

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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EQUANIMITY AND SKILL IN ACTION

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WHAT connection is there between equanimity of mind and skill in action, each of which the *Bhagavad-Gita* says is Yoga? Or, to take the opposite approach, between skill in action and that important and hard-to-obtain thing, equanimity of mind? It is axiomatic that things equal to the same thing are equal to each other, and that we see in everyday life that ordinary skill in action does not imply equal-mindedness, or ordinary equal-mindedness, skill in action! The excellent typist is not necessarily well-poised; neither is the person who is always placid necessarily skilful in action, though the absence of either equal-mindedness or skill in action does react upon the other.

To take a common example, if skill in action does not prevail, we make mistakes and get upset. Bad typing, forgetfulness in cooking or in keeping to arrangements made with others, due generally either to lack of attention or to the mind being immersed in feelings, leads to emotional upsets. And almost inevitably such upsets in turn lead to more mistakes.

We have, however, to get a different understanding of what the *Gita* means both by skill in action and by equanimity of mind. Since Yoga means union, skill in action in the *Gita* sense must imply that equanimity of mind which is a co-ordination of mind—from the higher aspect as well as the lower—with the outer senses and organs, so that all actions will be performed with skill, through control, steady and continuous, by an equipoised mind.

How is this to be attained? It cannot be attained by “sitting for meditation” or by concentrating the mind on a pin-point for a cer-

tain length of time, but by control of the attention in every action in life and at every hour of the day, so that the whole life is an orderly sequence of thought-feeling-action in one whole, approaching accuracy and tidiness of mental as also physical life.

To attain to this condition it is necessary to understand our natures: the relation of the senses and their outer organs with the feeling-desiring nature and with the mind. Therefore we have to start the work on ourselves by seeing the senses and organs as those means by which the mind and the desire nature contact the world of outer sights and sounds, and by means of which the impressions created in the memory affect our thinking-desiring nature. It is not enough, therefore, to "close the doors of the senses." After we have closed our eyes and cut ourselves off from sounds and from taste, smell and touch, we have to begin to cut off the memory of old sense impressions and the internal images in which the mind is caught. When these have ceased to affect the mind, however vaguely, then it is free to be affected by the Higher Mind or pure consciousness, which is always equipoised, always serene.

This moment of contact is hard to reach and, when reached, the contact is hard to maintain. Time and time again the effort must be made until success in holding it fast is the reward.

When that is attained, the connection of the Higher Mind with the mind functioning throughout the organism of man is also attained, because that mind, once its inherent nature is evoked, is of the same nature as the Higher Mind itself. When such mental awareness is established in the organs, they act as representatives of the Controller, not as themselves or in terms of their instinctive actions for aeons past. Hence all action becomes steady, accurate, the product of steady thought, the reflection of perfect thinking or imagining.

But between the mind and the senses and organs is the astral body, in which circulate, all the time, desires and feelings. Having control of an emotion or of a desire may be merely controlling one desire by another, or a feeling by another feeling. To control the feelings and desires through a higher type of thinking means to destroy their self-reproductive character. If there is no time to think on desires or to be upset by emotions, or to dwell on pleasant or unpleasant sense impressions and memories, then those things die at their birth and equanimity of mind can the more quickly be attained.

THE ROYAL WAY

WHEN Prince Siddhartha left his Princess and Palace to seek that Wisdom which would both explain and eliminate the woes of humanity, he went from school to school of ardent practitioners who were engaged in the same great quest. He came across that class of gaunt and mournful yogis, who regard the body as foe to the soul and therefore torture flesh and maim each limb, hoping "to baulk hell by self-kindled hells." In answer to the royal aspirant who inquired why they added ills to life which is so evil, they had no explanation to offer save that they had chosen that way; and in their turn asked: "Speak, if thou know'st a way more excellent; if not, peace go with thee!" This was before the Enlightenment; Gautama was not yet able to point the Royal Way — Raja-Yoga — but he felt that the Torturous Way — Hatha-Yoga — was wrong.

There is another class of false pietists of bewildered soul — those who have not the strength of will, the pluck to suffer, nor the courage to endure bodily chastisement, but who, nevertheless, retire to convents and monasteries, ashrams and maths, where the power of flesh may not envelop them, where the senses may not encounter temptations.

Both these groups are far from the reality of the Second Birth.

In our own midst there are not a few who have freed themselves from the bondage of organized religions, but have not been trapped into materialistic agnosticism and atheism, and desire to seek the Way to Enlightenment. There are those who are trying to define the rules of the higher life under the title of a "new asceticism"; there are those also who are seeking a guru or a master in the high-ways and hedges — going to the West, or coming to the East. Some fancy that bodily training and breathing exercises will bring Wisdom, while others imagine that it matters not what one eats and drinks and says and does as long as inner aspiration is remembered and subjective peace is felt. Some seek visions and wonders; others despise them as not only worthless but meaningless, finding their satisfaction in the exercise of their own mental muscles. All such, however well-meaning, are "bewildered souls."

True asceticism belongs to the most ancient of sciences, the Kingly Science of Raja-Yoga. Raja-Yoga is the science of true aesthetics, the knowledge to be obtained through *higher* Feeling which is perceptive, vaguely called Intuition. Hatha-Yoga is the science of

athletics, deals with bodily training at its best and with torturous control over bodily functions at its worst. The very first rule of that Kingly Science taught in the *Gita*, proclaimed by the Buddha given in *The Voice of the Silence*, is that the higher life is an inner process and begins with an inner attitude.

If thou art told that to gain liberation thou hast to hate thy mother and disregard thy son; to disavow thy father and call him "householder"; for man and beast all pity to renounce — tell them their tongue is false....

Believe thou not that sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men; believe thou not that life on roots and plants, that thirst assuaged with snow from the great Range — believe thou not, O Devotee, that this will lead thee to the goal of final liberation.

Think not that breaking bone, that rending flesh and muscle, unites thee to thy "silent Self." Think not that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O Victim of thy Shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man.

The blessed ones have scorned to do so.

The teachings implied in the above piece of instruction should be fully applied.

What is to be given up is not social life, but only some personal habits practised in social life; what is to be adopted is not wholesale bodily asceticism, but only some ascetic rules. The Divine Discipline taught in the *Gita* "is not to be attained by the man who eateth more than enough or too little, nor by him who hath a habit of sleeping much, nor by him who is given to overwatching." (VI. 16)

The principle of the higher life which leads to the Second Birth is this inner attitude and habit, from which outer deeds and behaviour naturally emanate. He who has purified his thoughts will find a clean tongue; he who speaks pure words will find his palate responding only to that sattvic food which the *Gita* defines, but not in terms of vegetarianism or meat-eating (XVII. 8). But consuming sattvic food will not bring forth true words or kind ones; mere utterance of holy sentences will not enlighten the mind. From within without is the basic law, and true asceticism observes it to the full in the letter and in the spirit.

There are two unpardonable sins in the hidden life against which true asceticism warns. Each aspirant must fortify himself against

them, and they may well become pointers to what is to be abandoned and what is to be adopted. They are — Doubt and Hypocrisy.

The best way to overcome doubt is to be true to one's self. The development of Conscience is the first step; it is the Voice of Conscience which subdues the Voice of Flesh and evokes the Voice of Spirit. The use of Conscience removes doubts. Doubts are little concerned with our *beliefs*; they attack our clear perceptions, our knowledge, our highest visions. It is well to doubt that which confuses our reason, which shocks our intelligence, or weakens our moral stamina. Doubt which awakens to action the lethargic man of blind-belief is to be prized, as Browning taught. But to doubt our own convictions which are rooted in our reason and founded on our calmest reflection or highest vision and which are the teachings of the Sages is to commit the unpardonable offence. The ascetic rules to be adopted by each must conform themselves to such inner convictions. Mere aping of habits of others, however high in evolution or holy in life, is the wrong way of asceticism and proves disastrous.

The sin of society is hypocrisy. Pleasant but insincere speech; white lies; glossing over our acts which our own reason pronounces wrong and our own moral perception condemns; explaining away blunders of omission and sins of commission; the simulating of a charitable and kindly spirit; the gossipy condemnation of people behind their backs under the guise of fearless criticism; indulgence in questionable deeds under the excuse that one must experience everything — all such are acts of hypocrisy, corrode soul-life and open the gates of hell. Battle must be given to any such personal social habits if they abide in us. The dread of being called sanctimonious must be faced, and saintly ways of true sanity should neither be abandoned nor masked. Virtue and moral hygiene are laughed at as "goody-goodness," but those who aspire to soul-life must not be daunted by petty criticism. Prudence may be scorned as prudery, a sense of justice to one's self may be attacked as selfishness — but nevertheless the ascetic rules positively applied by individuals in society will change the tone of that society.

Jesus was an ascetic — he never doubted the power and potency of his own spiritual-soul, his "father in heaven." And he was not a hypocrite; that is why he did not fear to break bread with wine-bibbers and harlots, nor to chase usurers, nor to attack rabbis.

Gautama was an ascetic — obtaining light about suffering and

its cause, he adopted the begging bowl and unflinchingly pressed his way to the hearts of tyrants and untouchables and never failed to overcome hatred by wise compassion, which was his highest vision.

Krishna was an ascetic — seeing that war, and ruthless war at that, became necessary after his failure to secure peace with honour, for which he used all possible avenues, he led the Pandavas to the gory field of duty. The Master of his own Mercy stood unmoved amidst the havoc all around.

