

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (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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### FIGHT OUT THE FIELD, O NEOPHYTE!

#### III.—A MAN IS BORN

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, January 1954.]

Love thyself last. The Vastnesses above thee  
Are filled with Spirit-Forces ; strong and pure  
And fervently these faithful friends shall love thee :  
Keep thou thy watch o'er others and endure.

IN the Righteous War which every chela has to wage and win, the probationer must not err by measuring only the strength of the enemy—his personal nature. We have seen in the preceding article how he should recognize the strength of his own godlike nature and the powerful allies of his own Divine Ego. Not only is his own Eternal Self by his side but, as a Divine Ego, he is helped by the hosts of Friends of the Eternal Self.

The first lesson in practical Occultism which the neophyte has to learn is that he is indissolubly linked with the whole of Nature, that he is the Microcosmos—an exact replica of the Macrocosmos. His Eternal Self is the Supreme Spirit of the universe, and every power of that Supreme is possessed by him. His human Soul, the Higher Mind, is an aspect of the Divine Mind-Soul, Mahat or Maha Buddhi. Further, the constituents of his personality are derived from the Spiritual Forces acting in Matter. This lesson of the Occult Philosophy has to be learnt and assimilated by the neophyte. The first task is that of extricating his Manas from Kama and establishing the *Antahkaranic* Centre, looking upwards or inwards towards its parent and watcher,

Manas, the Divine Ego.

The second lesson is to perceive that the powers in great Nature are his helpers; Sages or *Rishis*, Gods or *Devas*, Nature Spirits or *Devatas* are ready to help. By knowledge and awakened will that *Antahkaranic* Being is able to command the Nature Spirits or Elementals. The Esoteric Philosophy teaches that there are four types of Elementals related to the four great elements—earth, water, air and fire; next, that the Gods or *Devas* presiding over these great elements are among the builders of man—the sevenfold being. By acquiring special knowledge of the science of Occultism under the guidance of its Professors and Doctors, the neophyte learns how to conjure them and to invoke their help for winning the war in which he is engaged. Then there are the Sages and the Seers, the Mahatmas and the Nirmanakayas, the Silent Directors of the probationer's Divine and Eternal Self. These Living Mahatmas are *Siddha-Purushas*, Perfected Beings who hold the powers of Life in Their own strong hands. Their Philosophy-Science contains all the necessary knowledge for living the life of the Warrior-Soul, the fortune's favoured soldier. Even theoretical knowledge of the major principles of the Esoteric Philosophy purifies the lower man; as he ponders over the great teachings, assimilation takes place and this elevates him and thus enables him to see the light of his Divine Ego, to hear the voice of that Silent Speaker. However indirect and short-lived this experience of seeing and hearing, it confirms the neophyte in the firm position he has taken with the end in view of being a helper of Nature on her path of Life and Light.

The neophyte must learn the truth that the army on his side is made up of pure Intelligences of Sages, Gods and Elementals; further, that in the army on the other side (his lower nature) there are also some pure forces, which are there captured by the lower and dark aspect of Nature—and that they help the neophyte in their own peculiar manner. Thus in the *Gita* allegory, Bhishma and Drona and Karna contributed each his own share to the great victory of Arjuna. This aspect of the war—the help to the true Warrior-Soul from both the light and the dark sides of Nature—is difficult to comprehend. But it is well for the neophyte to know of it, at least in theory, and to strengthen his soul with the truth that in a real sense the *whole* of Nature is on his side, as he wages the war against human darkness and

evil.

The Sun, the Moon, the Stars; air, fire, water, earth; gold and silver; flowers and fruits; birds and beasts; slum-dwellers and geniuses; saints and sages—all befriend the Warrior-Soul, all become his educators. As he transmutes his lower nature, he brightens up the sub-human universe, and becomes more and more a channel of the super-human Intelligences and of the Most High. In transmuting his personality he has become a Personage—a Man who has realized the truth that he is one with the indivisible Macrocosmos.

Unity is the Law; Rhythm, the Motion of Life. Man, in his ignorance, does not recognize this fact. Man is a Spirit-being, a Mind-being, a Body-being. He does not know this. But Theosophy gives him this knowledge. In his illusion and delusion man fights man. Theosophical wisdom alone gives a complete and satisfying exposition of the injunction of the Oracle at Delphi—"Man, know thyself."

Says *Light on the Path* (pp. 12-13):

Having obtained the use of the inner senses, having conquered the desires of the outer senses, having conquered the desires of the individual soul, and having obtained knowledge, prepare now, O disciple, to enter upon the way in reality. The path is found : make yourself ready to tread it.

Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this.

Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

Inquire of the inmost, the one, of its final secret which it holds for you through the ages.

The great and difficult victory, the conquering of the desires of the individual soul, is a work of ages; therefore expect not to obtain its rewards until ages of experience have been accumulated.

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If people, in order to secure redress of wrongs, resorted to Soul-Force, much of the present suffering would be avoided.

—M. K. GANDHI

## DEATH—WHAT THEN?

DEATH and mourning are generally spoken of in the same breath; and mourning commonly implies a certain amount of ignorance and of selfishness. In the main, we feel sorry for ourselves that our friend or relative has departed—we miss him. The memory of the past grips us—his love, his support, his help will no more be there; what, then, will become of *us*? The intenser the selfishness, the less we enquire about the condition of our dear departed. What a great change would death bring if we asked unselfishly: Where has he gone, what is he doing? Mighty is the blessing of death, but like all true blessings, this one also accrues only when some unselfishness is expressed. That blessing removes ignorance on the subject of death.

Of all the mysteries of Nature, two are the most profound—birth and death. The birth and the death of a human being are analogous to the birth and dissolution—*prabhava* and *pralaya*—of the Cosmos. But, besides solving this metaphysical problem, enquiry as to the condition after death of our friend or relative, if pursued, would bless us with knowledge which would transform our entire life. It is taught that death-contemplation will lead to soul-birth. Let us contemplate upon death, sweet in its release from pain and anguish, educative for those left behind, progressive for those who pass on, refashioning the lives of the many who have to live as of the one whose soul goes marching on. So let us ask at every death—*what then?*

Death is a major change attendant on very many minor changes; every moment, every hour, we change—in body, in feeling, in mind, in soul-perception. Just as every minute of the day is recorded on the clock, which shows the change in time, so our days and weeks and months and years record innumerable changes. Birth is like the rising of the sun, death like its setting. These two, sunrise and sunset, are major changes, like the birth and death of the body.

But the sun that has set one evening rises again the next morning; so the one who has gone through the gate of death today will re-enter this stage of life by the gate of birth tomorrow. For, lives are like days, and deaths are like nights, and of each there is a countless number.

Only one mystery transcends the mystery of night—that of light: *Ushas*, the Dawn-Maiden, symbolizes the birth of light, of day, of

active life. *Yama*, Death, symbolizes the passing of light, of active life. But Light is an aspect of Deity, everywhere and always present; and when the sun sets, the moon, the stars, the heavenly lights, shine forth. So too at night our life does not become extinct; it only becomes passive. We are active during the day, in and through the body, which becomes passive at night; so also in death. A person who goes to sleep, awakens; and he who wakes inevitably will go to sleep; so it is with birth, death, and birth again—that is, reincarnation.

So death does not end all; it is a change, a great change, and to learn about it we must ask the question—*what then?*

The understanding of man's constitution in some way is necessary for the study of the subject of death. The Greeks used to say of man that he always carried a ghost within himself, and it was generally believed that the ghost managed the man. The Upanishadic idea, which supplements this truth, is that when a god, a *deva*, dies in heaven, a man is born on earth. It is a profound truth, sadly forgotten, that within man is not only a spooky ghost, a cloudy bulk of ever-shifting passions, but also a god, a mighty son of Brahma, a Manasaputra. Theosophy teaches how man is a compound of two classes of beings, how he has descended from the Moon and the Sun—which means that our lunar or changing lower nature comes from one source, and our solar, constant, spiritual nature emanates from another.

So each one of us is a ghost and a god—a lower, personal, separative, egotistic being; and a higher, individual, uniting, altruistic being. Both these mix and mingle in man. The physical body is the habitat of both. The body is neither good nor bad; it is but an instrument in which the ghost and the god function from birth to death.

