the performance or the neglect of which Karma must now faithfully inscribe in the chela's ledger of life.

That which contributes the most to a sliding back or to a marking of precious time is the hesitation born of incredulity of accepting the fact that all things and creatures have to be seen in oneself. This hesitancy or doubt is the undoing of many, for Brotherhood cannot be accepted with reservations. Across the doors of the heart you cannot write a warning that certain persons are prohibited entrance within. It were

well to ever keep in mind that each life is contained in space, that each contains within it the motion which is an emanation of the Great Breath (the eternal perpetual motion that is an aspect of the Deity), and that each is a periodical emanation of the One and is therefore indissolubly interlinked with other emanations in the bosom of the vast whole. The marks of the man with a godlike character which are enumerated in the opening verses of the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Gita* are but the natural outflow of this great Oneness. Error arises where even remotely the Oneness comes to be denied in thought or action. This fundamental error from which all woes spring is summed up in the word "selfishness." Where equipoise or balance is violated—and a negation of brotherhood does just that—there disharmony prevails and its effects are felt for long afterwards. Attachment to desires violates brotherhood because it makes the man spring away from the middle position, thus producing an oscillation that makes him inimical to some one portion or another of the vast whole.

To achieve brotherhood among the many, the student is advised to establish brotherhood among the few. The task of welding himself into one cohesive mass is to an extent rendered less difficult when he has to limit his efforts to his brothers and to those who are of the same mind and teaching. It is, however, true that a close association of mortals becomes abrasive of personalities. Clashes of interest, jealousies, cravings for recognition and favours, the forming of groups and cliques, the claiming of rights and privileges are all too common among ordinary societies. In Theosophical circles, these get heightened by the very fact that the combined effect of noble resolves generates heat which because of wrong karmic accumulations brings the ugliness to the surface. Instead of holding grimly on and allowing the ripple of effects to subside students are too often prone to hide or even deny the defects or to push them below the surface, thus replanting them, as Judge puts it for future use. The frictions that arise in such associations as those of Theosophy are now sufficiently recognizable from the record of a hundred years of Theosophical effort. In her Third Message to the American Theosophists, H.P.B. wrote:

The Masters require only that each shall do *his best*, and, above all, that each shall strive in reality to feel himself one with his fellow-workers. It is not a dull agreement on intellectual questions, or an impossible unanimity as to all details of work, that is needed; but a true, hearty, earnest devotion to our cause

which will lead each to help his brother to the utmost of his power to *work* for that cause, whether or not we agree as to the exact method of carrying on that work.

Questioning and strong search of the vast Theosophical literature is bound to yield valuable aids to counter each pressure to depart from the strict lines of brotherhood. Each cause of disagreement, distrust and antagonism has to be studied and its antidote found through research and self-examination. It is vital not to lose sight of the fact that the Wise (this includes the Inner Warrior of *Light on the Path*) who know the Truth will communicate it to the pure of heart. An association can by deliberate endeavour become a team that will have only one motive which will dominate each one of the group. When in any one unit of such a group the flame burns low, it has to be willingly tended by his brothers; when one gets bogged down, all the rest must pool their strength to drag him out of the morass. For each, some one Theosophical task is congenial. This can be assigned to him even if it calls for sacrifice by some other brother strong enough to yield the beloved task. With loving care enthusiasm must be fostered to enable him to move from one difficult task to another, from one chore to the many. The influence which such a team can generate would be global.

Says H.P.B.:

To work properly in our Great Cause it is necessary to forget all personal differences of opinion as to how the work is to be carried on. Let each of us work in his own way and not endeavour to force our ideas of work upon our neighbours. Remember how the Initiate Paul warned his correspondents against the attitude of sectarianism they took up in the early Christian Church: "I am of Paul, I of Apollos," and let us profit by the warning.

WE CANNOT have peace until we deserve it by paying its full price — which is that the strong must cease to be greedy and the weak must learn to be bold.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE.

EMERSON AND OCCULTISM

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'Tis thus at the roaring Loom of Time I ply,
And weave for God the garment thou seest Him by.

—*Erd. Geist*, FAUST

THE SUNSET, to the boor a mere mass of evening vapours, presaging rain for his fields or heat for his harvest, expands for the poet, standing beside him and beholding the selfsame firmament, into a splendid picture rich in crimson and purple, in golden light and gleaming colour, mingled in harmonious purity.

Whence so great a difference?

The poet has finer eyes; and within the mere material forms perceives a subtle essence, which flows everywhere through nature, adding to all it touches a new wealth of joy and power. The poet's eyes have opened to a new reality; he no longer values things for themselves; but in proportion as they contain this quality, they become dear to him.

But beyond the poet, there is yet a third rank. The poet, it is true, rejoices in nature, and perceives its beauty and symbolic character. But he rests in the beauty of the symbol, and does not pass to the reality symbolized. Rapt in adoration of the beauty of the garment, he does not pierce through to Him who wears the garment. This remains for the philosopher — the sage. Yet the boor has his place in Nature. He has tilled and subdued the soil, has brought its latent powers into action; in command of nature, he is far in advance of the mere nomad savage, for whom nature is a maze of uncertain and unconquered forces.

The savage, the boor, the poet; these types have their parallels in mental life.

When the crude conceptions of nature, which mark dawning civilization, give place to those fair and truer, because more harmonious views which bear the name of Science; when the principle of Continuity, the reign of Universal Law, have displaced the first notions of Chance and Discord, the work of the physical scientist is done; he must stand aside, and make way for the philosopher, the transcendentalist. Modern Science has replaced the crudities of mediaeval theology by the idea of an orderly universe permeated by Law, binding alike the galaxy and the atom, as the tillage of the farmer has replaced the nomadism of the savage.

But within the world of the boor nestles the poet's world, and within the world of the physical scientist lies an ethereal, spiritual universe, with its own powers, its own prophets. The great trilogy of friends at the beginning of this century, who rose like three mountain peaks above their contemporaries, Goethe, Carlyle, and Emerson, were chosen by Destiny as prophets of this nature within nature.

Their gleanings have been rich enough to tempt many to enter the same field, though they have no more exhausted its wealth than Homer and Shakespeare have exhausted poetry.

The new world they have explored, is the land of hope of the future, for which we must leave the impoverished soil of theology, and the arid deserts of materialism.

What these three masters taught, Occultism teaches; and we propose to show them as great natural masters in the mystic knowledge.

To do this with any completeness in the space at our disposal is necessarily impossible; for the present, we must content ourselves with showing from the writings of one of the masters, Emerson, that he recognized some of the chief laws announced by Occultism.

The first truth to be insisted on, concerning this nature within nature, the spiritual universe, is that it exists for its own ends, and not as an adjunct to the material world; in other words, the end of morals is to make archangels rather than good citizens.

Spirit is the reality; matter, the secondary; or, as Goethe says, the *Garment of God*.

No occultist could insist on the subordinate character of matter more vehemently than Emerson — he writes:

Nature is a mutable cloud, which is always and never the same. Through the bruteness and toughness of matter, a subtle spirit bends all things to its own will. The world proceeds from the same spirit as the body of man. It is *a remoter and inferior incarnation of God*, a projection of God into the unconscious.

The Occultist sees in this world of spirit the home of that true joy of which all earthly happiness is the shadow, and whispered intimation. There all ideals find their realization, all highest hopes their fulfilment; there flow abundant fountains of celestial bliss, whose least presence makes earthly things radiant.

Of spirit, Emerson writes:

But when following the invisible steps of thought, we come to enquire, Whence is matter? and where to? many truths arise to us out of the recesses of consciousness. We learn that the highest is present to the soul of man, that the dread universal essence which is not wisdom, or love, or beauty, or power; but all in one, and each entirely, is that for which all things exist, and that by which they are; that spirit creates; that behind nature, throughout nature spirit is present. As a plant upon the earth, so a man rests upon the bosom of God; he is nourished by un-failing fountains, and draws, at his need, inexhaustible power.