There are others, Twice-Borns, who overcame doubt and hypocrisy. But all such began that task as mortals in the world of soul-doubts and social hypocrisy; all such took the inner resolve in the sanctity of heart-silence; all such, desiring to lift up high the banner of mysticism and proclaim its reign near at hand, gave the example to others by changing their own modes of life.

True asceticism is also true aestheticism. Doubt dies as old habits die; hypocrisy dies as mental and moral austerity is practised. Also, the Inner Perception of true Feeling deepens as well as widens as one lives out in family and in society one's own visions and convictions. Therefore—

Give up more than one personal habit, such as practised in social life, and adopt some few ascetic rules.

ALL who descend into birth must suffer and cause suffering, must act and be acted on, must learn and be the instruments of learning. For our task is to learn through experience, to learn how to handle, to harmonize, and in the end to master the elements of experience, until finally the compulsive self-identification with the form is broken, and we come to know ourselves in the freedom of our true nature.

—SRI KRISHNA PREM in *Man, the Measure of all Things*

PROBLEMS OF LIFE

FROM "THE DIARY OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN"

BY N. I. PIROGOFF*

III

ON ATOMS OF THE UNIVERSAL MIND

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, February 1891.—EDS.]

November 21, 1879

I BEGAN my diary on November the 5th, and today, November 21st, I resume it again after a few days' interval.

I write for myself, and will not read over again what is already written. Therefore, there may be in the latter a number of repetitions, of half explained ideas, perchance of contradictions and inconsistencies. Were I to set myself to correct this, it would be a proof for me that I am writing it for others.

I have confessed that I had no wish to keep my *memoirs* secret for ever; those persons, however, who will feel interested in acquainting themselves with my innermost life will be little troubled by such repetitions. They will prefer to know me as I am, and study the real man with all his repetitions, and even inconsistencies.

Hence I will busy myself today once more with my world-contemplation, and by repeating over again my present views, I may, perhaps, elucidate them the better.

And now I put to myself again the question: What is it, in fact, that forces me not to accept the atoms of matter as my concept of the Universe? Why not regard them as something final, eternal, infinite, self-dependent, consequently absolute and allowing of no other existence?

The atoms of matter are, viewed as a beginning, something just as abstract as the universal Life-Principle which I imagine. Why then admit of two abstractions when one will do? Why not say that these atomic particles have always existed, and, along with all other properties of matter, have always been capable of sensing and of consciously perceiving themselves? For where, and by whom were ever found in the Universe sensation and consciousness without the

* Translated from the Russian, by H. P. B.

presence of matter? Who of us has ever known himself, and could think without a brain? And why should not matter, endowed with other properties, be able to sense itself, to know and think? If we cannot admit this, is it not simply because, owing to our ignorance, inexperience and short-sighted reasoning, we have limited too much and too arbitrarily our views about the properties of Substance? And having done so, we have forced ourselves to admit the actual existence of an imaginary (psychic) principle, invented, moreover, by — ourselves.

Such were the questions that, at one time of my life, I had put to myself, and answered them all in the affirmative and to my own satisfaction.

This is an undeniable fact: no consciousness and thought without a brain; and these syllogistic arguments — according to well-known and generally accepted lines of thought: *cum hoc, ergo propter hoc* — appeared to me so natural and so unanswerable, that they did not allow me a shadow of a doubt.

But this same mind of mine, which had accepted so unquestioningly, in those days of old, ideating and conscious brain-atoms, came gradually to perceive itself, not only in itself, but in the whole universal life. And then my reason could not fail to see that its chief phenomena — ideation and creation — manifested in full accordance with the laws of design and causation as clearly in the whole universal life, without any participation of brain matter. Is it not passing strange, that thought emanating from the brain should find itself there, where no individual brain has ever been discovered by our senses?

It is this discovery by my brain ideation of the universal ideation, common to, and in concordance with, the laws of causation and of designment in the creative faculty of the Universe, which is the cause why my mind could not feel satisfied with the atomic theory; with those sentient, self-conscious, ideating atoms, which act only through their same selves and without the participation of any other higher principle of thought and consciousness. The creative faculty of our mind, and its natural aspiration to conform itself in its productions to aims and plans traced beforehand, cannot fail to discern in each of its actions the difference between thought and purpose, and the means and material which serve to carry out the two former.

Thought and purpose, caught, so to speak, in the nets of the material—whether on a canvas by means of the painter's brush, or in the marble of the sculptor, or on the paper covered with the signs and words of the poet—live from that time forward their own life, for long centuries, compelling the canvas, the marble and the paper to communicate from one generation to the other the creations contained in them. Thought, on penetrating into the brute material, makes of it its organ, capable of generating and developing new thoughts in the spectator and reader.

If this is an indisputable fact, then no less indisputable for me is the conviction that the Supreme Universal Thought, having selected the Kosmos for its organ, interpenetrating and grouping the atoms into a certain form, has likewise shaped my brain into an organ of *my* ideation. Indeed, it (the brain) can be compared to nothing better than a musical organ, the chords and keys of which are set in constant vibration from without, while someone touching, examining and listening to these vibrations, and thus setting chords and keys in motion, combines out of these oscillations a harmonious whole. 'This someone,' attuning *my* organ into unison with the universal harmony, becomes my "I."¹ And then, the laws of the design and causation of the actions of universal ideation become also the laws of my "I," and I find them within myself, passing their manifestations from without, within myself, and from myself back into infinite nature.²

Sensation, consciousness, thought (quite unthinkable processes without the vibrations of atoms which form our common sensorium) cannot consist of motion and vibrations only, unless these reach something that relates to them, as the eye relates to light, and the ear to sound-vibrations; that is to say, something which can receive these vibrations in order to transform them into something else, and then,

¹ Or, as the Occultist would call it, the "Higher Ego," the immortal Entity, whose shadow and reflection is the human Manas, the mind, limited by its physical senses. The two may be well compared to the Master-artist and the pupil-musician. The nature of the Harmony produced on the "organ," the Divine melody or the harsh discord, depends on whether the pupil is inspired by the immortal Master, and follows its dictates, or, breaking from its high control, is satisfied with the terrestrial sounds produced by itself conjointly with its evil companion—the man of flesh—on the chords and keys of the brain organ.—[TRANSL.]

² Had the eminent writer of the "Diary" studied for years the theosophical and occult literature of the Eastern philosophies, he could not have come into closer harmony of thought with esoteric mysticism. His was a purely natural idealism, however, a spiritual perception of eternal truths, that no scientific sophistry could destroy or even blunt.—[TRANSL.]

acting independently, communicate them to the outside world. Are not these atomic vibrations of the organ the very essence of our "I"? To accept the above means to me to admit in substance such an immaterial and abstract property, that would have no sense relations to matter, endowed with this property. Heat, light, electricity, as effects produced by the motion of particles, have all direct and immediate relations to our senses, and the capacity of acting directly through these vibrations on the concatenation and affinity of the atoms;³ and sense and thought again searching out in nature light and heat and electricity, and being by their nature purely subjective, become in their turn *objective*, not in a direct way, but through the mediation of other forces, in acting upon substances.

Life, force, motion and thought are, in my conception, ideas so closely linked together that I cannot imagine the one without thinking of the others. In *Life*, we have motion, force and thought; in *Thought*—motion and force; and in *Force*—motion and thought. From this collective or associated conception of life, that soil which we are accustomed to feel under our feet is entirely absent. It has nothing concrete or objective about it. Nor could a conception of cosmic life, in general, be concrete or purely objective; for it is a *fiction*, though to us unavoidable and inevitable, as such a life exists and we too exist, think and act within its vortex, inconceivable to us in its gigantic proportions. But then, even our objective investigations, which seem to us based upon such a firm foundation, are, in fact, only the investigations of our subjective thought; as otherwise they would be void of all sense and not worthy of the name. It is true that in all such investigations our thought constantly finds for itself a material lining or a canvas on which it shapes for itself designs out of the substantial material at hand.

When exploring or analysing an abstract conception about cosmic life, we are unable to master the voluminous substance used by it for its manifestations, while our investigation of its individual phenomena makes our conceptions of the world-life fragmentary, one-sided, and often false. One thing only is indisputable to an impartial and far-seeing observer; the continuity, the causation, the plan and

³ Physical Science, it seems, gives the name of "atoms" to that which we regard as particles or molecules. With us "atoms" are the inner principles and the intelligent, spiritual guides of the cells and particles they inform. This may be unscientific, but it is a fact in nature.—[TRANSL.]

thought in every phenomenon of the world-life. This means nothing else than the coincidence of our thought and aspirations in the research of aims and causes with what we discover in the world-life.

Thus, an unavoidable conviction seizes hold of me, that my brain (and also my whole self) is only the organ of the thought of the world-life, just as pictures, statues and buildings are the organs and the stores of the artist's thought.

For the substantial manifestation of the world-thought, an apparatus, composed according to a definite plan, of atoms grouped in a certain way, was needed. This became my organism; while the cosmic or world consciousness became my individual consciousness through a special mechanism contained in the nervous centres. How this came to pass, of course neither I nor anyone else can tell. But one thing is for me indubitable; my consciousness, my thought and that innate aspiration of my mind to be ever searching for aims and causes cannot be something detached, a unit having no connection with the world-life, and a something complete that gives the finishing touch to the Universe and has nothing higher than itself.

