

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## UNITY, STUDY, WORK

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THEOSOPHY'S great task is to free the mind of the race, because that mind at present is enslaved by the senses and passions. The true function of mind is to be enshrined by the soul and to control the senses and subdue the passions.

The pivotal doctrine of our philosophy is that each man is the maker of his own destiny. All our privileges and faculties are won by our soul's hard labour; they did not come as a gift from somewhere, but have been acquired through pain and suffering. We are enriching our knowledge and our character now and here by self-induced and self-devised efforts; if we are checked and frustrated so often it is because in the past we missed our opportunities, or were mentally lazy, or morally lax. We are our own saviours and it is we who condemn ourselves.

It is asked: If this be so, then how can we change the mind of the race? What use is all propaganda for Theosophy? Why not leave people to devise for themselves?

Theosophy teaches that the perfection of the individual means that he has acquired for himself a universal vision. His senses perceive *all* Nature; his mind understands *all* laws; his soul realizes the unity of *all* souls. He has overcome the illusion of differing and conflicting forms of matter and has seen in the laboratory of Nature, which is Her heart, heterogeneity fashioning itself out of homogeneity. He has conquered the slayer of the Real, that mind which evaluates falsely the many processes of life and so understands nought of the Parent Law (Karma) which is active in that laboratory. Thus he has realized the supreme fact that within himself, in fact he himself, is that laboratory of Nature. In his long past he was ignorant of all that was fashioning within him-

self, but by conquering his own nature he learned that he also conquered Mother Nature and rose superior to all. Such individuals are great Souls, Mahatmas, difficult to find.

This conquest of Nature is not achieved in a single moment; it extends over many lives and vast periods. The process is slow and runs its cyclic course, beginning at a moment of great resolve and ending at another of supreme consummation. The universal vision, complete and final, results from slow and gradual expansion; knowledge grows from more to more; capacity is acquired by degrees.

In the silence of midnight sometimes we are able to hear the beating of our own heart. Similarly in the sanctified silence, when our passions lie dead, we hear the heart-beat of Nature. At such an hour the single unified note of solemn Sacrifice, which *is* Nature, is heard and we feel that it must play its part in the song of life. We perceive that Nature is not really destructive, red in tooth and claw, but that She is philanthropic, altruistic. From this vision springs the resolve to know Her, to utilize Her wonderful sacrifice in order to rise superior to Her — perchance to find that She opens out to our gaze new and uncharted oceans, which, once again, we must set out to navigate.

The student of Theosophy is advised by his philosophy to seek the Self which resides in the innermost recess of his own heart. "He who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee," says the *Gita*. This is not only a matter of contemplation but of action also. By constant and repeated practice his senses come under his soul's control; by ever-renewed war and vigilance his passions are mastered, his feelings purified, and his virtues shine by the light of the Soul; deeds of kindness and compassion, often repeated, study daily and regularly prosecuted, and all works attempted in unity with that first glimpse of Great Sacrifice which is Nature — by these man flowers into an Adept.

Our efforts to unite with co-students, our endeavours to study in company with co-servers, our attempts to work for Humanity, the supreme and most important vehicle of Nature — these three are the great steps; they are the three strides of Vishnu whereby He encompassed the universe.

Let us then, brothers — Unite, Study, and Work.

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## THE HERITAGE OF THE BRAHMANS

[This article was reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, November 1957. The introductory note there read:

“In January 1891 W. Q. Judge began publishing papers specially written for the Oriental Department which he had established in connection with his Theosophical work.

“The following essay is reprinted from the *Oriental Department Paper* for January 1894. It contains valuable information and offers the people of the India of today sure guidance in the task of raising the temple of renascent India.

“Special attention may be drawn to the specialized *dharma* or mission of the two classes of builders of Aryan culture from remote times — the Kshatriyas or rulers and the Brahmans or teachers. Again, the complementary missions of reforming and elevating Hindu society — the first undertaken by Gautama Buddha, the Kshatriya, and the second by Shankara, the Brahman, are put before the reader as an important pointer in a significant cycle in the long story of the Aryan Race.

“From the very inception of the Theosophical Movement in 1875, the East, and especially India, was mentioned with special respect, and one of the designations of Theosophy was the ‘Eastern Wisdom.’ The real mystic significance of this idea has not been understood by all. It is clearly enunciated in this article, which refers to ‘the Eastern side of man,’ ‘the East in the soul of every man.’ The Man from the East must rise like the sun in the personal man in West and East alike, dispelling his darkness and gloom and ending his intoxication.

“The article refers to the ‘degeneration’ of the Aryan *Dharma*; since it was published in 1894, greater sacerdotalism on the one hand and materialism on the other have attacked the good work of Those who are the Lovers and Promulgators of the Asiatic Wisdom. One of Them wrote in the 80’s of the last century:

“‘You can do immense good by helping to give the Western nations a secure basis upon which to reconstruct their crumbling faith. And what they need is the evidence that Asiatic psychology alone supplies. Give this, and you will confer happiness of mind on thousands. The era of blind faith is gone; that of inquiry is here. Inquiry that only unmasks error, without discovering anything upon which the soul can build, will but make iconoclasts. Iconoclasm, from its very destructiveness, can give nothing; it

can only raze. But man cannot rest satisfied with bare negation. Agnosticism is but a temporary halt. This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans.' (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 29*, pp. 9-10)

"Mr. Judge and others endeavoured, the best they knew how, to labour for the Cause of Soul Culture, and the work continues. In its own humble way this monthly has contributed its quota of effort to this Cause and will continue to do so.

"This historical survey is illuminating and offers hints for the labourer in the field in this decade. Anonymously published, it carries the stamp of intuitive knowledge of real value to student and server alike."—EDS.]

IT IS SAID that long ago, in the childhood of the world, the senses were so fine that we could hear the growing of the grass, the rustling of the opening buds of spring. By a memory of these early senses, by the faint remnant of them that the long ages in their passage have left us, we can hear now the faint stirring of the opening buds of a new spring of intellectual life, a new period in the spiritual thought of the world; and the key-note of this new period is the East, the wisdom of the East, the thought and ideals of the East.

Not merely or necessarily the East in latitude, but rather the Eastern side of man — that East in the soul of every man where the sun rises, where the light of intuition opens its first dawning rays, and, "rising, guides the lesser lives among its rays." And yet the East in latitude gives the key-note to the new dawn of thought in a special sense too. For it was in the East, and, more than all, in India, "mother of nations," that the eastern part of man where the sun rises found its best development; that the interior light of the soul found its fullest recognition.

And it is only natural that the minds of men, feeling the first gleam of dawning day, should turn towards the East; that they should grow enthusiastic for the Lands of the East, and, more than all, for India; that India should occupy an ever-widening space on the horizon of their thoughts; that their hearts should more and more turn towards India.

This growing interest and enthusiasm for India — an enthusiasm at first almost instinctive, but gradually quickened by advancing knowledge — is especially felt today in the two most idealistic nations in the West, the Americans and the Germans. For with all their sense of

practical life and practical development, the Americans and Germans are at heart idealists, ready to sacrifice all their practical aims and practical accomplishment to a vision; ready, as Emerson said, to leave Cleopatra and the army, to seek the sources of the Nile.

The deepest curiosity of the Americans and Germans, turning towards India, unquestionably centres on the Brahmans; one hears again and again the words — the wisdom of the Brahmans, the ideal of the Brahmans, the life of the Brahmans; and the first question one is always asked refers to the Brahman order. To answer this question, it would be necessary to write many volumes; to trace the rise of the Brahman order in the dim twilight of Vedic days; to show the growth and consolidation of their power in the days of Rama, and through the struggles of the great war of the Pandu and Kuru princes; to point to certain dark sides of their development that had become visible in Buddha's days; and at last to fill in the splendid picture of Brahmanic advance and Brahmanic development in Shankaracharya's days.

When the records of the monasteries of Southern India are more fully known and understood, when the Smarta Brahmans who have preserved most clearly the splendid tradition of Shankara relax a little their reserve, we shall — it can hardly be doubted — have a picture of that great man and his times as perfect and full of colour as the picture we have of Plato's times, and the thought of Plato who, more than any other philosopher, resembles Shankara.

What we know of Shankara already, though only a tithe of what we may know when old records are opened, is enough to give him a place amongst the choicest spiritual aristocracy of the world, as a seer and thinker who towered above his race as Plato towered above the Greeks; as a Great Man, an elder brother of the race, whose thought and insight mark a high tide of human life.

There is a dim tradition, in the oldest Indian books, in the great Upanishads, and the earlier Vedic hymns, that the Brahmans were not in the beginning the spiritual teachers of India; that they received their earliest wisdom from the Royal Sages of the Rajanya or Kshatriya race. But the Brahmans have so long held these treasures of wisdom as their own — guarding them as a mother her child, as a man his first-born — that they have come to consider them as their very own; their heritage rather by birth than by adoption. The fact that, in spite of this jealous love of their darling treasures, they have preserved the tradition of their earliest Royal Teachers points to the most valued feature in the

Brahmans' character — the unflinching, unalterable fidelity with which they have preserved, unaltered and inviolate, the spiritual treasures committed to their care, and the safeguarding of which through the ages forms their truest and greatest title to fame, the best justification for that instinctive turning towards the Brahmans as the centre and representative of Indian genius, which we have noted as so marked a feature of the Indian Renaissance today.

