

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 psychological powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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TRUTH IS EVER THE SAME

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There is a canon of interpretation, which should guide us in our examination of every philosophical opinion: "The human mind has, under the necessary operation of its own laws, been compelled to entertain the same fundamental ideas, and the human heart to cherish the same feelings in all ages."

—H. P. BLAVATSKY: *Isis Unveiled*, I, xv

IN these words the earnest student has an important idea to reflect upon, till appreciation of it dawns on his own consciousness.

Even good students of Theosophy confuse blind belief and enlightened faith. Sometimes it is opined that there are statements and teachings of Theosophy which cannot but be accepted as matters of belief. One is not able, it is said, to demonstrate logically the truth of certain teachings. Thus, for example, some point to the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*, which says of Deity that it "transcends the power of human conception and could only be dwarfed by any human expression or similitude" (I, 14). That Principle, "unthinkable and unspeakable," is discussed and explained in many paragraphs and on numerous pages.

Can the Three Fundamental Propositions be expounded in such a manner that the logical mind is able to accept the verities they enshrine? The answer is "Yes" and "No"; "Yes," if the quotation from *Isis Unveiled* given above is adequately understood; otherwise, "No."

Many obstacles perceived by the student in grasping the truths put forward in the Three Fundamentals arise from the fact that the primary study of the Source of the Wisdom-Religion is neglected. What is Theosophy? How did it come into the 19th-20th century world? What about its lineage from the long past? Whither flows the River of Perennial Knowledge? Unless these questions are first asked and proper answers obtained, the student makes more difficult his task of comprehending the Three Fundamental Propositions. Can the truth of the first of the Six Items (*S.D.*, I, 272 ff.), recapitulating the facts and ideas related to the *first* of the questions we all should ask—"What is Theosophy?"—be logically demonstrated?

The failure of the originally founded Theosophical Society and its subsequent death are easily traceable to the non-acceptance of this basic teaching.

This teaching *is* difficult to understand. It is surrounded by what looks like an atmosphere of dogmatism. The answer seems on first sight to imply: This is the teaching. Take it or leave it. Impatient, know-it-all, cocksure students drop the pursuit of its meaning, and thereafter go wrong. The ambitious, the egotistic and the proud ultimately arrive at the position, "Behold, I know." Claiming abnormal powers, such create neo-theosophy, which is easily seen to be pseudo-theosophy. Humanity suffers as a consequence.

The earnest and sincere student goes deeper into the subject of the Source. He says to himself: "Here is a 'philosophical opinion'; what 'canon of interpretation' will guide me? What are the 'laws' which will enable my consciousness to gain an appreciation of this profound truth? And how can it come to cherish the feeling of reverence for this truth?"

Human beings obtain knowledge through the senses and the mind. Our present stage of evolution has brought us to the point where every educated man accepts this. The correct relationship of sense-data and mental inference; the proportion of unreality in this relationship—these and cognate questions need not be considered by us here.

The Theosophical teaching, "Mistrust thy senses, they are false," is now acceptable even to modern science, but modern knowledge will not accept the truth that "the Mind is the great Slayer of the Real."

Theosophy points out that our minds, like our eyes, are subject to illusions. All recognize optical illusions and know what causes them. But the understanding of the range of mental illusions is very limited for the man of modern knowledge. Western psychology has yet to learn the make-up of the human being. His different constituents—the senses and the organs, the sensations and the instincts, the emotions and the aspirations, the analytical and the synthetic mind, the intuitive faculty and the arising of inspiration—these are not understood by modern knowledge. Theosophy has very definite instruction to give on every one of these and on much more. The canon of interpretation of each student is limited and coloured by the constituent used: does he look at the teaching with the senses, aided by the lower mind, Kama-Manas? Or with the pure internal organ called *Antahkarana*? Or with the higher philosophical mind? Or with his intuitive faculty?

To sense perception, a rock is solid; to scientific mental knowledge it is a seething mass of electrons, etc. Between sense perception and mind comprehension there is a fundamental difference. An equally great and fundamental difference lies between the perception of the pure intellect and that of the intuitive Buddhi, the superior Reason which is compassionate.

When study of the Source of the true Wisdom-Religion is pursued we gain intuitive perception; and then every line and every thought of the first of the Six Items in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 272-3) is seen as true, and conviction, *i.e.*, enlightened faith in its teachings, arises. No more is it with us a question of belief; it is Knowledge.

The "MYSTERIES have ever been made a discipline and stimulus to virtue," says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, xxxv), and it is the Wisdom of the True which the Esoteric Philosophy imparts. The first step in the Secret Wisdom is to know the Great Source of all Knowledge.

Therefore it is very necessary that the importance of the Source be seen by every student and shown to every inquirer.

A COMPLETE science of metaphysics and a complete philosophy of science are not yet even conceived of as possible; hence the ancient wisdom by its very vastness has escaped recognition in modern times.

—W. Q. JUDGE

EDUCATING ONESELF

"EXCEPT a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," said Jesus; and the problem of Nicodemus as to how this could come about is the problem that has faced every individual who has ever given thought to the question.

It is universally acknowledged that the world needs unity, peace, good-will and understanding among the nations. To achieve this, what is required is the spiritual regeneration of the individuals making up the nations. Not by sense-education but by soul-education must the individual's regeneration take place. The boy and the girl, the youth and the adult, the prince and the peasant, the Hindu and the Christian—each man, each woman, by disciplining and educating himself or herself in the true sense, will not only help to raise the nation to which he or she belongs from its present degradation (and all present-day nations fall short of the true ideal), but will also contribute to the regeneration of the whole world.

One of the greatest foes in the way of those who want to regenerate themselves through soul-awakening, mind-illumination and heart-energization is false religion, or orthodoxy and sectarianism. We do want religion, but that religion must be of the soul. Our first and foremost task is to distinguish between the Religion of Life rooted in true knowledge and the many religions of belief from which spring superstition and bondage.

Thus soul-education is not education in a sectarian religion. It is not the exclusive knowledge of Hinduism, or Christianity, or Islam, or Judaism, or any other creed that is going to help. To foster sectarian knowledge is to foster sectarian pride. What is needed is spiritual knowledge, impersonal and universal, which will destroy sectarianism without destroying religion, which will purify every creed by promoting the One Religion of Life, and unite all sects into a single brotherhood. Therefore we must seek and formulate soul-discipline through the study and practice of universal principles which will enable us to respect whatever is true and good and beautiful in every creed and sect, and to reject whatever is narrow, intolerant or corrupted. The study and formulation of this soul-discipline is the dire and primary need of the world today, for people will remain divided as long as sectarian religions separate them; they can become united only when the power of Life itself triumphs over all distinctions of

sect and caste, of condition and organization.

On the other hand, the influence of modern scientific knowledge, and especially of Western psychology rooted in materialism, cannot but produce faulty systems of education. The modern methods produce a lopsided development, and the ideal of education in the world today is very one-sided. How could it be otherwise? How could there be education of the higher aspects of man, of the soul and the spirit, when men of modern knowledge misunderstand these principles and even deny their very existence? Let us, then, see what we mean by soul-education.

Soul-education is not only the concern of schools and colleges. All human souls are learners and life itself is the school. So the education of the adult presents as important and as pressing a problem as the education of the young.

A simple definition of soul-education in the light of our ancient teachings is: the training of the whole man into wholeness. Various implications are enshrined in this definition.

First, it is implied that man, though a complex being, is potentially whole, but that all his powers and faculties, the entire make-up of his being, have not yet become patent. Secondly, when we say that man is whole we are but reiterating the root idea of Indian philosophy, that Atma and Paramatma, Purusha and Parabrahm are identical—not two beings, but two aspects of one and the same Principle. Thirdly, man's evolution proceeds from within without. Therefore true education should not be the pouring in of information from outside, but the bringing out from within of all that is there lying latent.

These three principles are fundamental: man and God are not separate; man is an unfolding God; within man all the powers of divinity are locked up and the process of evolution brings more and more of that hidden divinity into expression and manifestation. Soul-education is the deliberate training by which the powers and potencies locked up within man are developed or unfolded.