But to obtain a footing in this world of essential being, is to be emancipated from the domination of Time and Space, to enter a universe where they do not exist; for Space and Time are no realities, but, as Carlyle says, the "deepest of all *illusory appearances*." Emancipation from Space and Time; how much more this implies than is at first sight apparent! The first fruit of this freedom is a feeling of eternalness, the real basis of the doctrine of immortality. It is an attainable reality, this sense of eternalness; let the sceptic and materialist say what they will.

Of this truth, also, we may bring Emerson as witness, He writes:

To truth, justice, love, the attributes of the soul, the idea of *immutableness* is essentially associated. In the flowing of love, in the adoration of humility, there is no question of continuance.

Once recognize the truth that we can gain a footing in a world free from the tyranny of time, that the soul exists in such a world, and a new philosophy is at once required. Freedom from Time implies the eternity of the soul, and the facts of life and death take a new position and significance. If the soul be eternal, death must be an illusion, a garment in which Nature wraps some hidden law.

In the following words of Emerson, on this subject—

It is the secret of the world that *all things subsist and do not die*, but only retire a little from sight, and afterwards return again. Whatever does not concern us, is concealed from us. As soon as a person is no longer related to our present well-being he is concealed or *dies*, as we say. When the man has exhausted for the time the nourishment to be drawn from any one person or thing, that object is withdrawn from his observation, and though still in his immediate neighbourhood, he does not suspect its presence. Nothing is dead; men feign themselves dead, and endure mock funerals and mournful obituaries, and there they stand looking out of the window, sound and well, in some new disguise. Jesus

is not dead; he is very well alive; nor John, nor Paul, nor Mahomet, nor Aristotle —

we have an accurate exposition of the occult doctrine of Reincarnation — the progressive discipline of the soul through many lives — which has been parodied in the popular fable of metempsychosis.

The true occult doctrine does not picture a series of bodies in each of which the soul makes a temporary sojourn. In this, as in all else, it begins with spirit and then descends to matter. It depicts that vital energy which we call a soul, alternately exuding from itself and re-absorbing into its own nature an environment or physical encasement, whose character varies with the increasing stature of the soul. According to the teaching of occultism, the successive formations of this objective shell — whose purpose is to provide for the development of the animal nature — alternate with periods of subjective life, which give expansion to the powers of the soul.

As corollary to this doctrine, occultism postulates a second — that the incidents of each objective environment or physical life — are not fortuitous and isolated, but that they are bound to all that precede and follow them, and moreover that “the future is not arbitrarily formed by any separate acts of the present, but that the whole future is in unbroken continuity with the present, as the present is with the past.”

To the various developments of this law, eastern philosophy has given the name of Karma; the west has as yet no name for it. But though unnamed, its leading ideas have not been unperceived by those western minds which have penetrated into the world of supernature.

Thus we find Emerson writing:

Every secret is told, every crime is punished, every virtue rewarded, every wrong redressed, in silence and certainty. Crime and punishment grow on one stem; punishment is a fruit that unsuspected ripens within the flower of pleasure which concealed it. You cannot do wrong without suffering wrong. The thief steals from himself; the swindler swindles himself. Everything in nature, even motes and feathers, goes by law and not by luck. *What a man sows, he reaps.*

The picture of an orderly universe, where matter is the garment of spirit — spirit visualized — where souls march onward in orderly procession to boundless perfection; where the life of each permeates and flows through the life of all; where the wrong of each is turned to the benefit of all by the firm hand of an invisible and ever active law, in-

cessantly disciplining and correcting, till the last dross of self and sin is purged away, and instead of man there remains God only, working through the powers that were man's; such is the conception Occultism holds.

“I know not,” says Emerson—

I know not whether there be, as is alleged, in the upper region of our atmosphere a permanent westerly current, which carries with it all atoms which rise to that height, but I see that when souls reach a certain clearness of perfection, they accept a knowledge and motive above selfishness. A breath of Will blows eternally through the universe of souls in the direction of the Right and Necessary. It is the air which all intellects inhale and exhale, and it is the wind which blows the world into order and orbit.

Let us build altars to the Beautiful Necessity which rudely or softly educates men to the perception that there are no contingencies, that Law rules through existence, a Law which is not intelligent but intelligence, not personal nor impersonal — it disdains words, and passes understanding; it dissolves persons; it vivifies nature, yet solicits the pure in heart to draw on its all, its omnipotence.

Discipline always and everywhere throughout the universe; to discipline, development, all other facts are subordinate; for their sake, all laws are enunciated, all spiritual facts are insisted on; all truths which tend not to the melioration of human life — if any such there be — are worthless. Discipline, development. What development does Occultism predict for man? Man's future destiny, in the view of Occultism, is so stupendous that we prefer merely to erect a finger-post pointing out the direction of the path, using the words of Emerson:

The youth puts off the illusions of the child, the man puts off the ignorance and tumultuous passions of the youth; proceeding thence, puts off the egotism of manhood, and becomes at last a public and universal soul. He is rising to greater height, but also to realities; the outer relations and circumstances dying out, he is entering deeper into God, God into him, until the last garment of egotism falls, and he is with God, shares the will and the immensity of the First Cause.

From first to last, Occultism has preached no doctrine more emphatically than the necessity of dependence on the intuitions, and the reality of interior illumination. “Seek out the way by making the profound

obeisance of the soul to the dim star that burns within; within you is the light of the world," writes the Occultist.

And this doctrine is repeated again and again in the writings of the philosopher we have been quoting from. He writes:

A man should learn to detect and watch that gleam of light which flashes across his mind from within, more than the lustre of the firmament of bards and sages. From within or from behind, a light shines through us upon things, and makes us aware that we are nothing, but that the light is all. The consciousness in each man is a sliding scale, which identifies him now with the First Cause, and now with the flesh of his body; life above life, in infinite degrees. There is for each a Best Counsel, which enjoins the fit word and the fit act for every moment. There is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins. The walls are taken away, we lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God. The simplest person who, in his integrity, worships God, becomes God; yet for ever and ever the influx of this better and universal self is new and unsearchable.

The life of one is the life of all. The good of one reacts on all. The walls by which selfishness conceives itself enclosed and isolated, are unreal, have no existence. Spirit is fluid and all-pervading; its beneficent power flows unchecked from soul to soul, energizing, harmonizing, purifying. To resist all discordant tendencies which check this salutary flow, this all-permeating love, is to come under the reign of Universal Brotherhood; and to the honour of Occultism be it said, that Universal Brotherhood is blazoned highest on its standard.

"Thus," writes Emerson—

are we put in training for a love which knows not sex nor person, nor partiality, but which seeks virtue and wisdom everywhere. One day all men will be lovers, and every calamity will be dissolved in universal sunshine. An acceptance of the sentiment of love throughout Christendom for a season would bring the felon and the outcast to our side in tears, with the devotion of his faculties to our service.

But to the axiom "Kill out the sense of separateness" Occultism adds another, "Yet stand alone." Before the lesson of life can be learnt, the soul must in some sort detach itself from its environment, and view all things impersonally, in solitude and stillness. There is an oracle in

the lonely recess of the soul to which all things must be brought for trial. Here all laws are tested, all appearances weighed.

About this truth always hangs a certain solemnity, and Emerson has given it a fitting expression in the following words:

The soul gives itself alone, original and pure, to the Lonely, Original, and Pure, who, on that condition, gladly inhabits, leads, and speaks through it. Then it is glad, young, and nimble. Behold, it saith, I am born into the great, the universal mind. I, the imperfect, adore my own Perfect. I am somehow receptive of the great soul, and thereby I do overlook the sun and the stars, and feel them to be the fair accidents and effects which change and pass. More and more surges of everlasting nature enter into me, and I become public and human in my regards and actions. So I come to live in thoughts, and act with energies, which are immortal.

The last words of this sentence lead us to the occult idea of *Mahatma-hood*, which conceives a perfected soul as "living in thoughts, and acting with energies which are immortal."

The *Mahatma* is a soul of higher rank in the realms of life, conceived to drink in the wealth of spiritual power closer to the fountain-head, and to distil its essence into the interior of receptive souls.