The body has senses and sense-organs; these are like the doors and windows through which the ghost and the god in man contact the universe without. The *Gita* speaks of this body as the nine-gate city of the abode of the Lord, or Atma. These gates, or windows, are called orifices.

Myriad kinds of impressions come to the body through the eye and the ear, the nose and the tongue and the skin. These touch our lower nature, ghostlike and ever changing—like the moon, which changes from crescent, to half, to gibbous, to full, and then starts waning, till

it arrives at the new moon stage. These impressions also touch the god or *deva* in us; but the god in us is like the sun, always full, always radiant, always the same. Worldly experiences affect both our lower lunar nature and our higher solar nature.

When any impression received through the gateway of the body goes within and touches the ghost, it promptly responds in terms of affection-aversion, likes-dislikes, love-hate. Out of these arise all our feelings, emotions and passions, and strengthen the lower, egotistical personality. Our feelings quickly coalesce with the impressions, we are affected by them; and so thousands of times the impressions from the universe without never pass beyond the world of desires in us; our arrogant personality, with its inherent separative tendency, responds, creating for itself a bondage for the future; for, those things which have our feeling-force, must and will return to us as fears and temptations in the future, near or distant. The ghost or personality is made up of elementals, good and bad, and gains strength by making common cause with them—that is the source of pain as of pleasure, for these always go together. The personality is affected by the impressions and is disturbed.

But the god within, the individuality, the soul, is never disturbed by the impressions from without. Its discerning quality is able to value quite correctly every impression that reaches it. The difficulty is that too often the lower nature, the ghost in us, will not allow the impression to pass within, to the world of the god in us. Therefore it is that *The Voice of the Silence* speaks of the soul as the bird that warbles not, nor does it stir a feather, but sits mute and torpid and of exhaustion dies. Therein lies the profound mystery of the death of the soul.

When the lower personality is quiet and willing to be controlled by the individuality or the soul, then the impressions coming from the world without penetrate within and the soul, the real Ego, the spiritual "I," is able to say, "This is *maya*, this the reality underlying it; this pleasure felt or pain experienced is illusion, the message underlying it is real." Thus the god is able to instruct and help the ghost; but it is the wish and the willingness of the ghost on which depends the extent to which we receive the light of the sun which illumines all impressions and gives each its true value.

So from birth to death, the ghost and the god, the *bhuta* and the

*deva* is us, are indebted to the body for receiving the food of experience. The real capacity, the real strength of the body lies in its power to receive impressions from without and to transmit them within; further, to receive from within the response to those impressions from the lower and personal ghost or from the higher and individual god. The health of the body, the poise of the body, the true beauty of the body depend upon whether it receives from within the killing, poisonous, worrying responses of the ghost, or the renovating, life-giving, blissful responses of the god.

Our good or ill health, in the final analysis, depends on this; and death results when the body has become unfit to receive and transmit impressions; it becomes unfit because it is tired and weakened by the process which has been going on from the very moment of birth.

What, then, is death? It is the separation of the body from the indwelling natures—the ghost and the god.

At death, a solemn change takes place—the ghost has to face the god. It has no more the body with its senses to turn to; it was dependent on the body, and with the body gone, where can it turn but to the soul?

A new process now takes place: the god, like the bee, sucks the honey of virtue from the flower of life that has just withered; in other words, the soul gathers in all the good and noble feelings and thoughts that the personality possesses, and rejects the bundle of vices—irritability, anger, greed, lust, sensuality, falsehood. The soul has nothing in common with them, so it lets them go. These now assume a form, rightly named *Kamarupa*, passion-form; it is the evil ghost, *bhuta*, without the body, which foolish people contact at spiritualistic séances.

The danger of playing with it is very great indeed. This *Kamarupa*, this senseless, soulless ghost, if left alone, will die its natural death in course of time.

The *deva*, the god, the soul, having gathered in whatever it can from the ghost, begins an uninterrupted meditation. The soul's nature always is contemplative. During the life of the body, its meditation consists in gathering facts, knowledge, for which purpose it takes up a body. Though hindered and hampered by the personal, lower nature, it collects whatever it can; with evil and separative lower things it has no concern whatever. Thus we hinder the soul's task by indulgence in

our personal attractions. When the body dies, the soul is free, and it collects all that it can, throws out the evil which becomes the senseless, conscienceless *bhuta*, and begins its undisturbed meditation on all that the life has yielded.

The after-death state is like the days after the monsoon; for, the soul throws away all that is spoilt by the dampness and mildew of life, and it does that very quickly. To be accurate, this takes place automatically; the soul is busy with the good qualities and ideas garnered during life, and the evil ones fall away. As sleep is helpful in recovering from pain of the body, so death destroys all ugly and evil things, as far as the soul is concerned. Such is the merciful law of Mother Nature.

The soul with all its good experiences goes to its own native land—*Devachan*, the land of the gods. It might help to take the analogy of the scholar who has brought home new volumes and is absorbed in them. Once the soul discards the evil tendencies of the last life, it is absorbed in reading the book of that life. The soul is now in a state of contemplation, and it achieves the following: (a) perfects all its creative faculties to which it gave a momentum during life on earth, such as music, art, or philosophical and scientific creative faculties; (b) refines its character—*i.e.*, the good traits that it showed in life, for the evil it has left behind, and among the good traits love plays a prominent part—but unselfish love, not passion-fraught emotion; (c) strengthens the bonds of friendship—real friendship, just and impartial, not based on flattery and mutual admiration; (d) perfects itself in devotion and altruism along the lines started here, but devoid of personal and narrow traits, so that soul-perception and spirituality are born; (e) finally, there takes place the natural and harmonious transformation of the last personality into a lustrous pearl on the string of soul-memory.

It should be noted that we cannot *start* anything new in the meditation on life after the death of the body; we only utilize the seeds that we have brought. Next, as the evil we did during life, including evil feelings and thoughts, is already left behind, the seeds and plants on which we have to work are the good ones. Working on them, we feel happy, as we do when we are engaged in any creative work. This state is called *Devachan*, sometimes the heaven world; but it is not a place, it is a state of life, a condition of consciousness, in

which a person is like a *deva*, a godlike being. A *deva* or god is always in *tapas*-meditation, always creates by his *tapas*, and is full of bliss-*ananda* because of the work he is doing. So our after-death state is creative and happy, not physically creative, but intellectually and spiritually creative.

Preparation for death consists in our asking the question: Death—what then? If we want to know what is going to happen when we shuffle off our mortal coil, we must answer the following queries to ourselves.

First, what are our evil tendencies and bad qualities? If they are many and virile, we will experience pain in throwing them off. Just as a gangrened limb may need to be amputated to save the whole body, though it is a painful operation, so also the soul "amputates," so to speak, its "limbs," of low and mean desires, evil thoughts and feelings. Let us be prudent, then, and remove by pure life and wise action as many of the bad qualities in us as is possible, for this certainly is less painful in the long run. It is easier to keep good health than to make an ill body healthy; so it is easier to change now compared to the throwing out that will become necessary in the few days immediately following the death of the body.

Secondly, do we use our mind and imagination in some creative work—music, painting, carving, writing, speaking, teaching? If not, let us take to it for the sake of our after-death life, and what is more, for the purpose of getting the soul active in the body here and now.

Thirdly, are we watching our character? What kind of conduct is ours? Removing the evil traits is only part of the work. Are we also strengthening the good virtues? If not, let us do so deliberately. Take such virtues as sacrifice, compassion, helpfulness, and by the power of thought and study, speech and action, build them into our nature. Of course they will not come to full fruition now and here, but they will after death; and what is more, it will be a natural habit in our next life. Our habits continue life by life, though fortunately they change and grow better. So let us labour with our character.

Fourthly, are we cultivating good friendship—*sat-sang*? Outside of Occultism, the value of real friendship cannot be understood. But let us purify our friendship ties of any and every dross; let the *understanding* between us and our friends grow; a few true friends with whom we have soul-bonds are better than numerous surface friends. In friendship there is more chance for unselfishness to grow than

among relatives and members of a family. We will know the hidden goodness of our friends in *Devachan* and appreciate better the qualities which we appreciate only partially here.