Keeping this in mind, let us look at the complex being that is man. Theosophy teaches that man is sevenfold, and this sevenfold man can be classified in a triple group—man, the soul; his three powers: of thought (*Jnana*), of will (*Kriya*) and of desire or feeling (*Ichchha*); and his body. The education of man is the education of these three aspects of his being.

The education of the body nowadays means mostly athletics; but physical training, important as it is for the building of a strong and robust body, is not enough. The body is the living temple of the living God dwelling in the heart of every being. He who tortures and disfigures the body tortures and frustrates the God within; he who pollutes the body makes it unfit for divine habitation. Then there is the other ancient concept entirely ignored today—there are the presiding deities, the *devatas*, of every organ, sub-human intelligences who themselves evolve aided by man. Not to degrade them, ever to elevate them, is part of the education of the body. To remove the dullness of *tamas*, to control the agitation of *rajas*, to stream forth the radiance of *sattva*, all three of which are inherent in these *devatas*, is part of bodily education. To add magnetic purity to physical cleanliness is very essential and in these days, when exaggerated sense-life and complete identification with the body prevail, it is necessary to emphasize the real constitution of the body and to inculcate the true ideal of self-control and purity of life.

The culture of the emotions, of concentration and of the creative will, is the second department of soul-education. Each of these types of culture has a destructive and a constructive aspect—the destruction of foul desires, of false thoughts, of selfish choices on the one hand, and the development of radiant purity, of spiritual knowledge, of enlightened creativeness on the other. The three *shaktis* or powers which belong to the human soul—thought, will and feeling—are covered over by the smoke of *kama*—lust and passion—as Krishna points out to Arjuna in the Third Discourse of the *Gita*. *Kama* is the constant enemy of man on earth and it has to be destroyed in order that our choices may ever be in terms of soul-knowledge, that all our thoughts may be pure and noble, and that our actions may all express the divinity latent within ourselves.

The education of the man himself, *Manushya*, the soul, is the third aspect of education. The soul has two aspects, the transcendent and the immanent. The soul in the body is called the *dehi*, the dweller and labourer in the field, and that is the immanent aspect. The other, the transcendental aspect of the soul, is our Paramatmic aspect. The culture of the soul implies attaining yoga—bringing about conscious union between the incarnate soul and the overbrooding Spirit. But yoga is also the yoke of the soul, the higher divinity, living and

labouring in the body in the service of humanity.

Education is a misnomer if it does not take into account the soul. All individuals are essentially souls, albeit most know it not. As souls we have gone to sleep. We must follow the injunction of one of the Upanishads to "arise, awake, seek the Great Ones and learn." The Great Ones have recorded Their knowledge, and we possess those records of the ancient Rishis and Sages. We must arise, awake, and seek the knowledge and the Knowers of the essence of things. The task before each individual is to come out, by discipline and education, from the kingdom of the dead into the land of the living, from the world of darkness into the world of Light; and the Life and the Light are to be found within us.

WISDOM without honesty is mere craft and cozenage.

I am glad when I see any man avoid the infamy of a vice; but to shun the vice itself were better.

If we would consider what our affairs are indeed, not what they are called, we should find more evils belonging to us, than happen to us.

There are many that, with more ease, will find fault with what is spoken foolishly, than can give allowance to that wherein you are wise silently.

Ill fortune never crushed that man whom good fortune deceived not.

He knows not his own strength that hath not met adversity.

No man is so foolish, but may give another good counsel sometimes; and no man is so wise, but may easily err, if he will take no other's counsel but his own.

He who could apprehend the consequence of things in their truth, and utter his apprehensions as truly, were the best writer or speaker.

I have considered our whole life is like a play: wherein every man, forgetful of himself, is in travail with expression of another.

—BEN JONSON

DIRECT PERCEPTION OF TRUTH

THE innermost heart of every religious and spiritual tradition is the direct perception of truth. We come to realize, through our studies, that the written word does not convey to us this reality and that what we are trying to realize is closer to us than our own breath. *The Voice of the Silence* tells us:

Behold how like the moon, reflected in the tranquil waves, Alaya is reflected by the small and by the great, is mirrored in the tiniest atoms, yet fails to reach the heart of all. Alas, that so few men should profit by the gift, the priceless boon of learning truth, the right perception of existing things, the knowledge of the non-existent! (pp. 26-27)

The Esoteric Eastern Schools that gave rise to the teachings of *The Voice of the Silence* emphasize the need for practical experience. The intellect can only take us so far; we have to go the rest of the way ourselves, and realize that we are truly the Path; it is not something external to us. The Zen Master Linzi said: "You impulsively seek elsewhere, looking to others for your own hands and feet. This is already mistaken."

So we must see all teachings as only pointers and try to experience at first hand the reality that lies at the root of all phenomena. H.P.B. and the Masters were very keen to get this idea across. One of the Masters writes:

The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of Illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most *if not all* of the Secrets are incommunicable. The receptivity must be equal to the desire to instruct. The illumination *must come from within*.

Now that a great many Eastern scriptures have been translated into English, the teachings of H.P.B. are becoming even clearer. We are learning that the meditation processes that she outlined are not so bizarre as they seemed (to some) over a hundred years ago. There were very few translations available at that time by genuine Eastern practitioners. The handful that were available were by Orientalists, most of whom had no real understanding of or reverence for the works they were handling. Therefore the teachings were rendered

literally and had very little of the true "life" in them. When *The Voice of the Silence* came along, it was an exception, and it still remains a work of great depth and beauty, expressing certain aspects of the Bodhisattva Path that have not been made clear elsewhere. But the injunction to "Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights. Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they should cast" (p. 20), and to destroy all sense of separateness, is the basis of all genuine meditation in the East, particularly in the Mahayana Buddhist schools that flourished in Tibet and China in the early centuries A.D. The processes are also easily discernible in the teachings of Krishna, Jesus, Plato and many others.

It is this process of breaking down barriers between ourselves and the Universal SELF that is the essential practice on the Spiritual Path. It is important to realize that we have to go to work on ourselves and not take comfort in conceptual doctrines. The instruction in *The Voice of the Silence* to exile all thoughts from out our Soul and yet feel ourselves ALL-THOUGHT (p. 66) is worth meditating upon. We have to paralyse the action of the lower mind (so-called) through the senses and attune ourselves to the Universal Mind. In other words, we have to use the senses while we are in incarnation, but we must not become swallowed up by them, and we should learn to disentangle ourselves from all mind-created images. In this way we shall come to realize what the Buddhists term "*sunyata*" or "emptiness." In a way it is wrong to describe the experience as a "realization," as it is merely becoming aware of something that has been obscured by the action of our senses, which in the East are often referred to as the "five thieves," as they rob us of our direct perception of reality. In *The Theosophical Glossary*, H.P.B. describes *sunyata* as "Void, space, nothingness. The name of our objective universe in the sense of its unreality and illusiveness."

When the illusive nature of our universe is realized, it is only the beginning of our quest. "Before the soul can see, the Harmony within must be attained, and fleshly eyes be rendered blind to all illusion" (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 2). This implies that only *after* realizing the "empty" nature of the universe do we really begin to see. And what we may see is that even "emptiness" is only an illusion, as we are taught that there is no such thing as empty space, but that on all levels of existence "life" abounds in many forms; but even these are

temporary manifestations of ONE LIFE. So it is all somewhat of a paradox. "Thou hast to study the voidness of the seeming full, the fulness of the seeming void" (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 61). This is a great mystery and we can clearly see that the teachings of this treatise are echoed in all the great Eastern scriptures, particularly those connected with the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. The *Diamond Sutra* is one of the great masterpieces of Eastern literature and gives the quintessential teachings of the Bodhidharma (Wisdom-Religion), teachings that transcend any religion or system of thought. A student of Theosophy can easily see in such a work the processes outlined in many of the teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters.

