

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## CONTACTING NON-THEOSOPHISTS

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He drew a circle that shut me out,  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But Love and I had the wit to win,  
We drew a circle that took him in.

—EDWIN MARKHAM

THE SEEDS of self-esteem and self-importance are in all men, from the statesman down to the savage, each individually insisting upon the correctness and the acceptance of his own point of view while summarily ejecting that of others. This not only in matters of concern but also in small things. If the tendency is not recognized and guarded against, even the Theosophical student is likely to fail in eradicating this weakness. Though he is trying to unfold the perception of spiritual principles, he has not, in most cases, freed himself from the tendencies of the race mind and may find himself increasingly and unnecessarily at odds with non-theosophists. Sometimes realizing the transient nature of bodily existence he sees that quarrelling is futile and so confines himself to resisting passively all attacks. A more constructive attitude is possible to the student if he looks upon everyone he comes in contact with as an incarnated soul, capable also of *becoming* a student of Theosophy. That attitude rigidly adhered to will transmute much of the disharmony into brotherly feeling. He has to bear in mind the *Gita's* teaching that even the man of most evil ways can tread the path of the higher life, if he resolves rightly. The aspirant has come out of the world of ordinary men. But only yesterday he was there indulging in the same weaknesses and tendencies. Perhaps he has them still today. If this is kept before the mind, the distinction the student is tempted to make between

himself and the non-theosophist is seen as a manifestation of conceit, a branch of the giant weed of selfishness. The student has to try to look upon all human beings as if they were his brother-pupils.

The mind in bondage to desire is the potent source of human evil and misery. The duty of the aspirant is to attend to the functioning of his own mind, to wean it from its lower terrestrial inclinations and to make it aspire towards higher spiritual ideals; so directed, the mind will become a force to right existing wrongs and to establish harmony and tranquillity. Furthermore, it is by patient dwelling upon the great ideas presented in Theosophy that we come to recognize their truth.

. . . . Knowledge dwells  
In heads replete with thoughts of other men,  
Wisdom in minds attentive to their own. . . .

As the aspirant learns to attend to his own mind he will realize the truth of the definition of unselfishness — “letting other people’s lives alone.” This does not mean that he will not try to help others as much as they will let him by furnishing the right intellectual basis for their thinking, but he must respect the inherent inclination of each individual towards freedom of thought. Even bigots have this inclination, though their insistence is on the right to confine their thoughts within a narrow groove, rejecting the universal view-point. If they enquire, a response should be made. If they are willing to listen, an appeal to their reason can be made by showing the view-point of Theosophy as more natural and all embracing than sectarianism, and thus they can be helped to a less bigoted position. But in this attempt to help others any effort by a student to impose his personal preferences and views and methods upon them is detrimental and naturally will always be resented. An idea does not become true to another simply because we ourselves consider it to be true.

And having presented the teaching of Theosophy when opportunity is offered, the student should drop the point, if no further interest is shown. The constant “dinning in” of the Theosophical teachings, in season and out, may be positively harmful to the Cause, provoking obstinacy and ridicule if not open friction. “Degrade not truth by forcing it upon unwilling minds,” one of the Masters wrote.

Seeds are not planted successfully by being beaten into the ground. The soil must first be prepared and then the seeds dropped gently into it. We get nowhere by heated argument about doctrines, the truth of

which another cannot see until he evolves the Theosophical view-point from within himself.

The very example of a student's life according to Theosophical precepts may be more influential than words and can render a great help to another as a model for his own life and thinking. But sometimes the student's self-righteous behaviour, however unconscious he may be of it, acts as an irritant and pushes the likely helper of the future away from Theosophy. Nay more, there are students who unconsciously to themselves irritate other students and cause indirectly their fall by little acts or by peculiar speech wrapped up in a pietistic or self-righteous atmosphere.

Sometimes the greatest service one can render to another is to draw his attention to the Lodge meetings or to present him with some Theosophical literature. But even here discrimination is needed.

Finally the student has to learn detachment and gain the power to discriminate between what is important and what is trivial; between the essential and the non-essential. Friction and disharmony cannot endure in the presence of trust and understanding.