But once the Brahmans had received the wisdom-doctrines from their Royal Teachers, their distinctive genius, their most valued quality, began to assert itself. With their unparalleled genius for order, their instinctive feeling for preservation, they recorded, classified and developed the intuitive wisdom of the Royal Sages; Buddha, a Royal Sage of far later days, has put on record this unparalleled fidelity: "Those ancient Rishis of the Brahmans, versed in the Three Wisdoms, the authors of the verses, the utterers of the verses, whose ancient form of words so chanted, uttered, or composed, the Brahmans of today chant over again and repeat, intoning or reciting, exactly as has been intoned or recited." (*Tevigga Sutta*)

That Krishna, the spiritual hero of the Mahabharata war, whose mission it was to usher in the Iron Age or Kali Yuga, was no Brahman but a Kshatriya, who traced his doctrines from Manu the Kshatriya through the Royal Sages, is enough to show that, in the days of the great war, the Brahmans had not yet claimed as quite their own the teachings of wisdom which it was their mission to hand down through the ages. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, IV)

The great war, according to Indian tradition, was fought out five thousand years ago. And after the great war, in which so many Kshatriya princes fell, the keeping of the sacred records began to pass completely into the hands of the Brahmans. The Brahmans, sensible of their great mission, prepared themselves to carry it out by forming a high ideal of life, by strict rules of conduct and discipline which only the highest characters could support, and the very strictness of which seems to have produced a reaction which we see traces of in Buddha's days.

The life of the Brahman was conceived and moulded in accordance with his high ideal, in accordance with his high destiny as transmitter of the wisdom of the Golden Age across the centuries to our dark iron days. Purity, unworldliness and discipline were the key-notes of his life;

and the Brahman's unparalleled genius for order gradually moulded this ideal into a set of definite rules, a series of religious ceremonies, which laid hold on his life before he saw the light of day, and did not lose that hold when his body vanished among the red embers of the funeral pyre — but rather kept in touch with him, through the Shraddha offering to the shades for nine generations after his death.

This life of ceremonies and rites, the key-note of which was the acquiring and transmission of the Three Wisdoms spoken of by Buddha, gradually made of the Brahman order a treasure-box or casket for the safer keeping of the holy records handed down. Whether the Brahmans were originally of the fair, almost white, race which forms their nucleus today, and whose distinctive physical character and colour make a Brahman of pure type at once recognizable in an assemblage of Hindus, is a question difficult to solve. We find in the oldest Indian books that: "The colour of the Brahman is white," and this, in later days, became a sentence symbolical of their ideal of purity; but in the beginning it may have been a description of their colour, an index of their race.

It is very probable that this fair, almost white, race, which now forms the nucleus of the Brahman order, gradually became through selective genius, through their unequalled instinct of order, the recognized repository and transmitter of the sacred records of the past. But the ideal life of the Brahman was, perhaps, too arduous for the common lot of man; at any rate we see a gradually increasing tendency to degeneration in one side of the Brahman's life; for, in India as in other lands, even silver clouds have their dark linings.

Their instinct for order, among the Brahmans of lesser moral structure than the high ideal of their race, became an instinct for ceremonial; their ideal of purity became a habit of outward purification; and they tended to harden into an exclusive priestly caste, withdrawn from, and above the common life of man. The priestcraft, by a second step, began to weave ambitions, to seek a share of political power, and, at last, a practical predominance in the state, which threatened to become a spiritual tyranny.

But these developments, inseparable from the weakness of human life, were but the rusting of the outer layer of the casket in which the wisdom of the Golden Age was handed down. There were also within the Brahman order — as there are today — men who held to the high ideal of their past; who were fitting repositories of the high tradition they were destined to carry down. The casket in which were held the records

of the past had always its lining of precious metal, though the outside might rust and tarnish with the passing ages.

The greatest of these followers of that high idea, in later days, within the Brahman caste, was Shankaracharya, the Brahman Sage of Southern India. It is hard to say, with certainty, when Shankara lived; but the records of Shringeri where his successors have held rule over the nucleus of the Brahman order, point to a period about two milleniums ago; a period, that is, just outside the threshold of our era.

Shankaracharya began the work of reforming the Brahman caste from within. A few centuries before him, Buddha had scattered broadcast through India, and Buddha's followers had scattered broadcast through the world, the teachings of India's Golden Days, in a form readily intelligible for all, and to be assimilated by the simplest mind of man.

It remained to do for India, what, perhaps, others were doing, across the Himalayas, for the whole world; to preserve inviolate, and transmit in its purity that other side of wisdom which the simplest heart of man can intuitively feel, but which only the most perfectly developed powers, the most fully expanded intellect and spiritual insight can fully and consciously grasp; it remained to secure the preservation of those profounder truths and that deeper knowledge which only the finest powers of the soul can adequately comprehend.

To secure their preservation in India was the duty and mission of Shankaracharya. Believing that this preservation should be helped and seconded by whatever aids selective race genius and hereditary capacity could give, he confined the transmission of this wisdom, and of the records which contained it, entirely within the Brahman order, as far as our knowledge goes. There is evidence that, among the Brahmans of Southern India in early days, were a certain number of families not belonging to that white race which forms the nucleus of the Brahman caste, but belonging to the dark, almost black Dravidian peoples of Southern India, who are the survivors, perhaps, of a land that once lay to the South of India, but has now vanished beneath the waves. This dark Dravidian race has produced many men of remarkable genius and power, whose insight and force quite fitted them for inclusion in the Brahman order.

But as the centuries moved on, such admission became more difficult, till, in the days of Shankara, it is probable that the door was completely

closed. What changes Shankara made in the Brahman order which followed him, in the division of the Brahmans which recognized his transcendent force, can only be known with surety to the Brahmans of that order themselves. But this much we know, that Shankara did all his overpowering genius could accomplish to turn the Brahmans from too exclusive following after ceremonial; to lead them back to the spiritual wisdom, the recognition of the inner light of the soul, which was India's greatest heritage; and that, taking India's most precious records, the Great Upanishads, he rendered them into the thought and language of his own day, and did all that a marvellous insight and a literary style of wonderful lucidity could do to make the spirit and the genius of the Upanishads live once more in the hearts of the Brahmans of his time.

He set himself, above all, to cleanse the inner lining of the casket where India's treasures lay concealed, to remove every speck from the precious metal whose perfect purity alone could guarantee the costly contents against rust and moth. The reforms inaugurated by Shankaracharya continue to bear fruit today; the new light he shed on the old records, the new insight he gave to the old symbols, are the treasured inheritance of the Smarta Brahmans, whose spiritual heads, in unbroken succession, have ruled at Shringeri Math, in the mountains of Northern India.

Centuries passed, and the sunlit plains of India were filled with Moslem invaders, falling like swarms of locusts on the rich gardens of that distant wonderland, full of the fierce hostility of fanaticism against the symbols of a religion they did not understand, and against the Brahmans, as ministers of this religion. It would not be wonderful, it would rather be perfectly natural, if this hostility and predominance of a foreign fanatical power had sealed the lips of the Brahmans once for all as to the mysteries of their religion, had locked and double-locked the casket in which the heritage of India lay concealed.

But in spite of tyranny and fanaticism that would have justified the most perfect reticence, the most absolute silence, the Brahmans retained an ideal of their universal mission, above and beyond their mission to their own land and their own religion. No sooner did brighter days dawn for them under the Emperor Akbar, the great Indian monarch of the 16th century who conceived and framed a high ideal of religious tolerance and mutual understanding which was the nearest approach to State Theosophy; no sooner did the brighter day dawn than the Brah-

mans were ready to forget old griefs and to teach their Moslem rulers the broad principles of their religion.

Two generations after Akbar, Akbar's noblest and most ill-fated descendant, Prince Dara Shukoh, received from the Brahmans the permission to translate into Persian a series of the Upanishads, including the Great Upanishads of which something has been already said. This Persian translation, besides following the words of the old records, put into visible form much that had been hidden between the lines, and followed, in some degree, the new light that had been shed on the Upanishads by the genius of Shankaracharya.

This Persian translation of the Upanishads, which embodies a very valuable tradition of their hidden meaning, made about the year 1640, was found by Anquetil Duperron in 1775, and by him translated into Latin. From Anquetil Duperron this "Key to the Indian Sanctuary" passed to Schopenhauer, and becoming "the comfort of his life, the comfort of his death," led him to prophesy that Indian Renaissance which is glowing with the fair colours of dawn today.

But under Dara Shukoh's brother, the fanatical Aurungzeb, darker days fell upon the Brahmans; and they suffered much from European nations more presumptuous and not less fanatical than Aurungzeb; of these the darkest record clings to the Portuguese, who tried to wring from the Brahmans the heart of their mystery by Inquisition and *auto-da-fé*.

Yet, once more, just a hundred years ago when a group of Europeans full of love for the East sought from the Brahmans some knowledge of their learning, the Brahmans, with singular generosity, made these Europeans in some degree sharers in their heritage. From the knowledge thus freely given to these Europeans, whose chiefs were William Jones and Thomas Colebrooke, the first foundations of Orientalism were laid, and a field of matchless fertility was opened to a growing band of workers who enrolled themselves under the banner of the East.