There is much interest nowadays in such scriptures from the East, which are deceptively simple in their presentation. This "simplicity" attracts many people who think that spiritual knowledge is easy to obtain and needs little effort on the part of the aspirant. Indeed the world is flooded with books on various aspects of the Eastern tradition. There is a great deal of interest in Zen Buddhism, which appears to suggest that there is no need to study anything at all, that merely by sitting in meditation to realize the truth, or by adopting the correct attitude of mind, all will be revealed. However, if one studies closely the lives and teachings of the great Masters of the past, it becomes evident that their training was extensive and that they were fully acquainted with the metaphysical and ethical aspects of the Teaching. So those who are trying to find "short cuts" in their studies may come to realize that their efforts may lead them along a *cul-de-sac*, and that many of their deepest questions will remain unanswered.

It is essential to develop a clear understanding of our own nature, as well as that of the cosmos, before we can begin to appreciate the idea of "*sunyata*" or "emptiness" at its true worth. H.P.B. once said that we have, in the fullness of time, to reach the world of "no-form, but of which all forms are narrowed reflections"; but there are no short cuts to this realization. The Zen Buddhists have the idea of "sudden enlightenment" and "gradual enlightenment," and there have been many heated arguments as to which is the best. The great Buddhist Adept Hui-Neng, who is regarded by many as the sixth Chinese Patriarch, puts the idea in perspective when he says: "The reasons why the names 'sudden' and 'gradual' are given is that some disciples are superior to others in mental disposition. So far as the

dharma is concerned, the distinction of 'sudden' and 'gradual' does not exist" (*Sutra of Hui Neng*). So this is a very clear warning for those who take the teachings too literally!

It is the same in Theosophy. There may be those who, as a result of some merit in a previous life, are able to grasp the basic ideas with comparatively little effort. In the early days of the Theosophical Society, Damodar K. Mavalankar showed such an affinity for the teachings and in a very short time was "called" to Tibet by the Masters. On the other hand, many of us take longer to make the ideas part of our being and to appreciate transcendent teachings, such as those of *The Voice of the Silence* or the *Diamond Sutra* or any other great Scripture. Theosophy, we must appreciate, means "Divine Wisdom" and as such cannot be the monopoly of any organization or system of thought. The value of the Theosophical Movement in general should never be underestimated, but in the end we have to be able to understand Theosophy as it is. Through the teachings of true Theosophists throughout the ages, we come to realize that the real answer lies with each one of us individually and, in the final analysis, collectively. For, what else is true awareness if not a process by which we are freed from all dogmatic ideas and modes of action? If we cannot transcend all our attachments to formulate systems of thought, then we have no chance of dissolving the personal self and gaining a direct perception of the Oneness of all living things. The awakening to a consciousness of Universality has ever been the emphasis of all the world's Enlightened Ones.

I BELIEVE in the essential unity of man and, for that matter, of all that lives. Therefore I believe that if one man gains spiritually, the whole world gains with him, and if one man falls, the whole world falls to that extent.

—M. K. GANDHI

THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

II

ONE of the rules relevant to our study is found in *The Voice of the Silence*. The rules contained in that book are meant for those who desire to make themselves worthy to be chosen as disciples. The rule states:

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder....

The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue. Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind. For then the ladder will give way and overthrow thee; its foot rests in the deep mire of thy sins and failings, and ere thou canst attempt to cross this dark abyss of matter thou hast to lave thy feet in Waters of Renunciation.

Even when the disciple has conformed to all this, he has to guard against other pitfalls on the way. Before crossing the threshold that will bring him to the narrow path that leads to the Kingdom of Heaven, let him pause and consider well whether he has developed that purity of motive which is the *sine qua non* for admittance to the path of woe. For, ere he can saturate himself with the peace that will ultimately be his, he has to crucify himself for his past dalliance with matter and materiality. Let him remember that the path of virtue is not only difficult, it is dangerous. It is difficult because for weak minds vice has the power of fascination by which it subjugates and overcomes the lesser will and thereafter induces in the unfortunate person the dread of leaving his familiar yet none the less unclean territory even though that be uncongenial to his spiritual advancement. The path is dangerous because even after considerable progress he remains vulnerable to vanity. Pride in having conquered vice comes to the unwary student, and finding an entry into his being, it demolishes even the little progress that he may have achieved. *Light on the Path* sounds the note of warning:

Do not fancy you can stand aside from the bad man or the foolish man....Remember that the soiled garment you shrink from

touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn in horror from it, when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain—not that yourself shall be kept clean.

Can any sincere student believe that he who desires to enter the Kingdom of Heaven can preen himself on his achievements and look down with condescension on all those who have not been able to make the grade?

Besides vanity, there are other failings that can lead the person away from the burgeoning of his divine possibilities. There are strange aberrations of the human mind which suggest other ways of gaining the Kingdom of Heaven. There are those who think that they can force the gates of heaven by retiring into dark forests and apart from men; by living on roots and plants and by inflicting torture on themselves. These believe that in adopting such practices their life will become more holy and their virtue more resplendent. Theirs is the position of one who being given a wild horse for training, maims that horse and turns its brute strength into docility through starvation. He does succeed in subjugating the animal to his will, but in the process he has made it impossible for a once fair animal to move fast and travel vast distances at his master's behest.

The patient acquiring of virtue, abstemiousness and asceticism are to a large extent dependent upon the aspirant's ability to guide, control and restrain his senses. Obviously the senses are his points of contact with the outside world. It is through them that he feels pleasure and pain and reacts to the messages of sympathy and antipathy which they transmit from the world outside. By now mankind has progressed far enough to realize that the messages that the senses transmit may in certain circumstances be very deceptive. Even today we say that the sun rises and sets, though we have now learnt to make the necessary adjustment in our minds to make the erroneous impression conform to truth. The straight stick when partly immersed in water seems bent at the point where it enters the water; railway tracks that run parallel for miles seem to the eye to converge at a point and no amount of sophistication will make them look different. These are examples taken at random which should make anyone wary of drawing any hard and fast conclusions about the information that the senses

constantly bring.

But the senses have yet another and a more alarming function for the one who seeks to reform himself. They have each the singular ability to jog the memory of long forgotten sojourns into vice, and by association of ideas these can arouse vile and dangerous passions which the aspirant had written off as having conquered.

Anger, envy, greed, the urge to possess something that is not one's own, the desire for vengeance, the sadistic joy of inflicting pain and torture, remain the curse of those whose memory pictures haunt and lash them for a repetition of the act and the experience. As if these were not enough handicaps in the living of the holy life, there are the inducements of drinks and drugs which help the person to cut off the gnawing feeling of guilt and so enable him to perform 'acts of vice which in his saner moments he would not do.

Thus far, we have touched upon the body. So long as the natural combativeness of the animal remains in it, it can never permit one to travel on the strait and narrow path that leads to the gates of gold. As long as one travels on land, one requires that sort of vehicle that is suitable for moving on the ground. If, however, one chooses to travel the ocean routes, one has to discard the familiar mode of land transport and use some other vehicle adapted to travel on the ocean waves. So too for our ventures into realms inaccessible to the physical body. The body is not suited to the dream state and for those moments is therefore put aside. It is equally unsuited for entering the planes of soul and spirit, and for that realm other vestures are required.

We have still far to go before we come anywhere near our cherished goal. We have still to traverse the territory presided over by the lower mind which is caught up in passions and desires. Like the body, the mind has a voice of its own and has cravings and hungers that clamour for satisfaction. Also, like the body it remains for the most part an unbroken steed that will stampede at the slightest hint of discipline, but which if trained will carry its rider over terrain where the latter's legs would totter and stumble and slip. The mind works in a medium that is inaccessible to the physical body. No doubt it deals with the physical plane, no doubt it gets involved and intoxicated by the aberrations of the physical man, but its chief and essential function is on planes invisible and unapproachable by the physical senses. It has senses of its own, as also a consciousness of time and

motion different from that experienced in the waking state. It can build castles in the air; it can create a heaven and a hell of its own; but by itself and unaided it has neither the power nor the expertise to reach anywhere near to the gates that open on to the heaven of man's aspirations. The untutored mind is like a hatchet. It is a proper tool to fell timber, but it is useless for delicate carving. Yet has the mind a very important function to perform, because it is from and through this mind that the first faltering steps can be taken heavenwards.

