

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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## INERTIA—MOTION—HARMONY

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O brother, use the Inertia of Matter to move thy mind away from darkness.

And use the Motion of Manas to pass out of the sphere of lust, wrath, greed, vanity: Touch the radiance of thy Inner God.

Thou art that Shining One, O brother, full of truth, harmony, and light.

Learn to sacrifice: Give the bliss of that light to the realm of sorrow and darkness. Create in thyself the future Bodhisattva. Service, *Sevā*, opens the path of renunciation. Of myriad renunciations is the Great Renunciation made.

—*The Mirror of Magic*

THE central truth of the Higher Life destroys the cause of all errors and crimes — the dire heresy of separateness. That truth proclaims that there is no division between the spiritual and the secular. The continuity of conscious living in spirit is the goal for which knowledge is sought, application of sage teachings is made and discriminative promulgation of Theosophy is undertaken. All day long this triple activity of study, application and promulgation is attended to. Many slips in the observance of this Divine Practice occur and with zeal and promptitude each of them is silently corrected. He who talks of his slips to all and sundry is committing another mistake in trying to amend the original ones.

For such a devotee-practitioner the conscious doing of wrong becomes impossible. His struggle is not so much to avoid wrongdoing as to find what is the right. Paul, the Christian Apostle, repeats the teach-

ing about the constant enemy of man of which the *Gita* (III. 39) speaks:

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. (*Romans*, vii. 14-15)

The power of *rajas* which Paul calls "the sin that dwelleth in me" works in so subtle a way that thoughts are entertained, words are spoken and deeds are done non-self-consciously. This constitutes the trial of the neophyte — it may be regarded as the archetypal test from which all trials emanate. Our preliminary effort at living the Higher Life should be directed at understanding the mystery of Paul's statement — how it is that

to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (*Romans*, vii. 18-19)

Note how the Christian Initiate emphasizes the point by reiteration.

Between our motive for action and the method with which it is done with mind, voice, or body, there persists the dire heresy. This mars, and often completely spoils, the practice which the *Gita* emphasizes and which we aspire to follow:

Whatever thou doest, O son of Kunti, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me. (ix. 27)

If our motive is marred by the undetected subtle influence of the dire heresy of separateness, our method is covered over by the projective power of ignorance which envelops the Soul, and produces false valuation of objects and appearances of the external world.

Conscience itself is fooled by the dire heresy of separateness and by ignorance. Desires make untruth and ugliness appear as truth and beauty and then follows that other envelopment caused by *tamas*, the power of darkness, which makes truth appear as falsehood and beauty as ugliness.

Conscience itself is in need of enlightenment. Good motive, if it is really good, demands correct methods of expression. The end never matures in good if the means thereto are bad. *Tamas* fights against *rajas*; *rajas* itself resists its own frustration by *sattva*. Therefore, the creation of a *sattvic* personality out of the present disorderly one in which all three *gunas* play their parts, causing pleasures, pains and *ennui*, be-

comes the chief occupation of the aspirant to the higher life. Without neglecting the performance of duties, which become purified under the Law of Necessity intelligently applied; watching that no harm comes through our duties to the many for the good of the few, much less to the advantage of the selfish and greedy ones; by adding to natural or *prakritic* duties those acts necessary for spiritual living, pertaining to *Purusha*, we transmute the present personality into the purely *sattvic* one, through which the Ishvara in man radiates its light.

Under the impulse of *tanhaic* elementals, or karma, we feel desires and are impelled to action which right knowledge can and should resist. By the aid of right knowledge we know (1) our own duties and (2) our obligations to our Higher Ego. By walking on the Bridge of *Antahkarana* we gain these two perceptions. The conjunction of the Personal Consciousness with the Inner Individuality takes place — fleetingly at first, then temporarily, and ultimately permanently.

Not by withdrawing from the world of mortals wherein we are born but by transforming ourselves by right living in that very world is the process which the *Gita*, *The Voice of the Silence*, *Light on the Path* and other books of devotion advocate. As long as a devotee has a body and a personality, so long is he in and of the world. When he has learnt to part his soul from his body he is in the world but not of it. When he has resolved to make the great renunciation he once again lives in and with the world and is of it also, but on a higher spiral, as leader and master and compassionater of a few directly and of all men indirectly.

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THROUGH joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure, the soul comes to a knowledge of itself; then begins the task of learning the laws of life that the discords may be resolved and the harmony be restored.

—*Lucifer*, September 1887

## REINCARNATION AND MEMORY

[This article originally appeared in five parts in Vol. IV of *The Path* (September 1889 – February 1890), over the signature "Harij," the pseudonym of Dr. J. D. Buck. The present reprint divides the article into two sections. The concluding portion will appear in our next issue.—Eds.]

### I

THE QUESTION is often asked: If the theory of reincarnation be true, why have we no recollection of any previous life?

It may easily be conceived as possible that we have lived before on this earth, and that memory of the events of that existence has been blotted out. This lapse of memory is a frequent experience of everyday life; in fact, of all our varied experiences from youth to old age we really remember only a few of the most vivid, and can never recall all the details of even these. Indeed, we forget far more than we remember of the details of this present life, and the wonder is not so much how we can remember the few things that are partially retained, but how we can forget so much of experience that passes beyond all possible recovery. There is, no doubt, an absolute registration of every incident and experience in life, but nothing known to us as memory can possibly constitute that registry. The essence of what we designate as memory consists in our ability to recall into the sphere of consciousness past conditions and events, and this ability is seldom in any instance more than partial, and is always fleeting and uncertain. There are, indeed, flashes of memory where an event long forgotten is revived with unusual vividness, and we get the impression that nothing is really lost but that a latent or a passive memory contains them all, waiting only the touch of circumstance to recall them into being. So far as any legitimate function of memory is concerned, this is a fallacy. The absolute registration of events already referred to involves far more than can be assigned to the function of memory. This must be borne in mind, and we must accurately apprehend just what the word memory means, before we can intelligently discuss the real question under consideration.

In other words, when we have carefully considered the fact, the function, and the phenomenon of memory, we can easily understand why that which but partially records passing events, and never is able to recall them entirely, should be unable to bridge the chasm of perhaps a thousand years and recover the incidents of a previous incarnation. It

may, moreover, appear presently that all that escapes memory, all that memory appears temporarily to retain but in time loses, is nevertheless retained elsewhere and carried on from incarnation to incarnation. Let us bear constantly in mind that nothing exists without a cause, and that nothing is ever really lost. If this principle, recognized as everywhere true in physics, be true also in metaphysics and in all human experience, then each human being represents in himself and carries with him all previous experience, and is at any moment of his existence an epitome of all his past. It is, however, quite evident that nothing known to us as memory answers to this epitome, even for the present life.

The experiments in hypnotism have shown that consciousness and experience may exist independent of what we know as memory. An act to be performed at a future time and an exact date is fixed in some way on the sensorium, and the act is performed automatically at the exact time, although memory bears no record of the experience that led to the act. In another case memory may be impressed and confined to definite limits, thus showing that memory is relatively free from experience. Such illustrations might be multiplied indefinitely, to show that memory is not commensurate with all human experience, even in the present life.

As an element in man's being, consciousness is far broader and deeper than memory. Consciousness represents the fact of experience; memory the form and the details. Hence, while the fact remains and an experience once had can never be destroyed, the form and details in which it first appeared may pass away. This fact of experience remains as a precipitated result, and, divested of memory, *i.e.*, of form and details, relations and sensations, constitutes the basic element in Karma. Add to the foregoing considerations the ethical element, or relation to other individuals, giving thus the element of motive, and we have the law of Karma deduced from the elements. In the first instance we have the individual as related to himself; in the second, as related to his fellows.

These are elementary considerations, yet none the less important. They are derived from the commonest everyday experience, and hence everyone can test them for himself. It might be profitable to observe, in passing, that this deduction of knowledge from experience is the only way of learning. We have within ourselves the elements and conditions of superior knowledge and illumination, but so long as these elements are latent and inactive they are of no practical value. They make a grave, often a fatal, mistake who imagine that those possessed of supreme

wisdom can bestow it upon the ignorant as a gratuity or a favour. They have not so received it, neither can they so impart it. The law never changes, and is the same for Adept and neophyte. Most truly says Hadji Erinn in the last *Path*, "*It may be a child's school, but it takes a man to go through it.*"

This digression seemed necessary in order to show the importance of the simpler primary propositions, and the manner in which they are to be received and tested. We are not dealing with Reincarnation as a dogma, but strictly as a scientific hypothesis. For any intelligent person nowadays to accept the special-creation theory, with birth into the present life as the beginning of man, is to confess the whole problem of life to be incomprehensible and all its mysteries incapable of solution. With shaded eyes and bated breath all such continually ask, "*What does it all mean?*" The most salient point, the most common objection to the theory of reincarnation, is the lapse of memory. If we could remember distinctly any existence previous to this, the problem would at once be solved. It would then be a matter of common experience, and no one would doubt it. Therefore, memory becomes the point of interest in examining the theory. If we are to estimate with any degree of certainty what memory may or may not do, what it may or may not have done, we must first determine by our own daily experience just what memory is now doing. Every reader, therefore, should pause after every statement, and inquire after every proposition — "Is this true? Is it in accordance with my own experience?" If he does this, and is careful as to the use and exact meaning of words, he will find the latent stores of knowledge beginning to unfold within his own soul, and the meaning of life will begin to appear.