But the last and finest insight, the master-key to the records, was still treasured in the East itself; some of that insight has since been freely offered to us; on our ability to use it most probably depends the further insight that the future holds in promise.

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## “BE THOU A MAN OF MEDITATION”

The direct effect of an appreciation of theosophy is to make those charitable who were not so before. Theosophy creates the charity which afterwards, and of its own accord, makes itself manifest in works.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

DURING ANY AGE, there take birth a few aspiring Souls who bring back with them fragments of the true knowledge which they had gathered in other lives. Born with this heritage from a forgotten past, they do not require the tardy processes of reasoning to be convinced that the perennial knowledge exists and is in the custody of the wise among men. They readily understand that re-embodiment and reincarnation are universal and that wherever life evolves, there, within it, resides an intelligence that retains in its memory the programme and the plan for that life. The more discerning among them find that there is a law which is unerring, the workings of which though hidden from sight display an intelligence all their own. This law works through all forms — seen or unseen, active or seemingly inert — to synchronize evolutionary impulses with the grand ultimate purpose towards which each must contribute and each gravitate.

The natural impulse which propels the lower kingdoms towards their evolutionary objectives is in man replaced by a motive power that is both self-induced and self-devised. Man alone has the right to choose, the power to discriminate the right from the wrong and the freedom to exercise his will to achieve ignoble ends. He may thus choose to embrace evil and go counter to the universal plan. Because of his wrong choices, he may in time be pulverized and his puny personal force crushed and dissipated by the onrush of the great and overwhelming tides of the force that moves in tune with the universal will. Nevertheless, freedom of choice exists and it is this which makes him man. In general, a man's actions are a mixed fare of reflexes, impulses, emotions, desires, thoughts and feelings. At various times, he portrays the sly fox, the labouring ass, the depredating tiger, the unbroken horse, the busy bee, the frolicking lamb or the venomous serpent. But he is also in rare moments the humble devotee, the ardent searcher for truth, the defender of the weak, and the seeker for that which he calls god. No life below the human can cognize the eternal nor have a concept of the infinite. It does not possess the instrumentation which can make such perception pos-

sible. No animal-man can differentiate between the eternal and the non-eternal till the pain and torture of lost quests for happiness make him subdue the animal part of himself. He can then look inward for that which alone will help him to transcend the ephemeral pleasure and pain.

Both Patanjali and Vyasa show — the one in the *Yoga Sutras*, the other in the *Bhagavad-Gita* — that true knowledge wells up within the man the moment that the impediments to its inflow are removed. This knowledge which is *sui generis* deals with the essence that resides at the core and centre of all things visible or invisible to the eye of man. Very few men possess the non-pointedness that will enable them to penetrate to that inner essence. Man in this age is too prone to choose the easier road of evaluating all things by the familiar norms of sense-perception. The mortal aspects are thus probed, analysed and meticulously tabulated with no attention paid to that energy which inhabits the form analysed and which being non-matter becomes imperceptible to instruments of matter. Matter cannot understand spirit and any effort on its part to do so must culminate in the distorted forms of an earthy imagining. The non-eternal mind of man, when it attempts to ponder on immortality, vests it with the robes of mortality. So doing, the man does the reverse of what he is expected to do. Instead of raising his consciousness to spirit, he tries to drag the spirit down to the level of matter.

The evolutionary progress of man cannot be achieved by a mere movement from one incarnation to another. Neither can the man of flesh abandon his earthly garments and invest himself with heavenly raiments by the aid of material things, which include the help of bell, book, and candle of any religion. To advance, he has to shed his animal aspects. To get the desired effects, he has to generate such causes as can produce those effects. Therefore is it said that for man evolution is through ways and means which have to be induced and devised by his Self. The first such means is the building up of an unshakable conviction that the goal can be reached and that if in the past men have reached the terrace of enlightenment, he too may, incarnations hence, achieve what they did. This conviction and the courage that it brings with it must remain through all circumstance and be present during the hours that follow upon defeats, failures and deaths. Such conviction if rooted in blind faith will not be able to stand up to ordeals such as these. The conviction has to be immortalized in true faith, that faith which *Light on the Path* describes as a great engine, an enormous power, a covenant or an engagement between man's divine part and his lesser self. The man

has to realize that something of him does survive the interludes between death and life and that in the unknown part of himself he is immortal and of the nature of the infinite.

Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of Alaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface." Several important considerations follow upon an acceptance of this statement. The chief of these is that all search restricted to forms of clay must necessarily remain frustrating and futile. The forms of clay are mortal and lie shattered at death. Thus go the mortal possessions of the mortal brain, the mortal junk gathered over a long lifetime, money and fame included, as also the fruits of charity, sacrifice and austerities if these were motivated by a selfish and therefore a mortal desire. To come out from among the multitudes, the man has to make his obeisance to the crystal ray that is within him and which he himself is in the inmost essence. The disciple has to remove his gaze from the clay forms on which it is riveted and centre it on the immaculate beam of light which is within him as it is within the other forms and façades of matter which make up humankind. Like Narcissus of the classics, man adores his own form, adorns it, tries to give it the greatest comfort, is most exercised at its illness and dreads the coming on of death. Adoring his own form, man gets into the habit of adoring the forms that surround him and that through affinity attract him. As long as his gaze is firmly fixed on these forms, the man remains of the earth earthy, a student of the deceptive knowledge that his senses can supply. Unfortunately, to the man intoxicated by the heady wine of matter, the sense-knowledge that he has acquired is real, something of which he is proud and which he is apt to parade forth at each opportunity. The wise man sees in such knowledge only an amassing of false learning, a treasuring of that which would be of no value beyond death. The drunkard descending to low levels of consciousness conjures up fantastic images which to him are real but which to the average man of sanity appear strange and grotesque. But the images that the same average man produces under the impulses of lust, anger and greed appear as bizarre and grotesque to the man who succeeds in fixing his gaze on the one true Light.

No mere poring over books, no self-imposed ascetic practices, no plodding service over the years can culminate in the man gazing upon this fast-moving Light, unless he turn his back upon the ephemeral and

concentrate the energies of his body, mind and soul in the endeavour to reach the Supreme. If to identify himself with the immaculate beam, wealth, fame, fortune, family and name have to be given up, then they have to be surrendered with no regrets. In fact, by the dedicated man as by the man of meditation the shedding of these trappings is considered no high achievement because it comes as a natural outcome to his endeavours. Others may wonder how the great feat must have been achieved in anguish and pain. To him, it is a natural and an unhurried flowering of his life's desire, a majestic sweep of flowing waters that rising in far-off sources, move in measured flow to pour and merge themselves into the starlit sea.

The ordinary average man has two distinct sets of thoughts, two poles between which he oscillates. The thoughts that centre round the non-eternal are those which arise from a view of those portions of the material world which get illuminated by the lower light which the man directs on it. These in most men are sense-oriented thoughts to which the man gets attached. This attachment produces affinities which in time become so powerful that the man fixes the lower light in particular directions only. It thus gets caught up in matter which it illuminates and to which it gives life. At death, so much of the light as has become encrusted with matter gets lost in it and is severed from the parent beam. Thoughts which thus arise by the reflection of the lower light on matter cannot by any means be made to reflect spiritual aspirations. Such thoughts are to be avoided and no shelter provided to them lest they become enemies within the stronghold. At the other pole of man's being are thoughts which are devoid of mortal attachments and non-eternal aspects. They are reflections from such portions of *Akasha* as get illuminated by the higher ray (or mind) focusing its light on them. The thoughts and images that so arise are independent of the physical senses and have nought to do with personal longings of the perishable man. In their company man stands exalted and lives in an atmosphere which is not entered by his less fortunate brothers.

To reach to his high estate, the man has to start his ascent from lowly levels. But even at the initial stages of his endeavour, the goal has to be clearly defined, the footholds that lead to higher elevations planned and cut in the rising perilous slopes that have to be conquered all the way from the foot-hills to the icy summits. The Sixth Chapter of the *Gita* is eminently suited to aid the student in defining his goal and in providing guidelines for his efforts for the future. In it, the steps

in discipline are clearly marked, the goal set out in unmistakable terms. The quest is shown to be that of the Supreme Spirit. The ways to reach it are indicated to be through a steadfast devotion to that ideal. Krishna says that this devotion is possessed only by him who has spiritual knowledge and discernment, who, having controlled his senses, stands upon the pinnacle, and who in the company of sinners or the righteous remains of equal mind. Krishna goes on to say that this degree of devotion can be achieved by the man who ascends to meditation through the renouncing of all intentions and through severance of attachments to such actions as would lead to an involvement of the senses.

It is at the stage when the neophyte tries to free himself from the thralldom of the senses that he finds himself denuded of power to raise an impregnable barrier between himself and the spell that the sense-images cast upon him. He needs must fail and abandon quest and conquest if in ignorance he places sole reliance on himself — the little self that represents the personal animal-man of moods, passions and little aspirations. The lower self has not the strength to leap across the threshold to that place of peace which lies a jump ahead. No amount of service, questioning or humility can work the wonder unless, yearning for the higher light, he turns his back upon matter and the mortal aspects of the manifested. When the scripture says (VI. 5) that "he should raise the self by the Self," it postulates a call for help from the lower and a response from the higher. Without the help that only the higher can give, the lower can achieve no ends.