The human mind has the singular ability to invoke a power from the higher regions of life and use it to tame and transform the body and the desires that torment life in that body. By itself the mind has no such power. If it seeks to win through to heaven without invoking the superior force, it will not succeed; for, by itself it has no great sustaining power. It has the power by the force of a resolute will to scotch the snake of self; it is powerless to kill it. The mind is like a bar of soft iron. In close union with a magnet, and for the time that it remains attached to it, it will become an extension of that magnet and assume to itself its polarity, potency and quality, thus identifying itself entirely with the magnetism of its attracting agent. Therefore, when linked to and attached to the higher soul, the mind reflects its divine aspirations and its self-sacrificing inclinations. Delinking itself from this union and attaching itself to the soul's nether part, it saturates itself with the foul magnetism of the crafty animal and assumes to itself the loves and the hates as well as the depredatory instincts of the animal in search of its prey.

It is at this point in our study that it becomes necessary to understand why it is that the mind, once it has attached itself to the nobler elements, should let go its hold on that and seek its ease on the lower and ignoble planes of life. It can be easily inferred that the power of the higher attracting agent must have waned and then weakened and died. But *why*? Generally speaking, several factors contribute to this fall. The first and perhaps the most important is that the aspirant has somehow compromised in his duty of adoration of the highest. When that happens, the power of the animating life gets weakened, and it is during those moments of slackened awareness that there troop into the mind the memory pictures of its sensuous enjoyments. The memory of the delights and the fascinations of the unguarded moment generate a wave of longing coupled with a feeling

of regret that these pleasures, though ephemeral, have to be given up for a bliss yet to be experienced and a deliverance hinted at only in books and sermons.

These longings and regrets become the great deterrents to spirituality. The aspirant, thus caught up in the serialization of his past follies, excuses himself by the wrong and dishonest plea that nature can wait, but that the hunger that gnaws at his vitals cannot be denied. The fall becomes inevitable. But all is not lost. If he has garnered the precious memories of Soul life that he has touched in his rare moments of ecstasy, then will these impinge on him as soon as satiety or pain or remorse follow upon his escapades. If he is strong enough, he will start yearning again for the higher life and then, awakening by degrees, he will pick himself up and with renewed aspiration seek his union with his immortal and deathless Soul.

Thus far, we have seen some aspects of what the aspirant has to undergo by way of discipline. We now come to the very important teaching which demands the forging of an unbreakable bond between himself and those others who being like-minded are on the same path that he is—the path that leads to a union with the Father that is in heaven. In this, there can be no letting up of the effort to keep the line unbroken. "He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love god whom he hath not seen?" asks the Gospel (*I John*, iv, 20). Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Disciples may be likened to the strings of the soul-echoing Vina; mankind, unto its sounding board; the hand that sweeps it to the tuneful breath of the GREAT WORLD-SOUL. The string that fails to answer 'neath the Master's touch in dulcet harmony with all the others, breaks—and is cast away....They (the disciples) have to be attuned to the Upadhyaya's mind—one with the Over-Soul—or, break away.

And again:

Thou hast to be prepared to answer Dharma, the stern law, whose voice will ask thee at first, at thy initial step:

"Hast thou complied with all the rules, O thou of lofty hopes?"

"Hast thou attuned thy heart and mind to the great mind and heart of all mankind?..."

Hast thou attuned thy being to Humanity's great pain, O candidate for light? Thou hast? Thou mayest enter.

Brotherhood has to be made a way of life. In the Kingdom of Heaven, no divisive or disuniting force can enter; and so, the disciple finds himself placed constantly in areas of conflict. He is expected to find his strength in uncongenial circumstances. Running away from disruption and strife is like the reaction of the errant schoolboy who finds difficulty in keeping pace with the teacher and his co-students. The rules are very strict on this. The devotee may have brought a valuable gift to be placed on the altar; yet is that gift not acceptable and will not be sanctified if he is not at peace with his brothers.

Yet one word more. The disciple is required to drive away the money-changers from his mind and body, both of which he desires to consecrate as a dwelling of his Lord and Master. "I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you," says St. Paul (*Galatians*, iv, 19); and this process of what he calls "formation" is hindered by all material considerations. St. John has recorded this instruction: "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the father is not in him." (*I John*, ii, 15)

The lure of materiality snatches away spirituality as the storm snatches away the bark on the raging ocean. And yet, one can win no victories by running away from this sensuous world. As one wise in spiritual things put it:

Thou may'st look for silence in tumult, solitude in company,
light in darkness, forgetfulness in pressures, vigour in despondency,
courage in fear, resistance in temptation, peace in war and quiet in
tribulation.

Ere one can expect to enter the Kingdom of Heaven consciously and as a Son awakened to the glory and eminence of his Father, he is required to become his Father's emissary, to become a missionary of the noble way that leads to bliss past human thought. "Freely you have received, freely give," is one of the rules of the higher life mentioned in the Gospel according to St. Matthew. Yet, in this as in all things, discretion has to be exercised lest one throw away priceless pearls before swine and suddenly find oneself held accountable. The Scripture says:

When anyone heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in the heart. (*Matt.*, xiii, 19)

This is explained in greater detail in the *Bhagavad-Gita* where Krishna says:

Thou must never reveal this to one who doth not practise mortification, who is without devotion, who careth not to hear it, nor unto him who despiseth me. (xviii, 67)

Then follow words that have a special meaning for those who aspire to the Kingdom of Heaven. Says the text:

He who expoundeth this supreme mystery to my worshippers shall come unto me if he performs the highest worship of me; and there shall not be among men anyone who will better serve me than he, and he shall be dearest unto me of all on earth. (xviii, 68-69)

Lastly, this is what the *Qabbalah* says:

All the creatures in the world have each a superior above. This superior, whose inner pleasure it is to emanate into them, cannot impart efflux until they have adored. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 116)

Adoration alone leads to invocation, and adoration is not possible where the attention, love and labour stand divided in opposite camps. "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Let us ponder over this well, and may we discover, if not now then at least later, that our real treasure is not in this world but is in that kingdom where our Father patiently awaits our return.

A MAN who foolishly does me wrong, I will return to him the protection of my ungrudging love; the more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me; the fragrance of these good actions always rebounding to me, the harm of the slanderer's words returning to him. For as sound belongs to the drum, and shadow to the substance, so in the end, misery will certainly overtake the evil doer.

—BUDDHA SUTRA

SERVICE AS DUTY

"GIVE up thy love-to-sacrifice," spoke the Sage to the Mother in the dialogue "On Sacrifice," in *The Book of Confidences*—a dialogue that will help us to discover how sincere is our own effort "to give." Often in our very eagerness to "help," we forget that sometimes it is more of a sacrifice to withhold our effort. Perhaps this shows us that there is another attitude to take besides merely *wanting* to do good. What is this attitude which requires such detachment?

Reading the advice of the Sage, we see that true sacrifice requires us sometimes to be one who watches, instead of one who acts. The Higher Self *is* unattached. Only in the sacrifice of the natural propensity in the lower nature to *be* attached, do we rise above the three qualities, sacrificing even *sattva* itself, as Krishna bids Arjuna do. Perhaps if we thought of *sattva* as reflecting our aspiration to be of service, we could see that, in observing the supreme reign of law, we go one step further! We take duty into consideration. Only then do we avoid sacrificing one possession to another. He who helps because of a sense of duty will not lessen his love of helping by realizing that on certain occasions the best assistance he can give is not to do anything at all. In the words of Milton, "They also serve who only stand and wait." Duty is no sacrifice to the one who realizes that it is a "Law in Nature."

In *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. tells us: "Duty is that which *is due* to Humanity." In paying this debt, we are only fooling ourselves when we whisper, "I am sacrificing myself for humanity." (Besides, we are wasting time in remarking the fact!) On the contrary, we are only preparing ourselves for the real sacrifice when our present duties (or debts) are completed or paid off. Of course, little self-sacrifices daily accompany the performance of our duties, although he who finds pleasure in duty will not be aware that he is sacrificing. Here again, "sacrifice" is a relative term, and will gain in meaning the more we recognize the importance of motive. We know that the great Teachers had to make a choice between retiring into Nirvana and returning to earth for the sake of mankind. Is it not reasonable to think that each motive that we now have for performing our present duty, each choice that we now make, will affect the final choice?

