

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### THE GENTLE LIGHT OF UNDERSTANDING

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TODAY we can look back over many years of Theosophical history since 1875, years full of incidents in many and varied places, years which have brought the joy of constructive effort and the anguish of apparent conflict of duties, years which have seen soul tragedies and soul successes. Through it all, like an unbroken thread, runs the central purpose of the Masters, who are the heart of this, our Movement. Over and over again has that purpose been stated by the Masters in their letters, and by H.P.B. and Judge.

In its broader aspect, that purpose is to introduce into this age of transition certain seminal ideas which, used by productive minds in the realms of religion, science and philosophy, will lead to a nobler morality.

In its deeper aspect, that purpose is to unite firmly a body of men of all nations in brotherly love and imbued with the Buddha-like spirit of seeking to relieve human suffering, wherever and however it may be found, by dealing with the cause of that suffering. Perhaps nowhere else did H.P.B. write so insistently of the aim and object of the Theosophical Movement as she did in her *Five Messages*. She discusses there many important topics, but she returns to this central purpose again and again. It is our holy and most important mission. If Theosophists could achieve such a unity they could move the world; no power could overcome them, no obstacle stay their course. Such unity is a *sine qua non* for entry into the inner life of the Movement

and any attempt which does not have this unity as a basis will either be futile or lie blasted at the threshold.

To consider the broader aspect of the work of the Theosophical Movement: "What are some of the seminal ideas introduced by Theosophy? One is the idea that all religions, sciences and philosophies, as well as all folklore, contain elements of truth, and by combining those elements which will harmonize and rejecting those which will not, one arrives at a record of a body of knowledge which has always existed in the world. Another idea is that the power to recognize truth is innate in the human heart. Truth is not recognized because attention is directed elsewhere and the necessary faculties of attention and perception have atrophied. A third idea is the dynamic conception of unity and brotherhood which recognizes the unique contribution which every individual and every group must make to the common weal. In all healthy human institutions, family, school, hospital and so on, there must be great differences among the members, but at the same time there is at the core similarity of aim, purpose and knowledge. Real unity cannot be imposed but can only be evolved as a sufficient number of individuals devote attention and effort to these common factors instead of emphasizing personal differences. For example, the unity of a hospital can only be achieved by its members individually making deliberate efforts to devote their particular gifts to the common aim of the patients' well-being, and not allowing differences of religion, social background, political bias, etc., to interfere.

Other examples could be given—such as that the ideal man is more than a good man; he is a man of intelligent mind and compassionate heart—but the above should suffice. The essential point is that Theosophy does not seek to proselytize or to indoctrinate, but to provide the means by which the latent and little suspected powers of the human soul can develop. One value of "In the Light of Theosophy" and of "On the Lookout" is that they enable the busy student to keep a finger on the pulse of our time and hence to help intelligently this broader aspect of the Movement.

To return to the deeper aspect of the Movement: Much has to be done before its central purpose can be achieved. Unity and brotherhood as conceived by the Masters run counter to notions and habits acquired by us during the course of many lives. This fact, together with the essential freedom of belief and decision which must be left to every

aspirant, provides one key to the understanding of Theosophical history. Each difficulty and crisis was brought about by this conflict between the soul's purpose and the notions, habits and desires of the person. To bewail our inadequacy, however, is not particularly constructive. Most of us have been pretty egotistical for a good many lives and are likely to remain so for some time to come, and we might as well reconcile ourselves to the fact that we must work with ourselves as we are.

This brings up the point that the various difficulties which have arisen from time to time out of attention to persons instead of devotion to the central purpose of the Movement have had at the same time a kind of therapeutic value. They have given the opportunity to students of Theosophy to eradicate that in themselves which stood in the way of a clear understanding of the fundamentals of the Wisdom-Religion and its exemplification through a profounder conviction of brotherhood.

It is impossible to obtain a true understanding of Theosophy through abstract study alone. What a college student learns from books or from lectures has to be complemented by practical work in the laboratory. There the basic principles learnt theoretically have to be applied so as to become part of the student's mental equipment. So too the student of Theosophy has his practical work in coping with personal and family difficulties, with personal frictions arising in the Lodge, in the carrying out of the discipline of Lodge meetings, and so on. It is up to him to seek the appropriate principles and then to apply them. Only when study and application complement each other can the profound verities of Theosophy be grasped and made our own.

This is the reason for the literary form of *Isis Unveiled*. It contains all that could be given out in the early years of the Movement, but not in a form to be intellectually grasped. It was only as difficulties arose and questions were asked that the Teachers were able to respond with further clarification of what had been given. The articles reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, for example, were such a direct response and took advantage of opportunities to drive home certain lessons.

If we had sufficient breadth, depth and keenness of vision we could look back at the actions and attributes of H.P.B. and at the several events in the past to see how, in all their ramifications, they helped to clarify this point with one Theosophist, that with another, perhaps unrealized by themselves, even though so few achieved a comprehensive

understanding.

For example, that which in H.P.B. was so incomprehensible to many, intimated in time a profound truth of soul life to William Kingsland. This comes out in these words of his:

But perhaps also, while Mme. Blavatsky, the outer personality, chafed and raged under the stigma placed upon her, the *real* H.P.B. regarded the whole matter with those calm, deep, far-seeing eyes which look out on us from her portraits as from a soul untouched by the passing shows and storms of this life.

If today we understand a little more of the importance of loyalty to the teacher it is because we have seen the results of disloyalty; if we understand a little more of the magic power of duty it is because we have seen its work in America at the time of Judge.

The Declaration of policy of the U.L.T. states the responsibility of the individual Associate more explicitly than did the Three Objects in 1875. The policy of independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, the exemplification in practice of the principles of Theosophy through a truer realization of the Self and a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood, and the basis of unity, throw upon the Associate the duty of work upon himself in the light of a knowledge of the Movement, its purpose, and its message; and such work for others first, last and all the time.

That it has been possible to form a strong association on the basis of this policy is evidence of an advance, for it would not have been possible in 1875. The efforts of H.P.B. and Judge, followed up by those of Crosbie, and the painful experiences of students of Theosophy themselves, have combined to show at least a few students the kind of basis on which alone the deeper work of the Movement can proceed. That more could not be achieved in the past, because of the inability of sincere and devoted men to hold fast to the lines laid down, is a fact; but regret at this stage for things done and not done is futile.

Nor need we be fearful and apprehensive of the future. We can go forward with the confidence that if we meet our Karma with resignation and honesty of purpose, looking for the indication of our present duty, treating it all as pregnant with a meaning to be read with the help of the key given by our Teachers, that Karma will not be a stern nemesis but will unfold in terms of our highest aspirations. That is, the future will bring experiences of a kind and at a time and in a place which in

a potent way will point the lessons of the Teachers to us.

It is our present task to keep the link unbroken, to maintain the continuity of visible effort in the world. The Masters are the real link, the link between the Movement in one place and another, between one person and another, in one era and another. They have spoken to us through the lips of H.P.B., but if we have ears to hear and are engaged in Their work then They must still be speaking to us, not only for the further clarification of the message already given, but in terms of the future efforts to be made.

If the 100-year cycle is a reality and if the ever-present thought of the Masters is the elevation of the race, then the rising tide of more tangible help from Them must seep into all channels open to it. The gates can be opened by waking up to two facts: first, that the Masters really exist, that They really do give help to us up to the limit that Karma allows; second, that as sincere students never can we return to that condition of irresponsibility in which we thought the meaning of life to be the aggrandizement of the personal "I". We can find it now only in that united spirit of life which is our only true self.

To enter into that spirit we need, among other things, understanding of ourselves and of our fellow men. Understanding softens and then dissolves hard feelings towards others, tempers love with wisdom and sheds its gentle light all around, so that no suffering goes unheeded. One way to gain such understanding is to examine the years since 1875 in the light of Theosophy, but it is imperative to take the further step of applying what we gain to our own life's experiences. Our predecessors did not see themselves and the events of their day as we can see them now, but saw them through a veil of enchantment. So do we see ourselves and the events of our day. Calmly, without apprehension and in the spirit of learning, we must try to see ourselves, our fellow students and events as they unfold themselves as they really are, in the gentle but penetrating light of understanding.