The knowledge of the lower and the higher egos within man is essential for him who would seek the upward way. It is a sign of the degeneration of our times that although this knowledge is now readily available, the youth of today is not given this wisdom in the formative years of his life. The mortal aspects are all too familiar; the immortal, remote and almost unattainable; and thus years chase sordid years with wild and miry feet, till late in life the man assesses his past and recognizes how futile it all has been. But then it all seems too late. The fire of youth burns low or is extinct and the soul to dare is too often on the wane or at its lowest ebb. It is therefore a primary duty of the student of Theosophy to pass on the priceless knowledge to the young in age as to the young in heart and turn them from sense-intoxicated souls into beings striving towards the Light. Blessed are they who help in the endeavour.

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## LOOKING AT THE QUESTION

*"Looking at the question in the light of Theosophical theories."*

—*The Heart Doctrine*, p. 133

### II

*"How can I make progress in the higher life?"*

—*Vernal Blooms*, p. 27

HERE surely is the right question for the student of Theosophy to ask, and to give the right answer who could be better than Mr. Judge, ever willing as he was "to say a word or two on eternal matters" to inquirers. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 84)

Would he begin by telling us, as he did a correspondent of the past, "You are not in nearly such a bad way as you think" (*Letters*, p. 100), or with the advice that before we try to "force our inner nature up beyond the dead level of the world . . . we should, on the lower plane, accumulate all that we can of merit by unselfish acts, by kind thoughts, by detaching our minds from the allurements of the world" (*Letters*, p. 76)? One thing he certainly *would* say — that "knowledge must be carefully obtained with a pure motive" (*Letters*, p. 85), for through all his teaching he puts motive first, since a wrong motive can detract from even a good action. "Being at motives and purification of thought" would, we may venture to think, almost certainly be his starting point (*Letters*, p. 86). "Seek, then," he says categorically, "to live the Higher Life by beginning *now* to purify your thoughts by good deeds, and by right speech" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 34*, p. 14). And above all would he bring home to us that "the essential to all true progress is a wish to conform utterly to the Divine Will, we being certain that we shall be helped in proportion, as is our need." (*Letters*, p. 107)

So Mr. Judge makes plain to us at the outset that mere longing for the Higher Life is not enough. Neither by pious aspiration nor by prayer can we attain to it, if we rely on these alone. "In all nature we can find no instance where effort of some kind is not required" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 1). Would you suppose spiritual matters to be exceptions? No, indeed; very far from it. "He who would live the life or find wisdom can only do so by continued effort" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 1). If we disregard the laws of health, can we be healthy? Must not we obey them, and persevere in doing so? "How can a man

expect spiritual gifts or powers if he persists in ignoring spiritual conditions, in violating spiritual laws? To obtain the good, we must think good thoughts; we must be filled with good desires; in short, we must *be good*" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 30). "Let the seeker know, once for all, that the virtues cannot be discarded nor ignored; they must be made a part of our life and their philosophical basis must be understood." (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18*, p. 14)

Only on the firm ground of "continued effort" can prayer and aspiration operate. Mr. Judge is far from belittling these. Here is how he speaks of them in one of his *Letters That Have Helped Me*: "Devotion and aspiration will, and do, help to bring about a proper attitude of mind, and to raise the student to a higher plane, and also they secure for the student help which is unseen by him, for devotion and aspiration put the student into a condition in which aid can be given to him, though he may, as yet, be unconscious of it" (p. 120). There is a point here to note. Elsewhere, Mr. Judge gives this reassurance: "We make a good deal of progress in our inner, hidden life of which we are not at all conscious. We may not know of it until some later life" (*The Path*, February 1896); *i.e.*, until we see fruition not to be accounted for by even our own best efforts.

Returning to those "spiritual conditions" and "spiritual laws" on which Mr. Judge tells us our hopes of "spiritual gifts" depend, they seem, at first sight, simple. That is to say, there is nothing occult about them. Even when the two words *yoga* and *mantrams* occur, it is because Mr. Judge is making a perfectly simple statement. "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" (*Letters*, p. 72). Duty involves us with other people, and to his simple statement Mr. Judge adds a paradox: "We advance most rapidly when we stop to help other wayfarers. . . . We become one with the Supreme most surely when we lose ourselves in work for Humanity" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 30). He warns against "the astringent power of self — of egotism — of the idea of separateness" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 38), and tells us that the surest impetus to our progress comes "not from book-study nor from mere philosophy, but . . . from the actual practice of altruism in deed, word, and thought; for that practice purifies the covers of the soul and permits the light to shine down into the brain-mind" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 172). So the doing of our duty, whatever it is, and altruism in our daily life, are two paramount laws

for the student-seeker — “duty, piety and beneficence,” says Mr. Judge. (*Epitome of Theosophy*, p. 26)

In all, our attitude must be consistent. Spiritual laws are not to be obeyed by fits and starts. For our own good, our longed-for progress, “mind and heart must not be permitted to wander, for the path is narrow and the wanderings of a day may cause us years of effort to find the road again” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 48). Never must we forget — Mr. Judge would have us grasp this firmly — that “the real object to be kept in view is to so open up or make porous the lower nature that the spiritual nature may shine through it and become the guide and ruler. . . . The object of the student is to let the light of that spirit shine through the lower coverings” (*Epitome*, pp. 13-14). In these words he defines once for all what progress in the Higher Life really is. No sudden unfoldment of mystic faculties, but “a matter of both system and established law.” (*Epitome*, p. 14)

Law again; always law. Law is fundamental in the realm of spirit. Order, unity, harmony, and the whole great Karmic system depend upon it. It precludes impatience with our own slow progress; at the same time it ensures results, provided we fulfil the conditions that lead to these. “We must be content to wait and work,” says Mr. Judge, “to grow and develop; line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little, till, ages hence perhaps, we come to the full stature of the perfect man” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 29). Even “the transcendental powers possessed by the Adepts” are but “the natural result of growth in certain directions and the necessary efflorescence, so to speak, of the profound development in their cases of those spiritual potentialities which are the birthright of all men” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 28). But, drawing our attention back from this mighty vision to our own level, Mr. Judge adjures us, as a kind teacher, “Do not allow discouragement to come in. Time is needed for all growth, and all change, and all development. Let time have her perfect work and do not stop it” (*Letters*, p. 72). He gives us also a piece of advice, as valuable as it is practical: “If you try to put into practice what in your inner life you hold to be right, you will be more ready to receive helpful thoughts and the inner life will grow more real.” (*Letters*, p. 114)

Mr. Judge does much, but he cannot do all for us. Observing that “whatever the student of the higher life is, he is as the result of his past labours,” he adds the pertinent reminder that “whatever he may become in the future will be due to his own efforts” (*Vernal Blooms*,

p. 28). It is up to the student to make more progress. But, first, let him know clearly *why* he wants to make it. "He ought to assure himself that his motive in knowing and being is that he may help all creatures" (*Letters*, p. 86). Yet he himself will reap the benefit, since "by working for other people we put into practice the inner beliefs which rest upon unity, we develop certain faculties in our nature, we increase our spirituality; for the first and most important step in the cultivation of spiritual faculties is the practice of good thought, good act, and constant endeavour for other people. By following this you will find yourself growing from within more and more." Concern for other people also entails upon us "a constant watch over all faults of mind and speech," and from this also benefit ensues, for Mr. Judge assures us that, through such self-discipline, "in time an actual change is produced in the material person, as well as in the immaterial one within who is the mediator or way between the purely corporeal lower man and his Higher divine self" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 23). And while warning again that "this change, it is very obvious, cannot come about at once nor in the course of years of effort" (*Ibid.*), he still urges, "Persevere, and little by little *new ideals* and thought-forms will drive out of you the old ones. This is the eternal process." (*Letters*, p. 139)

"How can I make progress in the Higher Life?" That was our question, and how fully Mr. Judge has answered it! One can almost see him bending his clear gaze on some disheartened student and saying, with grave kindness, "From the fact that he has the thought that no progress is being made the evidence is gained that he is working onward" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 8). But perhaps his final word to all of us would be this: "Live well your life. Seek to realize the meaning of every event. Strive to find the Ever Living and *wait for more light.*" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 36*, p. 6)

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NOT believing in the glory of our own soul is what the Vedanta calls atheism.

—VIVEKANANDA

## THE PROBLEM OF INNER ADJUSTMENT

THE CHIEF PROBLEM of nations as of individuals is always the problem of inner adjustment, of adaptation to the environment and the circumstances. Inner adjustment and spiritual adaptation are the key to happiness, wisdom and peace. The world is unhappy and inharmonious because it has not found that key. Instead of adapting oneself to one's environment and bringing out the best in it, thus raising the level of the whole, the effort of nations and of individuals is to make others accept their ideas and adjust and adapt to their concepts of what is best and most desirable.

The claim is made that the world has grown smaller and more united with all the modern inventions for improved transportation and communication. But this in itself is of little avail without the moral and spiritual elements. All recognize the desirability of union, of harmony, of brotherhood, but brotherhood is not possible on a personal or selfish basis. Physical proximity does not bridge the barriers between men. The problem of disharmony between individuals and nations must be recognized as a moral and spiritual problem. The petty regional view must be transcended in the consideration of universal aims and mutual adaptation.