"Theosophy is the quintessence of *duty*."

ACTING RIGHT

WE know, for we have been taught all down the ages, what are the results of right action and of wrong action. But what we often do not know is what is right action and what wrong, what is the result we want to achieve and how to achieve it.

Is this so because no action stands alone? Every action has its seed in the past and will flower in the future, if it has not done so already. Some actions, like some seeds, flourish in one environment and die in another, and we are faced with the difficult problem of trying to decide what our action will result in, in the environment in which we find ourselves. Perhaps for this reason we find that we often err, thinking more of the environmental result than of the action itself; we act in what seems to us a suitable manner, instead of acting in a straightforward, ethical manner. In other words, we compromise; we take the law into our own hands and say, "Under these circumstances, *this* is right, not *that*." And so we suffer.

Yet the Gita tells us: "Act as seemeth best unto thee." Then why should we suffer? We forget that Krishna has already made it quite clear to Arjuna what is right action. He has also given him the background of various systems of philosophy. He tells him that if he does not act rightly of his own free will, Karma will compel him to act that way. So the issue is not so simple. How shall we do what we think is right in any given circumstance, and at the same time obey the Law, willingly and implicitly?

Perhaps it would help us if we remembered when in doubt that, whereas there is only one right way to perform action, *i.e.*, one which is universally applicable, there are as many wrong actions as there are men to perform them. Only a comparison between the genuine thing and the counterfeit will show us which is the true one, not a comparison between two or more counterfeits.

We come upon the dilemma of spiritual life—are we to act as seems best to us, or in line with what we have been taught?

But let us not say, "I will act as I please and bear the consequences of my action." It is a foolish remark. We shall have to bear them anyway, and when they come we shall probably have forgotten whence they have come and shall meet the resulting Karma with sorrow. It is our arrogance that makes us say thus.

Surely the right way is that of experiment. And while experimenting

we must keep in mind the testimony of the Wise Ones who have checked and verified the traditions of old. That is the keynote of right experiment—experiment along the lines of tradition; experiment by *following* the law, even though we fail to see at the moment the reasonableness of doing so. In that way we prove for ourselves its accuracy. If science, medical as well as in other fields, followed that method, knowledge would grow much more rapidly and time and energy be saved, to say nothing of the evils of futile and sometimes harmful experiments.

The line of right action in any circumstance is definite: our own duty lies in performing the action so that we disturb the environment as little as possible, in choosing the right time, and in acting with due thought, planning and lack of emotion. In other words, in whatever act we perform we must strive to be the impersonal agent, bringing that action to birth in its environment.

To revert to Krishna and Arjuna: Arjuna says, after due consideration, that in spite of the emotional sorrow he will feel at the loss of his kindred, in spite of his compassion for the sufferings of the soldiers and the people, he will act according to Krishna's bidding; he will act with devoted heart, surmounting his personal emotions. We know the result. Evil was destroyed; Arjuna triumphed.

FAITH...should not be confounded with *blind belief*. "Blind faith" is an expression sometimes used to indicate belief without perception or understanding; while the true perception of the *Manas* is that enlightened belief, which is the real meaning of the word "faith." This belief should at the same time be accompanied by *knowledge*, *i.e.*, experience, for "true *knowledge* brings with it faith." Faith is the perception of the *Manas* (the fifth principle), while knowledge, in the true sense of the term, is the capacity of the Intellect, *i.e.*, it is spiritual perception. In short, the higher individuality of man, composed of his higher *Manas*, the sixth and the seventh principles, should work as a unity, and then only can it obtain "divine wisdom," for divine things can be sensed only by divine faculties.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

LIGHT ON THE PATH

[P. Sreenevas Row's annotations on the closing Section of *Light on the Path*, entitled "Karma," are continued here from our last issue. They appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for December 1885.]

SECTION III, CLAUSE 3 (*Continued*)

TEJAS is another name for *Agni*, who is the source of all that gives light and heat. So that there are different species of *Agni* (fire); but "whatever other fires there may be, they are but the ramifications of *Agni*, the immortal" (*Rig Veda*, I, 59, 1). The primary division of *Agni* is threefold. "*Agni*," says the *Vishnu Purana*, "has three sons, *Suchi*, *Pavamana*, and *Pavaka*" (I, x). *Suchi* means the *Saura*, or Solar fire; *Pavamana* means *Nirmathya*, fire produced by friction, as the friction of two pieces of wood; and *Pavaka* means the *Vaidyuta* or fire of the firmament, *i.e.*, the fire of the lightning, or electric fire.

The sources of these three fires, I may observe in passing, constitute the three principal deities spoken of in the *Veda*, namely, *Surya*, the sun, representing the solar fire; *Indra* (and sometimes, *Vayu*), the rain-producing deity, representing the fire of the firmament; and *Agni*, representing the terrestrial fire, the fire produced by friction (*Nirukta*, VII, 4); and all these three, be it remembered, are merely the ramifications of one *Agni*, which in its turn is an emanation from the Supreme One, as the reader will find from the allegorical description given of *Agni* as being the mouth-born son of Brahma, in the *Vishnu Purana*.

Now, each of the triple forms of *Agni* has numerous sub-divisions. The solar fire is distinguished by several divisions according to the nature of the rays emitted by the great luminary. The terrestrial fire *i.e.*, friction fire, is called by various names, according to the purposes to which it is applied, *e.g.*, the *Ahvanika*, the fire into which the sacrificial oblations are poured; the *Garhapatya*, the household fire, and so on. And the fire of the firmament has various names with reference to its functions outside the man, and inside; as, for instance, the function of digesting food, etc. (See *Prasna Upanishad*, III, 5; *Mundaka Upanishad*, I, ii, 4. Also *Sri Bhagavat*, IV, i, 61 and *Vayu Purana*.) The name given to that form of the fire of the firmament, which is in the body of human beings, is *Vaiswanara* (*Rig Veda*, I, 59,

2); from the roots *Viswa* (all) and *nara* (man); *i.e.*, the element residing in all men. (See also *Bhagavad-Gita*, XV, 14.) It is this *Vaiswanara* fire which concerns us the most in connection with the subject of these annotations. Being the electric fire located in the human body, its functions are very important; indeed it is said to be "the navel of men, supporting them like a deeply planted pillar" (*Rig Veda*, I, 59, 1); *i.e.*, it supports man as a pillar supports a house.

It is to be remarked here that the same *Vaidyuta* (or firmamental) fire, which, in the form of *Vaiswanara*, sustains human life as above described, also supports the whole Universe, for the *Veda* declares it to be equally the prop and navel of the universe (*Rig-Veda*, I, 59, 2). That which is abroad in the universe is analogous to electricity, magnetism, light, heat, etc., as those terms are understood by physical science; and that which is in living beings is what may be called the animal magnetism; it belongs to the vital and spiritual portions of man, the microcosm, and is not only endowed with all the qualities of electricity, etc., which the macrocosm possesses, but is also replete with intelligence such as may be communicated to it by the will of the individual who evolves it from time to time.

This fire, called the *Vaidyuta* (electric), or *Vaiswanara* (residing in all men) is for obvious reasons called *Sarira-agni*, fire of the body, and is the vital force above spoken of as being influenced by the Will, and so producing muscular action, etc. "The Will," says the *Maitri Upanishad*, "stirs up the *Sarira-agni* (fire of the body); then the fire agitates the *Maruta* (wind) in the body, and the wind passing through the heart, produces sound, etc." (VIII, 11). This fire, this vital force, I propose to call by the name of *Tejas*, which, besides meaning *Agni* (fire) as above stated, means also light, heat, power, ardour, spirit, energy, bodily vigour, and so on, exactly representing the functions of the electric fire dwelling in the human body. Its powers in sustaining men, bodily and spiritually, are very great, and are extensively exercised by the Aryan occultists in reading the thoughts of others and transmitting their own to them, at however great a distance; also in healing the sick, and showering blessings, and various other purposes. Indeed this *Tejas* is a great power in the hands of the Aryan sages. "*Brahma-Tejas* is the power of powers" was the motto of the great Rishi Viswamitra. Referring to the fact that this emanation is endowed with colours and sounds, a great Oriental Adept says to one

of his correspondents, "How could you make yourself understood by—*command*, in fact, those semi-intelligent Forces, whose means of communicating with us are not through spoken words but through sounds and colours, in correlations between the vibrations of the two? For sound, light and colour are the main factors in forming these grades of intelligences, these beings, of whose very existence you have no conception," etc.