In harmony with this idea, Emerson writes:

Truth is the summit of being; justice is the application of it to affairs. All individual natures stand in a scale, according to the purity of this element in them. The will of the pure runs down from them into other natures, as water runs down from a higher into a lower vessel; this natural force is no more to be withstood than any other natural force. A healthy soul stands united with the Just and the True, as the magnet arranges itself with the pole, so that he stands to all beholders like a transparent object betwixt them and the sun, and whoso journeys towards the sun, journeys towards that person.

Occultism conceives the outer world and all its accidents to be so many veils, shrouding the splendour of essential nature, and tempering the fiery purity of spirit to the imperfect powers of the understanding soul. This illusory power Occultism considers to be the "active will of God," a means to the ends of eternal spirit.

In the view of Occultism, life is a drama of thinly veiled souls; as Shakespeare writes:

We are such stuff

As dreams are made of, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep!

We shall conclude with two passages from Emerson's essays, on the subject of illusions:

Do you see that kitten chasing so prettily her own tail? If you could look with her eyes, you might see her surrounded with hundreds of figures performing complex dramas, with tragic and comic issues, long conversations, many characters, many ups and downs of fate; and meantime it is only puss and her tail. How long before our masquerade will end its noise of tambourines, laughter, and shouting, and we shall find it was a solitary performance?

We must supplement this rather playful passage with one in a higher strain:

There is no chance, and no anarchy, in the universe. All is system and gradation. Every god is there sitting in his sphere. The young mortal enters the hall of the firmament; there is he alone with them alone, they pouring on him benedictions and gifts, and beckoning him up to their thrones. On an instant, and incessantly, fall snowstorms and illusions. He fancies himself in a vast crowd which sways this way and that, and whose movement and doings he must obey: he fancies himself poor, orphaned, insignificant. The mad crowd drives hither and thither, now furiously commanding this thing to be done, now that. What is he that he should resist their will, and think or act for himself? Every moment new changes and new showers of deceptions to baffle and distract him. And when, by-and-bye, for an instant, the air clears, and the cloud lifts a little, there are the gods still sitting around him on their thrones — they alone with him alone.

—CHARLES JOHNSTON, F.T.S.

THE SECRET of success is constancy of purpose.

—DISRAELI

THE SAGE WHO SAW THE OBVIOUS

III.—THE LADDER

IN THE LITTLE HOUSE at the crossroads, where he lived alone (but was never lonely), the Sage was employing the morning freshness for the performance of a few simple tasks. The shrill ringing of a bicycle bell interrupted him, and on looking out he saw its rider just dismounting. After propping his vehicle against the solitary banyan at the wayside, the visitor came running over the scanty grass towards him.

“Another perplexed one,” thought the Sage, wondering on what problem his advice was being sought thus early, and noting with some surprise when his caller faced him that on this occasion the problem was brought by a mere boy. Bright dark eyes examined him gravely, but their owner was obviously only in his early teens. His clothes were work-stained, his bare feet muddy. A small kit of tools strapped to his back indicated that he might possibly be a builder’s apprentice.

“What can I do for you?” the Sage asked kindly, checking the impulse to add, “my child.” He was far from being so out of touch with life as not to know that young people take themselves seriously. Yet the lad was so mere a babe to him that he could not refrain from saying gently, “I trust it is not trouble that brings you to visit me, young sir. Few come to me for any other reason, but at *your* age I should be sorry to find it so.”

The boy stared at him and shook his head. “No,” he said, “why should I be in trouble? I pass your door twice daily, Master, going to and from my work. I—I thought I’d like to see you.”

The Sage looked amused. “Well, I am worth little, I fear, my son, as a curiosity. But you are welcome, be your reason what it may. I keep open door for all.”

“I know,” the boy said quickly, “You are a wise man and can answer people’s questions. Some have big serious problems and you help them. But I haven’t, and I shouldn’t.”

“Should not?” queried the Sage, somewhat puzzled by the boy’s odd manner, for now he hung his head and shuffled one of his bare feet awkwardly. That, in spite of his denial, there *was* a problem somewhere the old man suspected shrewdly.

“I shouldn’t have come,” the boy muttered. “I—I didn’t really mean to. But you see, I’m always passing, as I told you. So—well,

thought I'd ask."

"Then, if I can answer, you did right," the Sage assured him. "Speak out, my son. You need not excuse yourself. You have only to put your question." And being a little tired with his morning tasks, he sat down, while the boy followed him over to his chair and stood before him.

"I am helping," said the young voice solemnly, "to build the new temple. The one in the village on the plain yonder —" he jerked his head towards the window. The Sage nodded comprehendingly, and waited: "My job is to go up the ladder, up to the very top, you know, and put on the gilding," the boy continued. "I was chosen because I was the lightest, and the most sure-footed. At least, they — they thought so."

"And are you not?" asked the Sage.

The boy shook his head and sighed.

"No, Master. I keep slipping on the ladder. But it isn't my fault."

"How so?" asked the Sage.

"Because the ladder stands in a lot of mud. They mean to have a lotus pool in front of the temple, but just now there's only mud, and my feet get sticky."

"Naturally," said the Sage. "But where do *I* come into this? What question, suddenly arising as you passed, brought those same feet across my threshold?"

The boy did not seem quite to understand. He wrinkled his forehead and stood eyeing the old man blankly. Then he said suddenly, "Well, that's it. That's what I came about. I thought you'd tell me how to keep my feet from slipping, Master."

"Wash them," the Sage said briefly.

"Wash them?" The boy echoed the words mechanically. Stock-still he stood, his mouth hanging open in utter astonishment.

The Sage heaved a deep sigh. Why should the obvious always strike questioners like a thunderbolt? Ah, but, he reminded himself, this present questioner was a child. How wrong if, even for a moment, he felt impatience!

"Yes," he said gently, "wash them. Be prepared ere you set foot on the bottom rung. Is not that the simple answer to your question? Does it not satisfy you, my son?"

The sound of his voice aroused the boy. He started, then a beaming smile spread over his face. "Master, it does!" he said heartily. "But

what a fool I must seem to you! I suppose I've got so used to my muddy feet that I forget about them — just take them for granted."

"Perhaps," said the old man kindly. "Or perhaps your mind is wholly on your work. You are eager, nay, impatient, to get on with it — to make progress, nay, to see it perfect and complete. But remember this, my son, there can be *no* progress unless in the first place one has rid oneself of hindrances. Do so, and you will fulfil your employer's expectations. You will be twice as light, twice as sure-footed as he hoped."

"Thank you, Master," the boy said earnestly. "That's good advice. I shan't forget it. I'm only sorry I wasted your time with such a question. If ever I have a better one, mark my words, I'll come back."

He bowed, and ran off, leaping out through the doorway into the morning sunshine, and a moment later the bicycle bell was ringing furiously, mingled with the rumbling of the heavy wheels of an ox-cart.

The Sage lay back and closed his eyes. He felt uneasy; the little interview had been farcical. All very well to point out the obvious in most cases, but in this one both question and answer seemed sadly trivial. Of that he had proof, he thought remorsefully. The Voice of the Silence had not spoken. Was that slight sense of impatience, albeit curbed instantly, the reason? Or, instead of "reason," might not it be truer to say "hindrance"?

Even as he ruminated, he realized that the Voice was speaking, soft and low within the cave of the heart.

"Beware lest thou should'st set a foot still soiled upon the ladder's lowest rung. Woe unto him who dares pollute one rung with miry feet. The foul and viscous mud will dry, become tenacious, then glue his feet unto the spot; and like a bird caught in the wily fowler's lime, he will be stayed from further progress."

The Sage sat and pondered. "Alas," he thought, "I did not say enough. I did not make plain to him the analogy with '*the ladder by which the candidate ascends*'." Then, swiftly, he cut short his self-reproach in order to listen again as the Voice spoke on, reminding him of words he had addressed to himself, ah, how often, in his long journey through the years.

"Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind. For then the ladder will give way and overthrow thee, its foot rests in the deep mire of thy sins and failings, and ere thou canst attempt to cross this wide abyss of matter thou hast to lave thy

feet in Waters of Renunciation."

