

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN	73
MAN, THE MIRROR OF THE UNIVERSE—II	77
THE DISCIPLINE OF DISCIPLESHIP	81
PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF OCCULTISM—III	84
INVESTIGATING PSYCHIC POWERS	90
REINCARNATION: A LOGICAL NECESSITY	95
DANGERS OF OVERSPECIALIZATION	101
ON THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY	104

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE BROTHERHOOD OF MAN

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Humanity is a great Brotherhood by virtue of the sameness of the material from which it is formed physically and morally. Unless, however, it becomes a Brotherhood also intellectually, it is no better than a superior genus of animals.

—*The Theosophical Glossary*

IN the long ages already covered by evolution, Nature was busy making and moulding the physical and moral being—Man—out of her own substance, body of her body, life of her life. All men are therefore brothers by virtue of this sameness of material of which they are made. In the human kingdom the process began by which Humanity *must become* a Brotherhood intellectually. The difference between “is a Brotherhood” and “must become a Brotherhood” should be noted.

Today men are thinking in terms of physical and moral Brotherhood because it is being forced on their minds that what hurts one hurts all, and that non-recognition of this fact may ultimately result in the annihilation of mankind. Nuclear weapons are bringing to men the realization that war is becoming so destructive that, unless it is refrained from, the future must witness the total destruction of the human family. Self-preservation is the keynote of this line of reasoning, and therefore the result will not be the creation of a Brotherhood intellectually, even though “the only palliative to the evils of life is union and harmony—a Brotherhood *in actu*, and *altruism* not simply in name.”

The intellectual realization that men are brothers by virtue of the sameness of material of which they are formed, “makes no appeal to our higher and deeper feelings,” and the same is true of the recognition that men must live in harmony if the race is to

survive. It is "the identity of the soul and spirit, of real, immortal man, as Theosophy teaches us," that "once proven and deep-rooted in our hearts, would lead us far on the road of real charity and brotherly good-will."

The recognition by the human being of this identity of soul and spirit makes of Humanity a Brotherhood intellectually, and this is possible because of the descent into the Form of Man (the Brotherhood physical and moral) of the Sons of that other Parent—Universal Mind (the Brotherhood of Spirit). In the human kingdom the two Brotherhoods merge into One. Man, as matter-form and desire-mind or moral nature, is little more than an animal: Man, the Thinker *in* matter-form and desire-mind, is the important factor in the human kingdom. The outer is the animal, the inner is the god; the cross of matter and the Christ. Today the "god" is barely perceptible in the human form and Humanity seems to have lost any concept it might have had of its spiritual identity, or indeed of any Spirit in Nature. But through sorrow and suffering the Thinker is beginning to pierce through the density of earthly forms and muddles, and men are searching within their own minds for some light on today's problems. Old creeds and dogmas have failed; old ideas have lost their value, and a totally different answer is now required as to the purpose of life. It is the soul of Man—not the souls of the few—that is awakening, and for this nothing but the "primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans" will suffice. Where else should we turn but to the presentation of that soul-satisfying doctrine which we know as Theosophy?

Study of the following quotations should call forth the inner nature and satisfy even the outer man, for they answer in brief or in germ the questions of all time.

Why does the Universe exist? The universe exists for the sake of the soul.

Why does the Soul exist? The Secret Doctrine teaches "the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Over-Soul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root. . . . No purely Spiritual Buddhi (divine soul) . . . can have an independent (conscious) existence before [it] . . . has . . . acquired individuality, first by natural impulse, and then by self-induced and self-devised efforts (checked by its Karma), thus ascending through all the degrees of intelligence, from the lowest to the highest Manas, from mineral and plant, up to the holiest archangel. . . . The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit.

How is this accomplished? There exists in Nature a triple evolutionary scheme...or rather three separate schemes of evolution, which in our system are inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point. These are the Monadic (or spiritual), the intellectual, and the physical evolutions.

What is man's constitution and what his goal? Man...has his objective, physical body; his vitalizing astral body (or soul), the real man; and these two are brooded over and illuminated by the third—the sovereign, the immortal spirit. When the real man succeeds in merging himself with the latter, he becomes an immortal entity.

Though the second line of evolution, the Intellectual, includes the growth of intelligence through every part of Nature, as there is but one Indivisible Intelligence in reality, in the human kingdom it is the evolution of the indwelling soul with which we are most concerned. This evolves through self-induced and self-devised, *i.e.*, thought-out, conscious efforts, for man must *win* his immortality. He has already passed through certain aspects of intelligence in the far past in a non-self-conscious way; his human evolution is concerned with the conscious aspects of that intelligence. A close study of the sentence "Mind is a name given to the sum of the states of Consciousness grouped under Thought, Will, and Feeling" is very illuminating. In the lower kingdoms consciousness, or mind, shows itself as sensation or feeling. The human kingdom adds thought and strives to reach the super-human kingdom where Will, the pure Force of Spirit in action, predominates.

As man thinks in terms of Divine Ideas instead of personal or individual ones, and brings his Will into operation consciously, he is creating the Intellectual Brotherhood of Man, for he is recognizing the spiritual side of life and the oneness or unity behind all manifestation. He is not so much concerned with similarity of ideas as he is with trying to find out what the Divine Ideas are so that he can "merge himself" in them and become an immortal entity. Though there is but One Self, One Intelligence, One Universal Soul, One Flame, One Substance-Principle, Spirit-Matter; One Fohat, the link between Spirit and Matter; one Law of involution and evolution—unless he grasps, intellectually, these facts and sees them reflected in himself, the brotherhoods of Spirit and Matter will not blend into the conscious Brotherhood of Man. He must see these in Nature, and in himself, and emulate Their workings. He must try to see the law of involution and evolution as showing in him as action moved by stimulus from

without or from within; he must see himself as the One Intelligence in its passages from the Hierarchies which guide and rule the lower aspects of evolution to the Dhyān Chohans, whose thought reflects "the Ideation of the Universal Mind."

In this stage, action from within without, *i.e.*, conscious action, is the method of growth, though the twofold aspect of motion must not be lost sight of. Just as the fire in the coal cannot burst forth without outside aid, so man's mind cannot progress without any outside help. He gets this help from others, either embodied Beings, evolved or unevolved, or from the vibrations of the Divine Thought which is ever fecundating those minds which are ready to receive the seeds. Just as man today can guide the natural functions of the body, desires and lower thinking, so greater Beings "guide some of the minor currents" of life and give out Ideas that will illuminate those minds ready to be illuminated. It is the self-induced and self-devised efforts of man that make for the readiness of the mind to receive help, for though help is ever in the world, "the receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct" for that help to be fully availed of. But even receptivity is not enough; neither is instruction. Instruction comes from without-within; it must be changed into action or realization through the self-induced and self-devised efforts of the recipient to absorb the instructions and act them out. Just as food taken into the body from without becomes part and parcel of the strength and energy and health of that body after the bodily functions have worked on it, so ideas taken in from without have to be absorbed before they show forth their dynamic force. It is because man has "both mind and consciousness, which act and make him perceive things both within and without himself," that he has free-will. He has the power to see the *without* of the brotherhood of man physically and morally; he has the power to see the *within* of men as brothers by virtue of the same spiritual essence; he has free-will to act in terms of the one or the other or of both. Man's beginning "is in . . . [the] androgynic protoplast, and [his] end is in the Absolute." Between stands Mind, capable of reflecting both. Man must demonstrate for himself

on logical, philosophical, metaphysical, and even scientific grounds that . . . all men have spiritually and physically the same origin.

What is also needed is to impress men with the idea that, if the root of mankind is *one*, then there must also be one truth.

MAN, THE MIRROR OF THE UNIVERSE

II

THE triple nature of man is said to stand in relationship to all things. *Transactions* tells of the "mutual relations" established from eternity by immutable laws. These two aspects take us to the Ten Items of *Isis Unveiled*. Here we have the practical side of the question explained to us; we see ourselves and Nature in a new light, though we are astounded by the task in front of us.

Nature is triune. . . . Man is also triune. . . . Magic, as a science, is the knowledge of these principles, and of the way by which the omniscience and omnipotence of the spirit and its control over nature's forces may be acquired by the individual while still in the body. . . . MAGIC is spiritual WISDOM; nature, the material ally, pupil and servant of the magician. One common vital principle pervades all things, and this is controllable by the perfected human will. (*Isis*, II, 587-590)

Confronted by this task, man asks himself why he should try to control that common vital principle which pervades all things. The answer comes: Because he must become a "co-worker with Nature" if he would become immortal. Just as he can control his life by his awakened will, or let it be wrecked by his uncontrolled desires, so he either has to learn control over Nature's forces, or be swept away by them. He must either use them or be used by them. Some he now uses, unconsciously or consciously, but all, on all planes, must be used consciously in time by the control of the one Force. Many manifestations, but One Force.