This knowledge of the true meaning of life will not depend on his acceptance of the theory of reincarnation as a dogma, though even in that way it is infinitely superior to any other, but the real benefit to the student will come from the fact that he is beginning to *know himself*, and to read correctly the lessons of his own experience. Those who oppose the reincarnation theory almost invariably show utter ignorance of these primary considerations, the very alphabet of the whole subject. The questions involved are so deep, so broad, and in their final application so abstruse, that an error in the beginning leads to endless complications and misconceptions further on. This is because human experience covers such a wide area, and human relations are so complicated that any theory capable of meeting these experiences at every point

must be equally potent and applicable. If, therefore, reincarnation be true, and be thus involved in human experience and capable of explaining the mysteries of life, it must be capable of logical deduction from these same experiences. Its ground of operation is our legitimate ground for investigation. Those who are unable or unwilling to study the subject in this way may accept the theory as a dogma, or deny it altogether, as they please; though at this point a great deal may be said as to motive and result on human action. From the standpoint of dogma the principle of *Justice*, both human and divine, overwhelmingly supports reincarnation; while every other theory known to modern times is horribly *unjust*, thus favouring priestcraft and kingcraft, and rendering the essential Brotherhood of man impossible.

*“Man’s inhumanity to man  
Makes countless millions mourn.”*

The essence of humanity is justice; the essence of all inhumanity is injustice. Wherever exact justice reigns, divine Charity glorifies life with the halo of Divinity.

These preliminary considerations may help to set our subject in its true light, and serve in divesting it of all prejudice. Only in this way can we examine any subject dispassionately, with any probability of arriving at the simple truth.

We may now return to our original inquiry: If the theory of reincarnation be true, why have we no recollection of any previous life? Passing by all those cases where such reminiscence is claimed by certain individuals like Apollonius of Tyana, and certain experiences difficult of explanation on any other ground in the life of many persons, passing by such considerations as favour belief in reincarnation on the ground of Justice, let us consider memory in relation to experience. From the known character of memory deduced from daily experience, is there any reason to expect it to bridge the chasm between two incarnations, provided more than the present incarnation has existed for the individual? If not, why not? Put in another form, our thesis may be stated in this way: Is the absence of memory of a previous life any bar to the acceptance and rational application of the theory of reincarnation?

The terms cause and effect are related to phenomena. The essence of phenomena is motion, or action. Every so-called cause is involved in its effect, and every so-called effect becomes in its turn a cause of further action to be involved in all succeeding effects. Man has sometimes been

called "a creature of circumstance." This is a half-truth. Man is also a creator of circumstance. In other words, man bears the same general relation to cause and effect as does every object in nature. If we observe any object in nature we discover it giving rise to the theatre of phenomena. If we find it acting, we may trace the so-called causes of its present activities. If we find it apparently quiescent, we may discover what activities it will presently give rise to. There is thus a period of activity followed by a period of repose, and this followed by renewed activity. All nature is thus instinct with life, for life is essential action. Thus "the out-breathing and in-breathing of Brahm" involves every atom and every object, no less than every organism.

Life's pulses quiver everywhere,  
 A solemn rhythm reigns;  
 A measured tread is in the air,  
 The ocean throbs with pain.  
 The solid earth its pulses keeps  
 While shadows come and go;  
 Deeps answer always unto deeps,  
 Glow answers unto glow.  
 Back of all action there is rest;  
 Behind all rest the flame  
 Of life but smoulders in Brahm's breast,  
 Ready to glow again.

In the further discussion of this subject we need a few terms with definite meanings, such as every one can understand. We are looking at the doctrine of reincarnation from a single standpoint, and for this one view a comprehensive philosophy and exhaustive classification are not necessary. We need only to appeal to common experience and to logical deductions drawn therefrom. The self-conscious centre in man we call *ego*. Experience is the varied relations existing between the ego and all its surroundings or environment resulting in action. Action implies reaction. If the ego in man acts upon his environment, so environment reacts upon the ego. This action and reaction constitute man's experience. The law of this action, that is, the direct relation between action and reaction, is that of all force, all attraction, all motion everywhere, *viz.*, quantity and quality are both mathematical and rhythmical. Circular motion begets circular motion, like attracts like. For every given impulse sent out a like impulse is returned, both as to form and as to intensity or quantity.

The self-conscious centre in man, the *ego*, the "I," stands in the

centre of his "sphere of life," is the centre of his environment, and it therefore actually stands between two worlds: the seen and the unseen; the world of action and the world of thought; the world of effects and the world of causes. Now the unseen world of causes, whence come our thoughts, our impulses, the "within" to all of man's outer world, or the centre of his sphere, is also the *noumenal* or spiritual world, as contrasted with his phenomenal or physical world. Man's experience, therefore, whether he is aware of it or not, is drawn constantly from these two worlds, though seldom in equal degree. We say of one, "He is a man of action"; of another, "He is a man of thought." We say of one, "He is spiritually minded"; of another, "He is carnally minded." We say of one, "He lives on a low plane"; of another, "He is high-minded." It may thus be seen that both our observation and common experience have become stereotyped in forms of common expression.

The logical deduction thus drawn from common experience and observation leads to the conception that man is a conscious centre between an upper and a lower world; or, if you please, that the "sphere" of man's life, of which the ego is the conscious centre, is composed of two semi-spheres. A perfect sphere is an ideal in nature. It is the design drawn by the *Architect* upon the phenomenal trestle-board of nature. In outer nature the sphere is always imperfect. Every fruit, like an apple, for example, has an actual centre just as an ideal sphere which it represents has an ideal centre. These ideals only are perfect. The core, or seed-pit of the apple, is its centre of life, but the two halves made by cleavage through the core are neither equal nor symmetrical, hence they are imperfect. The design of nature is its ideal. Without this ideal there could be no persistence of form, no such thing as species, no correspondences, no harmony.

Now to return to the life of man, let us observe that, relatively independent of nature's ideals, he has also his own ideals, and that these ideals or aims more or less shape his life. Man's ideals are a compound derived from his appetites, passions, or desires, on the one hand, and his aspirations, hopes, and disappointments, on the other. All these make up the round of his experience, and constitute his sphere of life. As to symmetry, man's sphere is thus distorted. With the ego as the centre, if man's sphere of life is to be rounded to perfection, his experience should be so adjusted that it shall pertain equally to the two worlds of which his consciousness takes equal cognizance. His thought shall inspire his action, and his action shall again give rise to thought. He will

thus act consciously and designedly, rather than impulsively or passionately. Man would thus have a rounded experience and a range of consciousness that would be both extended and clear, and by so adjusting his experience of the two worlds in which his ego abides, by checking one set of experiences with the other, he would have real knowledge of both.

As a matter of fact, there are individuals who in one short life have well-nigh exhausted physical sensuous experience. The aged Faust was exactly in this condition. But in such cases, the development being altogether one-sided and the experience pertaining so largely to the gross and material, the range of consciousness is really very narrow indeed. The vehicle of this experience, the physical body, is cast off at death, and the ego thus released and rounding up its experience on the higher or spiritual plane would find itself confined to very narrow dimensions. With little conscious experience in the higher realm which now constitutes the theatre of its being, and its familiar channels destroyed, with no organ of physical memory like the physical brain, there could remain but a confused precipitate in consciousness by which even the recent experiences of earth-life could be retained, and this must soon fade away. The ego now enters on a new phase of existence, in the world of causes, but where it has to work out, or "experience," the effects of its recent life on earth. When these have run their course and become exhausted, let us say that it returns to life on earth. Nothing remains of its former life save only precipitated results. The former body is destroyed, and the senses of its former life changed beyond recognition. In other words, nothing remains of the former personality. The precipitated results as impulses to new activities belong to the individual life, or to the real ego. Thus the personal and the individual memory differ as do the elements of a compound from the precipitated result in life's alembic.

*(To be concluded)*

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IN the beginning of time great sages from other spheres impressed the plastic nature of man with imperishable axioms, both of morals and mathematics. These endure through all changes of governments, society and civilizations; they will never fade, even unto the last great seventh knell which will close the Manvantara.