Though modern scientific knowledge is misapplied and divorced from moral and ethical aims, science in itself is not a barrier to the realization of universal brotherhood and its application in practice. There are two main barriers to brotherhood—religion and politics. Religion has become sectarian and separative; it does not unite its followers. Politics has become party politics, and strife and division and war are the logical result. People who want to defend orthodox religion claim that social customs are responsible for the divisions between man and man, but the social customs that divide are kept up because of orthodox religions. The different communities are generally tolerant so long as their own prejudices are not offended and so long as others adapt themselves to their views and their ways of doing things.

Orthodox religion is not based on knowledge but on feeling. Feeling and belief are two aspects of the same principle. The *feeling* of sectarian religion must be purified. A man is truly religious only when he applies knowledge, not when he indulges in blind belief. True religion is a religion of mind and of heart, a religion that not only brings knowl-

edge and correct understanding, but energy to act in terms of that understanding.

The problem of the individual man or woman is the same as that of the nation and the community. Individuals suffer from a sense of frustration and misery because they have not found the key to inner adjustment, because they have not learnt to adapt themselves harmoniously to the people and the circumstances which surround them. We have friction and discord even in the family group because of differences in tastes, in likes and dislikes, all personal, and because each tries to force the rest into the mould of his own preferences. For the individual as for the nation, a larger altruism must be substituted for the limited personal view; a true religion of knowledge must be found and practised, if universal brotherhood is to be realized and put into effect.

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THERE ARE earlier and loftier beauties than material ones. In the sense-bound life we are no longer granted to know them, but the soul, taking no help from the organs, sees and proclaims them. To the vision of these we must mount.

Divinity and all that proceeds from Divinity are the Soul's beauty, a graciousness native to it and not foreign, for only with these is it truly Soul. And it is just to say that in the Soul's becoming a good and beautiful thing is its becoming like to God, for from the Divine comes all the Beauty and all the Good in beings.

How are you to see into a virtuous soul and know its loveliness?

Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, labour to make all one glow of beauty. Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty unless itself be beautiful.

—PLOTINUS

# STUDIES IN MAGIC

## IX. — ALCHEMY

Had not Diocletian burned the esoteric works of the Egyptians in 296, together with their books on alchemy; Caesar 700,000 rolls at Alexandria, and Leo Isaurus 300,000 at Constantinople (eighth cent.); and the Mahomedans all they could lay their sacrilegious hands on — the world might know today more of Atlantis than it does. For Alchemy had its birth-place in Atlantis during the Fourth Race, and had only its *renaissance* in Egypt.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 763 fn.

ONE OF THE BRANCHES into which magic spread itself was alchemy, which in one sense swallowed up later all the rest. The importance of the objects of alchemy, its rejection in general of supernatural agency, the great learning by which it was supported, and the high rank and character of those who believed in its practicability as a science, gave it a respectability and standing along with astrology, and caused it to be as extensively pursued. Astrology was in one sense the foundation of alchemy. The relation of the metals to the planets was known to ancient philosophers, as was also the original matter from which the world and all objects were made.

Thales asserted that water was the principle of all things in nature, and that all the visible creation deduced therefrom its origin, and in later ages it came to be believed that the planets, according to their own power and their position in fiery, airy, earthy and watery signs, so acted upon the fluid mass as to produce that quaternary of elements which for a long time dominated the mind of the philosophers. Milton expressed this sentiment thus:

Air, and ye elements, the eldest birth  
Of Nature's womb, that in quaternion run,  
Perpetual circle, multiform, and mix  
And nourish all things.

The three objectives of Alchemy were: (1) the discovery of the philosopher's stone, which would transmute baser metals into pure gold; (2) the making of an alkahest, or universal solvent; and (3) the composition of an infallible, universal remedy called elixir of life. The various recipes given for the transmutation of metals, and indeed all recipes for alchemical secrets, are written in a manner so purposely

obscure that it is quite impossible for a lay person to say now what significance there is in them. The veil was purposive to keep the secrets from the profane. Raymond Lully put it thus:

In the art of our magistry nothing is hid by the philosophers except the secret of the art, which is not lawful for any man to reveal, and which, if it were done, he should be cursed, and should incur the indignation of the Lord, and should die of apoplexy.

As an example of this mysterious language, we may quote Hermes Trismegistus directing the adept to catch the flying bird and to drown it, so that it fly no more; by which is meant the fixation of quicksilver by combination with gold. It is after this to be subjected to the action of *aqua regia*, by which its soul will be dissipated and it will be united to the red eagle (muriate of gold). Ashmole gives the reason for this enigmatical language:

I asked philosophy how I should  
Have of her the thing I would.  
She answered me, when I was able  
To make the water malleable;  
Or else the way if I could find  
To measure out a yard of wind;  
Then shalt thou have thine own desire  
When thou canst weigh an ounce of fire;  
Unless that thou canst do these three,  
Content thyself, thou get'st not me.

How widespread the practice of alchemy had become in the fourteenth century is evident from the fact that Chaucer devoted one full story to the subject in his *Canterbury Tales*. "The Canon's Yeoman's Tale" describes in detail the vicissitudes of an honest but deluded alchemist.

The purpose of alchemy was not merely to turn baser metals into gold and silver, but to transform animal man into divine man, incorruptible and eternal. In mysticism, the alkahest or universal solvent is the Higher Self, union with which makes of matter (lead), gold, and restores all compound things such as the human body and its attributes to their primeval essence. The philosopher's stone had more than one meaning attached to its mysterious origin; for, according to Professor Wilder:

The study of alchemy was even more universal than the

several writers upon it appear to have known, and was always the auxiliary, if not identical with, the occult sciences of magic, necromancy, and astrology; probably from the same fact that they were originally but forms of a spiritualism which was generally extant in all ages of human history.

The material substances composed of the four Aristotelian elements and immediately of the three primary bodies, *tria prima*, were not merely salt, sulphur and mercury, but were anagrams for body, soul and spirit. The *tria prima* or hypostatical principles are nothing more than abstractions of qualities, and therefore, differed essentially in character from the elements of modern chemistry, according to Paracelsus. He uses the word alchemy in a different sense from that understood by his predecessors, for he felt that if the process of milling and baking is an example of outer alchemy, the conversion of flour in the alimentary canal is an inner alchemy. His *alkahest* was the universal solvent for the transmutation of life, which comes next after the elixir of life in the order of the three alchemical agents, the third being the philosopher's stone.

Had it not been for alchemy, which held out ideal wealth as a bait for investigation, chemistry would not have progressed. Idolatry spread wide, and so did belief in witchcraft, and any person possessed of attainments beyond those of the majority was suspected of having obtained them by supernatural aid. Many openly boasted of their communications with the invisible world. Tradition has preserved the memory of many wonderful events, of many apparently miraculous works performed by the skill of men. A long train of causes had induced a belief in occult agency and spiritual assistance. When causes could not be assigned by the lay public, celestial or infernal influence was attributed.

In Arabia flourished one of the most celebrated alchemists, Geber, whose works, treating of medical alchemy, have come down to us. One of the earliest alchemists was Hermes Trismegistus, from whose name it has come to be known as the Hermetic art. To him are attributed several treatises, such as the *Pymander*, a treatise on the power and wisdom of God, the "Emerald Table," as also a treatise on the philosopher's stone.

The Emerald Table, also known as the Smaragdine Table, has several legends connected with it, and is said to refer to universal medicine, the elixir of life. The following translation, extracted from Thompson's *History of Chemistry*, may be of interest:

1. I speak not fictitious things, but what is true and most certain.
2. What is below is like that which is above, and what is above is similar to that which is below, to accomplish the miracles of one thing.
3. And as all things were produced from the meditation of one being, so all things were produced from this one thing by adaptation.
4. Its father is Sol (the sun), its mother Luna (the moon). The wind carries it in its belly, the earth is its nurse.
5. It is the cause of all perfection throughout the whole world.
6. Its power is perfect if it be changed into earth.
7. Separate the earth from the fire, the subtle from the gross, acting prudently and with judgment.
8. Ascend with the greatest sagacity from the earth to heaven, and then again descend to the earth and unite together the power of things superior and inferior; thus you will possess the glory of the whole world, and all obscurity will fly far away from you.
9. This thing has more fortitude than fortitude itself, because it will overcome every subtle thing, and penetrate every solid thing.
10. By it the world was formed.
11. Hence proceed wonderful things, which in this wise were established.
12. For this reason I am called Hermes Trismegistus, because I possess three parts of the philosophy of the whole world.
13. What I had to say about the operation of Sol is completed.

This would remain a riddle even if volumes were to be written on it. The astro-chemical meaning may be familiar to many, but the anthropological is explained by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*. For, it has to be remembered that the esoteric meaning of the *Tabula Smaragdina* of Hermes has seven keys to it, understood only by the adept who knows the occult nature of things. When in item 3, mention is made of "this one thing," what is meant is MAN himself, whose parentage is given in the next item. In the occult rendering of the same it is added: "and *Spiritual* Fire is its instructor."