. . . [the] electric vital power, the transcendental binding Unity of all Cosmic Energies. . . on the earthly plane. . . is felt in the magnetic and active force generated by the strong desire of the magnetizer. On the Cosmic, it is present in the constructive power that carries out, in the formation of things—from the planetary system down to the glow-worm and simple daisy—the plan in the mind of nature, or in the Divine Thought, with regard to the development and growth of that special thing. (*S.D.*, I, 111)

It is to be noted here that on the Cosmic plane this force is *constructive*—it is used by Nature's intelligence to carry out the plan in the Divine Mind. Man alone of all Nature takes to himself the right to use that Power for his own ends. He does not perfectly reflect that plan or consciously image forth those Divine Ideas, but sees the Universe as a huge reflection of himself. He takes all

for his use, for he has not yet realized that the whole Universe is, as Pythagoras taught, "one vast system of mathematically correct combinations"; that "the world is sustained by the same law of equilibrium and harmony upon which it was built" (*Isis*, I, 318); and that "there is an inherent law—not only in the primordial, but also in the manifested matter of our phenomenal plane—by which Nature correlates her geometrical forms, and later, also, her compound elements; and in which there is no place for accident or chance" (*S.D.*, I, 97). Man has not realized that if he disturbs Nature's work, if he throws "into perturbation even the smallest atom in the Infinite World of harmony," this has to be readjusted (*S.D.*, I, 643). His only hope is to learn to be mathematically and geometrically correct in all his doings, for does not Nature geometrize? Once see, or sense, that the Universe is such a perfect machine, and it is obvious that each part must do its appointed task or chaos will result. The atoms "follow faithfully every line, point and figure traced in the imagination of the Divine Geometer" (*Isis*, I, 62). Why not man? He does not think and act in terms of the interrelationship of all Nature; so, "if one breaks the laws of Harmony . . . one must be prepared to fall into the chaos one has oneself produced." (*S.D.*, I, 644)

This state will last, we learn, "till man's spiritual intuitions are fully opened, which will not happen before we fairly cast off our thick coats of matter" (*Idem.*), but as that time is far ahead, we are given a starting-point. "Begin acting from *within*, instead of ever following impulses from *without*." Begin acting with forethought, and not by desire only, for "Man is himself his own saviour as his own destroyer." (*Idem.*)

On what lines shall we begin acting from within? By thinking of the laws of the Universe and acting in harmony with them, and, since the Universe is run on geometrical and mathematical lines, we have been given three rules of conduct: Accuracy in Space, Punctuality in Time, Purity in Causation.

Accuracy in Space. This has to be first learned from *within*. It is not the endeavour to be "accurate" as the world understands it, not the effort to put things straight and in their right places that really makes for accuracy. Forethought and planning and imagination have to be used first, watchfulness employed to see if the physical-plane results are what we planned, and all has to be planned as impersonally as a mathematician sets about his problems. Behind every action is a thought. Think accurately and actions will be accurate. It is in the little things that we see our lack of thinking accurately. Little acts of carelessness, of

inaccuracy—how these mount up and become an avalanche destroying us just at the moment when accuracy would have saved us! Little mistakes of adding up, of typing, do not matter as *mistakes*, but if the attitude to them is that they do not matter, inaccuracy becomes the attitude underlying all life. Take the slightly careless driver. He can extricate himself ninety-nine times, but the hundredth time comes, and harm is done. Perhaps the plane on which most harm is done by inaccuracy is the plane of speech. Little do we realize that in trying to develop accuracy, *i.e.*, the right attitude to the importance of all things in life, we are training ourselves and developing one of the most important of our powers! Even to give the right thing at the right place and to the right person implies thought. Further still, the very atoms of the body have to be trained to follow a noetic instead of a psychic impulse. Accuracy goes very deep into our natures, and only if we are accurate can we be trusted. The vice of inaccuracy is rooted in carelessness which in turn is rooted in the irresponsibility of the one who feels that nothing really matters.

Punctuality in Time. This implies also the power of judgment, or reasoning, or forethought. Watchfulness, as a constant mental factor, will help us more than trying to get up at the same hour or to catch a train. These things will come of themselves if watchfulness is ever present. Even the Spiritual Guides of humanity watch for the right time for Their efforts. We learn from *Isis* (I, 219): "Everything in this world has its time, and truth, however based upon unimpeachable evidence, will not root or grow, unless, like a plant, it is thrown into soil in its proper season." Forethought is essential, judgment is essential, both grow out of patience, and that grows out of reliance on the *Law*. In our planning we must form clear images, accurate in detail, and learn to image them forth when the season is ripe. Punctuality on this plane will result in punctuality on the physical plane. To refer again to one who can be trusted—and what higher praise can be given to anyone?—such an one can be relied upon partly because he is always in time.

Purity in Causation. The soul of all our actions will be harmonious if we remember our Divine Heritage and always plan and act for and as the Self. Impurity is any tinge of self; purity is impersonality, with its roots in the One Self. "Leave nothing of myself in me," said Plotinus. This will of ours which has to control all things has first to be lost as far as we are concerned, as it has to be merged in the greater Will. Given the freedom of choice, which is man's, Arjuna finally says: "I will act according

to Thy bidding." With purity of heart and mind comes the realization that life is a Song, a Harmony, and Man a part of that Harmony. "Not my will, but Thine, be done," the Christian says, and this surrender must be no hardship but a joy. When, finally, the student has become the *Master*, "all Nature thrills with joyous awe and feels subdued."

Compassion is no attribute. It is the Law of LAWS—eternal Harmony, Alaya's SELF: a shoreless universal essence, the light of everlasting right, and fitness of all things, the law of Love eternal.

As our planet revolves once every year around the sun and at the same time turns once in every twenty-four hours upon its own axis, thus traversing minor circles within a larger one, so is the work of the smaller cyclic periods accomplished and recommenced, within the Great Saros.

The revolution of the physical world, according to the ancient doctrine, is attended by a like revolution in the world of intellect—the spiritual evolution of the world proceeding in cycles, like the physical one.

Thus we see in history a regular alternation of ebb and flow in the tide of human progress. The great kingdoms and empires of the world, after reaching the culmination of their greatness, descend again, in accordance with the same law by which they ascended; till, having reached the lowest point, humanity reasserts itself and mounts up once more, the height of its attainment being, by this law of ascending progression by cycles, somewhat higher than the point from which it had before descended.

The division of the history of mankind into Golden, Silver, Copper and Iron Ages, is not a fiction. We see the same thing in the literature of peoples. An age of great inspiration and unconscious productiveness is invariably followed by an age of criticism and consciousness. The one affords material for the analyzing and critical intellect of the other.

Thus, all those great characters who tower like giants in the history of mankind, like Buddha-Siddhartha, and Jesus, in the realm of spiritual, and Alexander the Macedonian and Napoleon the Great, in the realm of physical conquests, were but reflexed images of human types which had existed ten thousand years before, in the preceding decimillennium, reproduced by the mysterious powers controlling the destinies of our world.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I, 34-35

THE DISCIPLINE OF DISCIPLESHIP

IN each person there resides the Supreme Spirit called Ishwara. He is untouched by desires, sorrows, works and the results of works. He is the Supreme Knower and the first of Teachers. His name is Om.

From these *sutras* emerges the whole philosophy and discipline of the would-be chela. For, if at all they have a message for him, they tell him that neither scriptures, nor books, nor men can impart those teachings which alone make life comprehensible. The Supreme Spirit alone has to become the object of his worship. Once this is recognized, the disciple has to impose on himself a rigid discipline which brooks no relaxation, for the Supreme cannot be approached save by paths acceptable to the Supreme. It cannot be approached through prayers and incantations. Worldly knowledge and wealth bring one no nearer to It. In these trivialities are not hid the passwords that open the doors of the sanctuary. The grace of the Supreme cannot be won by the offering of the aggrandizement of oneself, one's coterie or one's nation, for the Supreme which pervades the whole is concerned only with the whole. Even self-sacrifice and self-immolation are no credentials for access to Its Presence if these are undertaken to subserve a personal and therefore a limited end. No inviting of sorrows on oneself; no amount of Karma accomplished; no strivings through desires and longings can bring one nearer to the Supreme. Even in the love of a mother for her child, or that of a husband for his wife, there is selfishness in the first and egoism in the second. They are, neither the one nor the other, passports to the Supreme.