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HE who tells me of my faults is my teacher; he who tells me of my virtues does me harm.

—CHINESE SAYING

## THE ETERNAL PILGRIM

IN the rush of modern civilization, the deciding of fundamental philosophical questions is generally put off—"until there is more leisure time," as is said. Many of us change our opinions with the latest book we have galloped through, without bothering to think for ourselves. Therefore ours cannot be expected to be a highly philosophical age, for we are primarily concerned with outside sense impressions and their analyses. We pride ourselves on being scientific, but do we know what life is and what its purpose? Not only do the solutions of such fundamentals elude us, but we do not even take the trouble to find out if such questions have been solved in other ages, by other peoples; for are we not, according to our own belief, the most advanced thinkers of all times? Modern psychology observes and catalogues the several relationships which can and do arise from the interplay of physical acts, emotional strains and mental activities, but fails to perceive that there is a Thinker, a Chooser, who can and should be the controller of those faculties and powers. Instead we get lost in the ever-extending or contracting horizon of the infinitely great or the infinitely small. We are, therefore, without a centre or pivot. The ancients used the law of analogy and correspondence to solve such problems. Let us try to do the same.

Consider a universe, a solar system, a cell. Does not each of them have a centre? Have they not sprung from one single source? A cell has its nucleus, a centre of finer or more sensitive matter. The nutritive and all the formative and functional processes consist of outflow and inflow, of flux and reflux, of inspiration and expiration, to and from the nucleus. Does not man correspondentially breathe in and breathe out; take in food to transform, absorb and expel? Surely the sun, by analogy, is the nucleus of our solar system, and does not our small solar system, together with other suns and their probable attendant planets, revolve around a central Sun?

Then coming to the realm of thought: Civilizations are built or destroyed by men's collective thinking. Where have the former glories of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and ancient Rome vanished? Was it not found during the excavations of Troy that as a city it had been built, destroyed and rebuilt several times in succession? Then what of ourselves as men? Have we no centre? Are we not also building,

destroying and rebuilding? Do we not revolve around our fixed ideas? How then can man consider himself to be unique, with no nucleus or pivot to which can be aggregated his experiences and the results of the lessons he may have learnt? Is there no continuity for man? This seems hardly a reasonable position to assume, in the light of analogy and correspondence as well as the codified teachings of great thinkers, who state that man is, in fact, a continuing entity, who has lived and will live many lives on this earth. H.P.B. has said of the doctrine of reincarnation that it was

believed in by Jesus and the Apostles, as by all men in those days, but denied now by the Christians. All the Egyptian converts to Christianity, Church Fathers and others, believed in this doctrine, as shown by the writings of several.

She calls pre-existence "the oldest and the most universally accepted belief from an immemorial antiquity."

Because we do not take the time and make the effort to consider our position, we continually delude ourselves into thinking that the panorama of sense perceptions constitutes *life*. We seek that which is pleasant and neglect that which the *Katha Upanishad* terms the *better*. Most of us may, therefore, be classified as the living dead. We do not heed the words of Jesus to his disciples, that they should come out from among the sense-driven masses and be separate, *i.e.*, awakened and heedful to the dictates of the Inner Ruler.

As a matter of fact it requires very little effort, indeed, to realize that our bodies which continually change, our emotional likes and dislikes restlessly surging, and our kaleidoscopic thoughts, bright, morose, independent, servile, courageous, cowardly, stubborn, placid, concentrated or confused, are not the *man*. Sometimes the man is able to control and steady these several instruments of his which may run like wild horses or resist obedience like stubborn asses. What has Madame H. P. Blavatsky to teach on this subject in her presentation of the Ancient Wisdom? First, that the Aristotelian concept that has virtually hypnotized Western thinking for centuries, that man is an evolving social animal, is incorrect. In its stead we must consider the Platonic concept that man is, in fact, an unfolding *god*. Does not man appear as a god to the lower kingdoms? Does he not have all the powers of the lower kingdoms plus the capacity to choose? He may find that he is tigerish; but, whereas the tiger cannot become gentle,

the ferocious man may make himself mild. Did not Jesus advise his disciples to be as wise as serpents and as gentle as doves? Man has the power to rule wisely or to misuse the lower kingdoms. In fact he is a small universe, governing countless living beings who are dependent on him for their good or ill fortune, their health or disease.

But is not the thought that he is a universe in a sense a separative one? After all it is *his* little universe—his, separate from all others'; therefore it is a form of selfishness.

The philosophy of Theosophy endows every atom with every potentiality of life. It regards nothing, absolutely nothing, as inorganic or dead. The potentialities in a particle of "inanimate" matter may seem almost entirely dormant, but the process of awakening is going on in everything. Therefore all units or monads are essentially correlated, from the lowest of organisms up through all forms and gradations to man. Self-consciousness or reflective consciousness, however, belongs only to man, because his higher principles are somewhat activated, whereas in the lower kingdoms they are dormant. Just as the next great advance for the animal kingdom is to reach the stage of self-consciousness, so there must be a higher stage for man, the eternal pilgrim, the monad who has gathered to himself innumerable experiences through aeons of time, slowly unfolding his latent potentialities through form after form of matter. Hence the term "eternal pilgrim"; hence the teaching that man is an unfolding god.

The eternal pilgrim, man, must, therefore, not only make the effort to visualize that there must be a "beyond," but must strive towards it. The present state of our self-consciousness is definitely separative and selfish. The next higher stage is to unfold a sense of interdependence and unselfishness. To this end man must strive and be reborn or regenerated. In Mr. Judge's words:

The *Manasic*, or mind principle, is cosmic and universal. It is the creator of all forms, and the basis of all law in nature. Not so with consciousness. Consciousness is a condition of the monad as a result of embodiment in matter and the dwelling in a physical form. Self-consciousness, which from the animal plane looking upwards is the beginning of perfection, from the divine plane looking downward is the perfection of selfishness and the curse of separateness. It is the "world of illusion" that man has created for himself. "Maya is the perceptive faculty of every Ego which

considers itself a Unit, separate from and independent of the One Infinite Eternal Sat or 'be-ness.' " The "eternal pilgrim" must therefore mount higher, and flee from the plane of self-consciousness it has struggled so hard to reach....The original *Monad* has locked within it the potentiality of divinity.

Because of his potentialities and growing power, his godlike nature and his connection with every department and division of Great Nature, man binds or frees himself by and through himself. The eternal pilgrim is on the path to "All-knowingness," the perfection of knowledge, the possession of which confers the power of action upon any and all departments of manifested Nature. But to reach this highest place of "All-knowingness" the highest motive must prevail in all our thoughts and actions, life after life. The potentiality of divinity is locked up within us because the "*Mind* is the latent or active potentiality of *Cosmic Ideation*, the essence of every form, the basis of every law, the potency of every principle in the universe." Human thought is the reflection or reproduction in the realm of man's consciousness of these forms, laws and principles. Hence man senses and apprehends Nature just as Nature unfolds in him. On the higher planes of consciousness, however, the law of progress is said to be absolute, for knowledge and power go hand in hand with the service of humanity. Therefore if anyone succeeds in reaching the next rung of the ladder of self-conscious being, the "beyond" for present-day man, the whole race of men and the lower kingdoms as well are benefited. The Great Masters, the Custodians of the Ancient Wisdom today termed Theosophy, are by motive, development and achievement almoners of the divine. And this aim and this purpose is surely what Plato meant by terming man an unfolding god.

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As is the outer, so is the inner; as is the small, so is the great; there is but one law; and He that worketh is One. Nothing is small, nothing is great, in the Divine Economy.

—HERMETIC AXIOM

## THE INNER CONSTITUTION OF MAN

[This abstract of a lecture delivered by Mr. Judge in San Francisco, California, on October 26, 1891, was printed in *The New Californian* for December 1891.]