—ANCIENT ROCK INSCRIPTION

## LESSONS OF THE THRESHOLD

IN *The Voice of the Silence*, the pupil is made to ask his Teacher as to what he should do to reach to Wisdom. The answer is in explicit terms and admits of no ambiguity. The Teacher advises the pupil to search for the Paths. This answer is supplemented by words of caution followed by instructions as to how he should set about the search for that which he has not yet seen and which is not directly disclosed by his Guru. The stanzas which follow the answer of the Teacher lay down the conditions which must be fulfilled before the pupil can qualify himself for the deeper knowledge, the higher understanding. These are conditions which can neither be waived nor taken lightly. They are laws in super-nature and the preliminary effort at providing them demands the undergoing of a long and arduous course in self-discipline. The student who enters upon this training steps out into a strange new world. It is the same world as it was before the discipline was undertaken, and yet it is not the same. The former moorings, the erstwhile solid foundations slip away and the Soul finds itself cut adrift without a haven of refuge anywhere in sight. It is the first real test of the man's courage and of the stability of his faith. Many a student has lost heart as years have chased endless years with never a sign of progress. In desperation, he has called the goal unattainable, has abandoned quest and effort and has succumbed to a somnolence of the Soul. With the ceasing of the will to try, the incarnation becomes abortive for the reason that the songster is muted and the song of the Lord (the *Gita* of Bhagavan) is lost to ears that are made deaf to the higher vibrations.

For those who feel that the goal is worth the pain and the anguish of repeated failures, *The Voice of the Silence* gives valuable guidance in the practice of discipline. The Rules it sets forth are signposts; they "point out the 'Way' . . . as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness." These rules are no mere impositions nor are they barriers raised to trip the unwary. They serve a purpose and give momentum to the disciple's progress. They are by their very nature inviolable and deserve special consideration—a deeper pondering on the reasons why any soul which violates them is barred from progress till it realizes that no transgression is possible or can ever be permitted.

Before one ventures upon the perilous paths of discipleship, one is expected to take stock of one's entire being, and the first item of the inventory is the heart. Is it a jealous heart? A selfish, or a cruel, or

even a cowardly heart? In the would-be disciple who comes from the great roar of the outside world, the heart would portray both the good and the bad according as the inclinations oscillate between that which is desirable and that which is not. It is this heart which has to be made clean and then preserved safe and protected from substances which soil and cling. What makes the heart unclean? What steps should be taken to preserve to the heart its pristine purity? The answer to these questions is wrapped up in the understanding of the steps which the pupil is expected to take and which are set out in the same and subsequent stanzas of *The Voice of the Silence*. Some of these steps could be taken even by those who have no pretensions of becoming Occultists. They may be roughly summarized thus:

1. Efforts must be made to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the ever-lasting. No longer may the senses or even the reasoning intellect be relied upon, and this for the reason that no instrument which is itself ephemeral can be of any use to open up the vistas of the permanent. Each acquisition, each karmic heirloom has to be picked up, analysed and questioned about its competency to survive the journey to the other shore. The power of discerning the real from the false comes only by way of a series of progressive awakenings. The Soul when it awakes, shakes off the accretions of ages and stands nude and bereft of what the world called desirable. Yet, the forward step is not one of mere negation of the undesirable. It requires a positive approach, a questing for new weapons, vehicles, potencies. For, the signs and passwords which permit the pupil passage across the threshold of the new world are to be striven for and obtained by the use and exercise of potencies higher than terrestrial. The brain and its cerebrations, the feelings and their emotional overtones, the senses and their intoxicating, inebriating propensities have to be given up and replaced by a studied calmness and a total reliance on that which is born of *yagna-dana-tapas* (sacrifice, charity, austerity) mentioned in the *Gita*. For, in the measure in which the pupil becomes familiar with this trinity and makes it a living power in his life, in that measure will dawn upon his questing soul the possibility of finding an entry into the higher realms of wisdom and of acquiring proof bordering upon certainty that intuition can be reached and that out of the Silence a resonant voice will arise.

2. The pupil must learn to separate Head-learning from Soul-Wisdom. A painful and laborious process this at any time until the man has

accumulated to himself numerous existences. The pupil is asked to relegate that which at one time he valued as his most cherished possession — the knowledge of the physical world; its formulæ and intellectualisms, its arts, sciences and faculties. To deny to each of these their erstwhile pride of place and then moreover to keep that place vacant for a still unknown claimant demands a fortitude and faith bordering almost upon the fanatical. Ignorance belongs to the boor, the fanatic and the mentally lazy. Head-learning is the property of the man who hungers for knowledge, but who not having lit his lamp, sees the Universe in the deceptive half-light of a knowledge gleaned by others and founded purely on the testimony of the senses. This knowledge is perishable because it belongs to the earth and is stored in the physical mind, that terrestrial portion of the soul which at death parts company with its heavenly counterpart.

Shin-Sien, the sixth Patriarch of North China who taught the Esoteric Doctrine of *Bodhidharma*, likened the mind to a mirror which attracts and reflects every atom of dust and has to be watched over and dusted every day. The pupil is called upon to keep vigilance over his mind and if the clogging, tainting exhalations of the ephemeral are gathered on its surface, he has to brush these away by the help of the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom. The use of any other cleansing agent may prove abrasive for the mind and may in certain circumstances smudge and soil a larger surface in the erasing process as is so often the case in ordinary life with pencil erasers.

3. The pupil is called upon to seek for the Impersonal within his body, and having sought out that Impersonal to seek in it for the "Eternal Man." In the quest of the Highest, the importance of the body and its sensations cannot be ignored; for the body is the only window through which the light of that Highest can come and touch the world of matter. There are schools of thought which advocate that breaking bone and rending flesh and muscle unites a man to his "silent Self." There are others who think that the highest goal is reached merely by the cessation of sin and faults. The school of thought to which the Masters belong holds views contrary to these. Nor does Theosophy advocate the path of inaction. Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." And again: "If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, Disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future

harvests. Accept the woes of birth.”

Ere the body can be turned into a shrine, it has to be purged of all dross. Each atom and organ, each orifice and sense has to be made to turn its face towards the Light. You do not do anything to darkness nor manipulate it to turn it into light. You have to move out of and away from darkness by seeking the ray which illuminates. So with the body and the fleshly appetites to which man is heir. But the removal of darkness from the Soul is not an end by itself. It does not cleanse the heart. It does not build the fane. It is but a preliminary, a stepping-stone upon the way. It is when the gateways of the human abode are no longer darkened that, even from afar, the Impersonal is perceived to be what it is — a radiant being of light, a thing of beauty, a promise in this sorrowful world of that which transcends both grief and pleasure. Within this Impersonal is the Eternal Man — the luminous being that moves from incarnation to incarnation, the indwelling *Kshetraja* of the *Gita*. It is he who possesses the knowledge garnered through countless births and is the one who enjoys the aroma of the fruits gathered during each terrestrial existence. He knows what is the real as opposed to the unreal. He is the “true man” of the Northern Buddhists in whom are locked the keys to the higher mysteries.

When the pupil enters upon his quest in reality, the action of Karma changes. The law recognizes the pilgrim in him and so manipulates the circumstances of his life as to facilitate a quick scattering to the winds of the false learning and the useless encumbrances gathered and then preserved over the ages. The child when it grows up has to lay aside childish things. It may be painful but it is vital to its evolution. It is equally painful for the man to leave his familiar haunts of joy and enter what he must in his ignorance consider a stage which negates gladness. The Good Law which is intelligent beyond human comprehension now moves swift and fast. The Soul has to be induced to pass quickly out of its adolescence and the “Great Sifter” does its work unmoved by tears shed over broken toys. The man’s broken idols together with the warp and woof of his fantasies are blown away as chaff from the wind.

Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

When the man has added to himself numerous existences, his experience teaches him that to work for fame, position or even knowledge is to work for a reward. Such work becomes tainted with selfishness since in each case the man desires to set himself as a thing apart from the rest of humanity. True knowledge can come only as a result of sacrificial work gladly done for all mankind. Wisdom is like the dew from above that blesses the earth beneath. It blooms when the soul reaches the apex of its ascent towards Buddhi. The pupil who risks his progress towards the Light or who loses pace and even halts to aid a brother pupil whose feet are heavy with mire is the true pupil. He sows kindly acts and these must bear their results in time. "The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life — has lived in vain."

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THE tree which needs two arms to span its girth, sprang from the tiniest shoot.

Yon tower, nine stories high, rose from a little mound of earth.

A journey of a thousand miles began with a single step.

—LAO TZU

## THE PROBLEM IN INDIA

Where shall we find the true foundation for a changed civilization that all men and women can see and stand on? It is not philosophies nor religions nor political panaceas that are needed; but Knowledge, and a wider scope of vision than the vicissitudes of one short physical life. The knowledge that is greater than all the forms of religion ever invented is the knowledge of the very nature of man himself, for himself and in himself.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THERE ARE certain psychological diseases from which we in India are suffering today. Parochialism, creedalism, communalism and social conflicts are causing disturbances throughout the country, though their particular expressions differ in different areas. The remedy lies only in a proper observance of the Law of Brotherhood.

Whether man likes it or not, the impersonal Law of Karma restores broken harmony and in the process pain and sorrow are produced. No kingdom in Nature, save the human, can practise the Law of Brotherhood, for man alone is self-conscious and has the power to choose. He can devise ways and means to participate in the evolutionary process and thus become an intelligent co-operator with Nature, working with the Law and not against it — labouring to restore broken harmony everywhere and desisting from breaking harmony anywhere. This he can do by a proper observance of the Law of Brotherhood.