The Supreme is higher than the divisible. It is also higher than the indivisible. Says Sri Krishna: "He who being not deluded knoweth me thus as the Supreme Spirit, knoweth all things and worships me under every form and condition." Such an act of worship as this cannot be limited in time, enclosed by space, or hemmed in by circumstance. This worship has to dominate the discharge of duties and to enter into the act of sacrifice. It has to continue through recreation and repose, through meal-time and at work, in the silence and solitude of the still night as in the rush and tumult of public events. For, if Ishwara abides in all forms and is present in all conditions, then reverence has to be paid to the Ishwara within each form and condition.

Such worship does not come readily to people who have been trained to make of their lives a vast competitive arena where

thrust and counter-thrust are the routines of a day. It comes gradually, almost laboriously. It creeps into the person's life as a result of his or her silent homage and exclusive devotion. The adoration cannot be completed save by stages. Even to sense the presence of the Supreme "under every form and condition" demands that the person be at peace with all that lives and breathes. The vast brotherhood that this implies reaches out to friend and foe alike, and is to be sought after diligently within all forms of life—the animate as also the so-called inanimate. This devotion to Brotherhood comes only as a result of unselfish work done for humanity in the mass, for all individuals, whether good or bad; for, does not the rain fall on the humble and the proud, and the sun shine on the just and the unjust?

The working of the One in the many and the many in the One becomes manifest in the context of a Brotherhood which excludes nobody and nothing. Brotherhood becomes thus the *sine qua non* to knowledge, and that to such an extent that the slightest breath of non-brotherliness shuts the door to Spiritual Wisdom. It therefore follows that fanaticism, claims to exclusiveness and the boasting of attainments are sure outward indications of an inner impoverishment. Where there are rival claims, where pretensions prevail and there does not exist unity of aim, purpose and teaching, there remain no cohesive elements to cement a body of aspirants into one compact homogeneous unit. The aspiring soul has, therefore, to find his own *Sat Sang*—companionship with souls fired by the same holy motive of devotion to Ishwara. It is now this company which must become for him his world and his humanity. It is among these companions that he has to strive to achieve a brotherhood where the hurt of one is felt by each and where the joy of one strikes a chord of cheer in the hearts of all. The first duty of the brother is to be his brother's keeper. No sacrifice can be offered to Ishwara, no worship paid to its ubiquitous presence until all unfriendly thoughts are chased away. In the Sermon on the Mount, the injunction is given in clear, unambiguous language. Says the Scripture: "If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." (*Matthew*, V, 23-24)

No one desires harm to himself or to his own image. He practises no backbiting and slander against himself. He carries no disparaging tales about himself, starts no whispering campaign with himself as the target. He resents malice, envy or revenge

when these are directed against him. He feels hurt at imputed motives and slanderous innuendoes. Yet, such is the blindness of the age that it encourages the use of these very implements of unbrotherliness against others. The barbed tongue, the repartee which hurts, the veiled malicious gossip that strips another of all esteem—these have become valued possessions in the armoury of the 20th-century gentleman.

The disciple who desires to come out of the nightmare-side of existence is in duty bound to eschew all these. He has now so to merge himself in his *Sat Sang* that none of these emit their sparks of unbrotherliness through him. He dare not condemn, though by worldly standards condemnation would be justified. In the particular group of aspirants to which he is welded he has to go back of all irritating externalities—back of all human foibles—to search for and make his obeisance to the *Purusha* within. He has no right to cry to high heavens because within the group he has been unjustly treated. He has no right to hide behind externalities when truth has to be told to the very face of lie. In sober truth, he has to achieve the realization that all duty stems from the ideal of brotherhood and that no duty is obligatory which serves a lesser cause. It is now one of his duties that he search for ways and means whereby with such powers as are available to him he can lead his neighbour on to the right path of dedication and service.

Each member of the company has a similar duty cast on him, and it does not behove any brother that he pass judgement on the efforts of another lest by doing so he induce his brother to slip into despondency and stop all endeavour. The keeping alive of the vital link that runs through each brother and unites him to the whole is the chief task of any member. That task is Herculean, for, where magnetic influences vary, conflict in one form or another may lift its ugly head. It is on occasions such as these that brotherhood has to be practised most, for the simple reason that brotherhood alone is the cure for strife. St. Paul, faced with one such form of non-brotherliness among the Corinthians, gave his admonition thus:

If one of your number has a dispute with another, has he the face to take it to pagan law courts instead of to the community of God's people? Must brother go to law with brother . . . and that before unbelievers? Why not rather suffer injury? Why not let yourself be robbed?

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF OCCULTISM

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, July 1884.]

III

DEVELOPMENT OF WILL

You may be master of the Cabala and Chemistry; but you must also be master over flesh and blood.

—BULWER-LYTTON

IN our last letter on "Practical Instructions" we have attempted to show that thoughts and ideas, passions and desires, are not what are commonly understood as evanescent or temporary states of the molecules of the brain, but things, which by associating themselves with the semi-intelligent forces of nature, may become living realities and powerful instruments for good or for evil. Thoughts create desire, desire sets the will in motion, the motion of the will produces force and force gives shape to matter or substance.

There are three possibilities by which we may deal with these forces. We may either allow them to control us and become subservient to them, or we may associate ourselves with them and thereby make them our co-labourers, or we may become their masters and command them by the power of our will.

A person who allows himself to be guided entirely by his lower impulses and animal desires is either a criminal or a maniac, and it is very difficult to draw the line between the two. We read occasionally of cases where the most horrible crimes have been committed without any apparent provocation, and which can only be explained by the fact that the perpetrators either did not have the power or did not make the necessary efforts to resist such impulses.¹

The oftener man gives way to such impulses or influences, the less becomes his power of resistance. His condition finally becomes one of passive evil and, after death, his personality disintegrates and perishes in the eighth sphere.

The second possibility is to associate oneself with the evil powers of nature, to enter into communication with or propitiate

¹ See the story of "The Silver Hatchet" [THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, October 1963].

the elementals, to make them his co-operators in evil, or, in mediaeval language, "to make a compact with the evil ones." Under this head come the practices of *Black Magic*, which, although they may require a certain concentration of Will, do not require any high or enlightened development of the same. Instead of expanding the mind, such practices produce a contraction of the same. They consist in establishing an extraordinary amount of selfishness and isolation. The will is made forcible by certain exercises, such as the careless endurance of physical pain, or by concentrating all mental energies upon some material object. By such practices the "Black Magician" may obtain the assistance of the elementals, and through them produce some occult phenomena. His condition becomes one of *active evil*, and the consequence is not only the final destruction of his personality, but also that of his individuality.

The *third* possibility, and the only method to be recommended, is to develop our will power, so as to make the forces of nature our slaves and to control them. To gain the mastery over these forces is the most important step for the student of occultism, and the great secret, without a knowledge of which no further advance can be made, and the only method by which that power can be obtained, is by continual practice; that is, by a continual exercise of the will in the right direction. This does not mean only a continual desire to suppress selfish desires, but a continuous effort to accomplish and accumulate such work as is useful for the real progress of mankind. Like everything else in its right place, the animal nature also has its uses, and the lower principles are necessary factors at a certain stage of evolution. They are the soil into which the *tree of life* extends its roots, and from which the higher principles draw substance and strength. A man can be born without material desires and impulses, if the "Ego" or monad has already conquered them; but for *average* man to be born without material desires would be in the present state of evolution neither desirable nor useful. A man, for instance, without any combativeness would have no courage or self-reliance and would be a moral as well as a physical coward; without destructiveness he would have little energy to subdue evil, without acquisitiveness he would acquire no knowledge, and an entire absence of amativeness would probably make him narrow-minded, self-centred and selfish. Neither is it at all desirable that the so-called "fall of man" (the descent of spirit into matter) should never have taken place; for in that case man would have remained in the state of blissful ignorance of an elementary spirit,

while now he obtains knowledge and thereby becomes like God.