This fire is the higher Self [states Blavatsky], the Spiritual Ego, or that which is eternally reincarnating under the influence

of its lower personal Selves, changing with every re-birth, full of *Tanha* or desire to live. It is a strange law of Nature that, on this plane, the higher (Spiritual) Nature should be, so to say, in bondage to the lower. Unless the Ego takes refuge in the Atman, the ALL-SPIRIT, and merges entirely into the essence thereof, the personal Ego may goad it to the bitter end. This cannot be thoroughly understood unless the student makes himself familiar with the mystery of evolution, which proceeds on triple lines — spiritual, psychic and physical.

The trinitarian latent nature of life is mirrored in its three active emanations from the three higher principles in man, namely, "Spirit, Soul and Mind," or *Atma, Buddhi* and *Manas*. It is the spiritual and also the material human basis. Rudimentary man, having been "carried by the wind in its belly," becomes the perfect man later on, when, with the development of "Spiritual Fire," the *noumenon* of the "Three in One" within his Self, he acquires from his inner Self, or Instructor, the Wisdom of Self-Consciousness, which he does not possess in the beginning. Thus is seen the Hermetic truth that divine Spirit is symbolized by the Sun or Fire, divine Soul by Water and the Moon, both standing for the Father and Mother of the human Soul, or Mind.

The Smaragdine Tablet is said to contain the essence of Hermetic wisdom. Man is shown to be a link between Heaven and Earth. As in the sign of the *Svastica* the right hand is raised at the end of a horizontal arm and the left points to the earth, in the *Smaragdine Tablet* of Hermes the uplifted right hand is inscribed with the word "*Solve*," the left with the word "*Coagula*." Writing about the occult significance of this "Alchemical, Cosmogonical, Anthropological and Magical sign," Madame Blavatsky says:

It is not too much to say that the compound symbolism of this universal and most suggestive of signs contains the key to the seven great mysteries of Kosmos. Born in the mystical conceptions of the early Aryans, and by them placed at the very threshold of eternity, on the head of the serpent Ananta, it found its spiritual death in the scholastic interpretations of mediaeval Anthropomorphists. It is the *Alpha* and the *Omega* of universal creative Force, evolving from the pure Spirit and ending in gross Matter. It is also the key to the cycle of Science, divine and human; and he who comprehends its full meaning is for ever liberated from the toils of *Mahamaya*, the great Illusion and Deceiver. The light that shines from under the divine hammer,

now degraded into the mallet or gavel of the Grand Masters of Masonic Lodges, is sufficient to dissipate the darkness of any human schemes or fictions.

All the adepts in true alchemy have ever recognized the truth that it is impossible to get material results if the analogies of the elixir of life and the philosopher's stone have not been found in the higher realm of the philosophical and spiritual worlds; failing which those who have sought them for purely selfish, earthly profit are sure to meet with loss, pain and misery. The Hermetic art is at once a synthesis of religion, philosophy and science; as a religion, it is ancient Magic, whose practitioners were the Initiates of all ages; as a philosophy, its principles are to be found in the Alexandrian School; and as a science, its methods have to be ascertained from Paracelsus and Flamel.

Nicolas Flamel is to be counted among those Hermetists who realized that material transmutation is only the outward husk of the sacred art, and that it is of greater importance that there is first an appreciation of the moral philosophy which lies hidden beneath the jargon of the alchemists. For, ever since he came in possession of the secret book by Abraham, the Jew, he devoted himself to the pursuit of learning and of practical alchemy, living the life necessary by a recognition of the doctrine of moral regeneration, which the alchemists had cloaked in terms of the chemical science of their time.

Though Nicolas Flamel acquired the secret of making gold, he made it only three times in the whole of his life, not for himself, as he never changed his simple way of life, but only to mitigate the evils which he saw around him. And this is the touchstone which allows one to recognize that he is on the path that leads to adepthood. This touchstone can be used by everyone and at all times. There has to be a *real* and not an alleged, contempt for riches. However great a man's active virtues or the radiant power of his intelligence, if they are accompanied by a love of money, it is certain that they are tainted with baseness. What they create under the hypocritical pretext of good, will bear within it the seeds of decay. Unselfishness alone is creative, and helps to raise man.

Besides Nicolas Flamel there were other adepts or semi-adepts who knew the secret of the philosopher's stone. Those men who dimly saw the path to the divine, but could not prevent themselves from giving way to their passions, took to alchemy with a selfish aim, and since anything to do with gold unlooses greed and hatred, they were carried

away by their folly and almost all of them perished miserably. But not all the true adepts who had the secret are known, as the real sign of an adept is his ability to remain unknown. Many lose self-control in the presence of gold, for its glitter produces an intoxication more intense than that of alcohol. It increases the man's base passions, his desire for physical gratification, avarice, vanity.

Making gold is only part of the secret; the other is the healing of illnesses by the same agents which produced transmutation. But to reach it a higher stage of advancement and a more complete disinterestedness is necessary. The third stage, according to the esoteric doctrine, enables a man's soul to attain unity with the divine Spirit. But that is possible only for the very few. Just as the molecules of metals are transformed under great increase of temperature, so the emotional elements of human nature undergo an increased intensity of vibration which transforms them and makes them spiritual.

As above, so below. If in the mineral kingdom all elements and metals (minerals) evolve to reach perfection in gold, the human body is the model of the animal kingdom, and living forms are orientating towards their ideal type. The emotional substance of the soul strives, through the filter of the senses, to transform itself into spirit and attain unity with the divine. The movements of nature are governed by a single law, which is diverse in its manifestations but uniform in its essence. The alchemists were seeking out this law. If there were a few who discovered the mineral agent, fewer still were able to find its application to the human being, by knowing the essential agent which could transform the emotions by the heat of the soul, consume the prison of form and allow entry into the higher world.

It is of great interest that Dr. Carl G. Jung, the founder of modern analytical psychology, has discovered in the literature of alchemy a key to some of the mysteries of the human psyche. He has devoted his book *The Integration of the Personality* to a study of alchemical symbolism, having been led to this subject by practical experiences in treating sick minds. As his patients showed unmistakable similarities to alchemistic symbolism, he was forced to the conclusion that alchemy was the requisite mediaeval exemplar of the concept of individuation. By "individuation," it may be mentioned here, Dr. Jung means the psychological process by which an individual character is integrated, giving the conflicting currents of emotional and mental life harmonious unity. Complete individuation, then, must imply self-mastery, that is, the actual

facing and seeking to understand the chaotic and non-rational elements which derive from the lower nature of man, a process which may lead to the rationalization of intuition.

The real quest of the alchemists, according to Dr. Jung, was for moral redemption. Citing several passages from alchemical literature, the psychologist proves that their concern was with the transmutation of the base stuff of human nature and that true alchemy was never a business or a career, but a real *opus* that a man carried on in silent self-sacrificing labour. The various alchemical elements had each their correspondence on higher planes, and alchemical operations were really an inner psychological experience assisted by the corresponding processes which the alchemist carried out on the physical plane.

Dr. Jung is one of the few psychologists to recognize the moral and spiritual purpose of the science of alchemy, in so far as it exercised a decisive influence on the spiritual life of the Middle Ages. Taking cudgels against those who speak of the "error of alchemy," he characterizes such an attitude not only as being "out-dated, but a sign of intellectual poverty." There is no denying the fact that the fundamental philosophical conceptions of alchemy were sound; for the unity of matter of which the alchemists spoke is now admitted as a fact, and the transmutation or change of one element into another is a process very familiar to the modern physicist and chemist. Further, the psychologist's discovery that certain archetypal symbols which frequently recur in the psychic life of modern man were also symbols of common usage among the alchemists of the Middle Ages has gone a long way in setting aside the materialistic preconceptions of the day, at least among the intelligentsia.

Just as modern scientific beliefs were centuries in achieving their present eminence, growing in authority bit by bit as the accumulation of facts gave the lie to religious dogma, so also the return to purified metaphysics and moral philosophy is being preceded by the slow process of recovering the fragments of occult truth one by one. And in this gradual development the pioneering work of such psychologists as Dr. Jung is by no means insignificant. For every important field of scientific inquiry needs a few determined and fearless investigators who realize that their researches will be truly fruitful only when pursued from the solid foundation of philosophical principles, which have been so truly laid by Madame Blavatsky. Defining alchemy as the "chemistry of nature," dealing as it does with the finer forces of nature and

the various conditions in which they are found to operate, she adds:

Seeking under the veil of language, more or less artificial, to convey to the uninitiated so much of the *mysterium magnum* as is safe in the hands of a selfish world, the alchemist postulates as his first principle the existence of a certain Universal Solvent by which all composite bodies are resolved into the homogeneous substance from which they are evolved, which substance he calls pure gold, or *summa materia*. This solvent, also called *menstruum universale*, possesses the power of removing all the seeds of disease from the human body, of renewing youth and prolonging life. Such is the *lapis philosophorum* (philosopher's stone).

The Occultist-Alchemist, spurning the gold of the mines, gives all his attention and directs his efforts only towards the transmutation of the baser *quaternary* into the divine upper *trinity* of man, which when finally blended are one. The spiritual, mental, psychic, and physical planes of human existence are in alchemy compared to the four elements, fire, air, water and earth, and are each capable of a threefold constitution, *i.e.*, fixed, mutable and volatile.

(To be continued)

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INTELLECTUAL KNOWLEDGE is partial, because our intellect is an instrument, it is only a part of us, it can give us information about things which can be divided and analysed, and whose properties can be classified, part by part. But Brahma is perfect, and knowledge which is partial can never be a knowledge of him.