Now let me assure my readers that the theory of *Tejas*, or bodily fire, or animal magnetism, is neither fanciful nor novel. It is a stern reality, founded on ages of experience. "Search where we may," says Professor Williams, "this force (magnetism) has been universally acknowledged and used by all tribes and nations; and so far from this being but a science of yesterday, it enjoys the double reputation of being very old and having stood the test of ages; indeed, we maintain that it is the oldest science extant, and that nothing was practised as a *science* prior to it." Magnetism as such, then, was the keystone of medicine, or the secret of the physician, and it was the pillar of religion, or the power of the priest. It may be interesting to some of us to know that medicine and her sister, the church, can pre-eminently claim the greatest antiquity as "professions" (*i.e.*, the former concerning the body and the latter concerning the spirit). And even in the present age, despite the sceptical notions here and there prevailing, we see the great strides which this sublime science has made; and its reality and importance are being recognized by numerous modern scientists of eminence. I beg to refer my readers especially to the works of Professor Williams above mentioned; to the book of Baron Reichenbach, translated into English by Mr. William Gregory, late professor of Chemistry in the University of Edinburgh; to the Treatise on Light and Colour by Mr. Edwin D. Babbit of New York, and lastly to the numerous quotations in the book on the science and art of Organic Magnetism, by Miss Chandos Leigh Hunt of London. All these writers, be it remembered, have founded their works upon their own personal researches, observations and experiments, and upon the testimony of hundreds of other persons, some of whose names and addresses have been given in full.

These Western authors call the *Tejas* by various names, such as Odyle, Odyle force, Od, Odic force, animal magnetism, animal electricity, Mesmerism, Aura, Magnetic Aura, and so on. One of

them, Professor Williams, describes it in these words:

The aura which pervades the brain and nervous system, though electrical in its nature, is something more than mere electricity; hence, for want of a better name, it is frequently called animal magnetism or animal electricity, in distinction to terrestrial magnetism or electricity. The former appears to be charged with an *intelligence*, so to speak; a spiritual essence characteristic of itself and clearly distinguished from the latter. Water may be charged with electricity; and but one result can be obtained from it. However, if animal electricity be used, the water partakes of whatever therapeutic virtue the operator desired at the time to charge it with.

Another writer, Miss Hunt, thus speaks of the powers and properties of Magnetic Aura:

I will now refer to it as it is expressed in name...A thought makes this emanation active. It flows from the eyes, fingers, toes, and the ends of the hair. It can, by art, be rendered entirely subservient to the human *Will*, and can be compelled to travel in any direction; how far, is unknown. We might correctly term it elastic in its nature. It carries with it any desired influence, affecting sensitives at a distance as powerfully as though they were in the same room and under the immediate influence of the one who is directing it. It is called animal magnetism...and it can be directed for curing mental, moral and physical diseases; producing refreshing sleep; rendering the body insensible to pain; *developing spiritual gifts*; artificially causing the phenomena of somnambulism; cultivating plants and fruits; taming animals, etc.

It must be remarked that although we have been speaking of the Magnetic Aura as it emanates from human beings, for the purpose of illustrating the law of Karma, yet it must not be supposed that its flow is confined to human beings. It exists in every animate and inanimate body, and in fact in all known substances and elements.

Having thus seen that such a thing as *Tejas* does exist, it must next be understood that it does not remain dormant. Designed as it is by the laws of nature to perform the most important functions, this *Tejas* is ever vigilant, and its influence is constantly spreading itself both within and without the body in which it abides; and, except in cases where a human will commands and transmits it in any particular direction, it flows in all directions widely and indiscriminately,

although not generally visibly owing to the very subtle nature of the particles composing it. Some idea may be formed of the extreme minuteness of the atoms from the following account, for which I am indebted to Professor Thomas Dick:

There are found in various liquids animalcules so small that they appear only like points when viewed through microscopes magnifying several hundreds of thousands of times. The smallness of some of these animalcules is such that a million of them do not exceed the bulk of a grain of sand, and yet each of these creatures is composed of members as curiously organized as those of larger animals. They have life and spontaneous motion; are endued with sense and instinct; are observed to move with astonishing speed and activity; and their motions appear evidently to be governed by choice, and directed to some end. They use food and drink; and are consequently furnished with organs of digestion. They appear to have considerable muscular power, and are furnished with limbs and muscles of strength and flexibility. We must therefore conceive that these living beings have a heart, arteries, veins, muscles, and circulating fluids, with all other parts and organs requisite to constitute an animal being. And if this is so, how inconceivably fine and minute such organs must be! Dr. Reid has calculated that the bulk of one of these animalcules—by no means the smallest—is equal to only $\frac{27}{1,000,000,000,000,000}$ or less than forty billionth part of a cubic inch; that is, it would require more than forty billions of such minute beings to be equal in size to a cubic inch!

If the *bodies* of these animals be so small, how infinitely smaller still must be the globules that swim in their blood! And how inconceivably smaller again must be the atoms that compose a solid, inanimate body! Professor Gaudin calculates the number of atoms for a large pin's head at about 8,000,000,000,000,000,000,000, which, if measured off at the rate of a million per second, would take over 250 millions of years to complete! But even this must be far below the infinitude of the smallness of the particles of matter, for the subtlest ethers must have atoms quite transcending in minuteness all the measurements and calculations of the human mind!

It is owing to the extreme minuteness of the particles of matter that we are not generally able to see them as they issue from bodies; but it is certain that they do exist, and continue to flow, as the natural result of the constitution of organic bodies, animate or inanimate. As

the constituents of those bodies are particles of matter held together by the operation of certain laws of nature, so there are other laws of nature under which particles tend to separate, and complex bodies are resolved into their prime constituents. Besides the great dissolution called the *Naimittika-pralaya* (occasional dissolution) which occurs at the end of each day of Brahma (*Kalpa*), when the organic bodies are destroyed, but their substance remains intact; and the still greater dissolution, the *Maha-pralaya* or *Prakrita-pralaya* (great elemental dissolution), which occurs at the end of a hundred years of Brahma (*Maha-Kalpa*), when not only the organic bodies, but even their substance—in fact the whole universe—is resolved into the original source, *Mula-prakriti*, there is a third dissolution, called the *Nityapralaya* (constant dissolution), which is taking place incessantly and without the slightest intermission, in respect of all organic bodies, in the course of their various stages of growth and decay. *Sri Bhagavata Purana* speaks of this constant dissolution in these words: "The various conditions of beings, subject to change, are occasioned by that constant dissolution of life which is being rapidly produced by the restless stream of time, perpetually taking everything away" (XII, 5). Indeed, nothing in the universe remains the same, without undergoing some change or other, during even the shortest twinkling of an eye. Our ability to perceive this fact, while partly due to the very subtle nature of the change, is principally the consequence of our ignorance and disregard of the laws of nature.