If the Will is a universal force, it necessarily follows that there can be only *one* supreme Will in the universe, although it may manifest itself in different forms, and the more we unite our individual Will with the supreme Will and co-operate with the same, the more our Will becomes powerful; while if we attempt to bring the action of our individual Will in opposition to the supreme Will, the consequences are necessarily disastrous to ourselves and lead to isolation and death. The Will to become powerful must become free from material desires. If we desire an object, we do not necessarily attract that object, but the object surely attracts us and we may become its slaves. Eliphas Levi says: "The Will accomplishes everything which it does not desire," and illustrations of the truth of this paradox are seen in everyday life. We see people spending their whole lives in vain and useless efforts to obtain riches, and either dying in poverty, or even if they accomplish their object, craving for more, and leading a life more miserable and wretched than the homeless beggar in the street; we see the office-seeker desiring power, bowing before ruffians, and the result is frequently an ignominious failure; we see the fop who wishes to be admired by women usually ridiculed and rejected by intelligent women; and we often see those who seek happiness in external pleasures becoming disgusted with life and ending it by their own hands. The safest way to become rich is by not craving for riches; because if we are contented with what we have, even if it be nothing, we shall be richer than the miser who possesses much and wants still more. If we desire power, we must rise morally and intellectually above others and be willing to sacrifice our own desires for their benefit, and power will come to us unasked. If we desire love, let us distribute all the love we have to all mankind, and the love of all whose love it is desirable to possess will descend upon us like the rain descends upon earth. If we desire happiness, we must be willing to give up our selfishness and we shall find happiness within ourselves.

A consideration of the above makes it evident that the development of the will and the attainment of occult powers is simply a natural result of evolution. Many incarnations may be necessary for average man to arrive at the state of perfection attained by the Adept, but the process may be hastened by a continuous effort of the will. Man in his youth longs for the material pleasures of earth, for the gratification of his physical body. As he advances in age he throws away his playthings and reaches out for some-

thing more substantial. He enters perhaps into intellectual pursuits, and not unfrequently, after a lifelong study, comes to the conclusion that he has been wasting his time by running after a shadow. Perhaps love steps in and he may think himself the most fortunate of mortals, only to find out sooner or later that ideals can only be found in the ideal world. He then becomes convinced of the emptiness of the shadows he has been pursuing, and like the winged butterfly, emerging from the chrysalis, he stretches out his feelers into the realm of the infinite spirit, and is astonished to find a radiant sun where he only expected to find darkness and death. Some arrive at this light sooner, others arrive later, and many are lured away by some illusive light, which they mistake for the sun, and scorch their wings and perish.

Life is a continuous battle between good and evil, between the results of a previous Karma and the efforts of the Will to overcome them, between man's higher nature and his lower impulses, and man's future depends on which will come out victorious. But this battle does not last for ever if determined efforts are made by the will. A set of animal impulses, once thoroughly subdued, are not liable to assert themselves again, and the more man exercises his will the more will he gain in strength.

There are two gigantic obstacles in the way of true progress: the misconception of what we believe to be *God* and the misconception of what we believe to be *Man*. As long as man believes in a personal God who distributes favours to some and punishes others—a God that can be reasoned with, persuaded or pacified—he will keep himself within the narrow circle of his ignorance and his mind cannot sufficiently expand. To be selfish and at the same time to continually think of some place of personal enjoyment or heaven, does not assist in man's progression. If such a man desists from doing a wicked act or denies himself material pleasure, he does not do so from any innate love of good, but either because he expects a reward for his "sacrifice," or because his fear of God makes him a coward. We must do good because we want to do good, and not from fear of punishment or from hope for any personal consideration. The gods help those that help themselves, and the wise expect nothing but *justice*. The wise man knows that he is only a part of the universal whole; that by doing good to others he also benefits himself, and that by injuring others he becomes his own executioner. To love all is to him a necessity, and the love of self appears to him illusive and foolish.

The knowledge of God and the knowledge of Man are ultimately identical, and he who knows himself, knows God. If we

understand the nature of the divine powers within us, it will not be difficult to unite our Will with the supreme Will of the cosmos; we shall then be no longer subject to external influences, but we shall control them; instead of being the slaves of Nature, we shall become her masters, and instead of being ruled by demons, we shall become rulers and gods.

This is, however, a doctrine which is liable to be misunderstood, and a misunderstanding of which may lead to consequences of a most serious nature. To unite our will with the universal will, does not simply mean a sentimental acquiescence with the decrees of an inexorable fate and a patient indifference to whatever may happen; much less does it mean a submission of our will to the will of an ignorant or wicked person; but it means a strong and active desire to accomplish whatever may be in our power for the good of humanity. An old doctrine which often turns up in the Middle Ages, and was especially prevailing among the Convents of France and Spain, says: "The devout having offered up and annihilated their own selves exist no longer but in God. *Thenceforth they can do no wrong.* The better part of them is so divine, that it no longer knows what the other is doing." This has been misunderstood by the numerous monks and nuns of these times, who thought that after they had worked themselves to a certain degree into the favour of God by confession, castigation and penances, they might thenceforth do as they pleased and commit the most outrageous acts of profligacy and injustice without being made responsible for their acts; and as the clergy were considered to be the especial favourites of Divinity and God's deputies, the people would often submit entirely their own wills to the desires of clerical scoundrels, who did not hesitate to assert their authority by torture and fire. They became indeed irresponsible beings, because by associating themselves with their animal natures they became brutalized, and the "better part of them" did no longer know what the other was doing, because having separated themselves from their higher principles and having merged themselves into the lower ones, they had no "better parts" any more. They became "devils" instead of becoming "gods."

To sacrifice one's self means to subdue the *lower* desires and strengthen the higher ones; to unite one's will with the divine will, is to want nothing else but the good, to live up to one's highest conceptions of justice and truth, and to have one's actions always guided by a universal love for humanity. It means not only to *desire* the good, but to *dare* to do it. To accomplish this,

it is necessary that our highest conceptions of such abstract ideas should be correct. It is sometimes said that it does not make any difference what a man believes, so long as he acts rightly; but a person cannot be certain to act rightly unless he knows what is right, and we therefore often see the most horrible acts of injustice committed in the name of justice. The belief of the majority is not always the correct belief, and the voice of conscience and humanity is often drowned in the clamour of a superstition based upon an erroneous theological doctrine. An erroneous belief is undoubtedly detrimental to progress, and a belief to be useful must be based on knowledge. The true development of will depends therefore on the attainment of knowledge, because knowledge establishes faith and without faith the will cannot have much power.

(To be continued)

HE who would drink the essence must dare to possess it pure; must willingly throw aside the dust-covered treasures of earth that harboured its flavour before.

The first strong day of power repays in full the weakness of ages.

All the air resounds with the Presence of the Great Spirit.

All mortals shrink into echoes—faint, distorted, jarring. But listen beyond the echoes to the singing souls—the immortals are no other than the mortals themselves: today in promise, hereafter in consciousness and life.

These Divinities have universal aims; when the silence falls upon us, we can hear Their Voices, pointing out the Path which transforms the body of earth into the Body of Light.

Our Divinities cast the Light on the Path for us and as It grows we see the Light of the Lords of Light.

On that day the august Company of Watchers, strangers ever to earthly company, shall take for us the place of the poor actors who now usurp the stage.

The grain of incense will fall into the Flame of Wisdom and the sacrificial fragrance will live—the Immortal will become MAN.

—*Ageless Wisdom*

INVESTIGATING PSYCHIC POWERS

(1) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity without distinction of race, colour, or creed. (2) To promote the study of Aryan and other Scriptures, of the World's religions and sciences, and to vindicate the importance of old Asiatic literature, namely, of the Brahmanical, Buddhist, and Zoroastrian philosophies. (3) To investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature under every aspect possible, and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man especially. These are, broadly stated, the three chief objects of the Theosophical Society.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

THE subject of psychic faculties too often arouses the expectation of things that whet the appetite for wonders, and encourage the desire to possess powers. The development of psychic faculties is inevitable in our race and evolution period, especially in the Americas, where the forerunners of the next sub-race of the present Fifth Root-Race are coming into incarnation. But this natural development must be under control of the Soul-Mind, for, if these faculties grow wild and dominate their possessors, they breed delusion and danger, and may lead indeed to moral destruction. So, in the *Five Messages to the American Theosophists*, Madame Blavatsky indicated the lines of action to follow, the developments to watch for, the dangers to be guarded against. And in them, as always, she insisted that the practice of the ethics of Theosophy was a far greater need than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts.