We are such stuff as dreams are made on. —SHAKESPEARE

Have perseverance as one who doth for evermore endure. Thy shadows [personalities] live and vanish; that which in thee shall live forever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeting life: it is the man that was, that is, and will be, for whom the hour shall never strike. —*The Book of the Golden Precepts*

IT is of these "dreams" of which we are made, and of this man for whom "the hour shall never strike" that I have to speak to you tonight. Or, in other words, of the inner constitution of man, divided in a seven-fold manner; called sometimes the seven-fold constitution of man. This seven-fold constitution is not confined, in our opinion, to man, but is shared with him by the whole of nature also. The consideration of this subject, therefore, properly demands that of the whole theosophical theory of evolution, so that tonight I cannot hope to go over it, but only that part of it which particularly relates to man.

In the theosophical theory, spirit and matter are co-existent and co-eternal. There is no spirit without matter and, *vice versa*, there is no matter without spirit. These two are the manifestations of the One Absolute Reality. That is to say, matter is at one pole of this reality and spirit at the other. In other words, spirit contains the plan, as it were, which it impresses upon matter, which receives this and carries out its evolution from the moment that manifestation begins. Therefore, this evolution is on all the seven planes. The word "plane" is used in Theosophy—and by many others before this—to indicate not only a place, but also a state or condition. For instance we have the plane of mind, of body, the spiritual and the physical planes. This does not mean that they are separated from each other like the compartments of a ship, or floors of a house. These planes are conditions, or states, of which one may interpenetrate the other, and evolution may be carried on to perfection so far as this relates to inner planes, such as those of man's septenary constitution. To illustrate: Consider the shadow from some object in an electric light, thrown in a certain

direction. Another electric light may throw a beam at right angles to this black shadow. The shadow and the light thus cross each other, but they do not interfere. The shadow, when it strikes an object beyond, still envelops it in darkness, although the electric light has shone through its centre. Thus the shadow and the bright light may exist at the place where they cross, independently, otherwise they would negative each other, and there would be a cessation of light or of shadow beyond the point where they met. Instead of this, both shadow and light will continue on to their respective destinations. This sufficiently illustrates my meaning, that the planes of evolution may proceed within each other, and yet not interfere, and it is not necessary that they be separated in any sense whatever. There are many illustrations which could be drawn from science. Mr. Tyndall substantiates this with respect to the colours of the solar spectrum. We know these are all in the solar light, unseen by us until they are separated by the prism. And so on, in almost every direction, are similar illustrations.

Evolution proceeds on seven planes throughout the manifested universe. Man, in this world, is the highest manifestation of this evolution, and therefore contains within himself its higher seven planes, which before his advent were not perceptible, although they existed always in the germ. Buddha declares that man is made up or formed from thought germs. He is not alone in this assertion. Many philosophers since his time have said the same thing; that man is a thinker, and is made up of and the result of his thoughts. Western minds have become so accustomed to judging him by his mortal body, and to listen to theories which teach the conditions whereby mental states may be materially produced, that at last they have lost sight of man as a thinker at all, and cannot understand why he is made up of his thoughts. We admit that he has a body, and that this body is not thought, but declare that it is the result of his thoughts. The body, now used by all human beings, is the result of the thought of the human race in the past, which thought at length enabled it to so mould matter as to furnish the body in which man, who is the thinker, really lives.

Man, the thinker, is not divided in this seven-fold way, but man consisting of body and other elements of his nature is so divided. This seven-fold division is not absent anywhere in nature. The seven days

of a week is an instance. The layers of the skin are divided in a seven-fold way. In the growth of the child before birth, there are seven distinct divisions. In the progress and construction of the great works of man, there is seen the seven-fold division. Of a great building, for example, the architect first formulates the plan. The materials existing in various states, represent a second stage; collecting them together after that, a third; united in the building, a fourth; decorating it, a fifth; furnishing it, a sixth; and its occupation by man, the seventh and last. And so it is with man. The ideal plan is laid down, the materials of which are scattered through space; these are collected; then built together in the various forms of nature, until that of man is reached.

The first division of man is body, composed of what is called matter, or atoms, held together in a definite form. Have you ever reflected that your body, composed of matter, is made out of the mineral, vegetable and animal kingdoms, and therefore you have in you portions of the tiger and all ferocious beasts, as well as the gentle? You have also vegetable and mineral matter collected in your body, for this represents all that evolution on the physical plane has accomplished in the world.

With the Evolutionists of today, we admit that at one time there was only a mass of fire mist, and, although our theory of evolution does do so, it is unnecessary to go beyond that for our present purpose. The Evolutionists say there was first this fire mist, which, by means of the processes of nature, began to revolve into a vortex, and so continued until it became sufficiently dense for a crust to form upon it. This kept growing thicker, until we have the world as it exists today, which finally, without any life or intelligence of its own, produced these. That is, from nothing came forth something. We admit with them that this process went on, but we assert that it was in accordance with the plan laid down by other human beings, who evolved it as the result of the experience of other lives on earth which they had passed through in the great wheel of eternity. But we say further, that in this fire mist, of the scientists, are beings, carrying the plan of evolution with them. They first put this matter through the mineral school, so to speak, residing within each particle, and continuing the process for millions and millions of years. When this had been sufficiently accomplished, these beings then passed on; that is, pushed forward some of this matter into the vegetable kingdom.

This process was carried on for uncountable years. Then this same collection of beings carried the evolution of atoms up into the animal kingdom, where we are now, as mere masses of flesh, not as human shapes. This process went on until the whole mass had received education in the animal kingdom.

The geological history of the world verifies these statements, excepting, of course, the presence of these egos. I admit that its links do not give us any proof of these beings, but I insist that a survey of the whole scheme demands their presence. In the early ages we find only forms of trees; later, we observe enormous, or mammoth, beasts. They have disappeared when the necessity for them passed. There isn't even a "missing link."

The anatomist of today insists that these were the forefathers of our animals; that such and such a huge beast is the original of such and such a smaller one. The process of perfecting that brought them to the stage where they now are was done by and through these beings. Are our bodies, then, the result of this evolution? If so, we are connected with all the lower kingdoms. Without life this body would be useless, and the Theosophic theory is that there is no spot in space where there is no life. We have been accustomed to talking about life as something belonging to material bodies, but as to the intervening space, we have generally thought of it as without life. It is undoubtedly true, I think, that in every point in space there is the same stream of life, in which all beings exist, and hence this Life Principle is the second division of the Theosophic classification of man's constitution.

Now, the question arises, what is life and what is death? Ordinarily, death is thought of as something that comes to all beings, without exception. Theosophy denies that there is such a thing as death at all. We don't say there is no death for this body. But we declare that what is called death is really life; is one of its phenomena. Man may be compared to an electric lamp, composed of carbon interposed at a break in the wire. The current, caused to flow through the wire, reaches the carbon, is resisted and broken until the carbon is exhausted. Man is a carbon standing in a current of life, consisting of molecules united in such a manner that he is capable of living—burning—just so long. That is, carrying the theory into everyday life, he is capable of remaining active just so many hours, when he becomes fatigued because life is so strong he can no longer resist it. In the morning he

awakens, to once more renew the contest, and keeps on so doing from year to year, until life has grown too strong for him and he is compelled to give up the fight and abandon his home in the body. So that there is really no such thing as death, but only a change, an abandoning of the body. This, then, is the second division of man's nature; called in the Sanskrit language, Prana, meaning breath, because it is said that man lives by means of breath. It is derived from the sun, which is the centre of life or being for this globe.

The next division is the astral body, called the design body, or Linga Sarira, that on which the physical structure is built; a further materialization of the ideal plan which existed in the beginning of this evolution. Ages since, at the time animals were going through the evolution necessary to prepare the human form, only the astral man existed. This astral body was therefore first, before man existed in material form, and, I think, represents the time when according to the Christian Bible Adam and Eve were banished from the Garden of Paradise, for it was a state of paradise to have only an astral body at a time when a physical one would have compelled man to maintain a perpetual warfare against the monsters of prehistoric ages.