"Alas," sighed the Sage again, "of these Waters I said nothing. May another opportunity be granted me! Does not he pass my door twice daily? For the moment, though, I grieve, fearing lest I grow less useful, growing older. If that be so," he concluded mournfully, "how shall I serve others to the last?"

As he uttered these words aloud it struck the Sage that he himself had become a questioner, and that one more problem awaited solution in the quiet room which had already heard so many.

Came the Voice of the Silence in answer, the old man holding his breath to listen:

"Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty."

The Sage released his breath in a long sigh of deep relief. All was well! He had been pointed to the obvious.

WE FEEL "the good, true and beautiful" to be essentially one with our own souls in any last analysis. Within us all there is at work a divine principle of growth to some good end. Accordingly we select as "good" whatever is in harmony with innate law.

We thus reach for the light, spiritually in some innate spirit-pattern as the plant does physically. If we are sound of heart and not sophisticated by our education far beyond our capacity, we call that objective the Beautiful.

—FRANK LLOYD WRIGHT

THE SKIN OF THE EARTH

[This story by W. Q. Judge appeared originally in *The Path* for October 1889, under the pen-name of Bryan Kinnavan.—EDS.]

THE COLD MATERIALISM of the 19th century paralyses sentiment and kills mysticism. Thus it commits a double crime, in robbing man and preventing many classes of sentient beings from progressing up the ladder that leads from earth to heaven. So in telling these tales I feel sheltered behind the shield of the editor of the magazine for which I write, for, were I to be known as believing that any beings whatever other than man are affected by the mental negations of the century, my life would soon become a burden. This age is so full of ignorance that it sees not and cares nothing for the groans that are rolling among the caverns of mother earth fathoms deep below its surface. Nor will it care until its contempt for what it calls superstition shall have caused its ruin, and then — another age will have risen and other men have come

It was not so in our Sacred Island cycles ago. Then what we call superstition was knowledge that has now been replaced by impudent scorn for aught save the empiric classification of a few facts; a heritage of glory given up for a mere statement of the limits of our ignorance. But I will plunge into the past and forget the present hour.

Seven months had rolled away since the time when, standing in the picture gallery, I had seen the simulacrum of a dear friend blacken and disappear, and now on the morning of the day when I was to pass by the mountain of the diamond, the news was brought to me how he had fallen faithless to his trust overcome by vanity with its dark companion, doubt

So, at the appointed hour I waited for the messenger. Once again the white moonbeams shone into the room and, revealing the monthly dial curiously wrought into the floor and walls by a chemical art that allowed nothing to be revealed save by moonlight after the 14th day of her course, told me in a language pale and cold that this was the 17th day. As I looked some new combination of our ancient magic was revealed. Every now and then clouds seemed to roll across the floor, while on them rested the earth itself. Seven times it rolled by, and then I felt that near me stood the silent messenger. Turning, I saw him just as he stood when he called me to the gallery.

“Do you not know this picture?” said he.

“No. All is dark to me.”

“It is the sign that you are to come to the earth’s hall beyond the gallery. Look again closely at that rolling ball upon the clouds, and tell me what you see.”

These words seemed to come not from the man’s lips, but from all about him, as if the air was full of sound. But obeying the direction I gazed at the picture and saw that the surface of the mystic globe was moving, and then that myriads of small creatures were coming through it.

“It is time,” said the sounds from all about the impassive being. “That is the signal. We will go.” And he turned away.

I followed while he led me up to the building and through the gallery of tell-tale pictures where still in the silence the faces changed and the soft music sounded. I would have lingered there to see those magic pictures, but a cord seemed to draw me after my guide. As we approached the other end of the gallery nothing was visible to the eye save a blank wall, but the messenger passed through it and disappeared. Afraid to stop, unable to resist the drawing of the invisible cord, I walked against the wall. One short moment of suspense and with my breath held I had passed through; it was but a cloud, or a vapour — and I was on the other side. Turning, expecting to still see through that immaterial wall, I found that it was impervious to the sight; and then the cord that drew me slackened, for my guide had stopped. Stepping up to the wall, my outstretched fingers went through it, or rather disappeared within it, for they felt no sensation. Then the messenger’s voice said:

“Such is the skin of the Earth to those who live below it.” With these words he walked on again through a door of a large room into which I followed. Here a faint but oppressive smell of earth filled all the space, and, standing just inside the doorway now closed by a noiselessly moving door, I saw that the whole place save where we stood was moving, as if the great globe were here seen revolving upon its axis and all its motions felt.

As I gazed the surface of the revolving mass was seen to be covered with circling hosts of small creatures whose movements caused the revolutions, and all at once it seemed as if the moving body became transparent, and within was filled with the same creatures. They were constantly coming from the surface and moving to the centre along well-defined paths. Here was the whole globe represented in forcible miniature, and these creatures of their own nature moved it, guided by some mysterious Being whose presence was only revealed by beams of light. Nor could

the others see him, but his silent directions were carried out.

These little beings were of every colour and form; some wore an appearance similar to that of man himself, others appeared like star blossoms of the sea, their pure tints waxing and waning as they throbbed with an interior pulse of light. Whatever their shapes, these seemed evanescent, translucent, and easily dissipated; in their real essence the creatures were centres of energy, a nucleolus around which light condensed now in this form, now in that, with constant progression of type and form. Some were more swift and harmonious in their movements than others, and these I understood were the more progressed in the scale of Being. Such had a larger orbit, and satellites circled about them. Of such systems the place was full, and all owed obedience to the subtle and interior Power which I could not discern. Each system existed for the service of all the rest; each complemented and sustained the others as they swept onward in a harmony that was labour and love. Their object seemed twofold; they assisted in maintaining the revolutions of the earth upon its axis and in guiding it in its orbit. They also grew through the ever-increasing swiftness of their own motions into greater splendour and brightness, approaching greater intelligence, coming ever nearer to self-conscious reason and love, and, as they grew, stimulated the latent spark in the metals and all the underworld growth as the lambent touch of flame awakens flame.

Guided by the Unseen Power and in their automatic obedience (for to obey was their nature), there were some who by the greatness of their own momentum and the ferment of new forces attracted and gathering about them, seemed upon the point of bursting into some fuller expansion, some higher state of intelligence and life, but they were withheld by something that was not the Power guiding them. Looking closer, I saw that an antagonistic influence was at work in the place.

The orbit of many of these docile and beautiful creatures included a passage to and fro through the mystic wall. Their duties were upon the earth as well as beneath its surface; faithful fulfilment of these functions comprised an evolution into higher service and a higher form. The malign influence often prevented this. It seemed like a dark mist full of noxious vapour that deadened while it chilled. As the clouds rolled into the hall their wreaths assumed now this shape and now that, changeful and lurid suggestions of hatred, lust, and pride. Many of the creatures coming in contact with these had that influence stamped upon their sensitive spheres, giving them the horrid likeness which they

were powerless to shake off, and thus becoming servants of the baleful mist itself with altered and discordant motions. Others were paralysed with the chill contact. Others were so taxed to make up for the partial suspension of their fellows' activity that their work was unsteady and their orbital revolutions checked. But still the whole throng swung on like some splendid creation, paling, glowing, throbbing, pausing, a huge iridescent heart scintillating, singing through the gloom. Here the mist was beaten back by greater efforts that jarred the harmony; there it gathered, condensed, and in its vile embrace swept in bright systems, stifling their motions, then leaving them paralysed where they fell, while it crawled on to fresh victims. And all through this strange picture and wonderful battle I could see the dim cloud-like shapes of cities inhabited by the men of earth, my fellows, and also the rivers, mountains, and trees of the globe.

In my mind the query rose, "Why do the earth's cities look like dreams?" And there upon the wall flashed out this sentence, while its meaning sounded in every letter:

"When you are being shown the elemental beings, the men of your earth and their cities appear as clouds because it is not to them that your mind is directed. Look yet again!"