Fifthly, let us have devotion to the interests of another or others, which means caring for their souls, not just for their bodies; on the other hand, devotion means reverence and adoration of the Holy Masters, the Sages and Rishis. Let us cultivate compassion for those who know less, reverence for those who know more. This is the most powerful factor of real growth, *i.e.*, soul growth.

Sixthly, in *Devachan* we are going to lose this personality. The soul is the Individuality which never dies; but the personality—Mr. Proud, Mrs. Vain, or Miss Clever—will be no more. Our good is real only when it is impersonal. In *Devachan* we lose the personality and garner the fragrance of its experiences. The incense burns and its fragrance wafts heavenward. So, are we deliberately weakening *ahankara*, egotism, speaking less and less of ourselves, thinking more and more of others, and thus forgetting self? As the lower and the little self is forgotten, the higher and the greater Self becomes manifest.

Seventh and lastly, all these things have to be practised, and for the student of Theosophy his Theosophical discipline and work constitute that practice. He has the opportunity to create—to become a speaker or writer; to acquire knowledge; to re-form his character; to make not social but soul-friendships; to guard the seed of devotion and contact the Lords of Perfection. He has opportunities that few others have—to kill his personal, petty self and bring to birth the soul. Hard is the task and long is the way, and we have many lives in front of us; but we have to begin some day, and the best time to begin is *now*. We will be energized to do so if we think that death is certain to all things that are born, and if we ask the question: Death—what then?

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THE strongest argument for the existence of a reality which is in some sense the true home of man's spirit...is the testimony of the lives and characters of the thousands who have believed in it and have lived in accordance with their belief.

—C. E. M. JOAD

## THE NOTION OF TIME

WE are the children of our past. We are now the present and the generators of futurity. This idea is valuable, collectively and individually alike.

We are both the past and the future. Influenced by the past, we create continually for the future. Our actions are placed in eternity; life never ceases to be. By the fact that we are self-conscious, however, we limit our perception and our concept of this eternal duration. The notion of time arises in our minds.

One of the difficulties in our age is the rapidity of existence. We are living in the *Kali Yuga*. During the golden age of childhood, time appears to pass slowly. On the other hand, adults consider that their life passes too swiftly.

Diversities, temptations, sense gratifications fascinate a person. His desires are awakened, nourished and vivified; his existence becomes a foolish round. A day of twenty-four hours cannot suffice for him. A schemer, he is not able to realize all his hopes. So, face to face with necessary work to do, he says: "I have no time, I am too busy."

We are this man. All of us, in greater or lesser measure, know this difficulty of handling time.

Is there any answer to this problem?

Turning our attention to the Theosophical teachings, we find, first of all, that Life works from within without. Keeping this principle in mind, we should search for the real cause of our difficulty in ourselves. "Consciousness is inconceivable to us apart from change, and motion best symbolizes change, its essential characteristic." (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 14)

Coming from the universal point of view to the particular: "No one ever resteth a moment inactive. Every man is involuntarily urged to act by the qualities which spring from nature." (*Bhagavad-Gita*, III, 5)

The second deduction that we are drawn to is to admit that we never cease to act consciously or unconsciously. A new question arises: How to perform any more actions if our time is fully occupied? In fact, we may not be able to perform more actions, but we should *modify* the nature of our deeds.

"Every action without exception is comprehended in spiritual knowledge" (*Gita*, IV, 33). It is the duty of each one to discover where this spiritual knowledge is enshrined. Various are our actions in our daily life. Some bring pure nurture to the Soul; others are steps towards renunciation; still others thwart and deceive the Soul. Let us remember this: "All actions performed other than as sacrifice unto God make the actor bound by action. Abandon, then, O son of Kunti, all selfish motives, and in action perform thy duty for him alone." (*Gita*, III, 9)

Self-study will help us to find how useless many of our actions are. They are seen as useless now, because our understanding is clearer. But even in performing these actions have we lost our time? Not quite, for we have acquired experience which will help us to avoid such behaviour in the future.

When you have found the beginning of the way, the star of your soul will show its light; and by that light you will perceive how great is the darkness in which it burns. Mind, heart, brain, all are obscure and dark until the first great battle has been won. Be not appalled and terrified by this sight; keep your eyes fixed on the small light and it will grow. (*Light on the Path*, p. 19)

A day is always of the same duration—24 hours—but he who is able to fix his mind and heart on the highest ideal cannot lose time.

In so far as we see how unprofitable our mode of action is, we shall try to make our daily life conform to our ideal. Slowly we shall modify our desires and centre them in one desire: the Search for Unity. Unity includes Devotion, Knowledge, Service—three in One.

Our incarnation is the theatre provided us for attaining this aim. Each minute is a treasure gained or lost for the Soul. Each deception of the Soul is a deception of all Humanity.

We are responsible for our actions, thoughts and words—and also for our failure to act, think and speak as we should.

Time is our friend if we so handle it as to enable us to serve.

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THEY throw their shadows before them who carry their lantern on their back.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

## OUR ELECTROMAGNETIC UNIVERSE

ELECTRICITY and magnetism are two facets of the forces of Nature that have been known since ancient times. In modern times, the technological revolution of the 20th century would not have been possible without electricity and magnetism. We use a wide spectrum of electromagnetic waves in our daily lives. These waves can travel tremendous distances and appear in many different guises, as light, as radio and television broadcasts, as radar, X-rays and cosmic rays. Space is full of electromagnetic fields. The twinkling light we see from the stars on a clear night is just one example—a form of electromagnetic radiation which has a frequency within our visible range. At longer wavelengths, scientists on Earth can monitor radio waves coming from space, even from remote galaxies, and can pinpoint objects immense distances away. Electromagnetic radiation forms a network that enables us to send and to receive messages throughout our world and beyond.

Science recognizes electricity and magnetism as two aspects of the same force. Put a piece of metal near an electric current and you can make it into a magnet. Move a wire in a magnetic field and you can generate electricity flowing in the wire. Moving electrical charges produce magnetic forces and moving magnets produce electric forces. The close relationship between electricity and magnetism, science says, can be found even within atoms, the building blocks of matter.

But what are these fundamental forces?

The Sun (the visible Sun, Theosophy says, being merely the reflection of the Real Sun) is a gigantic ball of electromagnetic forces, the storehouse of universal Life and Motion from which the latter pulsate in all directions, giving sustenance from the smallest to the greatest of beings. If it is a huge storehouse wherein *all* forces are generated and preserved, then it must follow that what we call light, heat, magnetism, electricity, etc., must all have a common source, must all be but products and correlations, or differentiated aspects, of one and the same omnipotent Force which we call the One Life, the One Law, or Universal Motion. This One Life is the essence and root of all the electric and magnetic phenomena on this manifested plane.

According to Theosophy, Life and Electricity are one, and science has now come considerably nearer to this concept. We have evidence

of it from every living thing. It is recognized that the activity of the brain as also every impulse that passes through a nerve has its electrical component. Every muscle contraction, every movement of a leg, a finger, the wink of an eyelash, the ceaseless flow of the blood through arteries and veins, discharges electricity. Even the tiniest of bacteria are now known to produce electricity.

All contains and is electricity; it therefore follows that we cannot think of magnetism as different from it. Experiments continue to show that all living beings (and there is nothing like "dead" matter in the universe) are not only generators and transformers of electricity but also living magnets. Magnetism and electricity are natural forces *universally* operative; the two form an indivisible pair. There is no phenomenon in nature entirely unconnected with either of these forces. In fact, wherever there is motion—and motion is all-pervasive—there magnetism and its *alter ego* electricity will always be found as both cause and effect. So, to the proposition that life is electric may be added the corollary that life is magnetic.

But this electricity is quite a different thing from that seen, for instance, in our electric lamps. What the ultimate nature and essence of the electric fluid is, is not yet known to modern science, which deals not with electricity *per se*, but with its purely phenomenal and hence grossest effects, which include sound, light, colour, heat, cohesion, etc. In their hidden behaviour, these are supersensuous effects of a still more supersensuous, spiritual, intelligent Power. Modern physicists are still far from an understanding of this guiding spirit of Life, which in Esoteric Science or Theosophy is termed Fohat.