The Theosophical theory is that Adam was existing as an astral body, and having reached that point in evolution where matter could be built into this body he received a "coat of skin," or became a man of flesh and blood as he is today. I advert to this because it is from the sacred book of the Christian, which has been reviled and scoffed at because it has never been explained except in its literal sense.

The astral body is the shape of man's body, but contains in itself organs which connect the man inside, the real figure, with the outside organs: eyes, ears, nose, etc. Without the astral body it would be impossible to account for the possession of senses which are not man's true outer senses. The somnambulist, for instance, walking with his eyes open sees nothing; is looking at you and cannot see you. Our explanation is, that the connection between himself in the astral body and the outer organs is cut off. In hypnotism, any organ or organs may be so cut off while others remain active, thus accounting for many of its phenomena. The astral body therefore is in reality more the man than the body, but is so connected with it that it is not able to act except in certain cases. "Mediums" are such instances. A medium is a hysterical, nervous person. We know that looking over

mediumship we find them afflicted with something akin to this; catalepsy, for instance. The condition in which many curious things happen through mediums is this: the proper adjustment of all the functions, nervous, material, and mental, is really a condition of the astral body, which is able sometimes to manifest itself. In our opinion, nearly all the phenomena of Spiritualism may be traced to the astral body, are manipulations of it, and we know that when one goes to a medium he simply awakens that medium's astral body and receives from it his own thoughts in reply to his queries, and nothing more, except in some few rare cases.

The divorce between religion and science has been so great that the "Inner Man" has been forced to manifest improperly and out of place, in order to keep alive the evidence that there is such a body. Had science been united to and gone hand in hand with spiritual philosophy, we would have had a uniform development. Since man's investigations have been curbed he has revolted within, and he has been manifesting this inner nature for the last forty years. The facts of Spiritualism are thus of use, but at the same time are dangerous. They bring back to the earth influences which ought not to return; pictures of old crimes which produce in men once more the desire to commit them.

We come next to the division of passions and desires, the basis of action from which men find their incentive to do both good and evil. When a man dies and is buried his kamic body is released. The life principle is also released from these atoms to go into others. Then the kamic body with all the passions and desires is set free. We will suppose the case of a suicide. His kamic body escapes full of the idea of suicide. Similarly, the man who has indulged in drinking and all sorts of sensualities, goes out full of these things. A murderer who is hung is in the same condition. Guiteau would go out full of that last scene where he defied his accusers, and where he declared he would destroy all the people who had anything to do with his incarceration. What happens? Man's higher principles go on and on with evolution, finally being reincarnated. If after death these lower elements are seized by mediums and brought back to earth, infused with additional life, not permitted to disintegrate, it is a crime. Everyone who goes to a medium and asks that their dead may return, commits a crime. It is a crime against the person who is dead, and against the medium; it

brings around him bad influences, for the majority that can return are full of crime. They are of the earth, earthy. Now, when I am dead my astral body will not have my senses; it will contain only my passions and desires, which swerve me as they swerve you also, and if I am drawn back against my will I may do harm. If you could actually see what occurs at a séance you would never go to another. You would see all these vile shapes enveloping the sitters like a huge octopus. Mediumship is nothing but communicating with the astral dead; it is the worship of the dead, and as such it has been condemned for ages. Moses said, "Ye shall kill a witch." He prohibited his people from having anything to do with such things.

Having considered the lower principles of man we now come to that which is immortal, or mind, soul and spirit, called, respectively, Manas, Buddhi and Atma. Atma, or spirit, is universal, and Buddhi its vehicle. Manas is the individualized thinker, the one who is conscious. These three together are eternally passing through incarnation and coming back again and again to gain experience; to reap reward or punishment.

Before birth, in the pre-natal state, man is in almost the same condition that he is after death, so that consideration of the post-mortem state will serve for the pre-natal. The difference is only slight. By a simple illustration you will probably understand the ordinary, or devachanic condition after death, and its relation to life. Imagine a young Theosophist who is to deliver a speech. Previous to his appearance he thinks of it continually, perhaps for days, goes over his ideas and wonders what kind of an impression he will make. In the evening he delivers it, in a brief time compared to that he has spent in thinking about it. When he has delivered it, he thinks of the impression he has made. The next day and for many days he still thinks of it. Isn't the thought more than the act? The state of Devachan is where he is in a similar manner thinking over the things of his last life until he returns to rebirth.

Thus after the death of the body we keep up this thinking, and develop this part of our nature, until the time comes when it is exhausted, and we come back to life to continue evolution, until the race has been perfected.

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## ANGER—A DESTRUCTIVE FORCE

Anger is the passion of fools; it becometh not a wise man.... Anger is the destruction of all that man obtains...and prevents the attainment of emancipation. The sages shun wrath. Be not thou subject to its influence.

—*Vishnu Purana*, I.

MEN and women in our civilization are surrounded with so much false knowledge that they do not take vices like anger, irritability and impatience very seriously. They make excuses for them, condone them. In "civilized" society it is not considered an evil to feel wrathful, so long as an exhibition of irritability is not made, unless one can shape it to a form called "righteous indignation."

It becomes necessary for the student of Theosophy to revise his own estimate of this vice and help others to do likewise. We must train ourselves to look upon it as a veritable Gate of Hell; that is the first step. The tendency to make excuses for our own weaknesses should be checked. There is no such thing as "righteous anger." No matter what the cause which arouses anger in us—it is more often a trifle than a major wrong—there can be no escape from its evil consequences.

Anger is one of the greatest obstacles in the way of those desirous of living the higher life. As explained by Mr. Judge in his article "The Culture of Concentration" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18*), anger has the effect of violently shaking, or pulling apart, or bursting into fragments, the inner man and hindering all progress. It debases man, making of him worse than a beast. It effects nothing, and hurts the one who is possessed by it more than the one against whom it is directed. As a Chinese proverb puts it, "The fire you kindle for your enemy often burns yourself more than him." We often suffer much more from anger than from the very things at which we are angry.

The light of knowledge, the motion towards righteousness and the perception of his own abject condition are absent when a man is filled with rage. Most people suffer from a temporary rising of this vice, and it is ordinarily recognized that when so attacked a person is disabled from reasoning, even from cerebrating. We use many common phrases that show our recognition of this fact: "He was so infuriated that he lost his mind"; or, "He was so angry he could not speak"; or,

"He was so enraged that he made himself ridiculous"; and so on.

Occult Science teaches that when we are angry certain types of elemental beings or nature forces are aroused. The *Gita* says that for the performance of every act five "agents" are necessary, and one of these "agents" is called "the presiding deities." Our bodies are composed of small lives of many different kinds, each of those kinds acting only in response to particular impulses. There are within us lives or elementals which feed on irritability; it is their nourishment. When we give way to anger these elementals are awakened from their slumber and begin to eat, so to say. This activity goes on till they feel exhausted and once again go to sleep, to be aroused again.

The force of anger does more than harm the individual himself. Every thought is dynamic, every word and act a potency. The destructive power of our wrathful thoughts, words and deeds stirs with responsive thrill the lives or elementals in the surrounding atmosphere and in the objects we contact. Wherever our eye falls in our wrath, wherever our voice sends its discordant notes, myriads of beings catch the message and pass it on throughout the universe. In ages yet to come, these lives will confront us and demand their reckoning.

Now our getting angry or impatient creates in us an impression which is subject to cyclic law. Just as there is the ebb and flow of the tides in the ocean, so in man we have tides, which are called the constant return of these impressions. Every thought we think, every act we perform, every impression of any kind that we have, will inevitably return under cyclic law. Habits of any kind are instituted by repetitions. The first time we do a thing, it is not yet a habit; but if we repeat the action and keep on repeating it, finally it becomes automatic. So it is with anger. With the knowledge of cycles, and by watching the return of the impression of anger which we have created, we shall find that it is within our intelligent control.