I saw that the evil mist had gathered strength in one part of the place, and had destroyed the harmony and swiftness of so many of the little beings that the great circling globe was moving off its axis, circling more and more, so that I knew upon whatever earth this happened great changes would occur, and that in the path of the mist there would sweep over man epidemics of disease and crime. Horrified at such impending calamities I sought for an answer and looked towards my guide. As I did so he disappeared, and upon the wall his voice seemed to paint itself in living letters that themselves gave out a sound.

"*It is the thoughts of men.*" I hid my face, appalled at owning such a heritage, and when I looked again great jets spurted through the Skin of the Earth, thoughts spouting and pouring out in miasmatic streams.

I would have asked much more, but again from some vast distance came the tones of the deep bronze bell; a shower of earth's blossoms fell about me; I had passed the wall; my guide was gone; and I was alone in my own room reflecting on what I had seen.

—BRYAN KINNAVAN

THE CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

IF WE ARE TO GAIN any practical benefit from a consideration of the culture of concentration we have to remember that it is in our own life, not someone else's, that concentration must be practised. Laying aside all formal nomenclature, let us consider what our nature is.

We have, first of all, an energetic or vital nature by means of which we are able to act through the body or to resist action. Then we have a psychic or moral nature that may range from the noblest to the most ignoble of feelings or sentiments or emotions or sensations of any and every kind. We also have a reasoning nature which is able not only to see the difference between one thing and another, but also to compare one set of experiences with another set. And over and beyond our reasoning nature we have a discriminative nature — the power to choose to judge; or, putting it another way, the sense of justice.

One thing has to be noted: the energetic nature is not one thing and myself something else; the psychic nature is not an entity in itself and myself another thing, and so with the reasoning and with the discriminative nature. All these natures are parts of ourselves, projections of ourselves; they constitute what we call our powers.

If we consider our principles or natures still more closely, we shall be able to discern that our life presents two opposed aspects: the aspect of repose or rest or inaction, and its other pole of action. The very words we have used — the faculty of discrimination or the sense of justice, the rational or intellectual or reasoning nature, the psychic nature and the energetic nature — none of them singly nor all of them together represent our nature in repose. They all represent our nature in action in some degree or another, separately or coherently.

Our life, then, presents two phases — action and repose. If we consider that the Spirit everywhere and all the time represents that portion of our life which is in repose, which inclines neither up nor down, neither east nor west, neither north nor south, but is veritably the centre of gravity of our being, then we shall have a true conception of what is meant by the word Spirit. All the other constituents — Buddhi, the discriminative principle; Manas, the intellectual principle; Kama, the psychic principle, and vitality, the energetic principle — represent, in fact, different degrees of the polarization of that portion of our being which is in action.

The culture of concentration must, then, of necessity imply, first

understanding, a correct comprehension of life itself, of its dual aspect — repose and action — and of the fourfold nature of the man who is in action. Now suppose that the Spirit represents that portion of our nature which is in repose, absolutely at rest, and that our discriminative principle is active; the moment the discriminative principle ceases to operate, what then? It becomes Spirit. Suppose the rational principle is not energized — there is nothing for us to compare, nothing for us to reason about, nothing for us to speculate upon for the moment — what then becomes of that rational principle? Is it annihilated? It is as a principle; it has fallen from action as a being and has rebecome Spirit. Suppose the psychic nature is not energized; the pairs of opposites do not move us. When the psychic nature is at rest, what has become of it? It is Spirit. Suppose the whole of our nature were at rest. We would be all Spirit. But that which is this moment at rest can be set in motion in the twinkling of an eye, without knowing why it is moving or in what direction. There is the vital impulse present in all nature; it makes no difference what we call it — chemical, molecular, metabolic, anabolic, or what not — it is action, in the simplest terms we can conceive — without purpose, without motive, without discrimination, without comparison and without objective.

All the time our whole nature is Life, nothing but Life. Above, below, ahead, behind, on either hand, there is the Universe *in abscondito*. Why is it that the unnumbered millions of earnest and sincere men in all the ages gone by, in all the great religions of the past and of the present, have never been able to understand either themselves or nature? It is because of their misconception of the nature of the source of all beings. No man can understand nature, no man can understand himself, no man can understand his experiences, whose idea of the source of things is rooted in the conception of a perfect personal God. All religions have taught a God who knew it all, who had it all; who had no beginning but was a being; who was infinite and omnipresent but a being. At once we see that is contrary to all our experience, so far as all our experience goes. We know that no being knows anything except what he has learned through action, that is, through experience, through observation, through the comparison of one thing with another, through the choice or selection of one thing rather than of another. Every man who holds the personal-God idea, and every religion that teaches it, of necessity makes of man a creature — someone who had an origin and that origin outside of himself. The moment we make of man a

creature we have got to admit his irresponsibility, and all those things comprehended in such terms as ethics and morality become things which are to be considered in the light of fear or reward. Religions, in order to appeal to the divine in man, either threaten him or bribe him. How, then, since the very noblest things we all do are done neither from hope of reward nor from fear of punishment—how, then, with such an angle of vision upon eternal justice could a man ever arrive at the understanding of God, of nature, of himself?

The truth is that every religion that has ever appealed to the populace has never risen any higher than the psychic nature of man. No religion makes an appeal to the rational, discriminative principles in man. No religion makes an appeal to that sense of infinite justice which is the king faculty and the very god in every man. Actually the appeal that every religion has ever made to any man has resulted, in so far as he has become a faithful believer in it, in the stultification, if not in the death, of his perception of divine justice.

We, cased in matter, looking through matter, think that all our sensations spring from matter and base all our reasoning on mortal and imperfect existence. That is the trouble with us. But if we look at things aright, that is, if we regard the operation of law within ourselves, we shall discover that to a certain extent each one of us is the law of his own being. Every man is the law as to his own attitude towards the principles of his own nature; towards his fellow beings, visible and invisible, who surround him and contact him on every hand; towards nature *in toto* and towards the infinite, the inconceivable source of all nature. If a man's attitude towards life is that of a materialist, who can change it? None but himself. If a man's attitude is that of a religionist; if he is so saturated with his psychic nature that all the rest of his being is asleep, who shall tell that man that there are buried deeps in him, that the Christ that he hears of as having been crucified twenty centuries ago, has been crucified in his own form eternity after eternity? Who shall make that man see? Who shall make him believe? It cannot be done save by the man arousing himself from his stupor.

Man possesses that highest of all faculties that can be attributed to any deity—the power of determination, the power and function of his will, call it motive, choice, volition, what you please. Having observed this universe, having experienced, we draw certain conclusions in regard to it. That is the use of the discriminative faculty, and, like

the judge on the bench, we might judge foolishly or we might judge wisely, but we judge. Always before any action there is judgement — more after the action. Action is impossible for any being without volition — the exercise of the discriminative faculty.

Now we come to the culture of concentration. The culture of concentration is, first, the intellectual perception of the principles of our own being. Second, that the principles are not merely in us but in everything in the universe — in the drop of water, in the grain of sand, in the fleck of smoke, in Judas as in Christ, in the lowest as also the highest being one can imagine. Next, these principles are but aspects of life. Higher than life there is nothing; and, at the other extreme, lower than life there is nothing. Good is not a thing in itself; evil is not a thing in itself; knowledge is not a thing in itself; ignorance is not a thing in itself — they but represent the various phases of life in action. When the life which is any man has arrived at the *summum bonum*, that is, at the perfect discriminative knowledge of the manifested or phenomenal, the pre-existent or past, and the ever-existing or eternal universe, why should that man act? There is nothing to be gained that he has not already gained; nothing in the wide reaches of space can be lost to him. Now if nature is a vast factory, a vast school, a vast unfolding process — that is what the word education means, a drawing forth, an unfolding from within outward — if the nature we know in the raw or unfinished state is a vast hall of learning and all is spirit and soul — that is, life and intelligence — ever evolving, and we learning a little more each day in one direction or another, is it not conceivable that in the endless roll of the past there must have been evolved those beings who could read the scripture of all the evolution that has ever been, because they embody it in themselves?