In *The Secret Doctrine, Transactions* and elsewhere two aspects or phases of electricity are referred to—electricity as cause and as effect, or cosmic electricity and vital electricity. The latter, the vital electric fluid, operates on this plane, is a consequence of life, is substantial or atomic in its nature, and is identical with the magnetic fluid. Cosmic electricity, on the other hand, is the primary Force, the *cause* of life, the vivifier of all things. Electricity in this latter sense is the work of Fohat, the intelligent, animating, guiding power of all manifestation, electrifying every atom into life. In this latter sense, electricity is not only substance but is an emanation from an Entity, an Intelligence, which is one of the numberless Entities that rule and guide our

Universe according to the eternal Law. Fohatic electricity is the cause of all molecular motion in the physical universe, including the motion of attraction and repulsion—or magnetism.

*The Secret Doctrine* speaks of the seven "son-brothers" of Fohat, and these stand for the seven forms of cosmic magnetism. Like electricity, magnetism too has two aspects—what is called animal magnetism and cosmic magnetism. Animal magnetism, like vital electricity, is a substantial fluid which emanates from all living things. Cosmic magnetism, like cosmic electricity, follows its laws and is regulated by Intelligences.

It could be said that if we are referring to the electricity generated as a vital force on this plane by all living beings, then there is no difference between it and animal magnetism, which also all living things, including men, animals, plants, and even minerals, emanate as an aura. In fact, so closely are the two interrelated that the combined word "electromagnetic" has come into use. But if we are referring to the electricity we call Fohatic or intracosmic, then it being the primordial Force, the synthetic motor power of all life-forces, is the root cause of all phenomena, including all forms of magnetism.

The knowledge that every force in Nature has at its origin a Noumenon, an Entity, conscious and intelligent, alters our whole attitude towards Nature as a whole. We cease to think of anything in terms of "inanimate" or "brute matter," or "blind force"; everything becomes for us living, conscious and vibrant. We also begin to perceive the unity of all in Nature, for the propelling vital force behind all things, the Noumenon, is *one*, whether we call it Fohat or by any other name. All this breeds in us a reverence for Nature and makes us see its close ties with ourselves.

The importance that H.P.B. gives to the idea that there is but one Force in the Universe and that all others are its products and correlations can be seen from the fact that she has reiterated it over and over again in her books and articles. Knowledge of this fact gives us the necessary basis to understand that every power, every phenomenon in Nature or in man, is subject to the same mysterious Proteus—the Vital Principle, of which science can tell us nothing.

There is no phenomenon on Earth entirely unconnected with magnetism and electricity. That is why we are asked to acquire an *intimate* and *practical* knowledge of these two forces. Unless we gain

a familiarity with their effects in and upon Nature and man, we will not know anything of the great phenomenon of life itself. Electricity and magnetism bind the cosmos together and in their ceaseless motion penetrate every atom in the Universe. To understand their qualities, correlations and potencies is to understand what Magic is in reality and to become a Magician in the true sense of the word.

Study of electricity and magnetism brings to life the teaching about the indissoluble union and interaction between man and the Universe, the electric and magnetic affinities between the Microcosm and the Macrocosm. All living things are surrounded by an electromagnetic sphere of their own making. This electrodynamic field plays a considerable part in determining the behaviour of each being. It is influenced, moreover, by all the little-understood forces and phenomena of the Universe. This means that the life of each living thing on earth is connected electrically and magnetically with the whole dynamic pattern of the Universe. There is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man.

We are constantly attracting electric and magnetic lives from the ocean of Life. These lives which we impress with our thought-feelings form the link between the immortal divine man and his instruments for gaining experience and knowledge in the world. An understanding of the electromagnetic aspect of man's nature necessitates a study of the inner principles of his being, especially the astral body and the life-principle. In these principles the origin may be found for those "magnetic currents which develop themselves into electricity upon their exit from the body." The matter of which the astral body is composed is electrical and magnetic in its essence; and the life-principle in us has its roots in the Fohatic force. Inasmuch as this life-energy pervades every other principle, it imparts its electromagnetic nature to them all. H.P.B. has pointed out that all cerebration is accompanied by electrical phenomena; and we know that our thoughts and desires are dynamic and act like magnets which sometimes attract and sometimes repel.

It could be said that every feeling in human nature—*e.g.*, anger, jealousy, friendship, love, hatred, etc.—is a modification of the magnetic atmosphere which is developed in us and constantly emanates from us. We speak, for instance, of love's electricity and magnetism. Unselfish love, that of a mother for her child, of an artist for some

particular art, love as pure friendship, are purely magnetic manifestations of sympathy in congenial natures. The highest aspect of such magnetic sympathy or affinity can be seen in the close tie and psychic interchange between Adept and chela.

So, if *everything* and *everybody* is linked together, so are we with the Adepts. Ours is the task to make this line a *conscious* one. "I can come nearer to you," wrote a Master, "but you must draw me by a purified heart and a gradually developing will. Like the needle the Adept follows his attractions." No Adept can help us if our electromagnetic sphere does not permit such help.

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ALMOST every form of religion has insisted that many possessions are a bar to spiritual progress, but while the Zen monk has certainly the minimum of material possessions, Zen interprets poverty as an attitude of mind rather than a physical condition. One of the most common ways of trying to fix life into rigid definitions is to qualify something, whether a person, a thing, or an idea, with the statement, "This belongs to me." But because life is this elusive and perpetually changing process, every time we think we have really taken possession of something, the truth is that we have completely lost it. All that we possess is our own idea about the thing desired, an idea which tends to remain fixed, which does not grow as the thing grows. Thus one of the most noticeable facts about those obsessed with greed for possessions, whether material goods or cherished ideas, is their desire that things shall remain as they are—not only that their possessions shall remain in their own hands, but also that the possessions themselves shall not change....Once we imagine that we have grasped the truth of life, the truth has vanished, for truth cannot become anyone's property, the reason being that truth is life, and for one person to think that he possesses all life is a manifest absurdity. Just as no person can possess life, so no idea which a person can possess can define it; the idea of possession is illusory.

—ALAN W. WATTS

## THE GOLDEN KEY OF VIRYA

VIRYA, dauntless energy—without possessing it, how can we travel on the Paramita Path? Fight the good fight, we are told; endure all things, says St. Paul. Hope always, never fail, he tells us. Though we know that without energy we could not act or feel or think, yet we believe it a difficult task to have *dauntless* energy, that energy which will fight its way to the end against all odds.

Perhaps we do not realize how *tanha*, thirst for life, is in a way dauntless energy. The very struggle of a child to walk is the result of dauntless energy. The fact that we go on living shows that there is that in us which is dauntless even in face of tremendous odds. So we already have some dauntless energy, but it needs to be turned towards a different goal. In the long, long past, we have used it to overcome fear, sloth, etc.; and, just as a child through constant efforts develops the power to walk, so also this dauntless energy, through constant use, has become one of our natural powers. If, perhaps, we viewed the steps to the goal as in the early days humanity must have viewed its steps to learn the new method of living, we might take heart. We need to change our conception of the purpose of life, and, realizing that the soul is distinct from all else and is alone permanent, and that there is a goal of evolution, we can begin to take this energy in hand and use it to help us in our new idea of living.

What are we going to do with the help of this energy? Combat all the weight of the changing and turbulent matter; all the strength of our desires and feelings, ordinary ideas and bodily characteristics; and meet all the Karma of the past that has been accumulating. We need all the strength to keep our vision clear and clean; the strength, while losing all sense of identification with the personality, to retain the universal life force.

We need strength to bring *Dana* into full operation, to practise *Shila* and *Kshanti*; we need it to keep ourselves from gathering possessions, and to let go those that cling to us. Only when through *Virya* we have found our way out of the "mire of lies terrestrial" to the supernal Truth, can we relax and travel towards *Dhyana*, "the realm of Sat eternal and its ceaseless contemplation." Through ceaseless contemplation—the fruition of ceaseless *Viraga*—we can reach the knowledge of *Prajna*.

Throughout the whole struggle, it is the dauntless energy of Atma that is working. Purify it of dross, and it becomes the golden key that unlocks all the gates on the Path.

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## LIGHT ON THE PATH

[P. Sreenevas Row's annotations on *Light on the Path* are continued here from our last issue. They appeared originally in *The Theosophist*, July 1885.]

THE Treatise proceeds to point out what *other* things are to be avoided by the disciple.