It is no use, as certain schools of occultism advocate, trying to exorcize the elementals of anger by one magical exercise or another; they will inevitably be drawn back to us. It is only by setting up an opposite thought or feeling, by implanting in ourselves another impression, of patience, calmness and tranquillity, that the old cycle of irritability and anger can be weakened and destroyed. Not finding the necessary food, the elementals which live and thrive on the

vibrations of irritability will *ipso facto* leave the individual.

The task of substituting calmness for anger is not an easy one; we will not succeed the first time, nor even the second time, perhaps, but if we keep up the effort we shall find that, while formerly the elementals of anger were aroused, say, every day, now they are aroused after longer and longer intervals, and by and by we shall have learnt to think of ourselves and all that concerns us, ever and always, "with the calmness of a stranger."

How can patience and tranquillity be attained and persistently maintained under all circumstances? To begin with, we must learn to get rid of the personal idea—to forget ourselves in working for others. Our likes and dislikes should not be made the basis for action. We must cease to resent what another has done or failed to do, or the personal injuries that we think are done to us. We need to gain the firm position that nothing can really injure us, that we are brave and strong enough to endure anything, and that the circumstances in which we find ourselves were caused by ourselves, can be met by ourselves, and are the very ones needed for our unfoldment. It is no use wishing that things were different. Even seeming evil can be and should be turned to good. We must learn to trust and lean back on the Great Self, the Real, which is never moved, but moves all things; sees all, without being involved. Any lesser trust cannot be permanent, for everything else is impermanent. No one can disturb us if we look upon that other as an expression, pleasant or unpleasant, of the One Self. No event or condition can upset us if we recognize it as Karma, the motion in and of the One, and thus the property, good or ill, of all. We have to be like the great bed of the ocean that is never moved, though storms may ruffle its surface. Calmness has been compared to a rock; waves of irritation may dash against it, but cannot affect it.

To be engaged in study and service in the spirit of sacrifice is the best protection against this archfiend whom few can escape. Charity and love—absolute toleration—are the strongest armours that make us invulnerable to this enemy of progress. If we persevere in our efforts,

then, when the time comes again and oft—as come it will till the enemy is fast enchained—when vexation and impatience seek to rend thy soul in twain, the calmness of thy reason shall be stronger, and allay. Within the chalice of thine heart a magic Essence is: it

rests immovable and calm though it pour forth to all the universe of balm and healing. It is the source of Patience, the source of Love, the source of that Compassion which would not harm the smallest of the small more than the greatest of the great; which would bestow on enemy e'en greater care than that upon a friend; it remains immovable in Calm and Patience whatever storms may rage or enemies from without seek to invade. (*From The Book of Confidences*, by Dhan Gargya)

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IN one word, our whole aim and desire are to help, in at least some degree, toward arriving at correct scientific views upon the nature of man, which carry with them the means of reconstructing for the present generation the deductive metaphysical or transcendental philosophy which alone is the firm, unshakable foundation of every religious philosophy. Theosophy, the universal solvent, is fulfilling its mission; the opalescent tints of the dawn of modern psychology are blending together; and will all be merged into the perfect daylight of truth, when the sun-orb of Eastern esotericism has mounted to its noon-stage. For many a long year the "great orphan," Humanity, has been crying aloud in the darkness for guidance and for light. Amid the increasing splendours of a progress purely material, of a science that nourished the intellect, but left the spirit to starve, Humanity, dimly feeling its origin and presaging its destiny, has stretched out towards the East empty hands that only a *spiritual* philosophy can fill. Aching from the divisions, the jealousies, the hatreds, that rend its very life, it has cried for some sure foundation on which to build the solidarity it senses, some metaphysical basis from which its loftiest social ideals may rise secure. Only the Masters of the Eastern wisdom can set that foundation, can satisfy at once the intellect and the spirit, can guide Humanity safely through the night to "the dawn of a larger day."

Such is the goal which Theosophy has set itself to attain; such is the history of the modern movement; such is the work which Theosophy has already accomplished in this nineteenth century.

—H.P.B. (*The North American Review*, August 1890)

## TRANSCENDING THE PERSONAL

THERE are many, many verses pregnant with both philosophical and practical day-to-day value in *The Voice of the Silence*. The fact that all things originate from the One Source, if widely understood and appreciated, and above all acted upon, leads to the understanding and practical realization of Universal Brotherhood. All men possess *Alaya*, are one with the Great Soul, but, alas, how few avail themselves of it! Why is this? Individual selfishness, family and communal fetters, the call of false patriotism, are serious hindrances. Other self-imposed impediments include the compelling life of the senses, the illusions produced by outward impressions. These give men and women a sense of a remembered personal continuity. This allows them, within the limits of their "luck" or "fate" or "God's will," to plan their future days and lives. They *hope* that there might be a life beyond the gates of death. The *Bhagavad-Gita* warns against the inclinations of the senses which ensnare and pervert the mind through their allurements, and against the resultant karmic consequences.

The *Voice* also echoes the teaching of the *Katha Upanishad* in warning that the path of the Pleasant (head-learning) does not lead to immortality. It is the path of the Good (Heart Doctrine) that leads to immortality. This is the Path recommended in Fragment II of *The Voice of the Silence*.

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions; mistrust thy senses, they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the "Eternal Man"; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha.

Students often overlook that the first golden key, *Dana*, is that of charity and love *immortal*. Impersonality transcends sense limitations, yet these are required for the leading of the life. It is said that "Death is the loss of the knowledge of our unity with the Universal Consciousness and is produced by *Avidya*, knowledge of the non-existent non-self." The mind must remain receptive to nothing but the universal truths in Nature, lest the "Doctrine of the Heart" become only the "Doctrine of the Eye," *i.e.*, empty exoteric ritualism. What is the remedy? To arouse the inner attitude of attention to that which is universal, impersonal and changeless, and to develop humility. The

road to hell is paved with good intentions; few there be who are wise before the event. Students should carefully check their motives and capacities. The task then is to try to sink the lower self as much as possible, little by little, day by day, in the interest of the general welfare. This gradually leads to the capacity to distinguish between the Good and the Pleasant. This is the pathway of impersonality, true unselfishness.

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As we approach the end of the twentieth century, we find that the world is becoming one community. We are being drawn together by the grave problems of overpopulation, dwindling natural resources, and an environmental crisis that threatens the very foundation of our existence on this planet. Human rights, environmental protection and great social and economic equality, are all interrelated. I believe that to meet the challenges of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for oneself, one's own family or one's nation, but for the benefit of all humankind. Universal responsibility is the key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace.

This need for co-operation can only strengthen humankind, because it helps us to recognize that the most secure foundation for a new world order is not simply broader political and economic alliances, but each individual's genuine practice of love and compassion. These qualities are the ultimate source of human happiness, and our need for them lies at the very core of our being. The practice of compassion is not idealistic, but the most effective way to pursue the best interest of others as well as our own. The more we become interdependent the more it is in our interest to pursue the well-being of others.

I believe that one of the principal factors that hinder us from fully appreciating our interdependence is our undue emphasis on material development. We have become so engrossed in its pursuit that, unknowingly, we have neglected the most basic qualities of compassion, caring and co-operation. When we do not know someone or do not feel connected to an individual or group, we tend to overlook their needs. Yet, the development of human society requires that people help each other.

—H.H. THE DALAI LAMA  
(From an address at the World Conference on Human  
Rights held in Vienna, Austria, on July 15, 1993)

## NIRVANA AND DAILY LIVING

BUDDHISM may be defined as the Religion of Discipline—self-discipline. It is a way of living our lives. It says that the soul is the priest, and the Buddha the refuge of the soul. It teaches that the reasoning mind is the guide and teacher, and the Dhamma the refuge of the mind. It asserts that the body and its passions must seek purification in the company of fellow aspirants—true co-religionists—and the refuge of the body is the Sangha. The body of senses has to be disciplined—the rules of the Sangha help; the mind has to be disciplined—the instructions of the Dhamma help; the soul has to be disciplined—the memory and example of the Buddha help.