Finally, the most-desperate empiricism, which neither admits nor wants to know anything save facts and sense-perceptions, has to be guided in the end by an abstraction, that is to say by thought, and we see that not only not a single sense-perception based upon unconscious logic can do without it, but that also sense perceptions alone, without a conscious and guiding thought, may be fit, perhaps, for an Epicurean empiricist, but can certainly never do for an observing empiricist and investigator.

Everything in the thinking Universe leads to abstract ideas. All our mental representations and concepts, however much they may be based on facts and sense-experience, become pure abstractions, so soon as they are subjected to a mental analysis. And not to so subject them does not rest with us. It is this corrosive analysis which transforms substance into force. All that which we regard as the characteristic of substance is transformed by our mental analysis into something existing outside of that substance which is subject to our senses, *i.e.*, again and once more into a force or a substance, opposed to Substance.

The atoms accepted by our mental analysis as the foundation of matter, are transformed by it either into mathematical (and thus, into *immaterial*) points, or into centres attracting to themselves other

atoms; or again into infinitely small, therefore infinitely divisible, magnitudes. In both cases substance ceases to be that which it appears to us. It loses its sensuous existence (sensuous as subjected to our senses) and becomes, in other words — force. Just so, a *force*; for having decomposed it into atoms, we can no longer regard it as quiescent and inactive; and by allowing it action, we endow it with the chief attribute of force (*viz.*, action). In order not to deprive substance of its most characteristic properties, we have to trace a limit to the mental analysis which decomposes it; *e.g.*, if, by carrying on our analysis infinitely, we thus allowed to matter infinite divisibility, then we would, as I just said, transform it into force or into something invisible and intangible, outside of the perception of our senses, and deprive it thereby of its other chief properties — impermeability and weight. On the other hand, to limit mental analysis, by refusing to carry it to the end, means to mistake for substance, not the last product of the analysis — atoms, but only their agglomeration or congeries; and in this case, we have to allow the possibility of the formation of matter out of an accumulation of force. Nor do I see a logical impossibility in accepting this final result of my mental analysis of matter. Very true, I do not know what may be a force manifested *outside* of matter; but then again, I do not see anything in substance, subjected to mental analysis, except a manifestation of that same force; and all the properties of substance are in my eyes, such manifestations. So, for instance, substance would become as permeable as force, did not its particles (*i.e.*, its accumulation of atoms) hold together by cohesion, without which primeval force, there would not exist the smallest particle of substance, and the infinitely divided matter would disappear from our world of sense. But the force which manifests to my senses through the properties and motion of matter could still exist without being necessarily in the form of agglomerated atomic particles. How far, after the dispersion of matter, it would remain entitled to the name of substance — meaning by the latter, to what extent it would remain perceptible to our brain-thought — this I am not prepared to say. Yet, convinced as I am that beyond my brain-thought there exists another, and a higher thought-World or Universal Ideation, I believe that this Thought-Substance would still continue to exist, and act in that World Thought. And this Thought, and the Force which acts through it, are just that which constitute Cosmic Life.

Yes; life, for me, is a collective conception. I have already said it: life is an intelligent, illimitably acting force, ruling all the properties of substance (*i.e.*, its forces), aspiring, moreover, and tending incessantly toward a certain object, namely the realization and support of being.⁴

The simple empirical definition of life, by Bichat and others, is very correct: life, according to it, is summed up by the collectivity of functions counteracting death — *l'ensemble des fonctions qui résistent à la mort*.

Indeed, in a living organism, as in the whole living realm of being, all the vital functions are directed toward the conservation of life and the counteraction of decay. The mistake, or rather the incompleteness of this definition, lies in that it is not the vital functions of the organism *per se* that aspire to, and reach more or less that object, but something else in them, a ruling principle, intelligent — since it aspires toward an end, preserving continuity in all the functions of the organism, namely — Life Force.⁵

All the mechanical actions of the organic arrangements and apparatuses, all the chemical processes, the whole process of the organic development — all is continuous; everywhere we find thought, plan, and the aspiration to realize, preserve and support life. The mechanism of the organization of the organs, the chemism of various functions, etc., all this, the more we investigate and the more we subject it to the analysis of the senses, the clearer it shows in the ingeniousness of its formation, causation and design.

But that which directs the mechanical and chemical processes of the organism towards its aims, *that* remains, and will remain for us the real and the primordial Force, though for ever hidden to our sensuous perceptions.

December 2, 1879.

A few days have passed since I conversed with myself. Whether I shall be able to catch the thread of my argument without reading over what I have written, or not, matters little. I do not pretend to the title of a philosopher, and write but for myself.

⁴ Useless, we believe, to draw the attention of our theosophists to the purely occult and metaphysical speculations in the above pages.—[TRANSL.]

⁵ The bugbear of the modern materialist: that independent Entity denied so vehemently by *exact* Science and still believed in, and accepted by, the greatest Scientists, such as Dr. Pirogoff, who prefer truth even to—Science.—[TRANSL.]

That which once seemed the greatest absurdity to my mind, which was somewhat given to empiricism, and that which strengthened it in me—was the proposition that thought can exist without an organ to generate it.

No; Brain-thought is inadmissible without a brain.⁶ But then, even World Thought is only the product of Brain-thought. Where can we find its manifestations without the latter? And that is just the trouble, as I say, *viz.*, that the same feeling which convinces us of our existence, is inseparable from that other conviction—the existence in the Universe, through its manifestations, of a World Thought or Universal Ideation. And thus the same mind which persuaded me of a design and purpose in our vital functions and which antecedes them, sees the same design in the work of the universal functions. In other words, our own mind, in whatever way it may have been trained by empiricism or idealism, cannot fail to perceive the presence of thought and reason outside of itself, just in the same manner as it gets convinced of the presence of substance in its own organism and also outside of it. One of these two things: either it (our mind) has to regard all that which exists outside of itself as an illusion, or else the sentient existence of the Universe—the whole of that which is the “not *I*”—must be as undeniable to it as is its own existence. To protect myself from insanity and the lunatic asylum, it becomes necessary for me to accept the latter proposition.⁷ And this leads us to a further and an as unavoidable admission: the actual existence of a cosmic as well as of a brain-

⁶ Precisely so; but then Occult philosophy reconciles the absurdity of postulating in the manifested Universe an active Mind without an organ, with that worse absurdity, an objective Universe evolved as everything else in it, by blind chance, by giving to this Universe an organ of thought, a “brain.” The latter, although not objective to *our* senses, is none the less existing; it is to be found in the Entity called KOSMOS (Adam Kadmon, in the Kabbalah). As in the Microcosm, MAN, so in the Macrocosm, or the Universe. Every “organ” in it is a sentient entity, and every particle of matter or substance, from the physical molecule up to the spiritual atom, is a cell, a nerve centre, which communicates with the *brain-stuff* or that substance on the plane of divine Thought in which the prime ideation is produced. Therefore *was man produced in the image of God*—or Divine Nature. Every cell in the human organism mysteriously corresponds with a like “cell” in the divine organism of the manifested universe; only the latter “cell” assumes in the macrocosm the gigantic proportions of an intelligent unit in this or that “Hierarchy” of Beings. This, so far as the *differentiated* divine Mind is concerned, on its plane of ideation. This eternal or ABSOLUTE THOUGHT—lies beyond and is, to us, inscrutable.—[TRANSL.]

⁷ Vedantic philosophy explains and reconciles the difficulty in a most philosophical manner, by showing both the “*I*” and the universe as illusion. Naturally we cannot separate the two, both having to stand or fall together.—[TRANSL.]

thought, of a higher and Universal Thought. Its constant manifestation in the Universe is the more unquestionable to us as all that manifests in our mind, all that it invents, all, in short, it can think out, exists already and is in the manifestations of the Universal Ideation.⁸

Of course it is far easier to a mind trained in empiricism to conceive itself as a simple function of the brain. In practical life an empirical intellect may, without any difficulty, choose such a view, flawless in appearance, and based on unquestionable facts. The unavoidable result of such a view, of course, is that a universal design, conformity and creative faculty according to a definite plan, are but the products of our own minds, a function of our brain. And this once accepted, we shall have to admit also this other result — *viz.*, that the brain itself, which finds through its function (mind) a plan and design in the organization of our universe, does so only because it happens to be so organized that the atoms which constitute the brain have, under the influence of external conditions, come to group themselves accidentally, and by mere chance, in such manner and no other. Furthermore, we shall have to allow that it might have been also otherwise. The outcome of all this is something very strange: if both design and plan are fathered upon the universe by my brain, and if this brain itself, as everything else in the world, is but the product of fortuitous combination of atoms, a certain form of the grouping and composition of which has resulted in that the operation of the external world upon them produces sensation and ideation; if, I say, we have to admit all this as an *ultimum refugium* of the mind, then all that which I attribute to the creative faculty of universal thought and life, must also be the work of chance! It is fortuitous — since there is no first principle to act designedly, intelligently and rationally. It is fortuituous, I say, even in the presence of those numberless legions of various forms and compounds, into which by means of their own properties the atoms of matter have grouped themselves together, as also the atoms of the brain; at first, of course, in some other, more primitive type; and then, changing and becoming more complex under the influence of external conditions, the now acting organ of ideation and sensation was formed.