The chief foe to progress is always the "dire heresy of separateness." The Theosophical Movement has suffered because its so-called devotees followed only one or other of its three objects. Yet these are really indivisible. How can we form a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood, unless we have, to some degree, a metaphysical understanding of the fundamental unity of Life—on the plane of spirit—and a scientific grasp of the nature of the ever-changing relationships of all living beings—on the plane of manifestation? Without this metaphysical and scientific basis, brotherhood would only be a flimsy thing of feeling, of sentiment and good-will, fluctuating and unstable as the feelings themselves are. But this essential knowledge does not spring from a study of the appearances of life, from observation of the physical world alone. We must go to the inner world of the psychic and spiritual forces that cause the outer universe to be. We must investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature before the ethical

foundation for Brotherhood can be sure. *The Third Object of the Movement is not separate from the First.*

But our investigation of occult nature need not start from the beginning, as though there had never been any explorers of this realm before. Who would take up the study of mathematics, physics, biology, music, or any other subject, by insisting on finding out every detail afresh, ignoring the fact that others have already formulated the principles and laws of the subject, and have indicated the methods found by long experience to be the most efficacious? Yet this empiric approach is the procedure of the majority of present-day psychic researchers. Hardly any recognize that there already exists a codified and total science of life, which covers occult and spiritual laws as well as physical. In consequence, there is much waste of time and energy in speculation as to causes of phenomena, much confusion in inventing fresh names, and many casualties by the way. And all the time, *a little attention to the Second Object of the Movement would illuminate this investigation of the hidden powers in nature and in man.*

The wisdom of the past combined religion and science as one—it was myth, legend, allegory, parable and ethical precept for those who could go no deeper, but practical, scientific instruction for those who could read their inner meaning. H. P. Blavatsky in her books, *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine*, all the time brings corroboration for her statements from the ancient writings, and shows how they correlate with and support each other.

But even these writings need a key to their comprehension because of the missing portions, the modifications, the accretions and perversions that have developed in them, in the course of centuries. In the Ten Points of the last chapter of *Isis Unveiled* are given, as it were, the very ABC of Occultism. They define the attitude of mind to be adopted, the method of approach, the fundamental principles, and, however familiar they may be, their importance should not be overlooked.

The first Item indicates the right approach. There is no miracle, there is only law. Therefore do not be a wonder-seeker, open-eyed, open-mouthed for whatever marvel may drop in. Apparent miracle is due to the operation of laws not at present known. Do not assume, therefore, that *your* knowledge is infallible, *your* experience, psychic or mystic, the only touchstone of truth. Be humble, and even though you think you know “the well-ascertained laws of nature,” realize that others may know that of which you are ignorant.

The next two Items serve to offset one of the most fertile causes of confusion—the false division of the universe into two aspects only, either physical and spiritual, or material and mental. Yet, how can we hope to understand life on a partial, imperfect basis? Nature has three aspects, the physical appearance, the unchanging, immortal Spirit, and the energetic, plastic, psychic link, the instrument of Spirit, the basis of form. With this threefold conception we can unlock the gate of magic—the science of the inner forces. The key to the lock is man himself, for his nature is also threefold—the body, the indwelling Spirit, and the energetic, psychic intelligence between. In man are to be found in miniature all the powers of the Universe, and, as he integrates his triple nature into the omniscience and omnipotence of Spirit, he becomes, so to say, a controlling switch by which all the cosmic forces can be operated.

The next Item states that, though magic is the science of integration and immortality, what is learnt must not remain in the head, it must be put into practice, it must become an art. Here a question is bound to arise. If we are advised to put what we learn into practice, if we are encouraged to *study* occultism, and yet are warned against developing and using the psychic faculties, is there not a contradiction? The answer is: When you use faculties abnormally, do you really *know* the science of them? Do you know which explanation of the vision you perceive is the right one? Is it a picture, an event, or a thought-form? Is it of the past, the present, or the future? From where does it come, what forces produce it, how do they work? What is the effect upon yourself? Have you any corroboration of the truth of your particular explanation? How many of the thousands who have one or other form of psychic sensitivity know the science of the subject? If you do not know, do not practise. What you do know, apply. For, the investigation and application of the psychic faculties should first be done in their normal manifestations. To develop telepathy, first learn to understand the *spoken words*, to translate and interpret them correctly—by no means an easy task. For indeed we could not understand other people at all if it were not for that same germ of telepathic power we all possess.

The next Items deal with motive. There is only one magic; whether it be white or black depends upon selfish or unselfish motive. Three goals lie ahead, and you are bound to follow on to one or other of them. You may become a white adept, or a black magician, with control over your own forces, and power thereby over nature's. Or, at the opposite pole, you may allow the forces

to control you, becoming the passive slave of any outside power that takes possession. This is the unhappy state of the medium. And races, which are made up of individuals, show the same three tendencies. In some are many natural seers, some are addicted to sorcery, others are given over to mediumship. Here is another indication for the searcher. Let him ask himself, "What is the general trend of my motives? Am I gaining control over myself and using the powers that come therefrom for the general benefit? Or am I continually looking for powers and possessions for myself, dominating others for my own ends? Or, again, am I sliding down into mediumship, letting life and events and people carry me along, day-dreaming or blindly following suggestions and commands from outside?" For safety's sake, we must know in which direction we are going.

The other three Items point out the fundamentals of magic itself. First, the existence of the astral light must be recognized. The agent in all magic is the vital substance-force that pervades all things, and which is called by many different names according to its mode and plane of functioning—Akasa, Astral Light, Archaeus, or Chaos, the sacred fire associated with so many gods of whatever Pantheon—Hindu, Greek, Egyptian—terrestrial magnetism, and what not. It is the force that, obeying the will and the desire, produces objective phenomena, and, in one aspect, it is the register of nature—the Book of the Recording Angel—for its living, plastic substance carries the impress, the images, sounds, scents, etc., of everything that has been or that is and also of what is to be, since the future is wrapped up in the past. Action, thought and feeling all leave their indelible mark on it, and by its means the powers of clairvoyance, second-sight, and so on, function. Memory itself is a perception of its records. And only by recognizing the fact of the astral light can we explain satisfactorily the thousand and one spiritualistic and psychic phenomena that take place.

The ninth Item mentions one phase of magical skill and this—since the enumeration of the Yogic powers would fill ten volumes, it is said—indicates its importance. It deals with the power to withdraw the inner man from the outer body, the power to know oneself as a conscious being apart from the instrument. The whole aim of incarnation is to be able to live a conscious life in spirit, by overcoming the delusion that we are the body, the name and form and personal attributes. Only when we cease to identify ourselves with the outer case can the withdrawal be made from it at will, leaving sufficient alertness in the guardian senses to be

able to take active charge when necessary. The medium may also lose his sense of identity, but involuntarily and abnormally, and the body is left in a cataleptic condition.

Finally, in the tenth Item, magic is defined as the intimate, practical knowledge of electricity and magnetism, that is, of this all-pervading force whose most material manifestations we call electricity and magnetism. It is polar in its functions, and this polarity is the key to the working of the occult powers. To understand any force, we must take into account its opposite—gravitation-levitation, cohesion-dispersion, positive-negative. All the affinities, the attractions and repulsions of metal and plant, human being and animal, as also the healing processes, are aspects of this same law of polarity. The flow of vision, so to say, or of the other senses, may be changed from without-within, to within-without, under the same laws. By learning how to integrate the pairs of opposites, to synthesize the opposing forces, we bring into action the real force behind, by which we become the master, co-worker and guide of nature.

So, if we accept our ABC humbly, and work on it, establishing habits of right thought and action, the psychic faculties as they ripen will no longer be strong poison, but fruitful aids for the soul's service.

THE distribution of mankind is only a distribution into *varieties*, which are commonly designated by the somewhat indefinite term *races*. While we maintain the unity of the human species, we at the same time repel the depressing assumption of superior and inferior races of men. There are nations more susceptible of cultivation, more highly civilized, more ennobled by mental cultivation than others—but none in themselves nobler than others. All are in like degree designed for freedom; a freedom which in the ruder conditions of society belongs only to the individual, but which in social states enjoying political institutions appertains as a right to the whole body of the community.

—ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT

REINCARNATION: A LOGICAL NECESSITY

Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting;
The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star,
Hath had elsewhere its setting
And cometh from afar.