But he can be known by joy, by love. For joy is knowledge in its completeness, it is knowing by our whole being. Intellect sets us apart from the things to be known, but love knows its object by fusion. Such knowledge is immediate and admits no doubt. It is the same as knowing our own selves, only more so.

Therefore, as the Upanishads say, mind can never know Brahma, words can never describe him; he can only be known by our soul, by her joy in him, by her love. Or, in other words, we can only come into relation with him by union — union of our whole being. We must be one with our Father, we must be perfect as he is.

—RABINDRANATH TAGORE

## A CURIOUS TALE

[The following is reprinted from *The Path*, December 1888, where it appeared over the signature of Bryan Kinnavan, one of the pen-names of Mr. Judge.—EDS.]

SOME YEARS AGO I ran down to the Lakes of Killarney, but not for the purpose merely of seeing them as any other traveller. During my boyhood the idea of going there had always been before me, and, in dreams I would often find myself on the water or wandering near by. After this had occurred many times, I procured photographs of the scenery and was quite surprised to find that the dreams were accurate enough to seem like recollections. But various vicissitudes took me to other parts of the world, so that I had passed my majority without having visited the place, and, indeed, the decision to go there at last was not made until one day, while looking into a shop window in Dublin, my eye fell upon a picture of Killarney, and in an instant I was filled with a strong desire to see them. So I went on the first train and was very soon there, quartered with an old man who from the first seemed like an old friend.

The next day or two were devoted to wandering about with no purpose nor with very great satisfaction, for the place as a bit of country did not interest me after all my wanderings in many different climes. But on the third day I went off into a field not far from the shores of one of the sheets of water, and sat down near an old well. It was still early in the afternoon, and unusually pleasant. My mind had no particular object before it, and I noticed an inability, quite unusual, to follow long a definite train of thought. As I sat thus, drowsiness came over my senses, the field and the well grew grey but still remained in sight, yet I seemed to be changing into another man, and, as the minutes flew by, I saw the shadowy form or picture of a tall round tower rising, some fifty feet high, just beyond the well. Shaking myself, this disappeared and I thought I had fought off the sleepy feeling, but only for a moment. It returned with new intensity.

The well had disappeared and a building occupied its place, while the tall tower had grown solid; and then all desire to remain myself disappeared. I rose with a mechanical feeling that my duty, somehow or other, called me to the tower, and walked over into the building through which I knew it was necessary to go in order to reach the tower. As I passed inside the wall, there was the old well I had seen upon

first coming into the field, but the strange incident did not attract my attention, for I knew the well as an old landmark. Reaching the tower, the steps wound up before me to the top, and as I mounted them a voice quite familiar called my name — a name not the same that I owned to upon sitting down near the well, but that did not attract my attention any more than the old well inside the wall. At last I emerged upon the top of the tower, and there was an old man keeping up a fire. It was the eternal fire never yet known to have gone out, and I out of all the other young disciples alone was permitted to help the old man.

As my head rose above the level of the low rim of the tower, I saw a calm and beautiful mountain not far away, and other towers nearer to it than mine.

“You are late,” said the old man. I made no reply, as there was none to make; but I approached and showed by my attitude that I was ready to go on watching in his place. As I did this it flashed across me that the sun was nearing the horizon, and for an instant the memory of the old man with whom I had lodged came before me, as well as the express train to be reached by cart, but that faded out as the old watcher looked into my brain with his piercing eyes.

“I fear to leave you in charge,” was his first remark. “There is a shadow, dark and silent, near you.”

“Do not fear, father,” said I; “I will not leave the fire nor permit it to go out.”

“If you do, then our doom is sealed and the destiny of Innisfallen delayed.”

With those words he turned and left me, and soon I heard his foot-fall no more on the winding stairs that led below.

The fire seemed bewitched. It would hardly burn, and once or twice it almost paralysed me with fear, so nearly did it expire. When the old man left me, it was burning brightly. At last it seemed that my efforts and prayers were successful; the blaze sprang up and all looked well. Just then a noise on the stairs caused me to turn round, and to my surprise a complete stranger came upon the platform where none but the guardians were allowed.

“Look,” said he; “those fires beyond are dying out.”

I looked and was filled with fear to see that the smoke from the towers near the mountain had died out, and in my sudden amazement rushed to the parapet to get a nearer view. Satisfied that what the

stranger said was true, I turned to resume my watch, and there, O horror! my own fire was just expiring. No lights or tinder were permitted there; the watcher had to renew the fire by means of the fire. In a frenzy of fear I leaped to new fuel and put it on the fire, fanned it, laid my face to it and strove with maddened gasps to blow the flame up, but all my efforts were vain, — it was dead.

A sickening dread seized me, succeeded by a paralysis of every nerve except those that aid the hearing. I heard the stranger move toward me, and then I recognized his voice as he spoke. No other noises were about, all was dead and cold, and I seemed to know that the ancient guardian of the fire would return no more, that no one would return, that some calamity had fallen.

“It is the past,” the stranger began. “You have just reached a point where you failed to feed the fire ages ago. It is done. Do you want to hear of these things? The old man has gone long ago, and can trouble you no more. Very soon you will be again in the whirl of the nineteenth century.”

Speech then returned to me and I said, “Yes, tell me what this is, or has been.”

“This is an old tower used by the immediate descendants of the white Magicians who settled on Ireland when England’s Isle had not arisen from the sea. When the great Masters had to go away, strict injunctions were left that no fires on these towers were to go out, and the warning was also given that, if the duties of life were neglected, if charity, duty, and virtue were forgotten, the power to keep these fires alive would gradually disappear. The decadence of the virtues would coincide with the failure of the fires, and this, the last tower, guarded by an old and a young man, would be the last to fail, and that even it could save the rest if its watchers were faithful.

“Many years elapsed, and the brilliant gem placed upon the mount of Innisfallen blazed both by day and night until at last it seemed to fade a little. The curious sounding-stones, now found in Ireland, were not so easily blown; only when a pure and faithful servant came down from the White Tower did the long, strange, and moving sounds float over the mountains from the stone placed near the mount on which was the gem. Those stones had been used by the great magicians, and when the largest of them all, lying near the great White Tower, was sounded, the fairies of the lakes appeared; when the stone of the mount was blown together with that at the White Tower, the spirits of the air

and the water ranged themselves obediently around.

“But all this altered, and unbelief crept in while the fires were kept up as a form.

“You were relied on with the old man. But vain dreams detained you *one* hour beyond your appointed time on this fatal day, now in the past but shown you by my special favour. You came, but late. The old man was compelled to wait, but still feared to leave you, for he saw with prescient eye the dark finger of fate. He descended the stairs, and at its foot fell down and died. Your curiosity then drew you at the exact fatal moment to look at yonder tower, although you knew the prophecy and believed it. That moment decided all — and, poor boy, you could not hold back the iron hand of destiny.

“The fire has gone out. You returned to the floors below; at the foot of the stairs you saw them carrying off the old man and ——— \*\*\*”

At this point I saw the shadowy, waving shape of the tower; the building had disappeared, the well was beside me, and I was in the field again. Oh!

—BRYAN KINNAVAN

NOTHING grows in a spot where there is neither sentient, fibrous nor rational life. The feathers grow upon birds and change every year; hair grows upon animals and changes every year except a part such as the hair of the beard in lions and cats and creatures like these. The grass grows in the fields, the leaves upon the trees, and every year these are renewed in great part. So then we may say that the earth has a spirit of growth, and that its flesh is the soil; its bones are the successive strata of the rocks which form the mountains; its cartilage is the tufa stone; its blood the springs of its waters. The lake of blood that lies about the heart is the ocean. Its breathing is by the increase and decrease of the blood in its pulses, and even so in the earth is the ebb and flow of the sea. And the vital heat of the world is fire which is spread throughout the earth; and the dwelling place of its creative spirit is in the fires, which in divers parts of the earth are breathed out in baths and sulphur mines, and in volcanoes, such as Mount Etna in Sicily, and in many other places.

—LEONARDO DA VINCI

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

"Are We in the Age of the Survivor Ethos?" is the question posed by William Grossin, professor of sociology at the University of Nantes, France, in his article under that title in *Unesco Features*. (No. 645, 1973)

The feeling is spreading [Professor Grossin writes] that we live in a threatened world. The notion that humanity could be destroyed by nuclear warfare, pollution, exhaustion of natural resources or by insufficient food supplies is no longer strange to the general public.

The evolution in the public attitude is part of the changes in our circumstances wrought by technological innovations.

People are behaving in new ways. We are acquiring, to a greater or lesser degree, the survivor ethos, with the consequent appearance of two psychological types that may be called protean man and constricted man.

These types are suggested by Professor Robert J. Lifton of Yale University in a recently published American work, *Social Changes and Human Behaviour*, edited by Dr. George V. Coelho, a former Unesco expert on youth problems now with the National Institute of Mental Health, Rockville, Maryland, and Prof. Eli A. Rubinstein of the State University of New York, Stony Brook....

The general numbing of sensibilities facilitates recourse to violence which is becoming more frequent and less subject to condemnation by the public.