Thus, chance is the first principle of the creative faculty; it is

⁸ Evidently the great Eastern and philosophical teaching of "non-separateness," reconciling the two propositions, was unknown to Dr. Pirogoff. Still his philosophical Pantheism is most remarkable. — [TRANSL.]

from the combination of its actions with the co-operative forces — generated likewise, in the beginning, through blind chance — that the bastard, called by us the Universe, has come into being.

In such a conception of the Universe as this, it is, of course, of first necessity that we should recognize blind chance as the mightiest of forces. But I will give my views upon chance further on.

There is, however, even in this concept, a grain of truth.

In investigating nature even on the most empirical methods, that is to say, trusting only to those facts which we get through our external senses, we still do nothing more, in reality, than transfer our ideation and mental faculties, in general, to the external world; inversely, we cannot analyse our own "I" otherwise than by making of it an external object, that is to say, by transferring it outside of ourselves. But, while accepting this as an unquestionable fact, I cannot agree that the design in cosmic organization, discovered by my reasoning powers, is no better than something that I myself have fathered upon Kosmos, arbitrarily or otherwise; *i.e.*, that it is something not quite as real or as unquestionable a fact as my own being.

But, the difference between my conception of the universe and the empirical view is shown nowhere better or clearer than in the fact that the mind which regards itself as simply a function of the brain, views as the greatest nonsense and absurdity the opposite conviction, *i.e.*, the existence of another, of a primordial and intelligent vital Principle; one that is neither functional nor organic, which is independent of the grouping of atoms and the action of forces, and is itself that which organizes and brings into activity the atomic forces; and the instrument or organ of whose manifestations is the whole Universe. Thence, our brain-mind discovering itself — or that tendency peculiar to it, to design and creation, which is its natural property — outside of itself, does so for the very reason that it, itself, is only a manifestation of the Higher or Universal Mind.⁹

(*To be continued*)

⁹ Precisely so; and therefore, Occult philosophy teaches us that the human mind (or lower *Manas*) is a direct ray or reflection of the Higher Principle, the *Noetic* Mind. The latter is the reincarnating Ego which old Aryan philosophers call *Manasaputra*, the "Sons of Mind" or of *Mahat*, the Universal Cosmic Mind. In the Hindu Puranas (See *Vishnu Purana*) *Mahat* is identical with Brahma, the creative God, the first in the trinitarian group (*Trimurti*) of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva.—[TRANSL.]

THE MYSTERY OF THE MOMENT

IS NOT TIME one of the greatest, perhaps *the* greatest, of all the mysteries we meet in life? It is long, and it is short. We say it flies, and again we say it crawls. We have learnt to measure it by means of clocks and watches, but just *what* we are measuring none of us can say. Perhaps the sun, with its rising and setting, brings us nearest to understanding it, but even that is only man-made nomination, man-made reckoning, for the terms that range from days to millenniums are mere descriptive words of human invention.

No, it seems that Time in itself must for ever elude definition. We may know its effects, those outward visibilities indicative of its course, but can only think of it as the undefinable medium through which those various effects come about.

There is, however, in musing on Time, a fascination due, perhaps, to its very elusiveness. It is not often that we come upon something which wholly baffles our efforts to put it into words. Here is Mr. Judge's definition, a negative one: "Time is that which does not exist outside the inner circle of this little world" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 8). And, writing to a friend, he makes the observation: "The future is only a word for the present not yet come" (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 76). Both definitions are true and accurate, but would they make Time real to us if we were not experiencing it? We must be content with them, however, and cease trying to achieve the impossible, for impossible it is to capture indefinability in words.

It is the use of Time, however, not the analysis of it, that constitutes the act of living. Mr. Judge substantiates this by pointing out Time's function: "Time is needed for all growth, and all change, and all development" (*Ibid.*, p. 72). That, at least, is comprehensible. Our eyes give us proof of it. We see a babe asleep in a neighbour's garden; then, in due course, a lad with his football. The two are one and the same. What has happened is, as we say, that "Time has passed."

Mr. Judge would not question that. He could not, for it is fact. But if we have already noted the explanation he would give of such change, namely, that "The future is only a word for the present not yet come." What has intervened between the babe and the lad is Time, and we can come no nearer an explanation than that, for

no mortal mind, strive as it may, can ever analyse Time into a material actuality. An actuality it certainly is, but we have to be content with seeing only its effects.

Mr. Judge might say of the alteration, "Great Time brings its magic changes," though he wrote these words in a very different situation, comforting one to whom "a friend [was] dealing blows to the right and left," a situation which only "great Time" might be hoped to amend (*Letters*, American Ed., p. 165). For Mr. Judge was not always speaking metaphorically. Indeed he was less concerned in general with Time's mystery than in urging the right use of it while it is still the present. "As we use the moment" — that little fraction of Time — "so," he warns, "we shift the future up or down for good or ill. . . . If the present is full of doubt or vacillation, so will be the future; if full of confidence, calmness, hope, courage and intelligence thus also will be the future." (*Ibid.*, p. 71)

He comes near to many of us on the day-to-day level when, in a letter beginning, "Dear Brother," his first words are, "I have but little time to reply to yours" (*Ibid.*, p. 183), while another, with the same beginning, ends with the plea, "Have patience with me for such short letters, as I am overworked and banked up high with unanswered letters on all sides, together with *Path* work for 2 advance months — all to be done in 3 weeks." (*Ibid.*, p. 185)

There we see Time as (shall we say?) a taskmaster, and Mr. Judge's advice to us in such case is simple: "Do what you have to do now, and don't trouble about other things; they will be looked after in due time" (*Ibid.*, p. 177). A wise and practical view, for Time can be lost through worry and confusion. That is to say, "lost" in the sense of being made unproductive. "The grand clock of the Universe" — Mr. Judge's phrase — will still move onward none the less.

But what is Time? Cannot we define it? Mr. Judge would have us not attempt the impossible. "An old Hindu saying," he tells us "thus runs: 'He who knows that into which Time is resolved, knows all'" (*Ibid.*, p. 224). None of us being likely to measure up to this condition, we must accept the fact that such comprehension of Time is beyond us.

These words occur in one of Mr. Judge's thought-provoking tales from *The Path*, the magazine he created and edited from April 1893 to March 1896, the tale in question being entitled "The Magic Screen of Time."

“Time, in the Sanscrit, is called Kala. He is a destroyer and is also a renovator.” Thus it opens, with a vast sweep, proceeding next to Time’s components, the moments. “The moments as they fly past before us, carrying all things with them in long procession, are the atoms of Time, the sons of Kala. Years roll into centuries, centuries into cycles, and cycles become ages; but Time reigns over them all, for they are only his divisions.” (p. 224)

For Theosophists (and, doubtless, others) two such atoms, two moments, were destined to become memorable. One was when “I first,” records Mr. Judge, “met H.P.B. in this life” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 3); the other when she herself sat down at her desk and penned the first word of *The Secret Doctrine*, concerning which she later wrote to a friend, “I hope you will be satisfied with the last and final work of my life” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, American Ed., p. 283). Each of those moments would fleet by like any other, yet both were, in a sense, to become timeless. Through them Theosophy was to be given to the world. Restored to it is probably the better word, however. From them immortal teachings were to be carried forward, to what time-point who can say, but, presumably, to the end of the cycle.

A cycle is a vast period, but Mr. Judge sees it as “starting with the moment,” and, further, speaks of “the moment being the basis,” which leads him on to ask, “When did the first moment come?” the only reply being his own — “This cannot be answered.” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 126)

Fleeting indeed is a single moment, yet an even smaller division of Time is just possible. Born mathematicians (“mathematical wonders” is Mr. Judge’s name for them) are able to perceive what can only be called ultimate divisions of ultimates. From this “a perception of the very subtle and recondite principles of the universe results,” but here we ordinary time-users are forced to realize that the mystery of the fleeting moment is fathomless. (*The Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*, pp. 59 and 72)

Mr. Judge was well aware of this. “What earth-men call time,” he writes, “does not, of course, touch the real meaning of time itself, that is, of what may be in fact for this solar system the ultimate order, precedence, succession, and length of moments” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 118). Of that order we can know nothing in our present incarnation and must be content with making the best use

possible of the moments given us, and of the days and years into which they lead on. For, little as they are, unimportant as they may seem to us in their flight, they — and we through our use of them — are under the sway of cyclic law. Mr. Judge draws attention to this with the reminder that “we are working for the new cycles and centuries,” though not even our most concentrated thought can give us any idea of what that infinitely distant future will be. What we can grasp is what he tells us about ourselves, namely that each is “a potentiality born into time, but spanning two eternities, his past and his future, and in his consciousness these are all one, *Duration the ever-present.*” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 3*, p. 18)

Does not something deep within us cry out for Duration? Perhaps we know instinctively that it is the sphere of our true self. Never to be found on earth, it pertains to Devachan, for “no time is there” — such is the teaching of the Secret Doctrine — “The soul has all the benefit of what goes on within itself in that state, but it indulges in no speculations as to the lapse of moments; all is made up of events, while all the time the solar orb is marking off the years for us on the earth plane.” (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 119)

In our earth life we cannot really speculate to any purpose as to the meaning and use of moments, and Mr. Judge does not speculate either. He only says plainly, “We are making causes every moment,” thus leaving us with something better than speculation — a reminder and a warning that we are ourselves responsible for what the moments bring forth. (*Ibid.*, p. 118)

Let us never despise or misuse the moment, however unimportant it may seem to us. Rather, let us think of it as the tiny seed of Timelessness.