SUCH a precious life does not come often. It is only as the result of great merit that one gets a human birth. Everything here is transitory; look at the leaves of the tree, they grow in abundance but they all drop away in no time, and those that drops away are never united with the tree. The sea of worldliness is vast and terrific and only he who is a swift traveller on the boat of concentration can cross it, none else. The saints and sages go on crossing it and exhorting others to cross the same. Mira, the maid, has Giridhar as her Lord and has realized the fact that life here is evanescent, a four days' show.

—MIRABAI

## ACQUIRING THE ABILITY

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

—U.L.T. DECLARATION

THE GIVING OF HELP and the imparting of knowledge require the outflow of a certain type of energy for the acquisition of which a course of strenuous preparation becomes necessary. That this energy has to be canalized into beneficial channels can be readily conceded. It therefore becomes incumbent on the aspirant to ensure that he build up for himself a fund of Theosophical knowledge and a reservoir of good-will, patience and dogged perserverance. A willingness to serve, an adaptability to environment and circumstance, an intuitive knowledge of the soul's needs and a constant vigilance to see that one does not give out anything that is tainted with lowly desires—these are the other requisites which fit an aspirant for the rendering of soul-service. All this requires a preparation of mind and soul that once begun can never be stopped. He who desires to serve must have clean credentials. Desire must have turned into aspiration before the pouring out of help and knowledge can be expected to work their mission of mercy and transformation for the starving and the needy.

With enthusiasm all things are possible, but that enthusiasm must be of the quality of light, not of darkness. It has to remain with the man and uphold him through hours of gloom as well as through those long periods when effort seems unproductive and results minimal. It is at such times that companionship of like-minded aspirants helps. *Sat-sang* or soul-companionship is a force that can bind the enthusiasm of several into one big tidal wave of effectual strength. But even if under Karma the man is required to work alone, he will find that he has in himself reservoirs of strength and dynamism which if properly tapped can work wonders. All aspirants have sooner or later to draw upon this inner source of energy to translate their aspirations into actions that can elevate and protect others.

To equip oneself for the giving of knowledge, study is the first prerequisite. But study itself has to be taken as an exercise, which for our goal and objective must itself go beyond brain and memory. Ordinary study, even of the abstruse sciences, has been known to be usually

tainted with the splashings of unworthy motives. Desire to turn study to profit for the obtaining of fame, power or position may win the applause of the world, and yet that same study may become the corroder of spirituality. When knowledge so acquired is transmitted to others, it can touch them on the plane of earthly learning which often creates an unhealthy inflammation in the passional part of the human make-up.

Even when the motive is proper, study alone will have very little chance of making the aspirant a fit instrument for service. He has to learn how to refer both his acquisitions and his offerings for approval or otherwise of his own soul. This is a faculty that has to be developed unaided. The initial difficulties in this task are great indeed and so the aspirant is advised to assure himself that what he imbibes as well as what he gives out offends no rule of the ethical code. The yardstick of the *Paramitas* is the best available in such matters.

The quality of help and the aspect of the teaching have to be oriented to the soul-need of the recipient. Each case has to be handled according to the urgency of the help and the psychological penchant of the individual. The student-server has to be all things to all men. For this, he can hardly qualify himself by a superficial knowledge that merely skims the surface of Theosophy. To make Theosophy potent for good, it has to be made a living power in one's life. For this, each one must know what Theosophy is. The aspirant's own study must lead him to a synthesizing within himself of religion, philosophy and science. It is this synthesizing, this finding out of a basis of unity between clashing ideologies and conflicting dogmas, which makes the man give life and limbs to Theosophy. From him must exude a harmonizing influence that soothes conflict and invites confidence.

Once that the essentials of Theosophical service are understood, the aspirant will realize in an ever-increasing measure that his own failings and submissions to the lower desires raise a barrier between him and his soul, and for the time being at least his words lack appeal and his teaching becomes either sterile or produces an effect opposite to that intended. True, that no one becomes a saint or a sage overnight after the first aspiration to serve takes root in the Soul. Therefore, for years and incarnations yet to come, the aspirant continues as a pupil-teacher who, over the years, tries to improve the quality of his service. He may find himself reviled, his services slighted and even abused, and his teachings ridiculed and scorned. In his agony at the failure of his mission, when he feels he cannot stand up against the taunts and assaults

of the ungodly, he has to learn to be charitable to the weaknesses of his tormentors. "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do," is no sentimental outpouring of a soul in anguish. It represents the indomitable compassion of an all-enduring soul that sees and understands and judges all actions by the insight born of charity and love immortal.