Elaborate rules of conduct for the Bhikkhus are laid down in Buddhism, compared to which rules for laymen and householders seem to be very few indeed. But it must not be supposed, on that score, that the Buddha had no message for the layman. His mission was primarily to give to the world an organization which reflected in the sphere of mortals the life of the Immortal Buddhas, and that organization was the Order of the Yellow Robe which he founded. But he did not neglect the laymen, and it is quite clear to the student of Buddhism that the teachings of the Buddha are for *all*; they show a way of living day by day, not in fear but in peace, not in darkness but in the light that radiates from the Land of Bliss, eternal and supreme.

In the Sixth Book of *The Questions of King Milinda*, Nagasena says that a large number of laymen became Arhats and even reached Nirvana, and he offers this explanation:

There is no realization of Arhatship, in one single life, without a previous keeping of the vows. There is no perception of the truth to those who are not purified by the virtues that depend on the keeping of the vows....What one, even as a layman, realizes in oneself of the condition of Peace, the Supreme Good, or Nirvana, is that which one had in former births accomplished by training and laid the foundation for.

There are two important ideas in the above. First, of reincarnation. None can gain wisdom, peace and power over life without self-effort. If today, for some, the effort *seems* easy, or comes simply and naturally, it is because in previous lives they had made similar effort.

But the second truth is even more relevant to our subject: by implication, Nagasena teaches that what counts is not just what a person does, but *how* he does it, *i.e.*, his mood in doing it; and, further, *why* he does it, *i.e.*, his motive in undertaking an action. The motive and the mood belong to the inner man and are of greater value than the actual deeds done by the outer man of flesh and blood. It is on this all-important principle that Buddhistic discipline is founded. He who aspires to live a layman's life in the home, the office, the club, the market-place, has to do so by this basic view of Buddha's philosophy. Let us understand it, fully assured by Nagasena's answer: "Whether he be a layman or a recluse, he who attains to the supreme insight, to the supreme conduct of life, he too will win his way to the excellent condition of Nobility." It is true insight and the correct conduct of life which lead one to Arhatship, Noble Freedom of the Soul, and not any outer religious practices divorced from life.

The continuity of life is strikingly brought out in Buddhist philosophy. The chain of *Nidanas*, cause begetting effect and effect in its turn becoming cause, in endless succession, is fully recognized. It was this oppressing power of life—birth, decay, death; it was this depressing force ever existing in the world—desire, sorrow, more desire, suffering, greater desire still—which awakened Prince Siddhartha to ask the question: Is there no way out? And he found the answer, and on his exposition millions have lived, not in hope but in contentment; not in passivity but actively combating the disease of life. Buddha taught that Life is the Great Disease, but escape from it is possible to him who opens the windows of his mind to the Light of Nirvana, who recognizes that

Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;  
Each man his prison makes.

What is the discipline put forward for every human being in Buddhist philosophy? While the Buddha, like many other ancient Teachers, gave the truth of reincarnation and taught that the present state of every soul was the outcome of his former living, and that therefore a vast and bewildering variety of human types, mentally and morally speaking, was in evidence, he also gave the general fundamental principles which any soul, at his own stage of evolution, can apply and make use of. Let us look at them:

(a) Our present state affords everyone the opportunity to open the windows of his mind. Just as people who are unaware of the laws of hygiene and sanitation keep closed the doors and windows of their houses, awake or asleep, so also human souls shut tight the doors and windows of their minds and bring upon themselves ill-health and disease. Sorrow and suffering, anguish and agony, in quick and quicker succession overtake such souls. Quacks, false doctors of the soul and of the mind, make the troubles worse and increase the power of the dire disease of existence. The first lesson of the Divine Discipline imparted by the Buddha is that whatever one's suffering, however deep one's sorrow, the roots of both are within oneself. This simple lesson becomes most difficult to accept when one is struck with grave mental suffering or deep heart anguish. When a mother loses her babe, she cannot perceive how the root of her sorrow is within herself. When an honest person is defrauded by his friend, he cannot see how the source of that trouble is in himself and not in the dishonesty of his erstwhile friend. When a wife devoted to her family is visited with anger and irritation by the husband, it is beyond her to understand that she is the cause of that outburst. When the husband returning home from work meets with petulance, disorder and sullenness from his wife, it is impossible for him to turn within himself and say, "my fault." And yet, the doctrines of soul-discipline taught by the Buddha imply this. It is the attachment of the mother to the dead infant, the attachment of the friend to his undeserving friend, the attachment of the wife to the husband and of the husband to the wife, which is the cause of their sorrow and suffering. This attachment, this force which keeps us bound, this power which is binding man to man, nation to nation, this *trishna* and *tanha*, is the womb of all disease and all sorrow. Wherever the power of attachment exists, there is disease—mental disease, moral disease, bodily disease. Therefore the Buddha advocated that everyone should overcome the thirst of attachment. In a striking sermon, he compared the power of attachment to fire—the fire of *tanha* or attachment.

From darkness to light, from evil to good, is a short step. A man and his shadow are joined together. This same fire which burns, has a spiritual aspect—the Fire of Wisdom, the Light of Nirvana, which casts its beneficent rays in this world of shadows and darkness. It is to this Light that the Buddha calls our attention. The Light of Nirvana

is like pure Fire without smoke. Self-luminosity casts no shadows; bodies without light cast their shadows around. And so it is said that the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas shine with their own glorious radiance in such a fashion that they cast no shadows as we human beings cast. This Light of Nirvana—the Blessed Land where abide the Buddhas and the Bodhisattvas—radiates its influence everywhere. There is not an object on earth, not an event in human life, which does not carry within itself the beneficence of that Light. That Light is Compassion Absolute and binds the souls of men in a grand unity. It is the spiritual aspect, the soul of *Trishna* itself. Between lust and love there is a difference; between Cupid and Eros there is a difference; between passion and compassion there is a difference. The one looks like the other, but only in appearance. The Buddha described the bonds that bind us to life as veils, hindrances, obstacles, entanglements. These bonds cause a false appearance and make us mistake lust for love, passion or attachment for Compassion, the Power of Divine Unity. The Light of Nirvana is not far away. It becomes obscured; the veil of bondage hides the Light, and our souls and minds become entangled.

In this pair of passion and compassion, the very soul of life-discipline is to be found. This truth emerges over and over again when we reflect on the numerous sermons of the Buddha with a view to evolving a practical discipline for daily living. Nirvana is here, not somewhere far away; the Light shines in the darkness and the darkness comprehends it not; Krishna is very near, yet people think he is in *Vaikunthaloka* or some other *loka*. The Light is covered over by the shadows we ourselves cast over men and things. To take a simple example: By what process do we judge anyone? By the power of our own feelings and thoughts. One pair of eyes sees beauty where another beholds but ugliness. By our feelings we are attracted to some and repelled by others; these feelings, attractions and aversions are our attachments—the fire that burns, the shadow that vanishes, the veil that hides the Light of Nirvana. The whole world is a blaze of glory, is bathed in Light Nirvanic, but we are like Cupid—blind. Human love and attachment are blind, but Eros, the God of Love, the Hindu Kama-Deva, symbolizes Divine Love, Compassion.

The discipline for the layman as for the *Bhikkhu*, in the final analysis, consists in throwing off the veil so that the Light of Nirvana

may be perceived. Every act contains that Light, every object can radiate it for us, but it is covered over by veil after veil of desire and passion and attachment that we ourselves have created in past lives, as we continue to create in the present. Remove the veils and the Light of Nirvana will shine forth. Nirvana has been described as "a change of condition, not of conditions." A single radical and fundamental change must take place within us, and all of us are capable of making that change.

But, while one can get a fleeting glimpse of the Light of Nirvana that is hidden by the glitter of the world, it is altogether a different matter to maintain and sustain that vision, waking and sleeping, eating and drinking, in the midst of birth, decay and death. All rules, all regulations are devised for this purpose. *Bhikkhus* who observe the rules of the Sangha do so for the purpose of never letting the memory of the Light of Nirvana escape them. The ultimate embodiment of the Light takes place in the Buddhas only, but even They were once mortals like we are, were ignorant as we are, were attached to the things of the world as we are, were glamoured by the power of *Moha* and of *Maya* as we are. They won the Kingdom of Light and we too can do so if we follow in Their footsteps.