TODAY there is a wide measure of agreement, which on the physical side of science approaches almost to unanimity, that the stream of knowledge is heading towards a non-mechanical reality; the universe begins to look more like a great thought than like a great machine.

—SIR JAMES JEANS

THE CAUSE OF SORROW

IN considering such a subject as sorrow and its cause, we need to look much farther afield than the experiences present in our consciousness of this life. The cause of sorrow is but one of the countless phases of that which in Theosophical teachings is known by the generic word Karma, which literally means action. So, to understand the word Karma, we have to look closely into the nature of action. All action is communication. No matter what the actions, our own, or of other human beings, or of nature, as visited upon us, they convey to us impressions. All action is the giving and receiving of impressions, and sorrow is a class of impression with which we are all too familiar.

To understand thus far is to go beyond our science and our religion, because if everything in nature is capable of giving and receiving impressions, we are led to the unavoidable conclusion that *all* is Life, regardless of its state, form, or condition; *all* is sentient and gaining experience. All Life has intelligence because all Life is in motion, which means all Life is engaged in communication. We recognize that in a common popular saying — “actions speak louder than words” — which goes to show that the word Karma has an intellectual and psychic as well as a physical meaning.

Taking that position, we can see that our body is a form of Life and is itself composed of a multitude of finer forms. But whether we call those finer forms cells, molecules, atoms, or what not, each one of them is a life, giving and receiving impressions. When we go beyond our body to our mind, we find that the same is true there too. Our mind has sometimes a beneficent activity, sometimes a truly infernal activity, but whether the ideas that throng it are good or bad, they are all in motion. They certainly convey impressions to us, and we are certainly able to impress our minds, because it is possible for us to dismiss an idea, pleasant or painful, true or false, or to accept and nourish it.

If we turn to something deeper than either body or mind, we shall find that that which lives in our body, that which thinks in our mind — ourself — is only another and a higher form of Life than either body or mind, and when we get this far we can see something at least of another meaning in the Christian Trinity than that given to it by the sectarian and the theologian. Man is him-

self a trinity. He is (1) Spirit or Soul, the conscious Ego, the Perceiver, the Knower, the Thinker, the Experiencer; (2) that subordinate form of Life which we inhabit and call our mind; and (3) that still lower form of Life in which both the Ego, ourself, and our mind are presently imprisoned — our body. The body interacts with the mind as we interact with both mind and body.

From this brief consideration of the fact that all is Life and that there are many forms of Life, the theory of reincarnation becomes immediately tenable. We know even from the physical standpoint — coming originally into physical existence as a cell — that the cell contains within itself the intelligence, power and know-how to enlarge its own domain, not merely by union with other cells in the Life around it, but by a species of magic whereby it inhibits the normal operation and full and free expression of the life hidden in the other cells and converts them into portions of its own habitation. The standing miracle of physical existence is the power of the germ cell to transform other cells into nerve cells, brain cells, bone cells, etc. If we enter physical life in a primary form we name the cell, it must be equally true that, at that supervention we call death we depart from the body in the same way we entered it. That leads us to take an entirely different view of the "cell" from that taken by mankind at large.

There is a principle or portion of our being that governs our life on the downward, that is, the sorrowful, path; first, because we do not understand what we are; secondly, because we do not understand our own nature, the powers and principles in us which we use; and, thirdly, because of our unwillingness to take the position of genuine learners. We are all desirous of learning the truth because, though we are buffeted by the forces of Life, though we suffer and are ignorant, nevertheless we are profoundly convinced in our own heart that truth by its very nature is necessarily palatable. We are never in contact with anything but truth and its opposite, and just as darkness means the absence of light, so falsehood, error and misconception mean the absence of truth. Our life being what it is — constantly coming into collision where we intended no collision, thus producing pain for ourselves and for others — we ought to know our conduct is based on our misapprehension of life.

The Great Ones teach by example and by precept what we have

to do to come out of a state of darkness into a state of light; out of ignorance into knowledge, out of error into truth. Their teachings are addressed to our moral nature — not to our physical nature, not to our sense nature, not even to what we call our intellectual nature. Certainly our physical development runs far, far ahead of our ability to take care of it and to rightly use it. Man, the most powerful being in nature, is also the most diseased and unhealthy of all creatures on the earth today, and is the most unhappy, the most insecure in his tenure. So there would have been no reason for them to bring us more physical information or more intellectual knowledge. Is not the world already divided enough into sects and parties, contending factions, all using the same circumstances of life, the same facts, as the presumed authority for their collisions, quarrels and contradictory teachings? They came to teach us about the middle principle of our nature, our moral nature. Between ourselves, who are spiritual beings, and our bodies, there is an intellectual principle and a sensational principle with which we are acquainted, but there is also a moral principle and that is the preponderant and governing principle in us. It is that principle in each one of us which instantly converts all experiences into terms of good and evil and it is that principle which needs education.

The education that the Great Teachers sought to give us is — not to inflict on others that which we ourselves classify as evil. Whatever happens to us is at once converted by us into terms of pleasure and pain: "I like this, I don't like that." "This hurts me, that benefits me." "This depresses and discourages me, that energizes and elevates me." Since we all have this spiritual power of discernment, however erroneously exercised, by which we see the spiritual nature of the universe and, therefore, at once translate all experiences into terms of good and evil, we can make use of our own definition of good and evil in our relations with others. No thief would ever steal on that basis. He would say: "Yes, hitherto I have esteemed it good to steal, but I would not wish anyone to rob me." No murderer would ever slay, because there never was a murderer who would not fight furiously by every known device to reserve his own life. The thief's idea of good and evil, his ideal of the purpose of life, of the possibilities of spiritual, intellectual and moral evolution, are very low and degraded, nevertheless the Great Teachers gave to the thief, the murderer, the Judas, the sure and perfect

basis from which he might begin his *conscious* spiritual evolution, so that he might take in hand the forces of his own being and order them in his contact and communication with the life through which he is moving. Jesus put it in the form of the Golden Rule, with which we are all too familiar. Buddha put this same Golden Rule in another form: "Hatred does not cease by hatred; hatred ceases only by love." And he set the example that a man could live free from hate and be on friendly terms with high and low, with educated and uneducated, with good and evil — with those who hated each other.

Theosophy stands in that same position in the world today. Religion and science personified hate each other and spitefully use each other. Theosophy, as we can see by its fundamental tenets, is just as different from religion and science as the attitude toward life and use of the moral principle taught by Krishna, Buddha and Jesus were different from those prevalent among the people with whom they lived and worked. Theosophy has no enmity for any man, no enmity for religion, no enmity for science. It knows that what is called religion is but the personification of a man's idea of good and evil. It knows that what men call science is nothing but the personification of man's idea of how to annex good and avoid evil.

Theosophy is in the world for the purpose of affording once more to mankind the opportunity of moral education — the understanding of that principle in our being which determines our weal or woe, not only from day to day, not only from life to life, but through vast interminable cycles. Jesus put it in many of his parables, but he also put it in the form of this expression: "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Krishna put the same truth in other terms. He said that wherever we go, whether in success or failure in victory or defeat, in pleasure or pain, in good or evil, in life or death, we will find life constantly presenting two extremes which represent the irremediable removes of evolution — Spirit and Matter morally interpreted in terms of good and evil. Eschew both as a basis of action and learn to look for the transcendental equation which underlies all forms, all conditions and all principles, that is that Life is One, that every being is the Supreme Spirit in his own form. As we regard our own life, we can understand the Buddha's teaching on the same subject. He said to his beloved disciple "Ananda, how can an immortal being be other than unhappy who places his affections upon mortal things? How can an immortal be

ing be other than happy who places his affections on immortal things?" Is not that the whole secret of life? Many men and women worship and adore their bodies; to them the well-being of their body is their own well-being, the good of their body is the supreme good; in short, the body is their God. Suppose that such a man has never known at first hand what is meant by physical pain or disease. He would walk through life unable to speak to his fellow men in terms of one of their major experiences — sorrow, suffering, pain. At the hour of death he would have lost all he held dear, and that is what sorrow and suffering mean. Or take a man whose whole idea and experience of life is wrapped up in what he calls success, pre-eminence, conquest, mental strength; he has worshipped the God of his own thinking, the God of his own ideas, the God of his own notions of what life is for. When the hour of death comes, this man, too, loses all he held dear because the mind, although longer lived than the body, is just as mortal.

So the first thing the Great Teachers call our attention to is the presence of the enduring in the midst of unenduring things. Both the enduring and unenduring are present everywhere, in everything; the unenduring is the body, the senses, the religions and sciences, the ideas and activities that engross us — mortal things, perishable, vain things that absorb the Soul; whereas the purpose of life is for the Soul to absorb the lessons of these things. Then when the hour of death comes, the man — no matter whether engrossed in the forms of science or religion, or the worship of the body or senses, or possessions of any kind — suffers terrible agonies indeed because he has lost all he held dear.

Since the world has moved on, since the class of Egos now in incarnation is a vastly different class than those in incarnation at the time of Krishna, Buddha and Christ, H.P.B. brought a message addressed not solely to the moral nature of man. She showed us that it is through the abuse, misuse and misconception of our moral principle that all sufferings fall on man, but she addressed herself equally to the spiritual nature of man. She told us that in the examination into the mysteries of our own being lies an understanding not only of all that has happened or is happening to us, but of how to emancipate ourselves and mankind from this prison-house in which we dwell.