5. Kill out all sense of separateness.

6. Kill out desire for sensation.

7. Kill out the hunger for growth.

8. (a) Yet stand alone and isolated, because nothing that is embodied, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you. (b) Learn from sensation and observe it, because only so can you commence the science of self-knowledge, and plant your foot on the first step of the ladder. (c) Grow as the flower grows, unconsciously, but eagerly anxious to open its soul to the air. So must you press forward to open your soul to the eternal. But it must be the eternal that draws forth your strength and beauty, not desire of growth. For in the one case you develop in the luxuriance of purity, in the other you harden by the forcible passion for personal stature.

These Rules form one group. Rule 5 to be read with clause (a) of Rule 8; Rule 6 with clause (b) of Rule 8; and Rule 7 with clause (c) of Rule 8.

As to Rule 5—The elementary particles of which bodies are composed and the souls which inhabit the bodies, are all in one Supreme Soul; and the Supreme Soul is in them all. While Divinity has a divided and separate existence in each individual, it has also an undivided existence pervading the whole universe, including the souls individually and collectively (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VI, 29, and XIII, 17). So that this universal soul is said to be both finite and infinite, being present as well in the individual as in the universal (*Vyashte* and *Samishte Rupa*). (See *Vishnu Purana*, VI, v). It is therefore preposterous to suppose that any one individual is separate from the rest of mankind. Multitudes are nothing else but the aggregations of units. Men are to be viewed collectively; and when so viewed, no person can appear as anything but a part of the whole. As all that belongs to the realm of the mind is thus of a kindred nature, one can comprehend

within himself not only his own self, but all others; and in all these, comprehend the supreme likewise. Mr. Herbert Spencer observes that

every phenomenon exhibited by an aggregation of men, originates in some quality of man himself....The characteristics exhibited by beings in an associated state, cannot arise from the accident of combination, but must be the consequences of certain inherent properties of the beings themselves.

Thus it is that the lot of one embodied soul is cast with all those who are similarly embodied; and the good or evil of the individual unit is the good or evil of the world as a whole. The Karma of one individual is thus inextricably interwoven with the Karma of all. The disciple should try to realize this idea very carefully. If he chooses to shun his less fortunate neighbour for no other reason than that he is a sinner in some respects, his vanity is simply unpardonable. Remember, O disciple, that the soul of your neighbour was primarily as pure as your own; its union with the body was brought about in exactly the same manner as that of your own soul with your own body; and the final goal which it ought to be his earnest endeavour to reach, is the same as yours. Hence, he is your brother-pilgrim, struggling to push himself forward on the right path, although it may be that he feels weary of the miry way, and his progress in the great journey is retarded owing to his conscious or unconscious violation of those moral laws which it might have been your good fortune to obey and respect. He is therefore entitled more to your sympathy than hatred. Sin, which makes him the object of your dislike, might have been yours yesterday or might be yours tomorrow. Even were it otherwise, even if we are to suppose, what our daily experience tells us to be a rare phenomenon, *viz.*, that in purity and wisdom you were superior to all your neighbours in bygone times, you are so now, and you will be so ever hereafter—even then, consider how immeasurable is the gulf between you and those whom you recognize as your superiors; and how deplorable would be your condition if, on account of superiority alone, these should shun you. Take care lest, by despising your inferiors, you should, in your turn, be despised by your superiors; besides bearing other consequences of your overbearing conduct—for, it is a fact to be steadily borne in mind that, if you allow the idea of separateness from any so-called evil person or thing to grow up within you, you will, by so doing, create a Karma, which will bind you to

that person or thing, until such time as your soul shall come to recognize that it cannot be so isolated from the rest.

Even from another standpoint, it seems to me that it is utterly absurd to talk of one individual remaining isolated from all others.

This is what I said in my pamphlet on Theosophy in 1883:

Nature requires that living beings should love one another; co-operate with and assist one another. The birds of the air and the beasts in the forest all move about in groups, large and small, and sympathize with their respective species in the most remarkable manner. Even the little ants and bees exhibit such strong attachments of brotherly love that, in their busy and hurried movements, they stop to exchange kind courtesies and friendly whispers to one another; they make a common home, store common food, and revenge the attack on one as the attack on all! And yet, can it be said that man alone on the face of the earth is devoid of such brotherly feeling, or that he does not stand in need of sympathy from his fellow-creatures at all? No! Man, boasting of being, as he is, the masterpiece of the created works, and of being endowed with rational and moral faculties, compares very unfavourably with other living beings in this respect. Unlike other creatures, man is utterly incapable of moving about for several years after he is ushered into the world; he cannot eat or digest raw food; sorely needs external covering and artificial dwelling, and urgently requires weapons of defence or attack. All this necessitates the application for help from numerous quarters; and nothing can be gained unless there is a cordial co-operation on the part of all.

A sense of separateness, moreover, engenders exclusiveness and selfishness, which are the most fertile sources of evil and misery; hence the text requires that this sense should be killed out, as by so doing the disciple benefits both himself and others. The sacred works enjoin the necessity of rooting out the evil of separateness, and of maintaining brotherly love among mankind without any distinction whatsoever (*vide Manu*, IV, 238-246; V, 46-47; VI, 75; *Bhagavad-Gita*; *Mahabharata Anusasana*, XXIII, 28; etc.).

But, while this line of conduct is the best that we can pursue in our concerns of worldly life, we ought not, for a moment, to lose sight of the fact that all this is worldly and therefore transient. Everything that is embodied has its end; even the enjoyment which such good behaviour would procure for us in the heavens is nothing but

transitory (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IX, 21, etc.). Indeed, the whole universe having once existed is again dissolved, and is again reproduced in alternate succession (*Ibid.*, VIII, 19). Consequently, conduct like this, however certainly it may be beneficial to the extent of gaining for us a step in the ladder which leads us upwards, can never of itself afford a complete help. For, as stated in the text, "nothing that is embodied, nothing that is conscious of separation, nothing that is out of the eternal, can aid you," and this is quite reasonable. Man, that is, the man who is true to himself, ought to look for happiness which is unchangeable, and such happiness can only proceed from that in which there is no change. If such a thing can be found, it is only thence that man can obtain an unalterable happiness; and it must consequently be the sole object of his aspirations and actions. What is that eternal thing? That alone is eternal which, upon the dissolution of all things else, is not itself dissolved" (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VIII, 20). It is the soul. True, we do not find the soul in a sphere different from matter. Nevertheless, as the soul shows itself in every respect absolute and independent, while matter is everywhere finite and dependent, we are compelled to consider the soul as the cause on which the existence of matter, in its various forms, depends. Hence we ought to look upon the soul as "dearer than a son; dearer than wealth, dearer than everything else; because it is eternal" (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, I, iv, 8). It behoves the disciple, therefore, to "be always delighted with meditating on the great soul. Sitting fixed in such meditation, without needing anything earthly, without one sensual desire, and without any worldly companion, let him live in this world, seeking the bliss of the next." (*Manu*, VI, 49)

This is what our Text (Rule 5) means when it says that the disciple should kill out all sense of separateness, but at the same time stand alone and isolated, and live in the Eternal; that is, in other words, to love and respect mankind, and to endeavour to reach the Eternal. The former is Universal Brotherhood, and the latter is Theosophy; the former constitutes a step in the ladder, and the latter leads the disciple up to the top of the ladder.

Rule 6 refers to sensation. As perception is a special kind of knowledge, so sensation is a special kind of feeling. Every sensation is a change in the state of the mind, produced by the impression made upon it through the medium of the organs of sense; and every such

change in the mental state disturbs the calmness of the spirit within, and leads to unfirmness, so fatal to spiritual progress. Not only should all outward impressions be unperceived, but also be unfelt. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, V, 21)

We should further remember that sensation means not only the effect that outward actions produce on ourselves, but also the effect that our own actions produce upon others. As we avoid receiving any impression from outward objects, so we should avoid doing anything for the sake of producing a sensation or an effect upon the minds of others. We should simply do that which is right, and that as a matter of duty, and utterly regardless of the effect which our action would produce on us or others.