All good-hearted people, all well-meaning men and women, believe in and speak about brotherhood. Their knowledge of the Law of Brotherhood as an important aspect of the Law of Karma is almost nil; their concept of brotherliness is surrounded by clouds of kindness, charity, tolerance. But clouds, though capable of producing showers, are not life-giving waters for the parched soil. Therefore even these praiseworthy virtues fail to create a harmonious atmosphere and the Law of Brotherhood is broken every hour of every day.

It is generally believed that if outer problems are resolved, men will be more brotherly; that, for instance, if boundary disputes between one State and another are settled, harmonious relations will be established. In short, it is thought that changes in outer conditions will change man's inner character and attitude. This is putting the cart before the horse. Outer conditions do affect a person, but not if there is not within him the power to respond. On the other hand, help a man to acquire

knowledge which will enable him to change his attitude to his own problems, and soon he will not only improve his own environment but also become brotherly in his attitude to others. Self-reform through Soul-education is the first requisite.

Are students of Theosophy, with the knowledge they have of the teachings about the Law of Karma and of Brotherhood, using the virtues of kindness, charity and tolerance correctly, so as to express real brotherliness in their own ranks? While knowledge is essential, and most of the students have a fair grasp of the truth that they have a responsibility to the Law of Karma and that they must practise the Law of Brotherhood, do they go far enough in their endeavour to apply in a practical fashion what they know with and in their own minds? Have the evil spirits of parochialism, communalism and social distinctions been dislodged, or do they exert a subtle influence over the students, unknown to themselves?

To free himself from creedalism the earnest student may give up the actual performance of rites and ceremonies belonging to the religion of his birth. That is a good step to take, but, unless the mental tendency which gave birth to the performance of ceremonies is transformed, the student is apt to exchange old rites for new. Similarly, communalism is a mental tendency with different expressions; the student of Theosophy has to guard against this persisting inner tendency and must not fall into the error of believing that right reform is achieved by outer change.

The influence of the Theosophical Movement on Indian thought has been great. During the years 1879–1885, when H.P.B. lived and laboured in India, she sowed seeds which yielded a wonderful crop even after her departure. The work started by her was not, however, properly implemented by those who came after her. The promulgation of Theosophy, the *source* of all religions, was weak; in the name of Theosophy sectarianism and creedalism were pushed forward and, instead of fighting class and caste brotherhoods, these were encouraged, albeit indirectly. The sin against the first object of *Universal* Brotherhood corrupted the work undertaken to promote the second and especially the third object of the Movement. The grand Theosophical Movement deteriorated and was wrecked.

We are not writing this to cast any stone at the workers of an earlier generation. We are writing for associates and aspirants of the U.L.T. They have a laudable and powerful contribution to make by distinguishing between the spiritual and the religious, between ethics rooted in uni-

versal principles and morality associated with conventions. The first duty of the student of Theosophy is to rise above the pride of race or of religion, to throw off the feeling of exclusiveness which caste and community engender and to breathe the pure air of universality, of cosmopolitanism, of internationalism. Religion may be good, but Theosophy is better. To love one's community may be good, but to allow that love to tarnish the fair name of India is degrading. To be partial to one's own family or State may be right for the unphilosophical, but is positively wrong in one who is a practitioner of Theosophy. "The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all." We cannot possibly belong to each and all until we refuse to belong exclusively to a particular cult or sect.

The student of Occultism must belong to no special creed or sect, yet he is bound to show outward respect to every creed and faith, if he would become an Adept of the Good Law. He must not be bound by the prejudged and sectarian opinions of anyone; he has to form his own opinions and to come to his own conclusions in accordance with the rules of evidence furnished him by the science to which he is devoted. To attain to this position the student of Theosophy must divest himself of religious ritualism, of communal bias, of national pride, and become a seeker of Truth, *i.e.*, a philosopher whose quest is pure knowledge and whose duty is the earnest and continuous application of what he has ascertained to be true. He must never act without a basis of wisdom-teaching. We cannot fight the bigotry of a priest-ridden populace without real rational living, *i.e.*, living according to laws, rules and principles whose truth we have determined. To live the life of Universal Brotherhood each has to cease to be a sectarian and become a man. The Hindu, the Muslim or the Christian, the Maharashtrian, the Gujarati or the Bengali is less than Man.

The sorest need of India today is a group of Theosophists who hold firmly to the principles of *Universal Brotherhood*, not in theory but in actual practice; who are pure thinkers, rationalistic philosophers, applying the noble ethics which flow from pure philosophical abstractions. Sacrificial action is great, but an act in which the sacrifice of wisdom is present is greater. Politicians, social reformers, educationists, cannot save India without the inspiration of practical mystics who live by the Eternal Light as brothers to all men.

Let the student reflect upon the following words of a Master in the light of what is said above. But more — let him ascertain if he himself

is living up to what is implicit in them:

Ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity. Look at India and look at Christendom and Islam, at Judaism and Fetichism. It is priestly imposture that rendered these Gods so terrible to man; it is religion that makes of him the selfish bigot, the fanatic that hates all mankind out of his own sect without rendering him any better or more moral for it. It is belief in God and Gods that makes two-thirds of humanity the slaves of a handful of those who deceive them under the false pretence of saving them. Is not man ever ready to commit any kind of evil if told that his God or Gods demand the crime — voluntary victim of an illusionary God, the abject slave of his crafty ministers? The Irish, Italian and Slavonian peasant will starve himself and see his family starving and naked to feed and clothe his padre and pope. For two thousand years India groaned under the weight of caste, Brahmins alone feeding on the fat of the land, and today the followers of Christ and those of Mahomet are cutting each other's throats in the names of and for the greater glory of their respective myths. Remember, the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods. . . .

If it be permissible to symbolize things subjective by phenomena objective, I should say that to the psychic sight India seems covered with a stifling grey fog — a moral meteor — the odic emanation from her vicious social state. Here and there twinkles a point of light which marks a nature still somewhat spiritual, a person who aspires and struggles after the higher knowledge. If the beacon of Aryan occultism shall ever be kindled again, these scattered sparks must be combined to make its flame. . . .

Imagine, then, that since we are all convinced that the degradation of India is largely due to the suffocation of her ancient spirituality, and that whatever helps to restore that higher standard of thought and morals, must be regenerating in national force, every one of us would naturally and without urging, be disposed to push forward a society whose proposed formation is under debate, especially if it really is meant to become a society untainted by selfish motive, and whose object is the revival of ancient science, and tendency, to rehabilitate our country in the world's estimation.

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## THE HERESY OF SEPARATENESS

[Reprinted from *Lucifer* for May 1893.—Eds.]

LACK OF CHARITY is the basis of all immorality. By “charity” is meant the true brotherly love, or viewing all other beings as one’s own self. “Sin” has its rise in selfishness, or the idea of benefit or advantage to one’s self as separate from — hence in opposition to — other selves. When man *realizes* the spiritual identity of all Being, then only does he cease to sin, for then only does he know that to sin is to injure himself and all other selves — the universal whole — by action in opposition to Universal Law. But such realization consists only in living out his belief. Intellectual appreciation and acceptance are mere stepping-stones to the groundwork of true realization.

Thus he who lacks charity for all his fellows is himself immoral in thought and in fact. In dwelling in thought upon the sin of another, he perpetuates and vivifies that sin through the thought pictures thus made, and clothed anew with his own mental energy. Man thus becomes a sharer in the “sin” of his fellow by creating new effects for the original evil. We graft upon ourselves the sins of others; moreover the *cause* of sin is in both cases identical; it is the mutual belief in separation from the universal whole. Thus the method of wrongdoing differs, but the original cause exists in both the sinner and the man who condemns him. He who has entire charity, has it by virtue of his recognition of the identity of all souls. This identity often obscures the original starting point of an evil action. The self-righteous man, and even the stern moralist, may have created, in their abhorrence of sin, strong pictures which may have an automatic action upon the sensitive inner bodies of mankind. Or our brother may have seen his fault, may resolve to amend, and may again be overpowered by the dynamic action of the thought-pictures of that fault poured forth by our minds. They have a life which binds him down to his sin.

Hence the only safe course is that charity which “seeketh no evil.” The moment we attach immorality to our fellows we commit the same sin so far as the real root of sin is concerned. True charity implies a recognition of the existence of evil itself as a misuse of powers, and as a fault common in this age to all men. It does not dwell upon those particular forms of sin most abhorrent to its own mental make-up when these are manifested by men or women, but endeavours to lay the axe to that common root of self in all men — most of all in the personal

self — while helping all other selves. The recognition that all are alike sinners against the Law of Unity, causes a man to seek for likeness and not difference between himself and all other men. Then he begins to overlook the sins of men and to abandon the character of judge, accepting instead that of helper of all selves. But let him, as he values his own soul, continue to condemn the root sin of self. And let him ask only of all others and in his own heart, not the question, "Have these sinned?" but, "Are these endeavouring in any degree to help the world?" If not, they most of all need his charity and his aid.