The real being to whom she addressed herself is that which we

call our Self-Consciousness. She showed us that there is more than one degree of knowledge; that experience of any kind is knowledge, but that kind of knowledge which is confined to experience alone is like water forever running down a stream to the sea. Every fresh experience, through the psychic principle, absorbs the Soul for the moment and then is replaced by a new experience. So there is a truly colossal accumulation of impressions — psychic experiences — every twenty-four hours, let alone in a single lifetime. In spite of such swift, hard blows as we may get from pain and suffering through the experience of evil, it is a fact that for the ordinary Soul it takes a thousand to fifteen hundred years after death to sift the little good out of the immense chaff of a life's experience of three score and ten years, before he is ready to come back again.

H.P.B. said there is another kind of knowledge than experience. We may call it Reason — the relating of one experience to another, not merely the classifying of the experience as good and evil but the relation and comparison of experience — our experience of yesterday with today's, or last year's; our own experience with the experience of our neighbour. Each one of us, if we are ever to become perfected beings, must of necessity undergo all experiences possible to life. We either have already undergone them, learned their lessons and risen to this higher form of knowledge, or have yet to undergo them. H.P.B. told us that not only is there experience in whose unending succession most people are absorbed, but there is reason and knowledge of experience, the classification and comparison of experience; in other words, the sifting, while awake and alive, that the ordinary man does not do until after he is dead. There is a still higher form of knowledge than that — *pure* reason, not human reason. It is the sifting of experiences before they happen.

So there are three fields of knowledge open to man that are not open to the kingdoms below. Only one does man have in common with the lower kingdoms, that is, the field of experience. With man there is the incessant, never-ending classification of all experience into good and evil; then the relation of experience in sequence for comparison; and, finally, that position, reached only by the very noblest of men, who can classify, relate and sift experience in advance. Those are the great leaders of mankind.

Some men pondering this problem — we cannot serve both God and mammon, both good and evil, both selfishness and unselfishness

— have resolved all doubts in their own mind and so are possessed of the very highest aspect of human knowledge. There is no pressure which can be brought on them which would make them commit the “seven deadly sins,” and they are ever engaged in practising the “seven glorious virtues.” But there is also a higher form of knowledge than that. Whatever our degree of knowledge, every being is an Experiencer, a Knower, and the marked characteristic of H.P.B. was that she not only restated, in terms we can understand, the message of the Great Teachers of mankind, not only restated the ultimate characteristic of the best in all religion, the final harvest in all science, but also brought us into immediate relation, in terms of knowledge, with the Knower. The whole effort of H.P.B. was directed toward teaching men to seek self-knowledge. By virtue of the fact that we are men, we have undergone over and over again, in countless lifetimes, every possible experience of good and evil. We cannot classify anything in terms of good and evil until it actually happens. Not until a child has learned his alphabet can he say, “That is ‘A’, that is ‘B’, that is ‘C’.” Not until we have had an experience over and over again, can we say, “That is good,” “That is evil.”

We have had an abundance of experience, have made enough comparisons, classifications, divisions, analyses; and we *know*, by virtue of our degree of evolution, that a house divided against itself cannot stand; that sooner or later the evolution of mankind as a whole will move up or down, that we will become either infernal or divine; that the divine rests upon knowledge of the Knower and the infernal rests upon knowledge of matter. Of all our psychologists, scientists and theologians, not one can say any more about himself than Descartes said about himself more than three centuries ago: “I think, therefore I am.” Yet in the study of our own nature, the study of ourself as the Supreme Spirit in this body, we know that is what we are. No man can make us believe what we choose not to believe; no man can make us think what we choose not to think; no man can make us love what we will to hate. It is solely through a consideration of ourself as the Supreme Spirit in this body that we can ever come to a consciousness of the real nature of the Supreme Spirit in all things.

Since we are immortal beings eternally sowing—no matter in what field, in what form, in what body, in what state—we must

equally be eternally reaping. The cause of all our sorrow is sowing in darkness, sowing in ignorance, sowing that which we esteemed to be good but which turned out to be evil; and when the harvest of our own sowing comes home to us, we are unable to recognize it as ours, and we do as Cleopatra is alleged to have done to the messenger who brought her the news of the defeat at Actium — she had the messenger slain. Whoever acts as the agent of the omnipotent, invisible, Supreme Spirit in all and hands us the fruit of our own sowing, we hate and would destroy.

We must, then, study ourself, not as a creature or as a creator, which we are, but as the Supreme Spirit in this field of creator and creature, of sowing and reaping. The sting is taken out of any suffering when we recognize three things: First, that it is just. Second, its inevitability, that is, that it comes under law and not as a visitation. Third, its beneficence. When we begin to think and look at our sorrows from this standpoint they cease to be *our* sorrows. We generally interpret all suffering in personal terms, as what *we* suffer, but pain and suffering are a universal phenomenon. The spiritual being in us knows his own nature as one with the omnipresent Supreme Spirit, and never acts except in concert with the whole. The divine in us by its very nature cannot be made participant in our wrong doing, or subordinated to our ignorance. It is so compassionate that it never fails to observe all our actions and stands ready to give us guidance when we are ready to learn. Now, since most of our actions are ignorant actions, since most of our experiences are wrongly understood, it follows that with nearly every action we divide our own nature and separate the low from the high. Every selfish action instantly makes a division between the higher and lower nature in man, between the divine and the human. Every selfish thought or hurtful feeling entertained, every unjust judgment passed, makes an immediate break in the circuit — the communicating power of the lower nature with the higher. The reason is that the Ego or the Self in this body is, for the most part, subordinate to, and a passive witness of, what goes on, but the moment we realize what the real nature of everything is, what the law of life is, the bridge is re-established and the presence of the Supreme Spirit in ourself and in all others is perceived.

THE IDEAL AND THE PRACTICAL

I

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IT MUST be admitted that to be of any use in the world the ideal must be capable of being proved practical, but from this it does not follow that the self-dubbed practical people of today are the fittest judges of the practicability of any ideal theory; indeed, their very nature disqualifies them from judging of the wider fields of vision.

The charge of being unpractical is often made against the idealist who deals with the higher ethics by those who trudge along the well-worn track of daily duty, but though the latter may be incapable of soaring beyond the well-beaten way, the study of history in all departments of life might teach them that the visionary's dreams of one age may form the basis of practical work in the next. What good thing is there that the race has ever achieved that was not in the first instance shadowed forth by one whom the practical workers of his day regarded as an idealistic dreamer? The poets and prophets of all ages stand in advance of their time, but a modesty of demeanour in face of a revelation they are incapable of grasping would be a more appropriate attitude for the practical workers than the assumption of omniscience which their ignorant criticism implies.

It is also beside the point to dwell on the fact that the idealist's life may not be on a par with his teachings; it may indeed fail to come up to the level of the conscientious duty-performer without in the least detracting from the value of such teachings. And it must also be remembered that "man is not, according to any analogy, observation, or experience, a straight line. Would that he were, and that life, or progress, or development, or whatever we choose to call it, meant merely following one straight road or another. The whole question, the mighty problem, would be very easily solved then." Man's nature is as complex as the Universe of which he is a microcosm. To instance two of the parallel lines of advance, the awakening of his spiritual perception is quite as important a part of his development as the progress of his moral nature towards altruistic thought and action. But all the force of the nature is required to effect real advance on either plane. Alternate lifetimes may be so consumed, with the apparent result that the one or the other is taking precedence in the development of the individual man. It ill

becomes any, therefore, to belittle the results that are being achieved because they may not be on the particular lines on which they themselves are advancing.

It is also a fact in Occultism that the attainment of knowledge as to the real facts of existence and the ultimate possibilities of the soul produces great Karmic results. "That is because it is impossible to give any attention to Occultism without making a definite choice between what is familiarly called good and evil. The first step in Occultism brings the student to the tree of knowledge. He must pluck and eat; he must choose. No longer is he capable of the indecision of ignorance. He goes on either on the good or on the evil path. And to step definitely and knowingly even but one step on either path, produces great Karmic results. The mass of men walk waveringly, uncertain as to the goal they aim at; their standard of life is indefinite; consequently their Karma operates in a confused manner. But when once the threshold of knowledge is reached the confusion begins to lessen, and consequently the Karmic results increase enormously, because all are acting in the same direction on all the different planes; for the Occultist cannot be half-hearted, nor can he return when he has passed the threshold. These things are as impossible as that the man should become the child again. The individuality has approached the state of responsibility by reason of growth: it cannot recede from it." The outcome of all this is that the evil in the Occultist is more rapidly brought to the surface than in the case of ordinary men. This is of course due to the greater intensity of purpose in the former, and it also requires a greater intensity of purpose to rid himself of the evil, but while that process is going on it is only natural that the evil which lay deep seated in his nature, and which has been brought to the surface, should be very apparent to the eyes of men. The initiatory stages of Occultism — that short cut to Perfection — may therefore easily appear to the eyes of the ignorant as a descent instead of an ascent.

A vivid illustration of the high ideality of a very material conception may be found in Mr. Edward Bellamy's novel *Looking Backward*. But to the majority of readers it will also stand as an illustration of the impracticability of an ideal theory. It must indeed be a trumpet-call to action to one who can so shut his eyes to facts that he is capable of believing such an organization of Society as there pictured could by any possibility be realized by humanity a

ow constituted. Whether realizable or not, it should be to all of us a beautiful picture to which it is a delight to turn from the hideous reality of today. Though severed from all the spiritual aims that could alone give it great value, it is in some sort of a way a vindication of the higher Socialism, the Socialism taught in the life of Jesus Christ, whose animating motives are love and charity, and whose end is justice—a contrast truly to the socialism whose animating motives are greed and envy and whose end is plunder!