We can get at it then by realizing that there is not now and never was but One Life, omnipresent, eternal, boundless, immutable, ever active; and being ourselves imperfect — imperfect in the sense that our knowledge of nature and of life is manifestly incomplete — all of us must of necessity be under the rule of law, not only the law of our own actions and misconceptions, but under the beneficent limitations imposed upon us by the perfected intelligence acquired by our predecessors upon this mighty path of evolution. If evolution has produced man who is superior in intelligence in comparison with a black beetle; if somewhere, some time, in the course of ascent, the soul of a noble man like a Buddha or a Jesus, or even a Lincoln or a Gandhi, is evolved, must it

not be that there are beings in this universe as much beyond man as man is beyond the black beetle, and that such beings must take an active part in the governance of the natural order of things? Now take the collectivity of such beings and we have God, we have Law, we have Spirit, we have Universal Ideation, we have the soul of the continuous energetic emission which maintains imperfect life, unfinished life, and supports the educational system of eternity.

If we regard our bodies we find they have to be nourished constantly. If we regard our psychic principle, we find it has to be sustained. If we regard our rational principle, we find the same thing is true. If we regard our discriminative principle, our sense of justice we find it has to be fed. So manifestly there must be that stream of energy of which all conditioned life is but a passing phase. Consider in this respect the noble words of the Fifteenth Chapter of the *Gita*: "It is the Primeval Spirit from which floweth the never-ending stream of conditioned existence."

We have then to consider what is the proper function and relation of these principles in us in order to reach to concentration. Take our bodies; without the psychic principle, matter would be of no value to us. It is only through the five senses that we cognize or contact matter. So our bodies have no validity whatever except as mere containers, tools, instruments of the invisible constituents. Our psychic nature is constantly fed by our contacts through the senses, by our memory of former contacts, by imagination of future mistakes. The only use of our senses and of our physical nature is to afford food for our reasoning faculty.

Intelligence, we ought to understand, is the purpose and foundation of the power of concentration. Intelligence is absolutely impartial. When we contact a person, what are we contacting him for? In the first instance, to appraise his nature. How can we tell how he feels? We mix up our feelings with his? Before we can take in another man's nature as it is, our own feelings have to be absolutely quiescent. Then we shall feel whatever he feels, good, bad or indifferent, agreeable or disagreeable, and we can discern something of what that man's nature is at the moment. We can then act with intelligence and with knowledge in doing the best that can be done for that man. We take our reasoning faculty and try to figure out from the way we feel about the man what ought to be done for him. Whenever we try to use our reason we take the sum of our likes and dislikes and weigh the other man in the

scale, whereas, if we are going to weigh a man at all, let us weigh him in his own scales. How else can we weigh? A Methodist will look at a Baptist and will weigh the Baptist in Methodist scales. A Baptist will look at a Methodist and weigh the Methodist in Baptist scales. An American will look at an Englishman, a Frenchman, or a German and weigh him in the insular scales of his own Americanism, and then curse the other man for weighing him in the same kind of scales! The result is that we never get true impressions when everyone is using the psychic nature to know the present attitude and state of consciousness of another being.

It is the law, the principle, the purpose of all action, to act intelligently. Now, if the reasoning faculty were used that way we would not have to ask so-and-so's opinion about this, that or the other thing. When we met a man we could form our impression immediately from the man himself. There is the psychic photograph of the man which he carries with himself always. He is capable of such-and-such a range of expression and no more — as in a piano there are so many keys, so many notes to an octave. Learn the range of a man's expressions, and once you have a picture of the impressions you know how to treat him when you meet him.

The whole purpose of the body, then, is to serve as an instrument for the psychic nature to take pictures of the life around us. But, just as we can take false photographs so the psychic nature does the same thing. What distorts our psychic nature? Erroneous notions of good and evil; erroneous notions of ourselves and of the other fellow; erroneous notions of God; erroneous notions of everything.

To turn to the discriminative principle: What is the use of comparing one thing with another except for the purpose of reaching conclusions? What is the use of a man reading signs at the crossroads when he does not intend to travel in either direction? And yet so stultified is the world by the corruptive use of the discriminative faculty that even when a man reaches a just judgment he is called prejudiced.

If a man is to cultivate concentration he must recognize the fundamental unity of all that is: One Spirit, one Life, one Consciousness — one only — and that it exists in repose and action. The active aspect is Being, of every kind, visible and invisible; the reposeful aspect is Spirit or Law which moves only when the equilibrium of the whole is disturbed by the active portion. That is why there is no Karma, there is no good or evil, unless there is a being to make it and feel its effects.

We should know when we have painful feelings that nature in her infinite wisdom is speaking to us in unmistakable language: You have misjudged life and its action; so misjudging you have chosen wrongly; so choosing wrongly you have acted wrongly upon the life around you; now you get the back kick.

Concentration is not possible to any being who does not believe in the One Life pulsating in all. Concentration is not possible to any being who thinks there is favouritism any place in this universe, at any time in this universe. Concentration is not possible to any being who adjudges the immortal universe in mortal terms, who judges the infinite and orderly universe in temporal and speculative terms, because we have to consider that action represents two poles always. There is that action which proceeds from concentration, then there are all other kinds of action pulling in other ways. Every action in this universe is volitional or induced and either proceeds from the will of the being himself or is produced in him from outside. There are actions of body, or mind or soul, or spirit. Are they Will action? No. The great bulk of our actions are not volitional; they are induced — induced by fear, by favour, by pain, by pleasure, by prejudice, by memory, by imagination, by fancy, by habit, by impulse, by contact of some kind. So human beings in this universe represent two poles: those who are on the path of adeptship and those on the path of mediumship. Mankind is a mass of mediums — their psychic nature rules absolutely.

Concentration implies, first, the highest knowledge in the universe — Self-knowledge. The knowledge each has of himself is true knowledge. When somebody else says he has a stomach ache, it is just a word to us; when we have the stomach ache we know what it is like. Self-knowledge is the highest because it includes all other knowledge. Likewise the highest power in this universe is self-control, for the man who can control himself can control the destiny of a solar system. "He who ruleth himself is greater than he who is ruler of a city." The ruler of a city, a state, or even of an empire can be overthrown. But the man who has self-control cannot be disturbed by birth, life, death or anything that may come to pass.

A man who has self-knowledge, the highest knowledge, and self-control, the highest power, is a Mahatma, a Great Soul, while we who are ordinary mortals are only Atma — souls. The difference is that while we control ourselves now and again when someone is not pushing or pulling, the Great Ones control themselves all the time; that, wherea

we know a few things about ourselves, mostly disagreeable, and a whole lot of things about our neighbours, still more disagreeable, they have actual self-knowledge of the foundation of all life, of the law of all life, of the process of all life. They have, therefore, but to give a glance in any direction to know the nature of the being operating.

There are any number of people all the world over striving for self-control and self-knowledge, but failing in their endeavour. They need to examine the motive for their search. Are they going to use this power and this knowledge for the benefit of humanity, to make all men brothers, to see that justice is done in all the relations of life? If so, then that which was before a dim luminosity bursts into a great flame and the man feels he is on the point of illumination or initiation. If he has been earnest and sincere, there is a voice which answers him: "Go forth with the knowledge thou hast and teach those who know less than thou. Go forth with the power thou hast and serve him who is still weaker than thou."

Why are we not on the road to concentration? What are we doing with the knowledge and the powers that are now ours? Is our own will, our own motive, our own purpose, our own determination, our own employment of all our powers, of all our functions, of all our faculties, of all our relations in life, undeviatingly and unshakably set, subject to no contingency, to serve all life and all beings wherever we go, wherever we are, whatever happens to us? The path of concentration is the study of the unity of life; the study of the diversity of powers that may be developed in life; the study of the purpose for which all evolution exists and the determination here and now, for ever and ever, without limitation in time, space or action, to devote all we are and all we have to the service of our fellow beings.

So the culture of concentration begins in the strict performance of the duties of everyday life, whatever they are. If one is an employee, let him be a good one; if one is a boss, let him be a good one. Whatever one does, let him do it with all his might. The strict performance of duty will show any man how poorly he is able to perform his duty. Then he begins to acquire learning to perfect his duty in the very best way he can.