Further, we must remember that were it not for the constant flow of material particles from all bodies, perception of external objects would be impossible, and our faculties of vision, hearing and the like would be but so many useless appendages. It is a scientific fact, recognized by Eastern and Western philosophers alike, that the functions of the eye, nose, ears and so forth are due to stimuli excited by the emanations that issue from all known substances. The particles of matter proceeding from surrounding objects fall upon the eye, and, entering it through the pupil, they are refracted by the different humours deposited in the eye of nature, and thus converge into a focus upon what is called the retina at the back of the inner membrane of the eye. On the retina images of those objects are painted, with all their varieties of form and colour, and these images are thence conveyed to the brain by means of the optic nerve. Similar particles

of matter produce the sensation of smell by entering the nasal organ, where a network of olfactory nerves is spread over the mucous membrane lining the upper part of the nasal cavity. These nerves are connected with the minute hairlets of the nasal membrane through certain cells. When the vibrations of a material particle, *i.e.*, the effluvia emanating from odoriferous bodies, come into contact with this network of nerves, they provoke the sensation of smell. And, in like manner, the particles proceeding from bodies in a state of agitation produce a vibratory motion; which, acting upon a sort of nerve network called the drum, in the cavity of the ear, produces the sensation of sound.

There is thus a perfect correspondence between all the vibrations of nature; and such expressions as: "The fire crackles with the light"; "The sun rises like the cry of a newborn child"; "The sound is heard when the sun is scattering his rays," and so on, are to be found in the *Rig-Veda* (VI, iii, 6 and 7, and IX, 74, 1); thus proving that there is an intimate relation between the set of vibrations which communicates to us the impressions of sound, and the other set which gives us the impressions of form and colour. It cannot be otherwise. The human voice (sound) is the means of expressing thoughts, feelings and passions; an adequate expression in words of deep thought and strong, passionate feeling is a poem; if the same sentiments are to be expressed in sounds alone, we must employ music, and if we make a similar appeal to the mind, dumbly addressing the eye as our sole channel of communication, we do so by means of painting. Thus poetry may be called the music of language, and music the poetry of sound, while a picture is an unspoken poem, a silent melody. All three arts are means of expressing our passions and feelings, and they operate upon the mind by sympathy. The mind is likewise affected by odour; an inseparable accompaniment of all bodily emanations, since it is a quality of every substance in which the earthly element is present.

If all this is true—as it must be true according to the teachings of science—in respect of the gross emanations of the body, it cannot be otherwise in the case of the subtle emanations which flow from our inmost structure. We are then perfectly justified in holding that these emanations spread themselves in the Ether around us, clothed in appropriate forms and colours, and producing smell and sound, like

all other emanations of the body; and that whenever set in motion by the exertion of the human will, they assume forms and colours and are capable of indicating the real character of every human action, however secret: disclosing the lowest whisper, the inmost thought, and the minutest play of the muscles. In this manner we are enabled to communicate our own thoughts to others at any distance, however great. This is not all. The *Tejas*, as already explained, being the immediate result of the conjunction of the soul with the body, will continue to adhere to the soul even after it vacates the gross body (*Sthula Sarira*) and merges into the subtle body (*Sukshma Sarira*) throughout all its various transmigrations. Thus its modes of manifestation form an important element in the operation of the law of *Karma* to which men are subject during the successive series of their numerous existences.

(*To be continued*)

ALLAH careth not about his leaving off eating and drinking, when the keeper of the fast doth not abandon lying and detraction.

Say (O Muslims): We believe in Allah and that which is revealed unto us and that which was revealed unto Abraham, and Ishmael, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the tribes, and that which Moses and Jesus received, and that which the Prophets received from their Lord. We make no distinction between any of them, and unto Him we have surrendered.

There are two benefits, of which the generality of men are losers, and of which they do not know the value—health and leisure.

The best of almsgiving is that which springeth from the heart, and is uttered by the lips to soften the wounds of the injured.

To spend more time in learning is better than spending more time in praying; the support of religion is abstinence. It is better to teach knowledge one hour in the night than to pray the whole night.

—Sayings from the *Koran*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The special single topic issue of *Scientific American* (September 1992) explores the relationship between mind and brain, considered to be "one of the most exciting subjects in modern science." Leading scientists deal with issues such as the foundations of consciousness and other attributes of the mind; where and how memories are stored; how we relate one thought to another; the role of brain and mind in the development of language; new approaches to treating disorders of the mind; visual awareness, etc. Their investigations, however, are limited to the biological, physiological and neurological aspects of the subject, since modern science as yet does not go beyond these.

Mind is often equated with consciousness, a subjective sense of self-awareness. Three centuries ago, Descartes described the mind as something immaterial, separate from the brain but interacting with it in some way. A few neuroscientists still assert that the mind (or soul) is distinct from the body. But most scientists today are exploring all aspects of mind, including its most puzzling attribute—consciousness or awareness—in a more materialistic way as the behaviour of sets of interacting neurons. Until recently, most scientists ignored the subject of consciousness; the problem was felt to be either purely "philosophical" or too elusive to study experimentally. However, some scientists like Francis Crick and Christof Koch are going ahead with the experimental study of consciousness. What they state in their article, "The Problem of Consciousness," included in the special issue of *Scientific American*, is typical of the scientific attitude today:

A few years ago we began to think about how best to attack the problem scientifically. How to explain mental events as being caused by the firing of large sets of neurons? Although there are those who believe such an approach is hopeless, we feel it is not productive to worry too much over aspects of the problem that cannot be solved scientifically or, more precisely, cannot be solved solely by using existing scientific ideas. Radically new concepts may indeed be needed—recall the modifications of scientific thinking forced on us by quantum mechanics. The only sensible approach is to press the experimental attack until we are confronted with dilemmas that call for new ways of thinking....

We believe that once we have mastered the secret of the simple form of [visual] awareness, we may be close to understanding a

central mystery of human life: how the physical events occurring in our brains while we think and act in the world relate to our subjective sensations—that is, how the brain relates to the mind.

Are mental phenomena merely the result of nerve impulse patterns in the brain, as modern scientists assume? The human brain is sometimes hailed as the most complex structure in the known universe, but does that make the mind a by-product of the brain—in scientific terms, "an emergent property of the brain's electrical and metabolic activity"? It is the materialistic conception of mind and consciousness held by science that lies like a thick cloud between it and the white light of truth from the spiritual sun above.

Although science can trace the electrical activity of the brain, it does not know how and at what stage conscious perception arises. Further, although it assumes that the human brain has developed from the very much smaller brain of the animal over a period of millions of years, it can find no evidence of any change in the last 200,000 years or any essential difference between the brain of a genius and that of many primitive human beings.

One other significant fact will be of interest to students of Theosophy. The mechanism of sight in man is similar to that in the animal, but is subject to the control of higher centres in the brain in ourselves than in the animal, and the same applies to other faculties. How can we reconcile these facts with the facile assumption that consciousness is a by-product of the brain's activity? They are, however, in perfect harmony with the teaching of Theosophy that the brain is like a musical instrument played upon by the soul, and that the fundamental causes of human differences lie in the soul's capacity to play upon the brain and other centres, and not in the brain itself.

...it is the higher mind *alone* which can influence the atoms interacting in those cells, which interaction is alone capable of exciting the brain, *via the spinal "centre" cord*, to a mental representation of spiritual ideas far beyond any objects on this material plane....The whole human body is, as said, a vast sounding board, in which each cell bears a long record of impressions connected with its parent organ, and each cell has a memory and a consciousness of its kind, or call it instinct if you will. These impressions are, according to the nature of the organ, physical, psychic, or mental, as they relate to this or another plane. (H.P.B.

in "Psychic and Noetic Action," reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*)

Fanaticism, intolerance and refusal to respect religious and cultural differences are by no means simply relics of the past, as recent events the world over bear out. Professor Iring Fetscher, author of numerous publications and professor of political science at the University of Frankfurt on the Main, Germany, stresses that in a society in which a multitude of religious, ideological and political convictions are in conflict, it is urgently necessary to promote the "minor" virtue of tolerance (*Universitas*, 1/1992). Tolerance, he says, is not just the attitude of people in strong, powerful positions towards those in less powerful situations, nor should it simply come from indifference:

Goethe advocated going beyond an attitude of mere tolerance of the character of other people different from one's own, and advancing to the point of a proper appreciation of their very different qualities, of their "otherness." It is my wish that the notion of tolerance should be understood in this sense which denotes respect for the nature of the other person and for his right to be different....