Writing on Christianity and Socialism in an article¹ which breathes the atmosphere of sound common sense, and also that of an enthusiastic sympathy such as may well quicken the pulses of the reader with a like hope, Dean Plumptre points out that Socialism's real antagonist is not Christianity but the terrible culmination of Individualism which we are now reaching—Individualism which finds its utterance in the question, "May I not do what I will with mine own?" and which is summarized in the motto of universal competition, "Every man for himself and devil take the hindmost."

There are so many false notions prevalent about socialism that his description is worth repeating. The ideal of Socialism, he writes, is just the opposite of this (Individualism). It assumes as the result of experience that there is in every man, either inherent in his nature or as the result of the environment by which his character has been fashioned, an evil selfishness which needs control; that the struggle for existence implies a fierce warfare of class with class and man with man—*bellum omnium contra omnes*—and is productive of an immense amount of evil. It holds that it is the function of the State to moderate this warfare and to remedy these evils. It insists on the principle that the rights of the individual are subordinate to the well-being of the whole Society; that right to freedom of action and to property is the creation of the State, and may therefore be limited and controlled by it. Even the Socialist theories which postulate the natural rights of man both to freedom and to a share of the land look to the collective action of Society as the means of asserting and perpetuating them. It lies in the nature of things that this may be the ideal of any form of government—Monarchic, Autocratic, Democratic. It is found in the theocracy of Israel under

¹ "Christianity and Socialism" by E. H. Plumptre, Dean of Wells, in the *Contemporary Review* of November 1889. It argues well for the Church of England to find in its ranks so worthy a successor of such Christian Socialists as Robertson, Maurice, and Kingsley.

its judges or its kings. It may be represented in ideal pictures of a patriot king, such as we find in Dante's *De Monarchia*, Fénelon's *Télémaque*, or Ken's *Edmund*, or of government by the wisest, as in Plato's *Republic*, the *Utopia* of Sir T. More, the *New Atlantis* of Bacon. The language of the late Emperor Frederick in his rescript to his Chancellor was altogether that of one who desired to be a patriotic, and therefore Socialist, King; ready to "support every movement towards furthering the economical prosperity of every class of society and reconciling their conflicting interests."

But to return to Mr. Bellamy's book. An utopia where every desire of the senses should receive instant gratification is an ideal which will no doubt satisfy many men. To the poor of this world who are able to satisfy so few of their desires, it may indeed seem an Eldorado, but even granted that state to be attained which Mr. Bellamy so ably pictures, what advance towards any permanent bliss will man have made? Life must still be a struggle, blinded with ignorance and bounded by the grave. There will still remain the whole vast infinitude between the unrest of conditioned existence and the Nirvana of pure Being, between the pain-goaded and pain-causing struggles of man and the unutterable Peace of God. "Teach the people," says one who stands on the very threshold of that Peace of God, or who, indeed, may have renounced it in order more effectually to succour Humanity, "teach the people to see that life on this earth, *even the happiest*, is but a burden and an illusion." While the solution, one by one, of the varied problems of the hidden life may be practically attained by every individual, the Socialistic dream of material perfection though it may become practical in some modified form to the Humanity of a far-off future, remains today in the realm of the beautiful ideals that are utterly impracticable.

While no real comparison can be made between the fanciful story we have been discussing and a great ethical work, it is a satisfaction to turn to such a book as Dr. Buck's *Study of Man and the Way to Health*. Though it may not be given to man to mould outward circumstance in accordance with his ideas of divine justice, the betterment of his own inner nature, the conquest of self, and the gradual enlargement of his sympathy are in the highest degree practical.

The *Study of Man* is undoubtedly a valuable addition to the Theosophical literature of the age, inasmuch as, while barely mentioning the word Theosophy and hinting only in a vague way a

the fundamental doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation, it yet appeals to the general reader, and more particularly to the scientific one, in terms which, if the train of thought suggested be carried out, are likely to lead to some apprehension of the divine Wisdom, which alone can offer to men, capable of reason, any adequate explanation of the mystery of existence.

It is, however, in some ways a disappointing book to lay down, particularly after the expectations raised by the laudatory notices with which it was ushered in. Perhaps too much stress must not be laid on the fact that for the general reader—indeed for all save those who are versed in the medical science of the day, many passages in the book would require further analysis to render them intelligible. But this, after all, is a minor point.

All able exposition of ethical doctrine must doubtless find readers whom it will benefit, but for those who only respond when the highest key is struck this book must be considered a failure.

To inculcate the love of one's neighbour, or, in a word, Altruism, has been one of the objects of all teachers of morality, and only praise can follow the perusal of any work devoted to such an end. But some efficient cause must exist. Without the highest sanction Altruism is impossible. "No man can be good without God," writes Seneca in his 14th Epistle; "God is nigh unto thee, He is with thee, He is within thee. If thou shalt see a man unappalled by dangers, untouched by illicit desires, happy in adversity, calm in the midst of tempests, looking on men as from a higher place, on gods as from an equal place, will there not enter into thee a reverence for such a one? Wilt thou not say, there is here something greater, something higher than can be believed to be of mere kin to the mortal body in which we behold him with our eyes? And such there is: that power within him hath come from God."

—PILGRIM

(To be concluded)

When you drink of the water, think of the spring.

—CHINESE MAXIM

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Dr. J. R. Durant's Darwin lecture to the British Association calls in question the many and varied theories that have been put forth through the centuries on the subject of human evolution, subject which has always evoked powerful interest. His address commented upon in the British Association's journal *Nature*:

The stories that people tell, he argued, and which have been used for various purposes by people as different as Freud and Galton, Lorenz and E. O. Wilson, are but myths; "theories of human evolution have come to embody contemporary hopes and fears about the society in which we live." Specifically, the accusation goes, since the time of Raymond Dart until quite recently, the story told of human evolution has involved a model of human nature which is consistent with the doctrine of Adam and Eve, the Garden and the Fall, the doctrine of Original Sin, the notion that each contemporary human being is a battleground between civility (in the strict sense) and the primitive and powerful Beast within. The notion that primitive men were not merely successful hunters of other species but killers of each other, Durant says, fitted well with contemporary views of society at war within itself. But now, says Dr. Durant, the fashion is changing. In making the public legend of human evolution, people have taken to describing primitive humans or hominids as creatures whose survival depended on co-operation between individuals and among groups, whose behaviour was shaped by an implicit recognition of the benefits of the division of labour in a hunter-gatherer society which Adam Smith first clearly described, and whose distinctive attribute — that of language — predisposes towards communality. What view, it might innocently be asked, is right? Neither, said Dr. Durant. Each is a myth. Tell us instead, he asked of palaeoanthropologists, palaeoarchaeologists and the rest, the truth. Or at least acknowledge that your data are insufficient to say very much at all. . . .

Durant's complaint was a complaint against a style of argument. . . . He was entirely within his rights to complain that, in much of what passes for a general account of the evolution of human beings and of human nature, people who should know better are too fond of making too much of far too little evidence. Their common error is to take a living primate species as a model for earlier — and even contemporary — human (or hominid)

society. Human nature being what it is, it is not surprising that these reconstructions reflect their prejudices or their hopes of wish fulfilment. . . .

Nobody should be surprised that these issues excite deep and general interest. Long before Darwin made it possible to talk about the issues in concrete terms, people at large were understandably preoccupied with the subject matter of *Genesis*. All writers on the human condition have found it necessary to tackle the same questions. . . . For the past century, however, the public interest in human evolution has mostly been guided by Darwin's terms of reference.

The lack of evidence is the chief stumbling block. The palaeo-anthropologists may not really agree, but they are fortunate among those who work on human evolution. They have bones and other objects to measure, but past behaviour has left no fossils, only occasional artefacts from which behaviour must be inferred. . . . Most of Dr. Durant's complaints were levelled at those who have embellished fossils with patterns of behaviour for which there is no evidence.

To students of Theosophy, it is evident that attempts to study man's ancestry and his past from the fossils that have been uncovered cannot but prove very misleading. In the field of evolution, as in other spheres, theories once accepted are being discarded, and this can go on *ad infinitum* until other and older teachings that E.P.B. brought to light are accepted, if only as hypotheses for future scientific appreciation. So evident are the scientific fallacies and gaps, that she touches upon these in *The Secret Doctrine* in order to place the two teachings on parallel lines. "For Occultism," she says, "it is a question of self-defence, and nothing more."

So far, the "Secret Doctrine" has concerned itself with metaphysics, pure and simple. It has now landed on Earth, and finds itself within the domain of physical science and practical anthropology, or those branches of study which materialistic Naturalists claim as their rightful domain, coolly asserting, furthermore, that the higher and more perfect the working of the Soul, the more amenable it is to the analysis and explanations of *the zoologist and the physiologist alone*. (Haeckel on "Cell-Souls and Soul-Cells"). . . . The mysterious nature of Consciousness, of Soul, Spirit in Man being now explained as a mere advance on the functions of the protoplasmic molecules of the lively *Protista*, and the gradual evolution and growth of human mind and "social

instincts" toward civilization having to be traced back to their origin in the civilization of ants, bees, and other creatures, the chances left for an impartial hearing of the doctrines of archaic Wisdom, are few indeed. The *educated* profane is told that "the social instincts of the lower animals have, of late, been regarded as *being clearly the origin of morals*, even of those of man"(!) and that our divine consciousness, our soul, intellect, and aspirations have "worked their way up from the lower stages of the simple cell-soul" of the gelatinous Bathybius — and he seems to believe it. For such men, the metaphysics of Occultism must produce the effect that our grandest orchestral and vocal oratorios produce on the Chinaman: a sound that jars upon their nerves. . . .