A placid, conquered soul remains the same in honour or dishonour, in pain or pleasure, in heat or cold. That person is distinguished, whose resolutions are the same, whether he is amongst his friends and companions, or in the midst of his enemies; amongst those who love or those who hate, or in the company of saints or sinners. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, VI, 7, 8, 9)

But sensation is not without some advantage. Whenever we see a display of sensation, we ought to observe it closely and draw a moral from it; for this is one of the best means of knowing human nature, and of trying to mould our own character by adopting all that is good and rejecting all that is evil in the world around us. "Even from poison," says Manu, "may nectar be taken; even from a child, gentleness of speech; even from a foe, prudent conduct, and even from an impure substance, gold." (II, 239)

This is what our text means when it says that the disciple should kill out desire for sensation, but should learn a lesson from it. But he must, at the same time, be extremely cautious in this respect. Man is prone to imitation; and this propensity is strong in children, and even at a more mature stage of life a spontaneous or deliberate imitation is experienced by all men, so that it has a great influence on man's conduct; and hence great prudence and self-control are necessary.

Rule 7 (with the last clause of Rule 8) requires the disciple to kill out hunger for growth, which means growth of the body, power, rank, wealth, wisdom, and everything else. What is deprecated is that growth which has worldly things for its object. The remarks made in the foregoing pages with reference to desire and ambition may

advantageously be recalled to mind in considering the spirit of this Rule. It must also be borne in mind that growth for its sake—and not for the sake of appearance, nor with a special object—is commendable. Mark well the illustration of the flower given in the text. A flower grows, but it is not conscious that it is growing, nor is it growing for the sake of show or for any other cherished purpose. It grows, and grows most eagerly too, simply to expose its petals to the air, as it were. The growth of the disciple must be somewhat similar. He should grow, in due course, as a matter of duty, without the least show or ostentation, but only to open his soul to the air of wisdom. As it is nature, and not a desire of growth, that draws forth the strength and beauty of the flower, so it must be the eternal, and not a desire of growth, that should draw forth the disciple's strength and beauty, and increase them. All that is eternal is the source of pure bliss, and therefore when man's strength and beauty are drawn forth by the eternal, he develops them into the perfection of purity; while, on the other hand, when our strength and beauty are drawn out by a desire of growth from a worldly point of view, we desire only a most transient pleasure which is not worth having, and which moreover, when repeated, has a tendency to create a habit of indulgence in strong passions which are highly prejudicial to real spiritual advancement—for "the mortal becomes immortal and attains the supreme, only when all the desires cherished in the heart cease and all the bonds of the heart are broken in this life." (*Katha Upanishad*, VI, 14 and 15)

Here we come to the end of the Rules (1 to 8) which declare what a disciple shall *not* desire, in order that he may be virtuous; but, before proceeding to consider the other rules, it is, I think, necessary to impress upon him the circumstance that, although some good results would flow from virtue, *however practised*, yet to become efficacious the virtue must be practised *cheerfully*, and not with reluctance or pain.

All sense of restraint, even if self-imposed, is useless [says an Oriental author for whom we have a great respect]. Not only is all "goodness" that results from the compulsion of physical force, threats or bribes (whether of physical or so-called spiritual nature) absolutely useless to the person who exhibits it, its hypocrisy tending to poison the moral atmosphere of the world, but the desire to be good or pure, to be efficacious, must be *spontaneous*.

It must be a self-impulse from within, a real preference for something higher; not an abstention from vice because of fear of the law; not a chastity enforced by the dread of public opinion; not a benevolence exercised through love of praise or dread of consequences in a hypothetical future life.

Nor is a disciple required to eschew his physical desires from any sentimental theory of right or wrong. The prohibition is grounded on the following good reasons as explained by the author from whom I have just above quoted:

According to a well-known and now established scientific theory, man's visible material frame is always renewing its particles; he will, while abstaining from the gratification of his desires, reach the end of a certain *period*, during which those particles which composed the man of vice, and which were given a bad predisposition, will have departed. At the same time, the disuse of such functions will tend to obstruct the entry, in place of the old particles, of new particles having a tendency to repeat the said acts. And while this is the *particular* result as regards certain vices, the *general* result of an abstention from gross acts will be (by a modification of the well-known Darwinian law of Atrophy by non-usage) to diminish what we may call the relative density and coherence of the outer shell (as the result of its less-used molecules); while the diminution in the quantity of its actual constituents will be made up (if tried by scales and weights) by the increased admission of more ethereal particles.

Above all, the disciple should particularly remember what has been already hinted, namely, that the rule for the abandonment of worldly desires refers, not only to deeds, but more especially to thoughts. To use the words of the aforesaid author again, the disciple

must beware especially of impure and animal thoughts. For, science shows that thought is dynamic; and the thought-force evolved by nervous action expanding itself outwardly, must affect the molecular relations of the physical man. The *inner man*, however sublimated his organism may be, is still composed of actual, *not hypothetical*, particles of matter, and is still subject to the law that an action has a tendency to repeat itself; a tendency to set up analogous action in the grosser shell he is in contact with, and concealed within. And, on the other hand, certain actions have a tendency to produce actual physical conditions

unfavourable to pure thoughts; hence to the state required for developing the supremacy of the inner man.

In a word, it is of no use to abstain from immorality so long as you are craving for it in your heart; and so it is with all other unsatisfied inward cravings. To get rid of the inward desire is the essential thing; and to mimic the real thing without it, is bare-faced hypocrisy and useless slavery.

It is with conditions like these that a disciple is required in Rules 1 to 8 of our Text to *abstain* from certain desires; and now the Text proceeds to declare what desires are to be *entertained* by the disciple. Here it is to be remarked that the desires prohibited are those which have worldly things for their object; and that the desires sanctioned are such as have a tendency to purify the soul, and pave the way for the disciple's progress in his spiritual work. "Where the only desire is for the soul, and where there is no other desire, there is no grief" (*Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, IV, iii, 21). But the disciple must be cautious in applying this rule practically. The desire for the soul is as much a desire as the desire for a house or any other worldly thing; both make man regardful of events; and both must therefore urge him to adopt all sorts of measures to secure the desired object. If one desire is to be condemned, there is no reason why the other should be commended. The *Niralamba Upanishad* argues this subject with much force and deprecates *all desires* indiscriminately, declaring that a desire to remain immersed in worldly affairs, as well as a desire to obtain liberation from worldly concerns, being both desires, ought to be equally avoided by the disciple, as an ardent wish to accomplish either of those desires, or any other desire, at any cost and under any circumstances, cannot but produce highly prejudicial effects involving the disciple into complications from which he cannot easily hope to disentangle himself. On this principle, the said authority humorously, though very correctly, asserts that even "a desire not to desire" is blameable. So that, the disciple must understand that, whenever he is told that he shall desire such-and-such a thing for the sake of the Soul, it is intended that he should adopt that line of conduct which would, of itself, and without any desire or other application on his part, lead to his spiritual advancement; and that therefore whatever good action is done, must be done from a sense of duty, because it is appointed and necessary to be done; and not with any desire or expectation of

reaping any advantage (*Bhagavad-Gita*, XVIII, 9, and V, 10, etc.); not even *Moksha* (final emancipation).

How, it may be asked, can one attain *Moksha*, if one does not desire it and does not ask for it? The *Rig Veda* contains a reply to this question in the seventh *Mandala* (*Sukta* 49 and *Mantra* 12) where it assures us that a really deserving person obtains *Moksha*, or liberation from life and death, in the same manner as the *Urvaraka* fruit liberates itself from its stalk. This fruit, it must be noted, is one of the species of cucumber; and it separates itself and falls of *itself* from the stalk, the moment it is fully ripe. So then, man can attain the final emancipation without asking for it: "The Supreme Spirit attracts to itself him who meditates upon it, and who is of the same nature; as the loadstone attracts the iron by virtue which is common to itself and to its products." (*Vishnu Purana*, V, vii)

(*To be continued*)

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SELFISHNESS is the chief prompter of our age; *Chacun pour soi, Dieu pour tout le monde*, its watchword. Where then is the truth, and what practical good has done that light brought to mankind by the "Light of the World," as claimed by every Christian? Of the "Lights of Asia" Europe speaks with scorn, nor would it recognize in Ahura Mazda a *divine* light. And yet even a *minor* light (if such) when practically applied for the good of suffering mankind, is a thousand times more beneficent than even infinite Light, when confined to the realm of abstract theories. In our days the latter Light has only succeeded in raising the pride of Christian nations to its acme, in developing their self-adulation, and fostering hard-heartedness under the name of all-binding law. The "personalilty" of both nation and individual has thrown deep roots into the soil of selfish motives; and of all the flowers of modern culture those that blossom the most luxuriously are the flowers of polite Falsehood, Vanity and Self-exaltation.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

"The basic fact of today is the tremendous pace of change in human life," Jawaharlal Nehru once observed. In recent months, this change is nowhere more evident than in the political changes that have been sweeping the world.