—J.

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As to our fellow students: we are apt to be mistaken in regard to their real attitude towards us. It is so often *our* attitude towards them that presents to us a false conception of theirs. That we all have defects is quite certain, and a defect of one kind is no better than a defect of another kind. We notice defects in others, or what appear as such, in much the same way as they may notice defects in us, and then on both sides there is judgement of one another on the basis of the *defects* perceived. This is the opposite of that respect for our fellow students which we ought to have because they *are* such, and all are working for a common purpose. We will readily admit the common ground, but say at the same time that on no other basis would we be at all congenial; so it must be true that there rests misunderstanding of one another. What this may be has to be searched out by each one. There is something that causes it. Is it fear, doubt, ambition, jealousy—or what? These things we have to determine and act upon for ourselves, regardless of what any other may do, or what we may have thought of that other. All this will keep us so busy in watching ourselves that we will have no time nor inclination to take offence at others. And all the time we will be raising ourselves to a higher and better degree of discrimination and power to help in the best and most effectual way the very ones whom we may have placed in a pigeon-hole that we have specially constructed for them.

It is written that students are not selected because of their natural affinity for one another, but for quite other reasons. Each student or disciple carries with him some particular expression of racial defects, which on the surface appear as points of dislike to others, and yet which have similar roots in each student, so much alike that one could not tell them apart. So each has to dig out the root, and when he has done this, the true nature shines forth and is reflected in the others.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## THE ROYAL ROAD

EVER SINCE the birth of orthodoxy, of exoteric religion and of black magic, thousands upon thousands of years ago, two predominant vices have held sway over the minds of men — Doubt and Hypocrisy. In pure Occultism, White Magic or Divine Wisdom, these two are known as unpardonable sins. The first anthropomorphists who worshipped form and matter were the creators of these two vices, which invariably go together.

Doubt is ever rooted in the doubt of and about one's own Higher Self and Inner God. Hypocrisy is related to the lower personal self. The self of matter is like a woman with many paramours — innumerable expressions of hypocrisy — who ever doubts the very existence of virgin chastity or marital fidelity.

Hypocrisy is the human psychological aspect of the metaphysical *Maya*; the great Buddha taught that life has coverings which give to our existence and problems false meanings and so veil the Light of *Nirvana* that its very existence is doubted.

Hypocrisy is pardonable in the ordinary man whose upbringing — social, religious and educational — keeps him in crass ignorance about the God within him. Anthropomorphism and Atheism, *i.e.*, religious orthodoxy and scientific orthodoxy, blind him; however different these two orthodoxies, they produce the same result — doubt in regard to the Divinity which abides, albeit in a slumbering state, in the heart of every man.

Unpardonable becomes hypocrisy when a person accepts the rational philosophy of Theosophy and its very primary teaching, the existence of a living God within the consciousness of man. No student deliberately commits the sin of hypocrisy; for no student deliberately doubts the existence of his own Inner Ego and Higher Self. But is there anyone among us who is absolutely free from doubt and hypocrisy and who does not, *unconsciously to himself*, commit these sins?

But, while all aspirants slip into these sins, the earnest rectify their mistakes with the aid of self-examination and study. But there are others whose Karma blinds them and whose defects are not unadulterated vices but are the defects of their quality and virtues. One of the most pitiable instances of such a sinful aspirant is the Selfish Devotee. The very taint of his motive is hidden from him; fancying himself a devoted servant of the Cause, ever ready to extend a helping hand, he,

unconsciously to himself, enveloped in egotism, self-righteousness and false piety, falls — never suspecting that he is developing into an Uriah Heep while believing himself to be on the highway to Adeptship.

Turn to Mr. Judge and note what he has to say about doubt:

Some too have doubt and darkness, the doubt mostly as to themselves. This should not be harboured, for it is a wile of the lower man striving to keep you back among the mediocre of the race. . . .

Doubt is not to be solely guarded against when applied to Masters (whom I know you doubt not). It is most to be guarded and repelled in relation to oneself. . . . We are not to try to be chelas or to do any one thing in this incarnation, but only to know and to be just as much as we can, and the possibility is not measured. . . .

All doubts come from the lower nature, and *never* in any case from the higher nature.

This doubt in regard to one's own Divinity does not always take the familiar forms — of despair, of nonchalance, and so on. Very often it is subtle in manifestation, producing subtle forms of hypocrisy.

In this Kali-Yuga many are the lures which draw the aspirant to Adeptship away from the Path of Purity. One of the most powerful lures is that of running away from one's Karma in the belief that there is a Call for self-sacrifice in behalf of the Cause of Masters and Human Brotherhood.

The teaching reiterated by W. Q. Judge is very often overlooked, that "Duty persistently followed is the highest Yoga." He calls it "the royal talisman." He writes:

Perhaps I see in you — I hope I mistake not — a pure desire to seek Knowledge for its own sake, and that all others may be benefited. So I would point out to you the only royal road, the one vehicle. Do all those acts, physical, mental, moral, for the reason that they must be done, instantly resigning all interest in them, offering them up upon the altar.

Doing that which must be done, but instantly resigning interest in what is done — duty without interest in the accruing results. This, be it noted, leads to knowledge — this, the method which must be ensouled by the pure motive — benefit to others. Mr. Judge further explains:

I do not say, nor have I said, that you ought to do something other than you do. . . . It is one's duty to try and find one's own

duty and not to get into the duty of another. And in this it is of the highest importance that we should detach our *minds* (as well as our tongues) from the duties and acts of others, whenever those are outside of our own. If you can find this fine line of action and inaction you will have made great progress. . . . Often we do not know our duty, but that too is our own fault; it is a Karmic disability.

In another place he gives a very direct teaching on the subject which would-be occultists will do well to memorize, take to heart and practise from day to day:

It is not that you must rush madly or boldly out *to do, to do*. Do what you find to do. Desire ardently to do it, and even when you shall not have succeeded in carrying anything out but some small duties, some words of warning, your strong desire will strike like Vulcan upon other hearts in the world, and suddenly you will find that done which you had longed to be the doer of. Then rejoice that another had been so fortunate as to make such a meritorious Karma. . . .

Remember it is the little things the work is done through. . . .

The very first step towards being positive and Self-centred is in the cheerful performance of duty. Try to take pleasure in doing what is your duty, and especially in the *little* duties of life. When doing any duty put your whole heart into it.

When the instructions contained in the above citations are neglected, then the Selfish Devotee is born. In a couplet of *The Voice of the Silence* this whole teaching is imparted, but it is the genius of W. Q. Judge who explains it in a way which the ardent practitioner of this era admiringly accepts and in silent gratitude applies. Here is H.P.B.'s rendition of that couplet:

The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life — has lived in vain.

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

To go through our appointed work, *i.e.*, our congenital duties, the duties which Karma has brought us, but without seeking pleasures or shunning pains which result from their performance. Thus not only is freedom from Karma achieved but also yogic powers are unfolded; or, to repeat and complete the above-quoted words of W. Q. Judge:

Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga, and is better than mantrams or any posture, or any other thing. If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal.

Now, in this correct performance of duties are developed primarily Faith in the Inner Ruler and Veracity in outer life. The artlessness and ingenuousness of the child-state which has to be attained is reached through this veracity in the doing of duties; the doer thereof is the Soul in whom we have faith. Those who have faith in others before they have faith in their own Soul cannot but go wrong.

To avoid hypocrisy we should develop Faith in the God within, in the Inner Ruler immortal. And remembering him as continuously as possible, we should work outwardly, confining ourselves to the field of duty. As we grow, that field will expand, for as H.P.B. has pointed out in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Duty is that which is *due* to Humanity, to our fellowmen, neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation. Theosophy is the quintessence of *duty*.

All of us are debtors to Nature and to humanity. But unless we find out the quality and the quantity of that debt we may turn speculators on the psychic plane, gamblers who gamble more and more in the mere hope of acquiring merit by which the debt incurred might be paid. Therefore the very straight warning of H.P.B. to all would-be chelas:

A man tied by his duty to one place has no right to desert it in order to fulfil another duty, let it be however much greater; for the first *duty* taught in Occultism is to do one's duty unflinchingly *by every duty*.

Light and darkness chase each other through the days and the nights. Real and false devotion also run a race in the life of every earnest aspirant. Devotee and Selfish Devotee by rotation, so to speak, play each his part in the Occult World as in the heart of the aspirant. It is for each individual to establish himself in the Life of Duty in such a way that the very desire to grow and to serve becomes automatic and his mind does not always turn to peer whether he is growing or serving. In his "Ode to Duty" Wordsworth makes this point in words worth remembering, and students of Theosophy will do well to study that poem dedicated to the Goddess of Dharma. He says to her:

There are who ask not if thine eye  
 Be on them; who, in love and truth,  
 Where no misgiving is, rely  
 Upon the genial sense of youth:  
 Glad hearts! without reproach or blot,  
 Who do thy work, and know it not:  
 Oh! If through confidence misplaced  
 They fail, thy saving arms, dread Power!  
     around them cast.