—WORDSWORTH

PROBABLY because man's chief interest is man, his nature and destiny, the doctrine of reincarnation has always been one of the more congenial aspects of theosophical teaching. In the past, especially in the West, admittedly at a time of stronger religious dogmatism, it was regarded as a most startling and revolutionary belief. Today it has a certain popularity. There are many, though their knowledge of Theosophy may be slight or even non-existent, who yet profess a belief in reincarnation and dwell upon the probabilities of their past and future lives. Before the doctrine can be well understood, it must be seen in its context, correlated to other aspects of theosophical teaching. Still, the fact that the belief is spreading, whether it is accurately understood or not, is encouraging.

As far as Westerners are concerned, there are only three tenable theories regarding man's past, present and future: that of the materialist, of the orthodox Christian, and the theosophical theory of recurring births and deaths. All differ fundamentally, but it should never be overlooked that one of them must be true.

The materialistic theory is quite clear and requires no comment. Man is nothing more than his body. Before birth he had no existence as an individual, and after physical death he ceases to be, absolutely. He is just the purely physical product of an entirely physical evolutionary process.

In considering the Christian theory we are confronted with the difficulty of getting a definite ruling. There are over three hundred Christian sects, and they range from a broad philosophical interpretation of the Biblical word to the narrowest unquestioning orthodoxy. Therefore, at the risk of contradiction from some sources we venture to state the generally accepted Christian belief. Incarnate man is a soul encased in a body. He had no existence before physical birth, so each birth is a new creation; but he continues to exist after physical death. If he has been a true believer he reaches Heaven and dwells there in a state of bliss for ever. If he has not been a true believer his post-mortem state seems nebulous; some consign him to everlasting torment, others maintain a discreet silence. So the Christian

theory appears to be: no existence before physical birth, a brief life on earth, and afterwards an existence in Heaven or elsewhere for ever.

The theosophical view is that the doctrine of reincarnation provides the only key to the obscure problem of life and death. It can be defined as the theory that the whole human race is individually proceeding along a succession of objective lives and subjective deaths with a definite purpose to a definite culmination. We have all lived many times on earth before and we will continue to do so. First, we must consider what it is that reincarnates. Seven principles, in conjunction, make up incarnate man. First, the body with three adjuncts—astral body, life force and animal instincts—the four comprising the false personality. They are all physical or near physical, therefore mortal and perishable, and they disperse at, or following, corporeal death. Obviously they cannot reincarnate separately or in conjunction. Above the false personality there is the true individual, the higher triad, intellectual man in affinity with his spiritual principles. In conjunction they comprise the spiritual, immortal ever-conscious self, which we call the "Ego." It is the "Ego" that reincarnates.

We cannot believe that a process of nature is devoid of purpose. Therefore the successive incarnations of the Ego must serve a purpose in the great drama of human life. Man is potentially spiritual, and through a spiritual evolutionary process hidden behind an observed physical evolution, he is eliminating his selfish animal nature and developing his spiritual potential, which is the Ego. His end (with the spiritual Ego fully conscious and articulate in incarnate man) is human perfection. Now it is only through a succession of many births and rebirths that the perpetual progress of the Ego towards final perfection can be maintained. It is only through incarnation in many bodies that the Ego is enabled to consciously realize good through experience of its antithesis, evil, and thus achieve emancipation. Consider man as he is today, the most complex and perfect organism on earth, already the head and front of a long silent evolution. He could never have reached his present state, with its developed sense of right and wrong, except through ages of past experience and teaching. And his end is not yet, though, through the promotion of pure and generous impulses, it may be coming into sight. Progress to that end is through reincarnation, and the spur is karmic law.

In describing the life-cycle of the Ego, Theosophy makes use

of the word *Devachan* which should be explained. Its literal translation is "home of the gods." It is probably the prototype of the Christian "Heaven," but it is not a place; it is subjective, and denotes the condition or state of the Ego between two incarnations. When the physical body ceases to function, the remaining principles leave it for ever, but the Ego is not immediately released from earthly ties. The animal instincts, or animal soul, being the lower or worldly aspect of the thinking principle and having a closer relationship to it than the other mortal principles, remains united to the Ego for some time. The length of time for this coalition varies; it is determined by the nature of the living man. If his life has been gross and selfish, strong in earthly appetites and thereby giving strength and vitality to the animal soul, it may last for some time; if not, the period may be short. This has an analogy in the story of Mohammed's coffin, "suspended between heaven and earth." It is certainly a state of suspense. It also appears to be the prototype of purgatory still accepted by many Christians, for it is undoubtedly a period of purgation though neither candles nor prayers can speed its close. This suspensory period ends with the severance of the animal soul from the Ego. Theosophy calls it the second death. Then the animal soul, a "shell," a mere bundle of animal instincts, lacking intelligence and hardly conscious, yet an entity, drifts about in the astral plane until it is dissipated. This same shell is, more often than not, the "dear departed" of the séance room.

But the second death means release to the Ego. Though it retains as a potency the essence of its last personality, it is now freed from all carnal influences, and falls into the subjective state of *Devachan*. This state is an idealized continuation of terrestrial life, a long period of supreme felicity, perfect peace and rest; a glorious recompense for the trials and sufferings of an incarnation. All the world-evils, cruelty, pain and misery are forgotten as though they had never been, for that in which they reside is no longer there.

But all the nobler things of incarnate life remain—love, happiness, beauty and art, for they are spiritually derived. The state is a vivid, beautiful dream, more vivid than life on earth. Yet, with consciousness of happiness only and without knowledge beyond, it is just a lovely illusion. But terrestrial life is an illusion also, all human life is illusion until we reach that final state of perfection when all knowledge becomes ours.

In the *Devachanic* state there can be no spiritual progress for the Ego, as the evils which must be overcome rest in the lower

principles and during this period they do not exist. Progress is only made during terrestrial life, when these principles can be engaged. Yet, without the *Devachanic* period the evolution of the Ego could not continue. It is a necessary rest from the terrestrial life just ended; it is also a strengthening and preparation for the life to come. In fact it is an assimilative process where our ideal human interests are naturally nourished. If music, poetry or art have been preoccupations of the terrestrial man, they may be continued. This is a determining factor in genius and particularly child genius.

When the appropriate period of *Devachanic* rest comes to an end, the Ego, moved by the instinctive desire of the potential animal soul, is once more summoned to take up the burden of terrestrial life and inhabit a house of flesh. With the birth of a child a new incarnation begins. Though the Ego is unchanged, the personality is entirely different, while yet endowed with the karmic attributes carried over from the previous incarnation. A new physical life in a new body, with a new personality, under new circumstances, commences, but they all fulfil the appropriate and deserved conditions for the progress of the Ego. So with renewed terrestrial life and inevitable death to follow, a life-cycle is completed.

An illustration may be given to supplement this description of reincarnation. The Ego is sometimes called the "thread soul" and the span of human existence is compared to a string of beads. The thread on which the beads are strung represents the immortal Ego, and each separate bead an incarnation. The personality is different with each life on earth, but the Ego is always the same.

This plain factual statement of a life-cycle may give the impression that the whole procedure is fortuitous. This is not so. Nor for one moment has karmic law been suspended. All the states through which the Ego passes, every incidental of each new incarnation, are predetermined by individual action in the past.

There are more people in the world today who accept the doctrine of reincarnation, in one form or another, than those who reject it. The belief has almost general acceptance in the East, but the Christian churches will have none of it. Yet Christ never denied it, and many of His sayings suggest that He and those with whom He lived accepted it implicitly. What else could He have had in mind when He said: "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"? And surely He must have had the lower mortal quaternary and

the higher spiritual Ego in view when He said: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Reincarnation must have been taken for granted when Christ could declare that John the Baptist was Elias of old whom the people were expecting; also when the people asked Him if a man had sinned because he was *born* blind. A man could hardly be punished for a sin before that sin was committed. Reincarnation must have been a Christian tenet at least until the conversion of Constantine, when there was such a wholesale revision. If the Church had, throughout the centuries, allowed the simple teaching of Christ to prevail over dogmatic theology with its Mosaic ideas and chronology, it would not be losing adherents so rapidly today.