One more consideration remains. The aspirant, since he comes from the outside world, comes loaded with the burden of frailties and idiosyncracies that ravage the majority of men, and may therefore find it hard not to react to the unfair criticism, the harsh judgment and the callous indifference of others and especially of those with whom he shares his hopes and aspirations. If he takes time to consider this phenomenon dispassionately he will find that the hurt is felt only by his personal nature — a part of his own make-up which it has been his desire to transcend. He cannot disown his close kinship with his traducers, for in the movement to which he belongs they remain his brothers — failing, falling, arrogant, self-opinionated, but still his brothers — and a duty devolves on him to keep the lines of brotherhood unbroken. It is this effort at preserving unity and the impersonal thought which he puts into it which will percolate through his life and teaching and make it more purposeful and more readily acceptable by those who rely on him for help and knowledge.

The help which it becomes the duty of the aspirant to give and the knowledge which he is expected to dispense freely cannot be reserved for the righteous alone nor for the virtuous and the humble exclusively. Among the needy are mostly the sinner and the spendthrift, the arrogant and the ailing, the crippled of soul and the criminal. The help and the teaching are essentially for those who by the timely and loving care of the aspirant may find their fall halted and their erring feet firmly planted on the right road to progress. The help and the instruction which the aspirant himself received were freely given and as freely must he give of these to those who come to him for that help and guidance which Theosophy can render when invested with the living power of a soul dedicated to service. The student-server, if he is both sincere and competent, becomes an outpost of spiritual strength in this dark and cruel world which takes an unholy delight in the degradation and humiliation of others. Let him remember that his service demands that he take upon himself the burden and sorrow of others. He who is prepared for all this, let him come by all means. He is always welcome.

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## THEOSOPHICAL DOCTRINES : A GENERAL PRESENTATION

[Reprinted here is another of Dr. J. D. Buck's addresses at the Parliament of Religions, World's Fair of 1893, held at Chicago, Ill., U.S.A.—EDS.]

THE HALL was crowded, about 3,500 persons being present. In consequence of the strained condition of Bro. William Q. Judge's voice, Dr. J. D. Buck was given the chair.

DR. BUCK — We are here this evening, ladies and gentlemen, to present to the Congress of Religions a general statement of the Theosophical doctrines, of that which the Theosophical Society has undertaken in these latter times. An historical account of the Society was given this morning by Claude F. Wright, in which statistics were furnished, the organization of the Society was presented, and the work which has been accomplished was at least outlined. In the announcement that was made in 1875, three objects were given as the motive for the existence of the Society and for its organization. These were, *first*, to found the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of humanity, without relation to race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. You will please note that to found the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of man was the object. The early Theosophists, the founders of the Theosophical Society, have been accused of a great many things of which they were in no sense guilty. They were not guilty of the folly of supposing that at the present day a Universal Brotherhood of man could be established and fully realized. Humanity will have to travel a very long way over the road of evolution before it will unite as one mass in forming a Universal Brotherhood of man. It was, however, supposed, and, as the very latest developments have demonstrated, with very good reason, that there might be found among the people of the world enough to form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood, and therefore in the establishment of this nucleus, it would become just what a nucleus always is: the very life and centre and soul of the Theosophical Society. It is the same in vegetable structures, it is the same in the building of worlds, and the same way we know it will tend in that most complicated of all structures — human society. Around this nucleus, pledged to this one principle of Universal Brotherhood, it was hoped that the peoples of the earth and nations of men might gather by aggregation,

just as the process of organization takes place in living tissue, and just as any formation crystallizes around the nucleus, which sets, you may say, the rhythm or possibility of the organization or structure that is being formed. Around this rhythmic centre, imbued with this one idea, might in time gather others, and others and others again, until the nucleus itself became the structure of the Society.