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DEAR YOUTH, thou look'st too far away to see thy duty. It lies at hand. Thou look'st for the great responsibilities of proven Souls, while the small plain duties which are thine own are overpassed. To do great duties is to be by natural impulse incapable of failing in the small. Thy gaze fastened on other duties than thine own in other lives hath made thee blind to those that now await thee....

Not even Masters can tell another Soul its duty, save in Principle and Plan. Nor wilt thou learn, until the small plain duties have been found by thee. Doing those duties in simple faithfulness, thou doest unto Them. Only when duty is done for Duty's sake *owed* to the Self of all creatures, will the reward of duties, "higher" to thy mind, present themselves in due and natural order....

There is no relation of life and no duty in it which will not yield thee knowledge. First observe, then learn, then teach by example; by precept teach when thou hast found thy duty to all men, the humble as the great, in every duty. Only so is a beginning made to bring all the world to duty.

—*From the Book of Confidences*

## TALES FROM THE MAHABHARATA

ONE DAY King Yudhishtira asked Bhishma how a good king should conduct himself when surrounded by enemies. He said he had heard Bhishma say before that that intelligence which enabled one to plan for the future and meet present emergencies was good, whereas destruction followed the one who procrastinated. Guided by what intelligence, then, should a king make friends and foes when assailed on all sides? How should he behave towards each? If those who profess to be his friends turn later into enemies, how then should he act? With whom should he make war and with whom should he make peace?

Bhishma answered that a foe can become a friend and a friend can become a foe, for the course of human actions, through the combination of circumstances, becomes very uncertain. Therefore, as regards what should be done and what should not, it is necessary that heed be paid to the requirements of time and place. There come times when one has to trust one's foes. One should not only make friends with men of intelligence and knowledge, but also make peace with one's foes when one cannot otherwise be saved. Foolish is the man who never makes peace with foes, for he stands to gain nothing. He who, when surrounded by foes, acts after a full consideration of circumstances, succeeds in obtaining good results.

In this connection Bhishma recited the old story of the mouse and the cat.

In the midst of a forest there once grew a very large banian tree. It was covered with many creepers and, as is the case with banian trees, had many branch-roots which, reaching to the ground, in turn became large trunks, thus making a beautiful shady place. Birds nested in the branches and many animals made the tree their home.

Palita, a mouse, lived in a hole at the foot of the main trunk, and, being wise, he had bored many other holes and passages so that when in danger he could escape.

Lomasa, a cat, lived happily on the branches of the tree, daily devouring birds and mice who were not wise enough to escape his claws. But Palita kept out of his way.

One day a man, a trapper of animals, came into the forest and built a hut for himself. Every evening he set his traps and snares and every morning he went to see what had been caught. One night Lomasa care-

lessly allowed himself to be caught in the snare, and seeing this Palita came out of his hole and roved about without fear. When he saw the meat that the trapper had spread here as a bait for the cat, he jumped on to the trap and began to eat it. Feeling very brave now that his enemy was helpless, he even got upon the back of the cat and continued to eat the meat.

But, alas, though one enemy was caught, other enemies were free, and suddenly he saw one of his foes coming towards him. It was a mongoose of the name of Harita, who, having scented the mouse, was coming there to devour his prey. Palita beheld at the same time another foe of his, Chandraka, the owl, sitting on a branch of the banian and looking down at him.

Poor Palita, very frightened, began to ask himself what he ought to do. He could not jump down from the trap, for if he did so the mongoose would devour him; he could not remain on the trap or the owl would seize him. If his third enemy, Lomasa, succeeded in disentangling himself from the net, he also would be certain to kill him. Palita determined that he would not lose his wits; for surely one possessed of intelligence and wisdom never sinks, however great and terrible the danger that threatens him.

His only hope seemed to lie with the cat, for the cat himself was in grave danger. Palita in his wisdom knew that when in distress one should make peace with even one's enemy. If, he reasoned, he could free Lomasa, perhaps the latter would help him. With this in mind he addressed the cat and told him that he had thought of a way of escape for them both. He said that he would free Lomasa by cutting the net in which he was entangled if Lomasa in turn would give him shelter and would agree not to kill him when he was freed. Naturally Lomasa, being wise, agreed, saying, "Let there be peace between us, O friend." Palita, having thus made Lomasa understand his own interests, trustfully crouched beneath his erstwhile enemy's body. Beholding the cat and the mouse make a covenant for accomplishing their mutual ends, the mongoose and the owl both gave up hopes of seizing their prey and left the spot.

Then, very slowly, Palita, as he lay under the body of the cat, began to cut the strings of the noose that held him. Lomasa became restless, asking him to hurry, for he was frightened that the hunter would return any moment. But the wise Palita said that Lomasa should not be impatient; as soon as he saw the hunter coming he would cut the

last string, for at that time Lomasa would not think of anything else save the safety of his own life. He added that if he freed Lomasa before this, he would have to stand in great fear of him, for Lomasa might feel tempted to eat him up. Lomasa begged his forgiveness for any wrong done in the past and again urged him to hurry up. But Palita told him that friendship founded on fear and which could only be kept up by fear should be maintained with great caution. He who does not protect himself after having made a covenant with one stronger than himself, finds that covenant to be productive of injury rather than benefit.

While they talked together night vanished and with the morning the hunter appeared on the scene. Quickly Palita cut the last cord and, trembling with fear, Lomasa fled up the tree and Palita ran into his hole.

After the hunter had gone, Lomasa came out of hiding and tried to lure Palita to come out too, so that they could talk together. He said that they were now friends, that he was very grateful to Palita for cutting the cords and setting him free, and that he longed to talk to him. Palita listened to the cat's sweet words and then replied that sometimes friends assume the guise of foes and foes assume the guise of friends, and compacts of friendship are often formed from considerations of self-interest and gain. It is force of circumstances that creates friends and foes, and therefore neither friendship nor hostility is permanent. But, he added, self-interest is permanent! In the course of a few hours Lomasa had changed from a foe into a friend, and now he was a foe again, for his very nature, as a cat, made him the enemy of mice. Just as circumstances had changed him into a friend, so now different circumstances had again made him an enemy.

Poor Lomasa blushed with shame and said that this was not true, for he would lay down his life for Palita, and he begged that the mouse should not be suspicious of his motive but should come out of his hole fearlessly. But Palita declined again, saying, "One should never trust a person who does not deserve to be trusted. Nor should one repose blind confidence in a person deserving of trust. One should always endeavour to inspire others with confidence in himself. One should not, however, himself repose confidence in foes. For these reasons one should, under all circumstances, protect his own self. A mouse should always guard his life from cats, and the cat should protect his own life from the hunter."

At the mention of the hunter, Lomasa took fright and ran away as quickly as he could, and Palita, in his wisdom, went into another hole.

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## A SOCIETY WITHOUT A DOGMA

[This article by H. P. Blavatsky appeared originally in the London *Spiritualist* for February 8, 1878, and is reprinted here from *A Modern Panarion*, a collection of the early writings of H. P. Blavatsky, issued by the Theosophical Publishing Society in 1895. H.P.B. apparently wrote the article in reply to letters to *The Spiritualist* from "M.A. (Oxon.)," the pseudonym of Rev. Wm. Stainton Moses, an eminent English Spiritualist.—Eds.]

TIMES have greatly changed since the winter of 1875-6, when the establishment of the Theosophical Society caused the grand army of American Spiritualists to wave banners, clang steel, and set up a great shouting. How well we all remember the putting forth of "Danger Signals," the oracular warnings and denunciations of numberless mediums! How fresh in memory the threats of "angel-friends" to Dr. Gardiner, of Boston, that they would kill Colonel Olcott if he dared call them "Elementaries" in the lectures he was about delivering! The worst of the storm has passed. The hail of imprecations no longer batters around our devoted heads; it is raining now, and we can almost see the rainbow of promised peace spanning the sky.

Beyond doubt, much of this subsidence of the disturbed elements is due to our armed neutrality. But still, I judge that the gradual spread of a desire to learn something more as to the cause of the phenomena must be taken into account. And yet the time has not quite come when the lion (Spiritualism) and the lamb (Theosophy) are ready to lie down together — unless the lamb is willing to lie inside the lion. While we held our tongues we were asked to speak, and when we spoke — or rather our President spoke — the hue and cry was raised once more. Though the popgun fusillade and the dropping shots of musketry have mostly ceased, the defiles of your Spiritual Balkans are defended by your heaviest Krupp guns. If the fire were directed only against Colonel Olcott there would be no occasion for me to bring up the reserves. But fragments from both of the bombs which your able gunner, and our mutual friend, "M.A. (Oxon.)," has exploded, in his two letters of January 4th and 11th, have given me contusions. Under the velvet paw of his rhetoric I have felt the scratch of challenge!