Constancy is a primary requirement of the Discipline of Life. Let us as men and women of the world be constant in looking for the Light of Nirvana—in the crying of children the Light is; in the work of the world the Light is; in birth and death, in waking and sleeping, in the young and the old that Light is. To find constantly the Light of Nirvana surrounding us, is to practise the Buddhist precepts.

Whatever we do, whatever we say, whatever we feel and think, let us bear in our hearts the spiritual counterpart of the deed and the word, the feeling and the thought. The sphere of Light is within this earth, interpenetrates it; it is within each of us. We must discipline ourselves in daily life to see that Light hidden within us and all around us, and thus we begin to walk the Noble Way to which the Buddha pointed. Let us follow the Path He showed, and Light Perpetual will bathe our mind and soul.

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## THE NUMBER NINE

H.P.B. writes in an article entitled "On the New Year's Morrow" (originally published in *Lucifer*, January 1890) that "*nine* was a digit terribly dreaded by the ancients. With them it was a symbol of great changes, cosmic and social, and of versatility, in general; the sad emblem of the fragility of human things." She goes on to say that "when multiplied by itself or any other number this cheeky and pernicious figure will always result in a sum of 9—a vicious trick of material nature, also, which reproduces itself on the slightest provocation."

In the light of this, it is unfortunate that we have to contend with *two* figure nines throughout this decade and an extra one when we reach 1999! The state of the world at the moment is a living proof that figures do seem to exert some kind of influence in our lives. In recent years there have certainly been some great changes at the social and political levels. We only have to think of the Berlin Wall which came down in 1989—here we have the two nines again! The 1990's have also seen major changes in many places—for instance, in the erstwhile Soviet Union. Students of Theosophy will be well aware of the regeneration of Theosophy there as well as the suffering that the changes have brought to many ethnic groups. Certainly there will be many more upheavals before this century "gives up the ghost" and, hopefully, as was the case in Russia, something good will come of the misery that may be caused. Many of us can attest to some changes in our own individual lives as well. The consciousness of Humanity seems to be going through definite alterations which may be for the best if opportunities are utilized correctly.

In *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 475) H.P.B. writes:

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death?

As we approach a new century, it appears that the Karma of the earth and of individuals is being speeded up in preparation for a new

phase of human progress. The spiritual boost given to us during the last quarter of each century is taking effect.

The attempts of a few to bring about the Brotherhood of Humanity prompt opposing elements to do all they can to prevent it. The suffering that is caused by all this does indeed lead many to learn about the "deceptive value of earthly hopes," but it also creates a dissatisfied minority who will resort to violence to try to bend minds towards their way of thinking. This is why study and practice of true Theosophy are so essential in modern society. It is wrong to think that everything will work out for the best automatically. H.P.B. emphasizes this point in an article entitled "Mahatmas and Chelas" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No.13*) where she writes:

A MAHATMA is a personage who, by special training and education, has evolved those higher faculties and has attained that spiritual knowledge, which ordinary humanity will acquire after passing through numberless series of reincarnations during the process of cosmic evolution, provided, of course, that they do not go, in the meanwhile, against the purposes of Nature and thus bring on their own annihilation.

The future of humanity is not so "clear cut" as many would have us believe. Theosophy still has a lot of work to do in the world and this is not a time to slacken our efforts. Although the influence of the number nine may precipitate the changes that are occurring at the moment, we have to remember that in reality man is the master of his own destiny and that he can turn all events, seemingly "good" or "bad," towards the benefit of humanity in general. It may be that the number is merely symbolic and is just one piece in the jigsaw of transformation. In this case, the number nine is an indicator of events and by no means the cause. Whatever the truth of the matter, it is obvious that the number is living up to its reputation. Let us try to learn the lessons that are being conveyed to us and help to speed up the progress of humanity. If we can make good use of the advantages given to us in the last few years of this century, then the next hundred years may be a great deal different. We will hopefully see an end to the separateness and selfishness that are the main cause of the world's suffering and we will then witness the commencement of a period of brotherly love, non-violence and morality.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Leaders from the world's major faiths and traditions who had assembled in Chicago from August 28 to September 5, 1993, at the Parliament of the World's Religions, signed at the end, after due discussion, a declaration about a "Global Ethic." There was general agreement that this document represented an initial effort, a point of beginning for a world sorely in need of ethical consensus. The declaration states that a common ground for ethical values already exists:

We affirm that a common set of core values is found in the teachings of the religions, and that these form the basis of a global ethic.

We affirm that this truth is already known, but is yet to be lived in heart and action.

We affirm that there is an irrevocable, unconditional norm for all areas of life, for families and communities, for races, nations and religions. There already exist ancient guidelines for human behaviour which are found in the teachings of the religions of the world and which are the condition for a sustainable world order.

We are interdependent. Each of us depends on the well-being of the whole, and so we have respect for the community of living beings, for people, animals and plants, and for the preservation of earth, air, water and soil.

We take individual responsibility for all we do. All our decisions, actions and failure to act have consequences.

We must treat others as we wish others to treat us. We make a commitment to respect life and dignity, individuality and diversity, so that every person is treated humanely, without exception. We must have patience and acceptance. We must be able to forgive, learning from the past but never allowing ourselves to be enslaved by memories of hate. Opening our hearts to one another, we must sink our narrow differences for the cause of the world community, practising a culture of solidarity and relatedness.

We consider humankind our family....

The declaration affirms that the Earth cannot be changed for the better unless the consciousness of individuals is first changed. There can be no fundamental improvement in our situation without discipline of mind, a readiness to sacrifice and to understand one another, and

socially beneficial, peace-fostering and nature-friendly ways of life—in other words, without global ethic.

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Dr. L. M. Singhvi, High Commissioner for India in U.K., made a clarion call for a "newer world" in his address on August 28, 1993, at the Second Parliament of the World's Religions. Reminding his audience that "success" and "succession" have the same etymological root, he said:

...the success of this centennial succession lies in our ability, the ability of humankind everywhere, to mobilize the moral will of mankind, to marshal the consent, concurrence and consensus of the peoples of the world and their diverse religions and spiritual traditions, and to give a new sense of direction and purpose, a new momentum, to the concept of the inherent unity and togetherness of all religions and spiritual traditions in the common cause of building, in the third millennium of the Gregorian calendar, an enduring, eternal Temple of the True Togetherness of Humankind; a Temple of Peace and Multi-religious and Multi-cultural Harmony; a Temple of Tolerance and Understanding; a Temple of Humanity, Compassion, Justice and Equity; a Temple of Freedom and Dignity for all; a Temple of Non-Violence and Truth in all its dimensions; a Temple of Cosmic Reciprocity and Interdependence; a Temple of Shared Concerns and Collaborative and Concrete Responses for the Relief and Amelioration of the Suffering Humanity and for Prevention of Cruelty; a Temple of Homage to Planet Earth in an integral relationship to inner and outer space for the preservation of human ecology and global environment, for the promotion of sustainable and many-splendoured development, and for preventing collective suicide by wilful Ecocide; a Temple of Unity and Solidarity of All Religions committed to Global Ethics.

All these universal temples of the ennobled human spirit have to be built in the hearts, minds and souls of men, women and children so that our world may be saved from the scourge of wars, violence, distrust, antagonism and insecurity, so that defences of peace and justice may be built on lasting foundations, so that humankind may fulfil its positive civilizational tryst with destiny without the trivializing and narrow-minded impediments which have often eclipsed and hamstrung the age-old vision of the World

as One Family, *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*. (*Bhavan's Journal*, October 15, 1993)

Dr. Singhvi evidently had conditions in India in mind when he spoke of "exorcising the haunting spectre of religious fanaticism from the workaday arena of politics" if our dream of togetherness and collaboration has to be translated into living substance and reality. The Indian ideal has always been to live and let live and to accommodate diversities of religions and traditions. But the bigotry and narrow-mindedness of some "leaders" and their followers have violated the norms of unity and togetherness.