Now, the objection to this proposition is often made, that there is nothing new under the sun. It is new, however, to the Western world in the form in which it is presented by the Theosophical Society. We don't claim merely that brotherhood is a thing that ought to be accepted; we don't claim that it is a thing simply which is greatly to be desired; we claim that it is a fact in nature, a universal fact in the process of the evolution of Suns, and holds no less in the process of the evolution of humanity. Deny it as we will, we can no more change that which is a fact in nature than we can change the law of gravity or than we can subvert materially the law and processes of evolution. Therefore you see that the initiation of this fact of Universal Brotherhood comes to us with a different force from that with which it is presented by the various religions and philosophies of the world; because in the philosophy that unfolds under such a doctrine, it is demonstrated that this is a fact which cannot be controverted. And as was shown in the meeting this morning, he who resists this law simply puts himself as an individual against the whole trend of the current of evolution. Nature issues her commands; under her invariable laws man may follow the lines of least resistance and work with nature if he will, but if he blindly resists, he takes the line of greatest resistance, and therefore the law of progress, the whole evolutionary scheme of nature, is turned against him, and pain and suffering will result. We have all learned this fact in the processes of our individual life, our individual evolution. We have learned it and seen by experience. But, drawing from the immense resources of antiquity, from the philosophy of the Far East, it has remained for the Theosophical Society to demonstrate this fact upon a scientific basis, to incorporate it into a system of philosophy or knowledge; one in which there are no missing links; one in which every proposition agrees with every other proposition; one in which the whole scheme of philosophy, man and the universe, agrees with all that modern and ancient science has discovered with regard to the laws of the universe. And then, passing this philosophy and this science, underneath is the background and the supporter of true religion.

We are endeavouring, therefore, to revive that which at the beginning of the Christian era was called the gnosis, knowledge in its true sense, in its highest sense, in its purest sense; knowledge of that great secret which was the burden and the veil of the alchemists, the secret of the human soul. Those who imagine that those Theosophists of the middle centuries and the dark ages, those philosophers who had a home in Europe and were known to the Western world as alchemists, that the true alchemists were not searching literally for the philosopher's stone or the elixir of life, or something to turn baser metals into gold — those who say so have but read the surface of their writings; they certainly have never read between the lines. For, that process of transmutation to which they referred was simply to convert the baser elements of human nature, of human life, into those spiritual and divine essences from which the very life of man proceeds.

The second object that was announced in the formation of the Theosophical Society was the examination and study of the ancient religions and philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of that study. Now, why was this stated as one of the objects for the formation of the Theosophical Society? Because all of our Western world, whether you call it philosophical, religious, or scientific, was grossly wanting in the real knowledge of the soul, knowledge of the higher nature of man; and because this study could lead to but one result, the realization of the first proposition, *viz.*, the formation of the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of man; but as it was equally important, it would demonstrate incontrovertibly the brotherhood of all great religions of the world, which had come down in the secret books in glyphics and symbols, the key to which was lost, but was possessed by ancient Initiates in knowledge, preserved by the Rishis and Masters of old India from age to age, and passed on in the doctrines of Pythagoras, Plato, and Zoroaster, and a great many lesser lights since that time. I say the key to this knowledge was to be found in the investigation of those Eastern religions. It was not by any means the purpose of the founders of the Theosophical Society to put any of the other religions that exist in the world today above the Christian religion or above any one of the other religions, but they hoped to demonstrate a Universal Brotherhood of religions equally with the Universal Brotherhood of man. The admission, the demonstration, of one of these principles verified the other, and therefore they were like the two hands upon the one body. Men who work for the

brotherhood of man must necessarily work for the brotherhood of religions, and he who admits the brotherhood of the great religions of the world is doing the best he can in that way to demonstrate the fact and to bring about the return of the Universal Brotherhood of man.