Many declare that they cannot accept the doctrine of reincarnation because they cannot remember their past lives. But they want memory to carry back to the actual physical happenings; the people they knew, what they did and the places they lived in. It is not possible, at least at present, to remember these things, but that does not disprove our having lived before. Memory is at best a faulty instrument. Few who have passed middle age remember more than the salient incidents of youth, and with some, memory fails completely. Yet this same faulty memory is expected to go much further and bring to us the knowledge of incarnations in past ages. But there is more involved in this question than the obvious fallibility of the memorizing faculty. With each incarnation the Ego is provided with a new body and brain from which arises a new animal soul, all constituting an entirely new personality. This new personality is the seat of physical consciousness and memory and it cannot provide consciousness of that which it did not know. It is impossible for it to be a witness to that which it did not experience. This is why we cannot, in our present state, possess any factual knowledge of past incarnations.

But, it may be objected, the Ego is immortal, it has passed through all incarnations, why does it not remember? The answer is that the Ego does remember, but in our almost entirely personal condition of life, it is not articulate to our physical consciousness. The potency is there, resting in the Ego, and as we make spiritual progress, factual memory of previous incarnations will come. As we are at present, it is without doubt a merciful dispensation that we cannot remember. How many events in this present life would we prefer to forget if we could? We have not yet developed the moral fibre that would enable us to bear all the dreadful knowledge of the past that would come to us. We

will know in time, but only when we have the spiritual strength to accept the knowledge. Meanwhile we should refrain from any action which could bring remorse and regret on the day when it can be recalled. It should not be overlooked that there is in all of us the *subjective* memory of past incarnations, and this memory is the basis of character. We all differ, we all have our own particular attributes, aptitudes and qualities, our own idiosyncracies. They can arise from nothing but knowledge and experience gained in past incarnations. We are at any given moment the epitome of all our past. There is no other logical way of accounting for character. Heredity and environment alone are too limited. If they were the sole arbiters of character, then all who are born to the same parents under the same conditions should be identical. The reason for children partaking of the nature of their parents is, that the Ego, returning to incarnation, finds, under karmic law, its own appropriate spiritual and physical condition.

Now review the three possibilities:

Materialism. No life of any description beyond the physical body.

Church. No life before physical birth when a soul is "created," but an immortal life for the soul after physical death.

Theosophy. Alternate incarnations and periods of rest until man achieves spiritual consciousness.

Which is the logical tenet? Which do you accept?

THE basic oneness of the universe is not only the central characteristic of the mystical experience, but is also one of the most important revelations of modern physics. It becomes apparent at the atomic level and manifests itself more and more as one penetrates deeper into matter, down into the realm of subatomic particles. The unity of all things and events will be a recurring theme throughout our comparison of modern physics and Eastern philosophy.

—FRITJOF CAPRA

DANGERS OF OVERSPECIALIZATION

LIFE is essentially synthetic and therefore no problem can be solved if it is isolated and viewed as a unique phenomenon. The consideration of particulars must play its part in the study of any one aspect of Nature or of man, but we must not lose sight of universals. Men of science are suffering today from overspecialization, the dangers of which are beginning to be recognized. We have fallen into the dire heresy of separateness to the extent of dividing every department of life from Life itself and in so doing we have disintegrated our own consciousness.

A specialist in any field of human endeavour is apt to narrow his vision in his attempt to focus it exclusively on one sphere. "I am interested only in politics," says the politician. "I do not read philosophy or even fiction unless it brings in some political issue."

This attitude is all too prevalent among politicians and party leaders. But the man imprisoned in the narrow groove of politics has neither breadth of vision nor depth of insight. Like an engine confined to its special track, his consciousness travels backwards and forwards on the same line, exercising itself only along that limited route. Inevitably his vision becomes short-sighted and superficial and ultimately he fails in his very aim as a politician.

What is the remedy? In the words of a great emperor who cannot be accused of having lived in the ivory-tower of his utopian idealism:

Constantly regard the universe as one living being having one substance and one soul; observe how all things act with one movement; and how all things are the co-operating cause of all things which exist; observe too the continuous spinning of the thread and the contexture of the web.

Thus Marcus Aurelius Antoninus, whose advice politicians and social reformers would do well to heed. The Universe is one living being; all substance is one; all energy is one. This identity of Spirit and Matter, the two inseparable aspects of the One Life, makes all beings and creatures, all forms and phenomena related to each other. Similarly the law of causation, under which every effect springs from its legitimate root, operates everywhere, drawing a living pattern to which each aspect of life contributes.

True philosophy does not divorce metaphysical study from active work. Metaphysics may not seem directly related to political activity, and may appear to the politician abstract and remote, yet metaphysics alone can give him the necessary detach-

ment to judge impartially and can bring to him the light of universal principles to evaluate particular problems.

How can a man without calmness see clearly? And how can the politician retain calmness if, plunged in the heat of the battle, he fails to withdraw into the cool realm of true philosophy?

The man of action more than any other needs to retire daily from the field of battle for quiet meditation. Such meditation, away from his action-problems, will enable him to gather the force of thought, will and imagination which are essential for the successful achievement of his ends.

Each one, no matter what his field of active endeavour, no matter what his job in life, if he would be *really practical* should practise meditation. Every morning he should determine the righteousness of his motives and seek inner direction ere plunging into the routine of his duties, lest in the fever and the hurry of objective life he forget his true direction and injure his public work.

Especially is this essential for the politician and the public leader, whose blood is apt to become heated and to run too fast!

The need for philosophy in cultivating coolness and tranquillity of mind and feelings was well recognized by our ancient forefathers. Hence old legislative codes such as *Manava-Dharma-Shastra* begin with details of cosmology, to the puzzlement of modern readers! But the ancient lawgivers and social reformers were true practical philosophers who aimed at the building of a State and a social order in conformity with the Unity and the Harmony of Nature.

Such great men as Confucius in China and Plato in Greece set model lessons for legislators and administrators, as food for daily meditation. Our modern political leaders, ministers, civil servants, all need to go back to the ancient principle of finding moral and spiritual nourishment in the practice of contemplation.

Let them not merely read but study such books as the *Second Book of Kural*, the old Tamil Code for princes, statesmen and men of affairs, and reflect upon such practical aphorisms as these:

There is no bigger fool than the man who has studied and acquired much knowledge and also preaches to others, but who does not govern himself. (Chapter 84)

To seek to further the welfare of the State by enriching it through fraud and falsehood is like storing water in an unburnt mud pot and hoping to preserve it. (Chapter 66)

Avoid at all times action that is not in accordance with moral

law. . . . Success achieved without minding the prohibitions of the moral law brings grief in the wake of achievement. (Chapter 66)

Efficiency essentially consists in strength of mind; other things come thereafter. (Chapter 67)

Or again, let them consider these precepts which the wise Confucius gave:

Government is rectification. When the ruler does right, all men will imitate his self-control.

When right principles prevail in the empire, there will be no controversies among the common people.

To centralize wealth is to disperse the people; to distribute wealth is to collect the people.

Educated politicians may have read translations of these ancient works, but such books need to be made daily companions. They provide the moral and philosophical basis needed for successful and righteous politico-social reforms in exactly the same way as the old law-codes provide the model for new legislation.

Let us not despise the ancients. Let rather their wisdom inspire us to combine study of philosophy and practice of meditation with skill in action and devotion to work.

WE are now realizing that Western man is ignorant of psychology just because of his immense practical success in obtaining power by assuming that the whole of reality is mechanical and by confining himself exclusively to those aspects which would, at least for the moment, submit to that menial interpretation, and yield him powers and means, not insight and meaning. On the other hand those thinkers and cultures which have hesitated to exploit the outer world as a power machine, before they had explored and understood that inner world through which all apprehension and conception of the outer world had to reach them, we now discover it is not unnatural to suppose, have thereby certain insights into the inner world which we are denied. In brief, our civilization, just because it is so powerful, is ignorant; because it knows so much about means, is proportionately ignorant as to ends; because it is physically so competent, is psychologically inept.

—GERALD HEARD

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Although the term “collaborative learning” may be unfamiliar for some, the idea itself is not new. Understanding of its importance to higher education is now gaining momentum. By challenging the traditional view of the teacher’s authority, collaborative learning helps prepare students for “effective interdependence in an increasingly collaborative world that today requires greater flexibility and adaptability to change than ever before,” says Kenneth A. Bruffee, in his article in *Change* (the Magazine of Higher Learning) for March/April 1987. With a little help from one’s friends and peers, anyone can exceed what he or she could have learned or accomplished alone. Surveys of research support the experience of school and college instructors that students learn better through non-competitive collaborative group work than in classrooms that are highly individualized and competitive. The author writes out of his own experience as a college professor:

Interest in collaborative learning in colleges and schools is motivated in part by these results. It is motivated also by the observation that the rest of the world now works collaboratively almost as a universal principle. . . . There is hardly a bank, legal firm, or industrial management team that strives—much less dares—to proceed in the old-fashioned individualistic manner. . . .