At the very beginning of what must be a long struggle, it is imperatively demanded that the Theosophical position shall be unequivocally defined. In the last of the above two communications, it is stated that

Colonel Olcott transmits "the teaching of the learned author of *Isis Unveiled* — the *master key to all problems*"(?). Who has ever claimed that the book was that, or anything like it? Not the author, certainly. The title? A misnomer for which the publisher is unpremeditatedly responsible; and, if I am not mistaken, "M.A. (Oxon.);" knows it. My title was *The Veil of Isis*, and that headline runs through the entire first volume. Not until that volume was stereotyped did any one recollect that a book of the same name was before the public. Then, as a *dernière ressource*, the publisher selected the present title.

"If he (Olcott) be not the rose, at any rate he has lived near it," says your learned correspondent. Had I seen this sentence apart from the context, I would never have imagined that the unattractive old party, superficially known as H. P. Blavatsky, was designated under this poetical Persian simile. If he had compared me to a bramble-bush, I might have complimented him upon his artistic realism. "Colonel Olcott," he says, "of himself would command attention; he commands it still more on account of the store of knowledge to which he has had access." True, he has had such access, but by no means is it confined to my humble self. Though I may have taught him a few of the things that I had learned in other countries (and corroborated the theory in every case by practical illustration), yet a far abler teacher than I could not in three brief years have given him more than the alphabet of what there is to learn before a man can become wise in spiritual and psycho-physiological things. The very limitations of modern languages prevent any rapid communication of ideas about Eastern Philosophy. I defy the great Max Müller himself to translate Kapila's *Sutras* so as to give their real meaning. We have seen what the best European authorities can do with the Hindu metaphysics; and what a mess they have made of it, to be sure! The Colonel corresponds directly with Hindu scholars, and has from them a good deal more than he can get from so clumsy a preceptor as myself.

Our friend, "M.A. (Oxon.);" says that Colonel Olcott "comes forward to enlighten us" — than which scarce anything could be more inaccurate. He neither comes forward nor pretends to enlighten anyone. The public wanted to know the views of the Theosophists, and our president attempted to give, as succinctly as possible in the limits of a single article, some little glimpse of so much of the truth as he had learned. That the result would not be wholly satisfactory was inevitable. Volumes would not suffice to answer all the questions naturally present-

ing themselves to an enquiring mind; a library of quartos would barely obliterate the prejudices of those who ride at the anchor of centuries of metaphysical and theological misconceptions — perhaps even errors. But, though our president is not guilty of the conceit of pretending to “enlighten” Spiritualists, I think he has certainly thrown out some hints worthy of the thoughtful consideration of the unprejudiced.

I am sorry that “M.A. (Oxon)” is not content with mere suggestions. Nothing but the whole naked truth will satisfy him. We must “square” our theories with his facts, we must lay our theory down “on exact lines of demonstration.” We are asked, “Where are the seers? What are their records? And, far more important, how do they verify them to us?” I answer: seers are where “Schools of the Prophets” are still extant, and they have their records with them. Though Spiritualists are not able to go in search of them, yet the philosophy they teach commends itself to logic, and its principles are mathematically demonstrable. If this be not so, let it be shown.

But, in their turn, Theosophists may ask, and do ask: Where are the proofs that the medial phenomena are exclusively attributable to the agency of departed “spirits”? Who are the “seers” among mediums blessed with an infallible lucidity? What “tests” are given that admit of no alternative explanation? Though Swedenborg was one of the greatest of seers, and churches are erected in his name, yet except to his adherents what proof is there that the “spirits” objective to his vision — including Paul — promenading in hats, were anything but the creatures of his imagination? Are the spiritual potentialities of the living man so well comprehended that mediums can tell when their own agency ceases, and that of outside influences begins? No, but for all answer to our suggestions that the subject is opened to debate, “M.A. (Oxon.)” shudderingly charges us with attempting to upset what he designates as “a cardinal dogma of our faith” — *i.e.*, the faith of the Spiritualists.

Dogma? Faith? These are the right and left pillars of every soul-crushing theology. Theosophists have no dogmas, exact no blind faith. Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions; let Spiritualists do the same. Dogmas are the toys that amuse and can satisfy but unreasoning children. They are the offspring of human speculation and prejudiced fancy. In the eye of true philosophy it seems an insult to common sense that we should break loose from the idols and dogmas of either Christian or heathen exoteric faith to catch those of a church of Spiritualism.

Spiritualism must either be a true philosophy, amenable to the tests of the recognized criterion of logic, or be set up in its niche beside the broken idols of hundreds of antecedent Christian sects.

Realizing as they do the boundlessness of the absolute truth, Theosophists repudiate all claims to infallibility. The most cherished preconceptions, the most "pious hope," the strongest "master passion," they sweep aside like dust from their path, when their error is pointed out. Their highest hope is to approximate the truth; that they have succeeded in going a few steps beyond the Spiritualists, they think proved in their conviction that they know nothing in comparison with what is to be learned; in their sacrifice of every pet theory and prompting of emotionalism at the shrine of Fact; and in their absolute and unqualified repudiation of everything that smacks of "dogma."

With great rhetorical elaboration "M.A. (Oxon.\*)" paints the result of the supersedure of Spiritualistic by Theosophic ideas. In brief, he shows Spiritualism a lifeless corpse — "a body from which the soul has been wrenched, and for which most men will care nothing." We submit that the reverse is true. Spiritualists wrench the soul from *true* Spiritualism by their degradation of Spirit. Of the infinite they make the finite; of the divine subjective they make the human and limited objective. Are Theosophists materialists? Do not their hearts warm with the same "pure and holy love" for their "loved ones" as those of Spiritualists? Have not many of us sought long years "through the gate of mediumship to have access to the world of Spirit" — and vainly sought? The comfort and assurance modern Spiritualism could not give us we found in Theosophy. As a result we believe far more firmly than many Spiritualists — for our belief is based on knowledge — in the communion of our beloved ones with us; but not as materialized spirits with beating hearts and sweating brows.

Holding such views as we do as to logic and fact, you perceive that when a Spiritualist pronounces to us the words dogma and facts, debate is impossible, for there is no common ground upon which we can meet. We decline to break our heads against shadows. If fact and logic were given the consideration they should have, there would be no more temples in this world for exoteric worship, whether Christian or heathen, and the *method* of the Theosophists would be welcomed as the only one insuring action and progress — a progress that cannot be arrested, since each advance shows yet greater advances to be made.

As to our producing our "Seers" and "their records" — one word.

In *The Spiritualist* of January 11, I find Dr. Peebles saying that in due time he "will publish such facts about the Dravida Brahmans as I am (he is) permitted. I say permitted because some of these occurred under the promise and seal of secrecy." If ever the casual wayfarer is put under an obligation of secrecy, before he is shown some of the less important psycho-physiological phenomena, is it not barely possible that the Brotherhood to which some Theosophists belong has also doctrines, records, and phenomena, that cannot be revealed to the profane and the indifferent, without any imputation lying against their reality and authoritativeness? This, at least, I believe, "M.A. (Oxon.)" knows. As we do not offensively obtrude ourselves upon an unwilling public, but only answer under compulsion, we can hardly be denounced as contumacious if we produce to a promiscuous public neither our "seers" nor "their records." When Mahomet is ready to go to the mountain it will be found standing in its place.

And that no one that makes this search may suppose that we Theosophists send him to a place where there are no pitfalls for the unwary, I quote from the famous *Commentary on the Bhagavad-Gita* of our brother Hurrychund Chintamon, the unqualified admission that "In Hindustan, as in England, there are doctrines for the learned and dogmas for the unlearned; strong meat for men, and milk for babes; facts for the few, and fictions for the many; realities for the wise, and romances for the simple; esoteric truth for the philosopher, and exoteric fable for the fool." Like the philosophy taught by this author in the work in question, the object of the Theosophical Society "is the cleansing of Spiritual truth."

H. P. BLAVATSKY

*New York, January 20th, 1878.*

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WHEREVER Theosophy spreads, there it is impossible for the deluded to mislead, or the deluded to follow.... And in the face of genuine spiritual growth, and true illumination, the Theosophist grows in power to most truly befriend and help his fellows, while he becomes the most humble, the most silent, the most guarded of men.

— *Lucifer*, July 1890

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

*Impact of Science on Society* (Vol. XIX, No. 4) has as its theme "Non-Scientists Dissect Science" and it includes sharp criticisms of science and technology — as well as praise — made by a number of notable belonging to different countries and different walks of life.

In an exclusive interview, the famous novelist-poet Robert Graves lashes out strongly at science and technology. Science, he says, is now dominated by base motives, such as making money. It "has gradually fallen into the hands of the traders," for "men of broad vision, the true creators and innovators, have long ceased to control the evolution or uses made of science." He decries the destruction by technology of human dignity and individuality and of the warmth of the home, with people now condemned to live in unnatural "little life boxes." Technology, he maintains, is responsible for the enormous flood of populations into cities: "Science and technology have themselves created the problem that science and technology have been vainly trying to solve." Moon landings he categorizes as "show-off science": "Until we have got this world in some sort of order, we should abstain from such expensive and dangerous nonsense."