The third principle held out as the object of the Theosophical Society is the investigation of the latent psychical powers in man. Now, here is the point at which knowledge was needed more than at almost any other: the psychical nature of man. With the trend of Western thought, with all that was given out under the name of Western science, with all that came to the West under the name of evolution, men were becoming more and more materialistic, and man was losing the consciousness that he has a human soul. I remember only a very short time ago an individual very interested in these subjects asked me the question: "Do you really believe in the existence of the soul?" The only answer that I could make to him was to say in his own terms: "Do you really doubt or deny it?" It is the consciousness of the soul that will come to everyone who will open his own soul to the higher light of truth, to the light and to the ministrations of his own higher self; it is in this line that will be discovered the existence of the soul. And then when we come to its laws, its processes, its method of evolution, the fashions under which evolution or progress can be most rapidly and most certainly made — this was the knowledge that was needed by the Western world more than almost anything else.

And then there was another reason why it was particularly necessary fifteen years ago, and is necessary still. There came in the process of time a check to this wave of materialism that was rolling over the Western world. I refer to that phenomenal existence or experience known as modern spiritualism. Take it with all of its eccentricities, take it with all of its physical manifestations and all its various phenomena, there are unquestionably a very large number of facts that are incontrovertible as facts; but without any correct knowledge of the nature and processes and operation of the human soul, impractical knowledge derived along these lines of investigation, pursued ignorantly by spiritualists and their interested aiders, was far more likely to result in evil than in good. The time therefore came when modern spiritualism ran into phenomenalism, and so far as furnishing a motive in life, so far as furnishing correct knowledge of the nature of man was concerned, I can say, I think, in all fairness and in all charity, it was rather the conception than the real. When this movement and this philosophy were furnished, a

pretty large proportion of those who entered into the investigation of spiritualism were influenced to make further and deeper efforts. They came as simple truth seekers to investigate the phenomena themselves. It is admitted by all fair and candid writers upon the subject that a very large proportion of the phenomena are evidently fraudulent, that a strong proportion of what are called professional mediums who pursue their calling for a fee are admitted to be frauds, and bring many unfortunate people into temptation; and so on this account there was greater than ever the need of exact, rational, definite, and satisfactory knowledge as to the nature of the human soul, or the psychical nature of man; and it was therefore the third object of study, to investigate the psychical powers latent in man.

Now, because of this statement and because of the widespread ignorance in regard to this subject, the most foolish and inconsistent and contradictory reports have gone out with regard to the Theosophical Movement. It is the most common thing in the world for people who know little of themselves, and perhaps little more of spiritualism, to identify Theosophy with spiritualism. When asked, What is Theosophy, they say, Simply an adjunct of spiritualism. But it is a very different thing indeed. We make an investigation of facts, and, when facts are demonstrated to us as such, why not admit them — especially facts which come under a broad and comprehensive philosophy that we have learned to accept as springing from the psychical nature of man? The most bitter opposition that has been accorded to the Theosophical Society has come from the spiritualists, simply because they have misunderstood generally the motive of Theosophy. They believe that it has for its object the destruction of spiritualism. It has been also accused of an intent to destroy Christianity and to set up Brahmanism or Buddhism or some other ism in its stead. But nothing could be wider from the mark. There is one particular fact in regard to this psychical investigation that should be understood once for all; that is, admitting all the facts, the authenticated and incontrovertible facts of spiritualism, Theosophy claims that the spiritualists have not got the only logical and rational interpretation when they claim that these phenomena are caused by the disembodied spirits of men and women who have departed from this life and are therefore evidence of the immortality of the soul. We take issue with them just at that point. We claim it is not the only rational interpretation, but we claim that a better knowledge of the psychical nature of man will modify all these views and in

a large number of instances change entirely the conclusions. We believe as firmly as any orthodox man, the member of any church, or any spiritualist, in the immortality of the soul, but we do not believe that that immortality can be demonstrated by communications with disembodied spirits. We believe it is the embodied spirit that should have consciousness of its own immortality, and at the same time be able to put in their own places all these psychic phenomena that can be demonstrated as facts that have been given to us by our brothers, the spiritualists. There need be no controversy at this point beyond mere disagreement as to the interpretation. There is not the slightest ground for any bitterness or ill feeling between the Theosophists and any other body of believers or experimenters. That is our view. It is not put forth as orthodox. As to those who still cling to the spiritualistic interpretation of the phenomena, there is no one who has a disposition so far as I know, certainly there is no one who has the authority, to say that they have not a perfect right to interpret the phenomena in their own way; for there is no creed or orthodoxy in regard to Theosophy.