There are two steps in the culture of concentration: To live to benefit mankind is the first step — whether it pays us to do so or does not pay us; whether mankind appreciates it or not, recognizes it or not. Let us observe our own thoughts, feelings, conduct. Is that *our*

will? Is that *our* motive? Is that *our* view?

And the second step is the practice of the six glorious virtues. When a man wants to benefit mankind the six deadly sins stand in the way of it, while the six glorious virtues make it possible through universal tolerance and charity. Any man can love his friends. How about loving one's enemies? That is the test — universal compassion. What is it that makes a being like Buddha or Christ, a perfect being come back to this world of imperfection? Compassion and nothing else. Why should a man sacrifice for the sake of another man? Because of the divine in each one of us — compassion. That part of our nature which is in repose is the part that sees true, that sees straight, that sees clear. That part of our nature which is disturbed by envy, by bitterness, by impatience, by anger, by hatred of any kind cannot see straight, cannot judge aright. If a man judges erroneously he is also going to act erroneously.

So the purpose of Theosophy is not to appeal to the psychic nature of any man, nor to the reasoning nature, nor to the discriminative nature. Its appeal is to the *man* himself, to the divinity in him. Divinity is not a gift or an endowment; divinity is the power to know life, to control life, and then to enjoy life as the fruit of right action.

So these ancient, time-worn words — Brotherhood, Fraternity, Altruism, Unselfishness — possess not only a spiritual validity but also a logical validity, because unless a man's mind is level he cannot truly weigh and his actions will be erroneous. Take ourselves: A year ago we did an awfully foolish thing and caused pain and suffering to others as well as to ourselves. They have been reconciled and we are reconciled. We cannot undo what we have done. Do we notice how different it looks now from what it did when we were doing it? Why? Now we are viewing it in repose, that is, our spiritual sight is directed upon it. Then we were viewing it through the psychic eye, through a poisoned logical mind, through a prejudiced discriminative principle. All our woes come, not from our inherent cussedness, but from our spiritual ignorance, from our non-understanding of our own nature.

Theosophy is the means whereby the man, the life, the spiritual being, may learn to understand, to control, to use, and, therefore, dare to gain the bliss of right knowledge, right understanding, right judgment, right use of his eternal nature.

“LISTEN TO THE SONG OF LIFE”

Light on the Path advises us to listen to the song of life. Amidst human slaughter and war-drums, with food shortage and starvation all around, and with all kinds of diseases taking their toll, it seems incredible that one can listen to the song of life. The picture of our world is so dark and gloomy that one wonders how there can be a song of life, and whether there is any joy in living. But if we turn our gaze from the human kingdom to nature in all its beauty and bounty, we do find it singing the song of life in its manifold moods, emitting its own expressions in colour, rhythm, sound, harmony, motion, each performing its own duty, providing true joy to human beings.

Sunrise every morning and sunset every evening put us in inner communion with the orb of light, both physical and spiritual. Then it is that the song of life can be heard, because we are in tune with the Infinite, away from the noise and clamour of the objective world. The vast firmament with rolling clouds during the day and sparkling stars during the night is an amazing sight which overwhelms us, but it opens our mental horizon far and wide and takes us away from our narrow, limited, petty personal existence. The earth produces a thick green carpet of parks and meadows, fields and farms with beautiful trees, flowers and fruits; the birds soaring heavenwards sing their melodies, giving us indescribable joy — then it is that we can listen to the song of life.

Sri Krishna is ever playing on his magic flute the divine melodies, but human beings prefer to remain where they are, from the spiritual point of view, so that all the sweetness of life is missed out, the joy of life becomes a remote experience, the meaning and the purpose of life is not understood, and the goal of life remains unknown. Sri Krishna's flute is ever playing melodious tunes to awaken human beings from their slumber, to activate their minds and hearts to reach the harmonious centre of life where peace and joy abide eternally. Human beings prefer to remain in their tamasic sleep unless and until some kind of sorrow or suffering bewilders them. Then they begin to question life's mysteries and try to understand what the great teachers have taught down the ages. That becomes a turning point in life for some.

What is life? It is the manifested expression of the divine source, the one reality back of all visible and invisible forms. Life is the teacher and brings us all the lessons necessary for our growth and evolution under the law of karma, pleasant or painful as the case may be. So it

is life itself which sings, as it opens before our eyes one chapter after another which discloses to us its meaning and message. Life is also a school where we learn as we go through different grades of experiences, physical, mental and moral, individual and collective. Some are fruitful, others barren, depending on whether we have worked with the law or against it.

Light on the Path also tells us: "Store in your memory the melody you hear." The melody must be in tune with the Infinite, for then only is it worth storing. It is not the brain memory but the soul memory that records the melodious tunes of the experiences of the soul. Further, we are asked to "learn from it the lesson of harmony." Around us, in the outside world, there is discord between man and man, nation and nation. Only at the centre of life does eternal harmony prevail, whose other name is compassion. To the extent that we unfold compassion we shall reach the very centre of life. Self-knowledge is of loving deeds the child; it is the way to compassion. And it is through the very law of compassion that the great teachers come down upon earth to sing the song of life, now of *ashoi*, purity of thought, word and deed, as did Lord Zoroaster; of love and meekness and humility, as did Jesus. The picture of Buddha in meditation is a song in itself, indicating the four truths: sorrow is, the cause of sorrow; the cure of sorrow; and the Noble Eight-fold Path leading to *Nirvana* and renunciation of it.

What does Sri Krishna play on his flute? He sings of his divine pedigree, and how he comes upon earth cycle after cycle for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked and the establishment of righteousness. So we naturally owe our heart's gratitude to all the teachers for their devotion to the spiritual welfare of humanity. Had it not been for them, humanity would have been in worse plight and misery. Theosophy is in the world to keep alive in man his divine intuitions so that he may listen to the song celestial. When human memory fails, then the teachings are forgotten, the teachers are forgotten, and chaos and confusion prevail in the world.

Light on the Path further tells us: "There is a natural melody, an obscure fount in every human heart. It may be hidden over and utterly concealed and silenced — but it is there. At the very base of your nature you will find faith, hope, and love." So, however silent and concealed it may be, the melody is certainly there and needs to be approached and attuned to. This can only be achieved by the cultivation of faith, hope and love. Faith in the great teachers and their teachings,

their very life example of service and sacrifice, of wisdom and compassion, of purity and truth. One must also have faith in one's own Higher Self. "Even if thou wert the greatest of all sinners, thou shalt be able to cross over all sins in the bark of spiritual knowledge." What a solemn affirmation, what an encouraging note to those who have gone astray, to follow the eternal verities and walk the path of righteousness! It requires discrimination. "Even if the man of most evil ways worship me with exclusive devotion, he is to be considered as righteous, for he hath judged aright." He has taken a right turn of mind and heart and therefore there is hope for him. "Those who serve me with love dwell in me and I in them." What greater inspiration can we derive than to serve the divine singer with love so that we can abide with him eternally, have his friendship and guidance, his wisdom and generosity! The last of the great teachers was H. P. Blavatsky, who came not just to one nation or one race, but to the whole of mankind, to sing the greatest of songs, that of brotherhood, so that all outward distinctions may fall away, and man look upon man as a divine ray of the Supreme Self. Tennyson speaks in "Locksley Hall" of "the Parliament of man, the Federation of the world." And again in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" he says:

Only That which made us, meant us to be mightier by and by,
 Set the sphere of all the boundless heavens within the human eye,
 Sent the shadow of Himself, the boundless, thro' the human soul;
 Boundless inward, in the atom, boundless outward, in the Whole.

CONTENTMENT is like nectar. Those with a becalmed mind are satisfied with that nectar, and they enjoy bliss. This bliss is not experienced by men who are greedy for wealth and keep running about restlessly in search of it from here to there and there to here.

—HITOPADESA

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The theory that life rhythms — or biorhythms — affect us in various ways is certainly not new, though research concerning it is fairly recent. The theory is now being used to determine the ups and downs in each person's life and to study the relationship between life's cycles and the physical, emotional and intellectual states of humans.