At this critical crossroads of the best of times and the worst of times for our planet as a whole, Dr. Singhvi asks, "Are we ready to be suffused with 'the spirit of essential unity of mankind'?...Are the religions and cultures of the world ready to beat their religious swords into ploughshares and their cultural spears into pruning-hooks so that humanity may cultivate goodwill and harvest happiness?" It is not too late to seek a newer world.

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An editorial by George A. Panichas in *Modern Age* (Summer 1993) deplores "the eclipse of excellence," both in the human individual and in modern civilization. We see the lowering of standards at all levels and "the very process of excellence has now been reversed by bringing its discipline and meaning downward so as to make things easier." We are conditioned from every direction to travel the roads to worldly bigness, which in other words amounts to mediocrity—"to grow not higher but to the side." In an era of vulgarization, trivialization, mechanization and statistical averages, both the idea and the act of excellence are all but forgotten.

It is a word [writes Panichas] that one hardly or ever encounters on a metaphysical level of discussion. If excellence is noticed at all, as in the world of athletes, of entertainers, and of college and university administrators, it generally has a commercial and empirical significance. Spiritual and noetic elements of excellence are simply not recognized in this time of the "New Barbarians."

Excellence predicates aspiration and transcendence, a quest for a higher quality of attainment and, in effect, going beyond the

moment—overcoming gravity, so to speak. Excellence asserts a straining motion and movement upwards—"far from the madding crowd." Excellence has an inherently metaphysical value, captured in the Greek equivalent, *aristeia*. Excellence presupposes intellectual, moral, and spiritual ascent; and ascent specifies growth and development by dint of effort and commitment. Excellence means meeting difficulties and overcoming obstacles in the context of the Socratic dictum that without labour nothing prospers....

Excellence is ultimately the approximation of greatness, neither diluted by sentimental and secular considerations, nor defiled by even small surrenders to the lures of utopian schemes. Without excellence there can be no greatness in life. At that point when excellence as an absolute surrenders to the fiats of the social sciences and the whims of the behaviourists—and becomes politicized, ideologized—excellence is no longer a real and great virtue. And when this transformation occurs on an individual and also on a collective level, the trivialization process ensues....

The collapse of the idea of excellence, it can be said, has been commensurate with the downslide of ethical, moral, and spiritual standards. We no longer hold anyone to some standard of conduct or accomplishment. We no longer believe that anyone should be expected to rise to a standard. Standards of excellence are steadily and systematically deflated at all levels, especially in education....

The path to excellence signifies purpose and effort; a measure of accomplishment, a course of action, a line of conduct, a way of life. It entails rigorous self-searching, self-discovery, and self-understanding. This path, with its sometimes steep climbs and sudden turns and twists, is the path to edification and true enlightenment.

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Occultism maintains that "every atom of matter, when once differentiated, becomes endowed with *its own* kind of consciousness" and, speaking relatively, with intelligence.

Even on this plane of ours there are other and various intellects, besides those of man, in creatures visible and invisible, from minds of subjective high and low Beings to objective animals and the lowest organisms, in short, "from the Deva to the elephant, from the elemental to the ant."...Thus, finding on our own plane—if we

credit the teachings of Occultism—so many and such varied states of consciousness and intelligence, we have no right to take into consideration and account only our own human consciousness, as though no other existed outside of it. (*Transactions*, pp. 13-14)

This is an age-old teaching, and some at least among the scientists now seem to be veering round to this view, though the majority still hold that consciousness is limited to the human mind. There is an ongoing debate in scientific circles on this "thorny question of consciousness."

For Lynn Margulis, professor of biology at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, U.S.A., and a lifelong student of microscopic beings, "human consciousness has less to distinguish it from the ways of microbes than one might think." (*Omni*, October 1993)

Because we are acutely conscious of the signs and symbols of other people [she says] we think we are conscious of everything. But we are dimly conscious. People are conscious of temperature in a certain range or of humidity, perhaps, but oblivious of magnetic fields, respiration, and many other things, including, not least, the wonders of bacterial life.

If consciousness is as my colleague Peter Frank Allport once defined it, a living system's developing ability to create, remember, recall, and use representations of aspects of itself and its environment, then it's possible to argue that the microorganisms are conscious. They are alive and have abilities to create, remember, and recall.

Social organization, recycling, predation, chemical sensing, gravity, magnetism, light, pressure—all of these sensitivities are developed not just in animals such as dolphins and whales, but in microbes. The sensory systems of all of the thirty million species with which we share this planet are vastly greater than the few we enjoy. Microbes respond profoundly to oxygen, methane, acids, sugars, salts, lipids—and uncountable numbers of chemicals, especially water. Phototrophic and other bacteria sense infrared and ultraviolet light we can't see....

Bacterial awareness is more limited than that of a human mind....I've watched conscious bacteria for hours, seeing things about which everyone would scream if they saw them. Unbelievable diversity! A microscopic theatre with thousands of beings all interacting, dying, killing, feeding, excreting, and sexually provoking each other—all activities most people think are so specifically

human....The idea that only people are conscious makes me laugh.

Evidently we have to extend our idea of consciousness. Every particle, whether organic or so-called inorganic, is a life, and where there is life there is consciousness, though degrees of consciousness vary.

Everything in the Universe, throughout all its kingdoms, is CONSCIOUS: *i.e.*, endowed with a consciousness of its own kind and on its own plane of perception. We men must remember that because we do not perceive any signs—which we can recognize—of consciousness, say, in stones, we have no right to say that *no consciousness exists there*. There is no such thing as either "dead" and "blind" matter, as there is no "Blind" or "Unconscious" Law. These find no place among the conceptions of Occult philosophy. The latter never stops at surface appearances, and for it the *noumenal* essences have more reality than their objective counterparts. (*S.D.*, I, 274)

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In the economy of nature there is nothing useless; every species serves a purpose. Yet, through the ages the lowly worm has been a much despised creature, something to be got rid of. Farmers believed worms devoured their grain and spoiled their fruit. People also disliked them for less practical reasons. "Worm," in fact, has become a generic name for any contemptible life-form.

Researchers now estimate that there are more than 4,000 earthworm species on the face of the planet, and the list grows every year. "It may be doubted whether there are many other animals which have played so important a part in the history of the world," Charles Darwin once wrote. Richard Conniff, writing in *Smithsonian* (July 1993) reminds us of some of these roles.

Among the earliest writers to question popular antipathy toward earthworms [Conniff writes] was the 18th-century British clergyman Gilbert White in *The Natural History of Selborne*. Though worms might appear to be "a small and despicable link in the chain of Nature," he observed, they "seem to be the great promoters of vegetation,...by boring, perforating, and loosening the soil..." and by piling up vast amounts of fine manure for the very crops they

were thought to destroy....White also wrote, unequivocally, "the earth without worms would soon become cold, hard-bound...and sterile." It took more than a century for the world to catch up with this idea....

Darwin won popular acceptance for Gilbert White's idea that worms make the ground suitable for plants. They aerate and drain the soil with their burrows, drag down leaf fragments to grind up for food and "mingle the whole intimately together, like a gardener who prepares fine soil for his choicest plants." Long before the advent of the plow or of the human race itself, Darwin wrote, "the land was in fact regularly ploughed" by earthworms....

Darwin spent enormous energy demonstrating that worms think their way around a leaf almost as if it were a geometric problem, usually seizing the narrowest point to reduce resistance as they drag it down into the burrow. Subsequent researchers have suggested that worms can also learn their way around a simple maze. The rest of the world, however, has not rushed to embrace Darwin's argument that the spark of active intelligence exists even in a worm....

Worms can indeed accomplish miracles....Worms don't merely plow the earth; they may also produce plant-growth hormones; and, as studies have shown, active worm populations dramatically boost plant productivity....Even as a solution to the solid-waste problem, worms may yet prove to be more than a pipe dream.

Earthworms thus form a small but very important link in the chain of life. As nature's alchemists and grist mills, they transform dead organic matter into powerful living soil. By helping them to prosper, humankind can help save itself.

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