Furthermore, past as well as present daily experience teaches that no truth has ever been accepted by the learned bodies unless it dovetailed with the habitual preconceived ideas of their professors. "The crown of the innovator is a crown of thorns" — said G. St. Hilaire. It is only that which fits in with popular hobbies and accepted notions that as a general rule gains ground. . . . As no worse fate can befall the exponents of Esoteric Anthropo-Genesis than being openly called by their foes by their old and time-honoured names of "lunatics" and "ignoramuses," the present archaic theories may be safely added to the many modern speculations, and bide their time for their full or even partial recognition. Only, as the existence itself of these "archaic theories" will probably be denied, we have to give our best proofs and stand by them to the bitter end. . . .

In our modern day the mere assertion that there exists a power which can create human forms — ready-made *sheaths* for the "*conscious monads*" or Nirmanakayas of past Manvantaras to incarnate within — is, of course, absurd, ridiculous! That which is regarded as quite natural, on the other hand, is the production of a Frankenstein's monster, *plus* moral consciousness, religious aspirations, genius, and a feeling of one's own immortal nature within one's self — by "physico-chemical forces, guided by blind Almighty Evolution" (*Pedigree of Man*). As to the origin of that man, not *ex-nihilo*, cemented by a little red clay, but from a living divine Entity consolidating the astral body with surrounding materials — this conception is too absurd even to be mentioned in the opinion of the materialists. Nevertheless, Occultists and Theosophists are ready to have their claims and theories — however unscientific and superstitious at first glance — compared as to their intrinsic value and probability, with those of the modern evolutionists. Hence the esoteric teaching is

absolutely opposed to the Darwinian evolution, as *applied to man, and partially so with regard to other species.* (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 649-653)

The experts in cardiovascular research who met recently under the aegis of the Paavo Nurmi Foundation in Finland came to the conclusion that privation, worry, frustration and other nervous and psychological factors do play a part, and a significant part, in coronary heart disease. Though there has always been enough evidence of this fact, it has received only grudging recognition from the medical fraternity over the past couple of decades. However, tomorrow's therapies for heart complaints may well emphasize behaviour and mood.

Dr. Clive Wood, a physiologist and freelance writer with a particular interest in the effects of personality and behaviour on disease, writes on "The Psyche and the Heart" *New Scientist* for November 5, 1981:

Today the emphasis is not so much on isolated clinical cases but in attempting to understand how nervous and psychological inputs exert their effects, not only on the heart but on the whole circulatory system. The interactions, it seems, are complicated, but some patterns are starting to emerge. Certainly it is vital to search for them, because the more "traditional" risk factors for coronary heart disease, such as a high concentration of cholesterol in the blood, raised blood pressure and cigarette smoking, account at best for only half of the new coronary patients who appear each year. There must be risk factors that we simply do not know about and an educated guess would put many of them in the psychological and social area.

One of the clearest messages from the Helsinki conference was that psychological stress can lead *either* to immediate sudden death, or to a more long-term set of changes that become fatal only after years of exposure. . . .

When we are faced with circumstances that require either combat or escape, our sympathetic nervous system is aroused. Adrenaline is secreted into the blood which in turn directs blood flow to the muscles and liberates the energy to fuel them. . . . The conflicts that lead us to secrete adrenaline may be struggles either against circumstances or against people. But other people almost always play a starring role in one's own circumstances, both at work and at home. So it is not surprising that discussion about

the "psychosocial" dimension in cardiac disease often has a heavy emphasis on conflict between individuals. But this is by no means the whole story, as pointed out by David Jenkins of the Boston University Medical Center.

Jenkins identified four clusters of factors all related to heart disease and then went on to search for a common element linking them all. The first cluster relates to socio-economic disadvantage. . . . The second cluster of factors is described as "sustained disturbing emotion" — that is intense emotions either experienced over a long period or experienced repeatedly. . . . Thirdly, Jenkins emphasized the importance of "Type A" behaviour in predisposing to coronary disease. . . . Type As exhibit "aggressiveness, competition, hurry, intensity of effort, and feelings of the pressure of time and the burden of responsibility." Finally, Jenkins drew attention to a cluster that he simply described as "overload." Working excessive overtime, carrying two jobs at once, or having a sudden increase in job responsibility are all items found among coronary patients much more often than among the healthy.

So what do these four have in common? In three words, the answer seems to be "excessive psychological demand." Individuals enjoying only a low socio-economic status often live in a permanent state of insecurity which demands their constant vigilance simply to avoid things getting any worse. Sustained unpleasant emotions put a continual and excessive demand on people's ability to cope. Type A personality and work overload both involve sustained attention under high pressure with the threat of being in trouble if anything goes wrong. . . .

Something of a dispute has been surfacing progressively in circles where heart disease is mentioned. On the one hand are the believers in drug therapy — powerful but potentially dangerous. On the other are the adherents of biofeedback, meditation, autogenics and other programmes of behavioural change — unlikely to damage one's physiology, but sometimes producing only moderate responses. According to Stephen Weiss, chief of the Behavioural Medicine Branch of the Heart, Lung and Blood Institute in Bethesda, Maryland, we need both approaches.

It was said of old that man dwells in the heart; that the heart of man is for him the centre of life spiritual and life physical. Is the heart, then, a mere physiological organ? In *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 92) H.P.B. remarked: "Why, it is asked, should there be such a strange repetition of the number seven in the anatomical structure

of man? Why should the heart have *four lower* 'cavities and *three higher* divisions,' answering so strangely to the septenary division of the human principles, separated into two groups, the higher and the lower?" Mr. Judge clarifies this in *The Path* for September 1893:

I understand her to refer to the true division or analysis of the heart, and not to the one presently accepted among physicians. The medical fraternity have not always been right, and their conclusions have from time to time been revised. It was thought that the discovery of the circulation of the blood was unique in the West, but in fact it has been known in the East for many centuries. Even the nervous system has been known and is spoken of in ancient Hindu books. In one place it is said, "a thousand and one roads lead from the heart in every direction," and goes on to state that in those ramifications the inner person resides or functions during sleep. This may very well refer to the use of the nervous system, especially in sleep. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No.16*, p. 15)

Mr. Judge goes further in declaring the occult view that the heart "receives its impulse from the great astral heart or the Akasa, which has been said by all mystics to have a double motion, or alternate vibration—the systole and diastole of nature." (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 32)

Bijjaragi village in Bijapur district of Karnataka is just a cluster of stone huts, but there is some kind of urge in its families to get their children educated. Bijjaragi means "village of knowledge," and quite a few of its 6,000 residents have availed of the benefits of higher education, among them being doctors, engineers and Police Service officers. In the past few months, child prodigies have started making their talents known in quick succession in this unpretentious village. (*India Today*, November 30, 1981)

Five-year-old Bharathi Siddappa Hadamani, the daughter of a tailor, has a remarkable memory and can flawlessly recite poems without much effort at memorizing them. Her talent was noticed even before she went to school. She has now been sent for schooling to Belgaum to give her a better chance than her village can offer.

Seven-year-old Ashok Biradar, son of a tiller, has a phenomenal capacity for mathematical calculations. After his unique powers came

to light, he was put under observation at the National Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences in Bangalore, where scientists concluded that he was undoubtedly a child with a "paranormal gift. He has a high Intelligence Quotient of 140. The State Government is now sponsoring his schooling in Bangalore.

And last month, seven-year-old Ramesh Hadamani, a distant relative of Bharathi's, dazzled adults by reeling off multiplication tables. One day, when asked at school to recite the tables, Ramesh just couldn't stop and went on up to 46 until told to stop by his astonished teacher. Ramesh himself has no idea why he is able to manipulate figures with such ease. "Numbers just come to me," he says. His family's resources are meagre, but his new-found talent should change his life for the better.

No one is able to make out why three child prodigies should suddenly crop up in a small hamlet and whether more are yet to be discovered. According to one resident, "The children's brilliant performance appears to be a carry-over from the bank balance of their previous birth."

It is not only child prodigies for which Bijjaragi has distinguished itself. Some of its older residents, too, are remarkably talented. Seventy-year-old O. S. Patil is an excellent painter and his works adorn almost every house in the village. B. L. Wagganar can put some beads and thread in his mouth and, a few minutes later, throw out a complete necklace. Babu Harivansh can compose poems while you wait. And blind beggar Malu Honnappa Hirekurva has a good memory for songs. The *India Today* account concludes: "In the months and years to come, Bijjaragi may reveal a few more gems and win a place in the *Guinness Book of World Records*."

Why there should be concentration of talent in one particular village affords a study in an aspect of Karma. Just as there is racial Karma, national Karma and family Karma, so also there is the Karma associated with several smaller families making up a village. No. 29 of the Aphorisms on Karma (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 2*) affords a clue.