According to an article on the subject in the August 1973 *Science Digest*, it is now generally accepted that beginning at the moment of birth, all human lives move in predictable undulations involving three separate cycles: a physical cycle of 23 days, an emotional or sensitivity cycle of 28 days and an intellectual cycle of 33 days. In each cycle, half of the days are "plus" and half are "minus":

In the 23-day physical cycle, the 11½ plus days are a good time for intensive training in athletics or for any activity requiring physical stamina. During the 11½ minus days, one is aware of reduced vitality and endurance. In short, you tire easily on these days.

The 28-day sensitivity cycle corresponds approximately to the lunar month and also to a woman's menstrual cycle. In the 14 plus days, both men and women are prone to cheerfulness, co-operation and a positive outlook on life. Conversely, the 14 minus days are conducive to moodiness and negativism.

During the 16½ plus days of the intellectual cycle, a person finds it easier to study, write creatively, understand mathematics or to pursue any intellectual efforts. You learn easier and retain more of what you learned at this time. In the minus period of 16½ days, these capacities are lessened. These are days better spent in review or practice.

In all three cycles, the day the cycle switches from plus to minus or from minus to plus is called a critical day. . . . It is on this critical day in the physical cycle when people have been shown to be accident-prone. This accident proneness is also evident on the critical day in the sensitivity cycle along with possible emotional outbursts. The critical day in the intellectual cycle is not considered to be as important, by itself, as critical days in the other two cycles as far as accidents are concerned. If it coincides with a critical day of another cycle, however, it has a contributory effect.

The day your cycle changes from plus to minus or from minus

to plus is critical because you are neither up nor down, but in a state of limbo. Tied in with biorhythm theory is the theory of body harmonics — that ups and downs are stresses which spend themselves in curving, pendulum-like motions. A switch-over day presents a brief moment of equilibrium with no stress, and at this point people are, according to the theory, most vulnerable. . . .

Proponents of the theory emphasize the importance of relativity in interpretation. A person's age, health, character and temperament must be taken into consideration in the application of biorhythm. Some people become excited or irritated more easily than others; some people are more accident-prone and cannot endure physical strain as well as others. So if you have a critical day coming up, don't panic, but be careful.

Is not this biorhythm theory but a restatement in modern garb of the ancient doctrine that cyclic law is the supreme law governing the evolution and destiny of men as it doe of nations and civilizations?

Psychic Anne Armstrong, a frequent participant in university-sponsored psychic symposia, claims that accident-prone people are usually "very unhappy." "If you ask them how they feel, they say they are fine," she explains, "but they are really charged up with negative feelings and they attract trouble in the form of accidents." (*Psychic*, August 1973)

In the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Vol. 223, No. 7), Drs. Alfred P. French and Joe P. Tupin of the University of California, Davis, report that they have developed a "meditation-like relaxation method" that may be taught within a few minutes and is often effective in relieving insomnia, moderate pain, moderate anxiety and emotional reactions to illness.

The three-step method calls for sitting comfortably with feet on floor, eyes closed, and letting the breathing become very relaxed and natural, so air flows gently into and out of the lungs. The muscles are then allowed to relax sequentially. Next, the physicians suggest, "simply allow your mind to be as relaxed as your muscles are, and let your mind drift, very naturally and very gently, in the direction of a memory which is very

pleasant, relaxing, restful and reassuring.” Finally, the physicians suggest, “Simply present that memory very gently to your mind and allow yourself to be there and experience that memory. Don’t concentrate on it or think about it in the usual sense, and if your mind wanders off simply bring yourself back, very gently and very naturally by presenting the memory to your mind again.”

This method, the physicians say, usually is learned within a matter of three or four minutes, and in many cases produces an immediate sense both of relaxation and well-being.

Such an exercise may be of some help in relieving the minor tensions of life, but the mistake that is commonly made is to confuse the several relaxation methods currently in use with meditation — and infinitely more exalted and difficult practice. True meditation has been defined as “silent and *unuttered* prayer, or, as Plato expressed it, the ardent turning of the soul toward the divine; not to ask any particular good (as in the common meaning of prayer), but for good itself — for the Universal Supreme Good’ of which we are a part on earth, and out of the essence of which we have all emerged.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 10)

Not too long ago, only a few enthusiasts maintained that such a continent as Atlantis once existed, and the concept was derided alike by science, archaeology and religion. Today, it is neither derided nor even seriously questioned, and in fact attempts are being made to locate the submerged continent.

By following the vibrations a group of 70 unique explorers hope to find the lost continent using their psychic abilities. *The New York Times* reported that the mixed group of scholars, teenagers and teachers will concentrate their efforts near Cadiz, Spain, north of the western entrance to the Gibraltar Straits and, using scuba gear and the psychic abilities claimed by 20 members of the expedition, they hope to uncover the lost continent.

The teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* in relation to Atlantis are too numerous and too elaborate for consideration here. The student is recommended to read them for himself as well as the many predictions made by the author to the effect that the truth would ultimately be known and admitted.

Another instance of how scientific attitudes change is provided by a survey taken by the *New Scientist* magazine. Most of the 1500 British scientists replying to the questionnaire said that they believed in extra-sensory perception. Only three per cent of them thought "ESP was an impossibility."

This is a clear indication that science no longer represents a vested philosophical interest — materialism. ESP is so contrary to the general scientific world picture that the acceptance of the former would compel the abandonment of the latter. To admit the fact of extra-sensory perception is to call into question the time-honoured postulates from which the entire body of modern scientific theory proceeds.

In the words of H.P.B., "as long as we enjoy our five senses and no more, and do not know how to divorce our all-perceiving *Ego* (the Higher Self) from the thralldom of these senses — so long will it be impossible for the *personal Ego* to break through the barrier which separates it from a knowledge of *things in themselves*" (*S.D.*, I. 329-30). As modern research proceeds it will be found necessary to assume the integrity of the individual ego as a conscious power apart from the body, and until this is done materialism cannot truly be said to have received a deathblow.

An item in the September 1973 *Science Digest* will be of interest to patients undergoing surgery who take a stand against blood transfusion. A group at the Texas Heart Institute in Houston reports that certain blood vessel surgery can be done on patients without the need for transfusions. They rapidly and meticulously clamp all cut blood vessels to prevent excessive bleeding and replace immediate blood loss with a solution of salt, carbohydrate, potassium and calcium during and after the operation to keep the circulation stable.

"Vascular surgery is routinely performed in this hospital without blood transfusion unless specifically indicated," says Dr. C. Wilton Simmons, Jr. "Blood is used cautiously during and after operations and patients who refuse to accept blood can usually undergo major operations without prohibitive risk and enjoy favourable postoperative results."

The following is from an editorial in *The Times of India*, December 18, 1973:

Many of us who are not dense have been wondering for some time why we seem to be short of fresh ideas and are ambling along in a general atmosphere of unrelieved mediocrity. There is no simple explanation, but a plausible one is: ideas are born where people think; where they emote, progress becomes a circular movement. And there is no one to break this juvenile game of round and round the mulberry tree, most leaders appealing mainly to the viscera, not to the brain. One statistically inclined wag has computed that if all the energy we spend in shouting and demonstration were somehow to be added up and canalized, a mighty dam, why, a whole city, could be built every month! Speeches, one concedes, are a necessary evil and serve some purpose sometimes. But vapid utterances, rhetorical gestures, verbalized gas — these are a sheer waste of heat. Strikes have a place in social activity in a free country, but surely this can be overdone, with the predictable result that everyone, not excluding the strikers, suffers grievously. Take go slow, for instance, or work-to-rule (which is a misnomer for shirk-to-rule). This is a kind of legalized coercion which, by interfering with norms of productivity, harms not only the coerced but the coercers themselves. As for riots, loot and wanton destruction of property, there is no room for such in a well-ordered society where the administration, being democratic, is supposed to be responsive to sensible public opinion. All of the various kinds of overt and hidden violence to be seen all over the land must be attributed to a depressing lack of social discipline. And the solution? Elementary. Let's have a voluntary ban on emoting.