Among the significant events that have claimed our attention is the end of the Cold War and the failure of Communism. Democracy is now stirring the imagination of people all over the world. Yet, there are skeptics who feel that there is no practical prospect for the further spread of democracy.

Joshua Muravchik's article in the November 1991 *Span* discusses the prospects for advancing the democratic cause in the changing international political climate. Using such examples as Japan and India, he takes issue with those who contend that democracy can prosper only in rich or Western-oriented countries. There is sufficient evidence, he argues, that over the past 200 years democracy has not only spread dramatically but it also seems to be growing at an accelerating pace.

In its 1990 report, an American research group, Freedom House, found that 61 of the world's sovereign states deserved to be called free. Thirty-nine percent of the world's people live in these countries, a higher percentage than ever before. The proportion living in free countries has crept steadily upward in recent years, although the share of the world's population living in the advanced countries has declined.

Of Freedom House's list of free countries, nine are in Latin America, 12 in the Caribbean, 14 in Asia and the Pacific, three in Africa, and one in the Middle East. In other words, 39 free countries lie outside North America, Europe, Australia, and New Zealand....Thirty-nine countries constitute a substantial portion of the non-European, non-Anglo-American world. How many such exceptions are required before we acknowledge that democracy can work in such countries? The list's wide variety shows that democracy can exist under many different conditions. Significantly, although some countries on the list are prosperous, many are poor....

Democracy is fragile and needs time to take hold. It would be amazing if the current democratic momentum were unbroken by disappointments and reversals here and there. Many states where

democracy is now entrenched once experienced failures at establishing democratic rule: France, for example. Many newer nations are likely to have similar experiences. But history shows a gradual and ragged advance of democracy.

According to Muravchik, there are several reasons to concentrate on continuing the spread of democracy; among them, empathy with fellow human beings, freedom to pursue happiness as one sees fit, and a friendlier and more peaceful environment in the world. Research has shown that war between democracies has almost never occurred in the modern world.

Theosophy would say that true democracy can rest only on the spiritual concept of the unity of all life and the brotherhood of mankind. Democracy implies that supreme power is vested in the people who compose the State. But a true democracy can never be a closed corporation, run for the benefit of those who belong to it without regard to the good of other peoples. In true democracy, the foremost thought is not of rights but of duties. It is too often forgotten that rights derive only from duties properly discharged. Respect for human rights is the basis of democracy.

To realize democracy, we must consider it not only in its political sense, but also as an idea having a spiritual basis. "On logical, philosophical, metaphysical and even scientific grounds," it needs to be demonstrated that

(a) All men have spiritually and physically the same origin, which is the fundamental teaching of Theosophy. (b) As mankind is essentially of one and the same essence, and that essence is one—infinite, uncreate, and eternal, whether we call it God or Nature—nothing, therefore, can affect one nation or one man without affecting all other nations and all other men. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 40-41)

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We often hear it said that our earth has become a global village; yet a universal approach to the solution of its major problems is still eluding us. It is our "absolute duty," says UNESCO's Director-General, Federico Mayor, to overcome the obvious imbalance which still separates the northern and southern hemispheres, the developed and

underdeveloped regions of the world (*Unesco Sources*, October 1991). A look at the situation as it really is in the Third World reveals that

three-quarters of the world's population—four-fifths by the year 2000—are faced with underdevelopment. A few figures will suffice to indicate the extent of their deprivation. Among these mostly poor people, one billion live in a state of permanent hunger. One and a half billion have no access to even the most rudimentary health services and almost two billion are without drinking water. During the past decade, the debt of the Third World increased threefold....There are more than 900 million illiterates in the South, and one child in five has no access to primary school. The number of scientists and technical specialists is a ninth of what it is in the industrialized countries.

The Director-General pleads for the forging of a new ethic of development. The system of international relations which has been largely responsible for generating such a vast imbalance or, at any rate, for tolerating it, cannot simply continue as before; it must be completely reshaped and reconstituted if our aim is the construction of a better future. It will not be possible to make any progress in that direction, he argues, without "an ideal which provides a means to transcend ourselves":

Liberty, equality, fraternity....The only foundation for any enduring human edifice is individual freedom—freedom of expression and association, freedom to communicate ideas and opinions and freedom of movement. No effort is superfluous to ensure that freedom is everywhere enshrined in law and permeates people's minds. But beyond that, a still greater ambition must be engendered which will form a bond between all men and women, going beyond their day-to-day existence to impart an ultimate meaning to their lives. We must construct a development ethic which will guide international relations so that freedom, including the free movement of goods and capital, which has demonstrated its productivity, does not become synonymous with a cynical attitude of everyone for themselves. It must not become associated with the view that might is right but must everywhere be accompanied by justice, law, equal opportunities for all and, let's dare to say it, fraternity. Then, and only then, can we be sure that the march towards democracy will not falter because of a stagnating or

worsening standard of living, which would pave the way for the resurgence of totalitarianism.

These remarks are all the more pertinent now when a new world is emerging. The key to a brighter future for the world as a whole is the practical realization of *universal* brotherhood. The world is suffering from false ideals and partial brotherhoods. The concept of brotherhood is dynamic; its energy flows in any channel provided by the human mind. As the ideal of universal brotherhood, it flows as a steady, beneficent stream; as the idea of the brotherhood of any nation or group of nations, as separate from or opposed to the rest of mankind, it can and often does wreak havoc as a positively destructive force. If a new world is to emerge, the responsibilities of each nation towards all others cannot be ignored. As the UNESCO Director-General puts it, "Disastrous consequences could follow if we fail to act or if we reach an impasse by pursuing a wrong course on the basis of false or incomplete premises."

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Of late, scientific interest in Mars has revived, and the new challenge, as a rising generation of space scientists see it, is the "terraformation" or "greening" of the red planet. They want to transform it, in less than two centuries, into "a new home for humankind." (*Life*, May 1991)

Whether or not life exists or has ever existed on Mars has been a subject of perennial interest. Many scientists believe that fossil evidence of early life can still be found on the planet. Some even suspect that tenacious microbes may be living in climatic conditions that from our point of view seem inhospitable. If living things or even fossils are discovered on Mars, they argue, then perhaps life is relatively commonplace, found wherever in the universe water, carbon and a few other elements mingle.

As a preliminary to the terraforming of Mars, a satellite will be launched this year to orbit the planet, under the U.S. space programme. Called the Mars Observer, it will take measurements and send back images of the planet for years to come. The next step will be the landing of a human on Mars in about 25 years. Some other nations are also considering a Mars probe.

Are such space projects worthwhile? What is our place in space? The writers of the *Life* cover story have this comment to offer:

We stand today like children at the edge of the ocean of space, dreaming of things to come. In that sea, many of our dreams will founder, and the terraformation of Mars may be one of them. More like sci-fi than science, the project sets off flashing yellow signals in the mind. Even the terraformers urge caution. "Mars is a corpse," says NASA planetary scientist Christopher McKay. "To bring it back to life would be a miracle. But there's good hard reason to hope."

Suppose it could be done. *Should* it be done? Having made a mess of Earth, do we have the right to tamper with Mars? Do planets have rights? And suppose we find life there. Do we have the right to trample its Eden? And another question: Suppose the expense of the project proves bearable—what would we get for the money? A boost for science, technology, education and the global economy, possibly a surge of national pride and international good feeling. But wouldn't the same benefits (and many more) be generated if we spent the same amount of money reviving our own damaged planet—terraforming Earth?