Human beings are not tolerant by nature. Psychologists and, in particular, psychoanalysts have repeatedly called attention to the fact that tolerant behaviour can only develop together with a successful adjustment to society. We all have a tendency towards intolerant and aggressive behaviour; we all must constantly engage in critical reflection on our own behaviour in order to develop at least a minimum of tolerance. Intolerance is a reaction to the feeling of one's own weakness and inferiority. Fanaticism is an attitude in which alleged convictions are combined with illusions of omnipotence; it represses and compensates for one's feeling of insecurity. Tolerance, on the other hand, requires self-confidence, and the ability both to control one's impulses and to abandon comfortable prejudices....

Justice is the cardinal political virtue with which the thinking of political philosophers has always been concerned; and justice must now be realized throughout the world. Only in a just world can tolerance be expected of all individuals and societies. But, in the meantime, this consideration should not keep us from practising tolerance in the environment in which we live. In the multi-cultural societies, a tolerant attitude of the majority (that is to say, of the

ethnically and culturally predominant elements of the population) towards the numerous minorities is a necessity. The prohibition of discrimination because of race, sex, or religious confession is not sufficient for this. Over and above this, one must respect the right of other people to be different and to preserve their own cultural identity, along with whatever degree of adaptability may be required of them. Only on this condition will the human dignity of people of other cultures be adequately respected.

From reasoned tolerance comes understanding, and from understanding, love. But let us not be hasty and accept anything and everything in the name of tolerance. To accept, for instance, religious credos for the sake of the grain of truth they may contain, to believe that everyone means well and is doing the best he can, is to deceive oneself. H.P.B. was not tolerant of social evils or of religious prejudices. Repeatedly the warning is given in Theosophical teachings that it is our "overwhelming virtues" that give an opening to the hostile forces. Against vice and obvious weaknesses we are on our guard; but exaggerated virtues are vices in disguise. One of the Masters wrote: "Our greatest trouble is to teach pupils not to be befooled by appearances." Take tolerance. If a person acts *blindly* on the maxim that "all men are equally my brothers," he might lead himself astray. "Evil is the exaggeration of good."

The virulent propagation of Hindu fundamentalism by one of the political parties in India for its own gains has come in for severe criticism by those who truly understand what Hinduism is all about. B. Seshadri, writing from London in *Contemporary Review* for August 1992, considers Hindu fundamentalism to be an "aberration," a "contradiction in terms," a concept that has no authority in the Hindu philosophical code.

The dictionary definition of fundamentalism [he writes], of a literal acceptance and maintenance of a finite set of traditional orthodox beliefs of a religion, does not apply to Hinduism. There is no one set of beliefs which a Hindu is required to accept and practise....Most people are familiar with the religious persecutions in the histories of the revealed religions of Semitic origins—

Judaism, Christianity and Islam—which have demanded compliance with the Word and the Book. There is no historical evidence of such persecution in the Hindu kingdoms since Vedic times....The principle of tolerance was handed down in impressive oral traditions.

The attitude was a strongly ingrained one. It had its origin in that Hinduism was not a religion in the sense in which the word is understood, that is, a particular system of faith and worship. It was primarily a moral order of humanity and righteousness within a highly organized social system. Its historic texts are singularly free from dogmatic affirmation concerning the nature of God. Its core did not depend on the existence or non-existence of God. It is possible to be a good Hindu whether one believes in a single god, or many gods, or an ultimate principle or being, or no god at all. Hinduism is thus a matter of ethics rather than belief. It had no specific name until other religions made their entry into India, when it too acquired a religious significance.

This absence of dogma is basic to an understanding of Hinduism. The Hindus themselves called their moral order *sanatana dharma*, a concept hard to translate from the Sanskrit. The closest, but yet incomplete, way of comprehending it is to think of an eternal law that governs all human and non-human existence. It gives absolute freedom of belief about the nature of God and form of worship. Dogmas, and therefore religious dogmas, can only be transitory and distort a transcending truth. A passion for dogmatic certainty has racked the religions of Semitic origin. And hence the incessant quarrels within them. The great Hindu teachers through the centuries expounded that all religions are simply different phases of the same Truth, called God by those who so prefer. The intellectual debate of the nature of this Truth has been a continuing one. A significant element of this debate is that it does not seek to safeguard Hinduism and protect conformity, but encourages revision and improvement.

Apart from the fact that the emergence of Hindu fundamentalism is not so much a religious phenomenon as a political one, a gimmick by scheming politicians to gain control over the masses, the crisis that has arisen over the building of a temple at Ayodhya goes to show that, "as in other archaic religious and philosophical systems, the soul of Hinduism has fled (to its primal imparters—the initiates), and only the decrepit body remains with a spiritually degenerate posterity." (*The Theosophist*, October 1883)

In 1633, the Inquisition of the Roman Catholic Church forced Galileo Galilei to recant his theory that the Earth moves around the Sun. Though he recanted under threat of torture, as he left the courtroom he is said to have muttered, "*Eppur si muove*" (all the same, it moves)—a sentence that has passed into the category of household words.

In November, 359 years later, the Church finally agreed. At a ceremony in Rome, before the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Pope John Paul II officially declared that Galileo was right. Over the years, the Galileo affair has embarrassed the Church, which now maintains an astronomical observatory. Father George Coine, who heads the observatory, says the affair was "tragic, beyond the control of any one party." It was the height of the Church's battle with Protestantism, says Coine, "and here was a scientist saying he interpreted scripture better than they did." (*New Scientist*, November 7, 1992)

Learning and sin were synonymous with the Church Fathers who were so painfully ignorant until the time of Galileo of the rotundity of the Earth, leaving the heliocentric system out of the question. Galileo's "discovery" was, however, anticipated by the ancients.

The world is always ungrateful to its great men. Florence has built a statue to Galileo, but hardly even mentions Pythagoras. The former had a ready guide in the treatises of Copernicus, who had been obliged to contend against the universally established Ptolemaic system. But neither Galileo nor modern astronomy discovered the emplacement of the planetary bodies. Thousands of ages before, it was taught by the sages of Middle Asia, and brought thence by Pythagoras, not as a speculation, but as a demonstrated science. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 35)

Though interest in astrology is age old, in recent times it has become one of the major preoccupations of Indian society. Be it politicians, businessmen, professionals, or the uneducated, all categories, writes Sharita Rai in *Indian Express Sunday Magazine* (November 8, 1992), are driven, by the pressures of modern-day living,

to express belief in a system that is yet to be free of the debate of

whether it is an art or a science, or merely an artful pretext to hijack the interests of the gullible majority. Like the traditional family doctor, today almost every family has a "family astrologer," despite any scepticism regarding the veracity of the predictions....

Even as the traditional astrologer remains a cultural institution in India, a growing phenomenon is the increasing number of those who form part of a para-professional network. Many of them claim to do readings free and offer consultations without charge, terming the service a "hobby." Others make their commissions out of recommending various pujas and tantric remedies, besides investment in gems expected to negate the adverse influences of the planetary placings in their horoscope....

Matching horoscopes of couples about to get married remains the top priority for most people, though increasingly even money, business, career and health are issues that are gaining importance in astrological terms....It is significant that faith should have such a major role to play in the success of astrology....

For ordinary people, as Mrs. Kannan in Bombay puts it, there are the day-to-day problems that need the reassuring touch of the soothsayer: "When we get a problem, we visit two or three people, and so we transfer our responsibilities on to them...." And so astrology has come to be both the symptom and the cure of the modern Indian society.

There is a vast difference between astrology as a "mathematical science" and what is practised by present-day astrologers. Today, the little that is known of that science is used mainly for personal ends. Karma will operate at the right time and in the right place if left to itself. When we try to learn beforehand what the future holds in store, we set in motion another line of Karmic action. We always have the power to deal with any circumstance; however, if beforehand we have let our feelings play on the idea of the result, or have tried to offset it, we have a dual power at work when the result does come, and our energy is lessened. Hence we are taught: "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course." (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 45)

As for true astrology, H.P.B. wrote that it is "the only branch of Occultism which, in its *exoteric* teachings, has definite laws and a definite system." (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 22, Indian ed.)

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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."

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.