Interest in collaborative learning is motivated also by recent challenges to our understanding of what knowledge is. This challenge is being felt throughout the academic disciplines. . . . The way we think now differs in essential ways from the way we thought in the past. Social constructionists tend to assume that knowledge is a social construct and that, as the historian of science Thomas Kuhn has put it, all knowledge “is intrinsically the common property of a group or else nothing at all.” . . .

In general, people learn judgment best in groups because we tend to talk each other out of our unshared biases and presuppositions. . . . One thing that college and university instructors most hope to do through collaborative learning is increase their students’ ability to exercise judgment within the teacher’s field of expertise.

But there is today another thing that instructors hope to do through collaborative learning. They hope to raise their students’ level of social maturity as exercised in their intellectual lives. In doing so, instructors are trying to prepare their students for the “real world.” They are preparing them to enter law, medicine, architecture, banking, research science—any field, in fact, that de-

pend on effective interdependence and consultation for excellence.

The formal varieties of collaborative learning organized by instructors in classrooms imitate the "real world" interdependence that is the very basis of all life. It empowers students to work more successfully beyond the confines of college or university classrooms. Collaborative learning calls on levels of ingenuity and inventiveness that many students never knew they had, and equips them for the real business of living.

It is the image of the child, as created by man, that determines educational practice in any historical epoch. And that image is as often wrong as it is correct, says David Elkind, Professor of Child Study and President of the National Association for the Education of Young Children, Washington, D.C., in his article in *Young Children* (XLII, 6-11). In the present, as in the past, the task of educators is to fight against the false images that threaten the healthy education of young children. Ideas of early childhood malleability and competence, the writer submits, distort how young children grow:

Historically, predominant images of the child were derived from the prevailing political, social, or religious ethos. Modern images of the child are said to be scientific in origin, but this has not rendered them any more valid. In some ways, the scientific origin of some contemporary images of the child makes them even more difficult to combat than previous images.

Three modern images of the child have contributed to what I call miseducation, namely, putting children at risk for no purpose. First, Freudian psychology gave rise to the image of the sensual child, having the whole gamut of sexual instincts and proclivities once reserved to adults; children whose sexual instincts were unduly repressed would become neurotic. . . .

The second image of child malleability is sometimes misinterpreted. . . . Children thrive on consistency, stability, and security; adults seek new experience and adventure. Children adapt less easily to change within the family than adults do, but the reverse image fostered by a misapplication of social scientists' ideas about change in society persists and contributes to miseducation.

Perhaps the most pervasive and pernicious contemporary image of the child was promoted by psychologists in the 1960s—the image of infants and young children as having much more capacity to learn academic skills than children, regardless of background,

actually have. It is true that all young children have intellectual abilities and that their thinking should be encouraged, but within the context of their psychological stage of development. . . .

It seems reasonable to predict that the false images of children today will be replaced by equally false images tomorrow. . . . The task of early childhood educators, then, is never-ending. Each generation presents a new challenge and a new battle. And it is a battle that we can never really win, because each new generation is prone to the same mistakes. Yet, if we do not fight, it is a battle we can most assuredly lose. For those in early childhood education, it is a battle worth fighting.

An article in the September 1987 issue of *Prediction* (U.K.) raises the question that has always intrigued mankind: fate or free will? Is the future set, or can it be changed? The writer, Lyn Shea, an astrologer, sees predestination and free will as two sides of the same coin and not mutually exclusive:

Take reincarnation. When the thought of other lifetimes is embraced it becomes possible to envisage the way cause and effect works—and cause and effect is what is meant by karma.

So the causes mooted in one lifetime will tend to dictate effects in another, thus curtailing our free will—or moulding it within certain guidelines. . . .

But that doesn't mean that all karma or all causes are predestined; there will be some areas of life where our free will has complete reign and even this we have earned by not infringing any universal laws to date and so "preordaining" our right to move freely. . . .

The future is within us, not without. It is subject to the individual and collective mind. . . . The present and the future are not two separate areas, they are one whole. But they are subject to growth and change just as our physical bodies are. . . .

To accurately read the long-term future is to be versed in all the wisdoms to such an extent that these can be seen as having no beginning or end. The world and the universe are a continuum.

Time is not linear; it is convolute—and quantum physics has just proved it, giving credence to many avenues of divination and metaphysics that were until now the territory of mystics and seers. . . .

How else could people like Nostradamus, Mother Shipton, Edgar Cayce and other notable seers have predicted the future if it did

not exist? The answer is that it exists only in possibility, like a negative. What they saw or visualized were distinct possibilities, which is why some of their predictions came off while others didn't. Perhaps they saw certain parts of the negative more clearly than others. They used their wisdom in connection with the inner eye and perceived the notable possibilities.

Free will naturally points to the existence of avenues. At all times we have options. . . . The negative for the future is developing as we grow, the picture is being contemplated as we travel.

We are heading into the future and at the same time we are tied to the past, by our karma. We are continually picking up threads and reweaving them (occasionally perhaps sewing in new threads) but eventually the old and the new threads are so interwoven that we cannot see anything but the whole tapestry.

The present is the landing stage between past and future but is so tenuous and fast-moving that it may be likened to a raft on rapids. The scenery is the past and the future, while the raft is the present.

The scenery may be certain landmarks which etch out stages in time, but the raft moves with us and is our stability, what we need to cling to, so that in the end it can be seen that past, present and future are not only inseparable but one moving unit. Only our personal awareness can segregate the stages—and that again is a matter of choice.

For centuries the nature and significance of dreams have been debated. Why do we dream? More important, why do we dream what we dream? At one time it was believed that dreams are froth. Then came Sigmund Freud, who summed up his theory of dreams by asserting that "a dream is the fulfilment of a wish." However, according to new theories advanced by psychiatrists and neuroscientists, dream sleep has a much deeper significance. *Psychology Today* for September 1987 gives a résumé of some of the latest theories:

According to a new theory by neuroscientist Robert P. Vertes of the Mercer University School of Medicine in Macon, Georgia, dream sleep may have a significance that even Freud never imagined. Far from simply providing a capricious nightly romp through fantasyland, it may be what keeps us alive. . . .

In the mid 1950s and early 1960s came the discovery of REM sleep. Named for the rapid eye movements that are observed

during this sleep stage, REM sleep typically occurs throughout the night as part of a fairly regular 80-to-90-minute sleep cycle. However, unlike the quiescence of body and mind that characterizes the bulk of sleep, the REM phase is accompanied by a storm of electrophysiological brain activity that is closer to that seen during alert waking than to any other stage of sleep. And dreams occur mostly during the REM phase. Is dreaming during REM really a way of acting out a wish? . . .

According to psychiatrists J. Allan Hobson and Robert McCarley of Harvard Medical School, during dreaming the activated brain generates its own information by a brain stem mechanism that has nothing to do with Freudian wish fulfilment. Rather, a dream occurs as a result of the automatic activation of certain behavioural programs without the ability to carry them out. . . .

For neuroscientist Jonathan Winson of Rockefeller University humans have so much learning to do, especially early in life, that the waking state—"on-line" processing, as Winson calls it—is simply insufficient for the task. REM sleep provides the neurophysiological mechanism by which information processing can occur "off-line"—that is, without actual contact with the real world—in order to supplement the on-line processing. Dreams, then, are recapitulations of experience for the purpose of learning and thus play a purposeful role in the development of normal thought and activity.

Using virtually the same observations and data, theoretical biologists Francis Crick of the Salk Institute and Graeme Mitchison of Cambridge University reach the opposite conclusion. In their view, brain development, involving countless neuronal connections and the processing of numerous pieces of information, necessarily entails a buildup of plenty of wrong associations. This results in the potentially dangerous accumulation of what Crick and Mitchison call "parasitic modes of behaviour"—unhealthy behavioural patterns that result from the chance connections arising in a complexly developing human brain. The function of REM sleep is to "tune the cortical system," to flush out and eliminate the parasitic modes by subjecting them to a "reverse learning mechanism." . . .

All this certainly suggests that dreaming affects the quality of life. . . . As with most aspects of complex human behaviour, we will no doubt discover that REM sleep and dreaming play a role in a wide variety of phenomena that give richness to waking and sleeping life, alike.

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The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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