The renowned painter Joan Miró, in another exclusive interview, is gloomy about this technological world, but sees a form of brotherhood between scientists and artists. "Scientists reveal nature's secrets as we artists do," he declares, "but from another angle. Scientists use one language and I use another." He remarks that "the end of the road along which we are going — I am referring to all the wars and all these political troubles — will be so catastrophic that inevitably there will have to be a new beginning."

"The impact of science and technology which is altering societies throughout the world" and which is greatly endangering the human environment, is the primary concern of Senator Edmund S. Muskie, vice-presidential candidate in the 1968 American elections. To meet the dangers of this "paradox of progress," he recommends, in another *Impact* article, that the United Nations and other international bodies might consider the creation of a co-ordinated International Commission on the Human Environment which could act as "an early warning system of the technological impact ahead."

Charles Habib Malik, former Lebanese Foreign Minister and ex-

President of the United Nations General Assembly and now professor of philosophy at the American University of Beirut, considers that "the great danger today is that the enormous and absolutely merited prestige of science and technology might delude scientists into believing that they are the absolute masters of the universe." He warns that "it is necessary for the well-being of society that the scientists be properly chastened." He sees three areas of danger in the progress of science: "the possibility of scientific development abolishing privacy altogether, so that not only where I am and what I am doing, but even what I am thinking and feeling can be penetrated and known at any time; the possibility of interfering with the genetic development of man; and the possibility of upsetting whole equilibria of nature, with great damage to our environment."

Poet Pierre Emmanuel, of the Académie Française, describes his conversion from mathematics to poetry and brings out some of the limitations of science and technology: "The inhibiting of certain instincts by the success of technology and by the widespread superstition about technology's infallibility has dangerously repressed those intuitions of catastrophe innate in the psychology of man." He adds: "Whatever heights scientific speculation may reach, it remains only a description of the world; it is only religions or art, not science, that can break through the bounds of knowledge, justify man to himself and spur him towards the infinite."

Present-day science certainly has its limitations and has come in for much criticism as its applications to human affairs have far outrun the ability of man to use them wisely. Yet *genuine* science may be regarded as an ally of Theosophy. The great struggle between science and religion W. Q. Judge characterized as "every bit as much a motion of the Theosophical Movement as is the present Society of that name." In his article "The Theosophical Movement" (reprinted in our issue for August 1965), Mr. Judge goes on to say that that struggle and the freedom thereby gained for science, were really as important in the advance of the world as are our different organizations." For true science is global, never partisan; therefore its impetus is towards the recognition of Universal Brotherhood.

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Scientists from eleven countries met recently at Unesco House in Paris to determine how far science has gone towards understanding

human aggressiveness and in what directions it must go in the future. They declared aggressiveness to be obsolete as a way to solve human problems. Despite popular writings to the contrary, it is not "instinctive" and can be eliminated from man's behaviour. (*Unesco Features*, June 1970)

The scientists concluded that

the task will be a long one. While aggressive behaviour is not innate, it is extremely easy for the human species to learn it. Changes in education are needed, particularly from the ages of two to six years, the very moment when children get no formal education at all in many societies.

In some, television is their mentor. It can expose them to a killing every half hour, a violent incident every eight minutes. It can show them cleaned-up murder without blood or gore, giving the impression that violence is an easy way out.

A further look is needed on the other end of the age scale at those who conduct world affairs. The very factors of intense pressure, nervous strain and lack of time that one finds in international crises are the same factors that inhibit the decision-making process when war is in the offing.

It could be said from the Theosophical viewpoint that aggressive behaviour is the inevitable result of generations of materialism, of the frightful teaching that man is no more than a glorified animal, and that it would be well for him to obey the law of the jungle and to sharpen his teeth and claws for continual combat. Science has robbed humanity of its soul by first persuading man that he was no more than a piece of material mechanism and then proceeding to make him so. Unbrotherliness, the "insanity of the age," lies at the root of most of our problems.

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Professor Sidney Hook, who teaches philosophy at New York University and is the author of many books, writes on "The Ideology of Violence" in the April *Encounter*. Since wars begin in the minds of men, he suggests that the education of a country, the ideals of its school system and its underlying ideology cannot remain a purely domestic matter but must become a subject of international concern. The minds of men, in turn, are moulded by the history, culture, and institutions in which they have developed. "The conflicts of interest in any given

society and *between* different societies will inescapably reflect themselves in the minds of those who live in them.”

Some of the fiercest wars have been fought among those who have shared the same fundamental *Weltanschauung*, for example, in the great wars of religion. . . . On the other hand we know that nations can and have lived in peace with different ideologies, different traditions, different languages. If world peace depended upon the establishment of a unitary world outlook, whether religious or secular, or a common language — different histories make a common tradition unattainable — prospects of attaining it would be dim indeed. The existence of diversity and plurality of world outlooks, traditions, languages is for many reasons highly desirable, aside from the intrinsic value of the variety of delightful experiences it makes possible. . . . the hope of peace and peaceful social change depends more upon the institutional ways of resolving differences of interest than upon common beliefs or rationalizations — in both senses of the word.

Attitudes like nationalism and racism have all along been prejudicial to the furtherance of peace among nations and peaceful social change within nations. More threatening today are what the author calls the “Ideologies of Violence.” These ideologies, in the words of H. L. Nieberg, assert that “the threat of violence, and the occasional outbreak of real violence (which gives the threat credibility) are essential elements in conflict resolution not only in international but also national communities.” Some go to the extent of asserting that violence and the threat of violence are the most effective means of achieving social reforms.

Until recently [says Professor Hook] those who defended the role of violence in social change did so in the main from a revolutionary perspective that forthrightly repudiated democracy as a political system either as a sham, covering up class rule, or as an inadequate institutional expression of self-government. . . . What is comparatively novel in our time is the defence of violence by those who are not prepared openly to abandon the standpoint of democracy but who, out of design or confusion, contend that a “healthy” or “just” or “progressive” democratic society will tolerate violence, recognize its productive, even creative role, and eschew any strategy for the control of violence by resort to the force of the civil authorities or to police power. . . .

To this very day the scarred, desolate streets of our riot-torn cities are a gaunt and painful reminder of the ineffectuality

of violence. Is it not possible that the fear inspired by the violence and confrontation instead of spurring on reforms or strengthening the desire for reform may set off a counter-violence? Why is it assumed that violence will result in the mutual accommodation of interests rather than in further provocation and escalation of violence?

Let us suppose we escape this danger and violence does not call into existence its own Nemesis. Is there nothing illegitimate and blameworthy about the action even if it turns out successfully? Is there no socially deleterious effect of violence upon the delicate fabric of confidence and trust, so essential to a civilized society, if it can be rudely torn whenever violence pays?

These questions that the author raises indicate the degree to which violence and incitement to violence are acquiring today a respectable status. He goes on to examine some typical syndromes in the contemporary apologetic literature of violence, as also the objections to violence, and concludes:

The view that violence and the threat of violence are always effective in preparing the minds of men for change is in a sense worse than false. It is thoroughly confused. It does not distinguish between the effect of the fear that violence *may* break out, and the effect of the actual violence *after* it has broken out, between the anticipatory fear and the consequential fear.... Whoever, then, calculates on the educational value of violence for the community, who anticipates that violence will strengthen the influence of moderates and expedite reform is taking a considerable risk — a foolish risk, and in the absence of compelling evidence that no other way is possible, a criminally irresponsible risk. He risks provoking a backlash, risks the hardening of opposition to further reforms, risks a counter-violence that as it escalates moves the conflict towards civil war, the cruellest form of all wars. In short, violence more often drowns out the voice of moderation than it succeeds in getting a hearing for it otherwise denied. It narrows options, destroys the centre, and polarises the community into extremes.

Professor Hook discusses also the relationship between student violence and university reform:

The truth of the matter is that most educational reforms in most institutions have come about *without* a show of force, where arguments have been the only weapons, where dissenters and

protesters have evinced not only zeal but persistence in a good cause. Where violence has been used, a grievous wound has been inflicted on the fabric of university community life. It may take a generation to heal it. For the commitment of the university, even more so than of the democratic community, has been to the processes of deliberation and to the authority of reason....

Violence in the academy is an outgrowth of violence in the streets and cities of the country. That is where the gravest danger lies. Were violence confined to the universities alone its evils could not long continue if only because the state and society on whose support the universities ultimately depend would restrict and perhaps cancel their precarious autonomy....

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Encouraging as is the response to the call of conservationists to halt pollution of all kinds, one should pause and consider a new peremptory voice that has just been raised. Dr. Conrad Istock of the University of Rochester, New York, says that

the tenets of an industrial society, whether western or communist, are utterly incompatible with those of ecology. Industry is committed to continuous expansion; all ecological systems tend toward stability and equilibrium. (*The Times of India*, May 16)

This is a challenging idea. His thesis is that there is a definite conflict between human economics and the ecology of the planet. By raising the problem of environment to such a level he has drawn attention to a profound dilemma of the times: how far can man go on the road to industrialization without messing up everything and bringing destruction upon himself and Nature? Is all our vaunted progress for the better or for the worse? The problem demands urgent solution.

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