A sense of the meaning of existence is being lost. Prof. Lifton very rightly remarks that man requires a certain continuity in which to conduct his life and a sense of historical and biological connectedness to human kind past and present which gives life direction and meaning. Traditionally, this was provided by having children or through work. The desire for continuity, or, as Prof. Lifton puts it, for symbolic immortality, is, of course, shown in the idea of a life of the spirit after death, common to religious belief....

Dr. Coelho and Prof. Rubinstein observe that daily behaviour and language also reflect a collective survival ethos. For example, there are the widely used phrases, "generation gap," "future shock" and "the age of discontinuity."

These popular, simplistic tags refer to highly complex phe-

nomena. The destruction of the old values which give shape and meaning to life has left the way open for every imaginable type of conduct: new sexual mores, new experiments in family role-taking, systematic delinquency, and revolt against all social constraint, among others. No symbol remains intact as a pole around which recognized models can be constructed of how life should be lived.

Our era is frequently described in terms of a survival of a vanished past, and has been variously labelled post-modern, post-civilized, post-historic, post-industrial, post-economic, post-materialist, and post-technocratic.

While these descriptions are debatable, they at least indicate a state of mind indicative of a deep crisis, a loss of faith in the durability of culture: nothing has true meaning any more....

According to researchers at the National Institute of Mental Health, certain kinds of protean conduct should be encouraged, such as experiments with groups of young children living together. Such experiments, together with the appearance of youth cultures, may foreshadow a process of communal resymbolization which would fill the cultural void and overcome the present wreckage of values.

The churches are taking part in this effort through the renovation of their rites and their changing view of their relationship to the world. A similar tendency can be seen in various projects for reorganizing such institutions as schools. And lastly, there are efforts to give a new purpose to work, enabling men once more to satisfy their sense of continuity through their work as well as a sense of social participation. Similarly, the struggle to save the environment partakes of an effort to restore the connection between human life and Nature.

Technological change, then, has provoked contrary effects both at the level of the individual and in groups; on the one hand, the loss of the symbolization of immortality, on the other attempts at resymbolization. More than ever before in history the destiny of society is being affected by the phenomenon of change *qua* change, and today's terrible anxiety derives from the conviction that most urgent action is required to bring under control forces carrying the societies of the world toward a horrible fate.

Faced with a crisis which threatens to destroy not only our material civilization, but moreover that which is human in men, we know no need more pressing than that of a change in the mind and the heart

of the race. No one — man or woman, young or old — can have a greater duty to perform than to make clean and clear his or her own nature, to make it *true*, to make it accord with the great object of all life, the evolution of the soul. Self-reform through self-energization is the only royal road to salvation, and all those, whoever they may be and however situated, who thus strive in faith and love, are the real benefactors of mankind. Each sincere student of Theosophy can make of himself an impersonal force for good through a truer realization and a profounder conviction of the following fundamental propositions of Occult psychology:

It is a law of occult dynamics that a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence.

The individual cannot separate himself from the race, nor the race from the individual.

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In an article, "Continuity of Learning," reprinted from *The Times Educational Supplement* in the *Saturday Review of Education*, March 1973, Jerome Bruner theorizes about the ways in which we can more effectively integrate all modes of life, learning, and work at all levels of the society. The author, one of the world's leading authorities on child development and the nature of learning, is Watts Professor of Psychology at the University of Oxford, England.

Professor Bruner is of the view that the neuroses of the young are far more likely to revolve around work than around sex; and that therefore the first order of business in the transformation of our mode of educating is to revolutionize and revivify the idea of vocation or occupation. He writes:

There is some deep, unrecognized, but anxious sense of impending change that pervades the thinking of students, a feeling of uncertainty about the future. Some of the most sensitive of the young scientists brood about the role of science in a world of technology that is not under humane constraints. Those who might ordinarily think of a career in commerce or industry are oppressed by the image of Willy Loman in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* or of burnt-out remnants of the rat race they have known. I am speaking not only of the counterculture, with its more radical search for new life-styles, but of a much broader

range of the young. They are searching, I think, not only for a sense of what has happened to the world but a sense of what their own role in it is to be. Neither vocational training nor training in the general skills of mind seems to solve their doubts.

I want to urge several drastic reforms in our approach to education that I think would respond to these needs. To begin with, we must change the conception of the role of schooling in the life cycle. Presently it is conceived as a preparation. It has turned out to be the case that performance during this preparatory period, officially graded or marked, is also used by "the system" as a basis for allocating and sorting out talent for later uses.

Let me urge that the process of education (whether in established schools or by other means) be conceived not just as a preparation but as a form of enablement selectively available throughout the life cycle. I conceive of this process as starting before the child enters school, but it is mostly the transition from the preparatory period into one's working life that concerns me here, whether one is a dropout or a college graduate. There should be a means available for "returning" or "continuing" or "converting" or "refreshing," or whatever. But, just as important, there must also be some means of planning before departing, even if only at the level of plausible hypothesis, concerning later uses of education in one's life. This planning need not be a fantasy; there can be study and counselling concerning what the options are. . . .

Ideas like that of the Open University, combined with opportunities to return for further training or further reflection, can give to those entering the system a firmer time perspective on their life and work. And with changing technology, changing needs for social service, changing ways of dealing with the quality of life and the environment, such an approach must surely result in more effective people, more future-oriented ones with a better sense of plan and prospect.

Such a conception of educational continuity through the life cycle is not just a means of equipping people with a sense of occupation and work. It is also a way of making leisure meaningful and not something that is an escape from work. For I think it is reasonable to suppose, though the conjecture has never been tested, that the more skilled and elaborated leisure activity is, the more deeply satisfying it becomes. Also, this more comprehensive continuing schooling may, in effect, make possible a more

skilled voluntary service in the community — in the care of the young, in the management of the environment, or in helping those in need of more teaching or guidance.

This kind of long-term, lifelong educational effort implies a system in which life, learning, work, and school can all be aspects of an on-going creative process. Knowing full well the enormous administrative complexities involved, Professor Bruner strongly urges that “we use the system of student-assisted learning from the start in our schools, that we test achievement *outside* the context of school, that we treat the process of mastering the culture’s devices and disciplines, its tools, as a communal undertaking.” At a time of deep perplexity and change in which we are living, such a plan of an extended form of education must surely be taken seriously.

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“Half, if not two-thirds of our ailings and diseases are the fruit of our imagination and fears. Destroy the latter and give another bent to the former, and nature will do the rest,” wrote H.P.B.; and recent findings bear this out. Writing under the title “Your Emotions Can Make You Ill,” in the March *Reader’s Digest* (Indian ed.), Blake Clark describes several cases which go to show that

emotions can affect your physical well-being. They can make hair fall out by the handful, bring on splitting headaches, clog nasal passages and make eyes and nose water. Asthma and skin rashes can be brought on by nerves, which can also plague one’s insides, causing dyspepsia and diarrhoea. Depression can result in frigidity or in impotence. Women may miscarry. And much worse — emotions can kill. . . .

Doctors estimate that 50 to 70 per cent of their patients, of all ages, have no organic disease. Their real problem is emotional. Particularly pathetic are young sufferers, innocent victims of unseen forces beyond their control. . . .

How do emotions make us ill? Normally, they serve healthy, even life-saving functions. When the brain warns of danger, for example, emotions leap into action; blood pressure increases, adrenalin flows into the bloodstream, muscles tense. When the emergency passes, the emotions let up, and we relax. But suppose the danger is of a kind that doesn’t go away? What if the soldier is kept under enemy fire too long? Or if the cause of anxiety is conflict between husband and wife, problems with children

or boss? Then the emotions keep pouring out distress signals which may ultimately manifest themselves physically. For example, a period of emotional stress may trigger off migraine or a flare-up of trouble from a peptic ulcer. . . .

Your emotions can also keep you well. If you are happy at home, content in your job, feel accepted by colleagues and receive praise for work done, healthy emotions are nourishing you.

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An editorial in *The Times of India* for June 22 relates to a much-debated topic — the stress to which human beings are subjected in our age. Under the title “Anatomy of Stress” we are told:

A wholly statistical approach to human misery may be superficially impressive, but from a psychological or therapeutical point of view it is useless. Consider the social readjustment rating scale drawn up by a group of American doctors with a view to understanding the link between stress and physical illness. Forty-three life events are listed as stress sources, giving each a different rating. (Examples: death of spouse 100; dismissal 47; minor violations of the law 11.) An aggregate of 200 or more in a period of one year is considered to be more than any individual can stand. These data make little sense and have no practical value. Stress is reaction to change and each person has a different stress threshold (and even in an individual the threshold varies with time and age). It does not necessarily lead to neural disruption or disease. Again, it is wrong to think that stress is a new phenomenon or a new discovery; only the reaction intensity and perhaps also the number of stress sources have changed. . . . There has also been a certain loss of innocence and faith, which today causes more personal worry. But we are also more self-aware and therefore more capable of countering stress. In any case, the endocrinological aspects of stress indicate that no important physiological change has taken place in the last five or ten thousand years; adrenalin still flows into the blood stream inciting one to fight or flee. As counters to stress are such tested techniques as an extended holiday, regular habits and meditation or total relaxation. In fact, in some cases stress will be found to be a useful thing. Thus it is clear that we often tend to overemphasize the ill effects of stress in modern times.

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