Very little is taught in Theosophy regarding the nature of life on other planets, but what little is said is highly significant. The question whether "life" exists or not on this or another planet is of no importance to Theosophists who know that the planets themselves are alive, for the reason that all matter is alive. The fundamental plan of life forms must necessarily vary with each globe. Life on other worlds, therefore, cannot be judged by the standard of terrestrial life. H.P.B., evidently with approval, repeats Flammarion's conclusion that "the humanities of other worlds differ from us, as much in their inner organization as in their external physical type." (*S.D.*, II, 707)

How...can we hope to speculate with profit on the nature of globes which, in the economy of nature, must needs belong to states of consciousness other and quite different from *any* which man experiences here?...Still the fact remains that most of the planets, as the stars beyond our system, are inhabited. (*S.D.*, II, 701)

*It is quite correct that Mars is in a state of obscuration at present* (I, 165). Theosophists will remember that, according to Occult teaching, Cyclic pralayas so-called are but *obscurations*,

during which periods Nature, *i.e.*, everything visible and *invisible* on a resting planet—remains in *statu quo*. Nature rests and slumbers, no work of destruction going on on the globe even if no active work is done. All forms, as well as their astral types, remain as they were at the last moment of its activity. The "night" of a planet has hardly any twilight preceding it. It is caught like a huge mammoth by an avalanche, and remains slumbering and frozen till the next dawn of its new day—a very short one indeed in comparison to the "Day of Brahma." (II, 660)

Adept astronomers...the Scientists of the earliest races of the Aryan stock...seem to have known far more about the races of Mars and Venus than the modern Anthropologist knows of those of the early stages of the Earth. (II, 699)

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The role of the individual in creating desirable futures was explored at a recent World Future Society conference in Minneapolis, Minnesota, U.S.A. In many spheres of life, opportunities are expanding for individuals to shape the future, speakers told the 700 participants at the conference entitled "Creating the 21st Century: Individual Responsibility." In business, industry, science, technology, urban planning, the arts, education, health-care, etc., the emphasis today is on individual capabilities, individual participation, individual responsibility. (*The Futurist*, November-December 1991)

In health-care, for instance, it is increasingly recognized that the doctor-patient relationship should be that of partners. It is proposed that doctors should be involved in health and wellness education in the community, thus promoting self-care, and hospitals should tend to patients' emotional needs by providing more individualized environment and care.

Responsibility begins in childhood, so educators are beginning to change their role from being "a sage on a stage" to being "a guide on the side," as one of the participants at the conference put it. The emphasis should be on students developing their own learning experiences rather than just passively receiving information. Such "knowledge-based" students can thrive in a world that is focusing less on repetitive activities and more on creativity and innovation.

Individual responsibility for the environment may be the key to the

planet's sustainability, asserted Rashmi Mayur, president of the Global Futures Network in Bombay. He made a passionate plea for simpler living and gave examples of people taking responsibility at the local level, such as the women of the Chipko movement who protect their forests against loggers by literally hugging the trees.

Technology is improving people's capacity to control their own lives and improve their lot; and, as one speaker suggested, its growing power has "leveraged our ethics" in areas such as the environment. He cited the instance of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl—how two individuals "playing around" with high technology led to the spread of radiation across the globe.

True it is that without individual initiative and responsibility and the powerful stimulant of individual thought at all levels and in every phase of our effort, success and progress are hardly possible. Mr. Judge writes in *The Ocean of Theosophy*:

...the individual in race or nation is warned by this great doctrine [Karma] that if he falls into indifference of thought and act, thus moulding himself into the general average karma of his race or nation, that national and race karma will at last carry him off in the general destiny. This is why teachers of old cried, "Come ye out and be ye separate."

Without absolving the individual from his own responsibility and Karma, it needs to be recognized also that races, nations and families have each their Karma as a group. The problem is to recognize the worth of the individual and at the same time to develop properly the interrelationship between human beings. For, the individual cannot separate himself from the race, nor the race from the individual.

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Camouflage, imitation, mimicry, enticement are among the strategies adopted by some insects, birds, animals and even plants. Owls, cobras and some insects, for instance, have false eyes at the back, aimed at deceiving attackers. Butterflies have dark spots on their wings which look like eyes and help divert the focus of attack from their vital parts. The leafy sea dragon fish has evolved bizarre extensions of its body to mimic small pieces of floating seaweed. By copying some detail of their environment—stone or stem—many animals render themselves

almost impossible to detect. Some plants, too, have evolved defences such as thorns and poisons against predators, or have resorted to subterfuges to avoid being eaten or otherwise plundered by animals and men. Other plants have perfected lures for pollinators, their ladders to perpetuity.

The common belief is that plants and animals have evolved these ploys over millions of years in their struggle for existence. However, biologists have now begun to question the underlying mechanisms and compulsions which have produced deceptive strategies in animals and plants over gigantic time scales, writes R. N. Sharma in 2001 for November 1991:

The debate has led to a number of new concepts such as the "arms race" between prey and predator; altruism; kinship; and of course the involvement of Darwinian modes of natural selection in the development of behavioural and other traits for deception.

An interesting theme recently developed by Richard Dawkins of Oxford University, U.K., is that of the selfish gene. He argues that the bodies or phenotypes are merely expendable carriers of these selfish replicators, namely, genes.

The question may well be asked: why do animals resort to manipulation or deception at all? The strategy is obviously successful; otherwise organisms starting from the lowest to the highest on the evolutionary ladder would not have adopted it. Evolution seems to favour cheating. He who cheats, wins. That seems to be the tack adopted by Nature. Even altruism seems to reveal a fundamental selfishness, once again, of the genes....

We should bear in mind, however, that in the strictly biological realm, such deceptions are not individually or voluntarily contrived strategies. They result from evolution over many generations culminating in adaptations providing maximum survival advantage.

There are, however, countless instances of deception and imitation in Nature which provide no "survival advantage" at all in the "struggle for life." In fact, in many instances it is quite the reverse, as H.P.B. points out in *Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge* (pp. 129-132). Daily experience shows that some of "the most pronounced forms of the imitative faculty are entirely useless, or, worse than that, pernicious and often self-destructive." Neither the natural selection theory nor the vitalistic theory of "protection," she says, can account for the varied phenomena of imitation throughout the lower kingdoms. Occultism

would attribute this imitative faculty to several things:

In the case of rare tropical birds and leaflike insects, to early intermediate links; in the former case between the lizard and the *colibri*, and in the latter between certain vegetations and the insect kind. There was a time, millions of years ago, when such "missing links" were numerous, and on every point of the globe where life was. But now they are becoming with every cycle and generation more rare; they are found, at present, only in a limited number of localities, as all such links are relics of the Past. (*Transactions*, p. 132)

There is a guiding intelligence in Nature and there are hierarchies of "builders of form," from the highest to the lowest. Every form, we are told, "is built in accordance with the model traced for it in the Eternity and reflected in the DIVINE MIND." (*Ibid.*, p. 129)

If the imitative faculty is once proved—as it can easily be—an absolute *misfit* for the Darwinian frame; *i.e.*, if its alleged use, in connection with the so-called "survival of the fittest," is shown to be a speculation which cannot stand close analysis, to what then can the fact of this faculty be attributed? All of you have seen insects which copy with almost a mirror-like fidelity the colour and even outward form of plants, leaves, flowers, pieces of dead twigs, etc. Nor is this a law but rather a frequent exception. What then but an invisible intelligence *outside* the insect can copy with such accuracy from larger originals? (*Ibid.*, p. 130)

# THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS

## By H. P. Blavatsky:

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THE SECRET DOCTRINE. A facsimile of the original edition of 1888.  
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THE THEOSOPHICAL GLOSSARY  
TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE  
THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY  
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE  
FIVE MESSAGES TO THE AMERICAN THEOSOPHISTS  
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## By William Q. Judge:

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LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME  
THE BHAGAVAD-GITA  
NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA  
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U.L.T.—ITS MISSION AND ITS FUTURE  
TEXTS FOR THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS  
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDY OF "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"  
IN MEMORY OF HELENA PETROVNA BLAVATSKY, BY SOME OF HER PUPILS  
U.L.T. PAMPHLET SERIES, NOS. 1-36  
H. P. BLAVATSKY AND WILLIAM Q. JUDGE PAMPHLET SERIES

# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

**T**HE 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 founders 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 lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is 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, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however 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*. And 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."*

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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 of 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.