Now, taking these three objects of this Society, the first one of them was made obligatory upon those who sought membership in the Theosophical Society. The first and foremost, the most important object for which the Society was formed, was this nucleus of Universal Brotherhood; and better by far if all else had been forgotten and left out of the question than that this should be covered up or neglected in our duty; because in the dimness of the future and in basing the life of the individual on the fact of Universal Brotherhood we find the surest way for charity among men, for recognizing the brotherhood of all religions; and furthermore, for the development of these very faculties in man which shall reveal to his own soul its own existence, its immortality, its nature, its destiny, its powers and its possibilities, there is no way by which these investigations can be pursued so certainly as by altruistic or charitable work in the world among our fellow men.

There has been a great deal of misapprehension not only in regard to spiritualism, or the supposed relation existing between Theosophy and spiritualism, but upon certain teachings given out by Theosophy itself. It was not an uncommon thing in the early days of the Theosophical Movement for one who had got a little scattering knowledge of Theosophy and the possibility of the evolution of these powers in man — it was not uncommon, I say, for one to get a little smattering of this philosophy and these ideas, and then begin to inquire where he could

find a jungle in the forest so that he might retire from the world and develop these powers. No greater mistake could possibly have been made. Take an individual in our own civilization here, an intelligent individual, charitable and kind as the world goes; what would he do in a cave? What could he do under a teacher, when he cannot control his fleshly appetites? He was really ready to take this like any other psychic food and make the most of it, and it would have resulted, if he had persisted, in wrecking his life in one way or another. Nothing of the kind was ever admitted or inculcated by the Theosophical Society, by its teachings and its doctrines, nothing except the ordinary evolution of the higher nature of man, wherein man must work out his own salvation with fear and trembling; not fear of an angry God, but of his own lower nature; fear of the temptations of the flesh and the appetites weak and depraved of human nature. When a man has along this line conquered himself, then certainly he should be ready to conquer another world than that of the physical senses, than that of the seen and known. So I say, follow along these lines the mission of the Theosophical Society, so well defined and kept steadily before the people, although the Theosophical Society as such, and its leaders, have been held responsible by individuals for their own misapprehensions as to what it was. All this we are trying to get before the world.

It is evident from a consideration of these historical facts and these movements of modern times that the greatest aim of the world today is not the organization of men simply to help each other. The greatest end is not the Theosophic amelioration of the condition of man, bad as that condition may be. The great end of the world today is correct knowledge upon the higher nature of man; because correct action never can proceed consistently, logically, and persistently except upon the basis of right knowledge. It is not mere faith, blind belief, mere superstition that we need. It is simply a correct knowledge of the nature and possibilities of the human soul.

Now, as individuals you can believe or not as you please, that the Theosophic philosophy is found in the writings of the ancients. In writings put forth by letters on masonry you will find this the lost creed of humanity; it is the knowledge of the human soul, this great secret symbolized on masonry by glyphs of secret meaning, that secret imparted under penalty of death by the Essenes, the Gnostics, by the Ecstatics, by thousands and thousands of societies whose names have been forgotten throughout the past. I say this is the great secret, the religion of

the nature, destiny, possibilities of the soul of man. That is what is symbolized in all masonic lodges by the legend of Hiram Abiff; the sacrifice by the son of the virgin. It is the individual, this man dwelling within man, that is involved in the building of the temple concerning which we hear so much in some of our secret organizations. What is the temple? That house not made with hands, the spirit of which is eternal in the heavens. So, in the older philosophies and older mysteries, by symbols, by glyphics, by all manner of methods it was attempted to preserve or to convey to all intuitive enough this knowledge of the human soul. Organizations that once possessed it lost it through their own degeneration and by falling into matter. Prof. Huxley was right in his book, *The Ancient Religions of the World*. I quote the idea rather than the exact words. On the last but one page of the book, he says that his investigations in these ancient religions have convinced him that they all came from one primeval religion, revealed to man from without. That is exactly the claim put forth by the Theosophical Society and by those higher than the common run of humanity, those very Masters, those Mahatmas, those ancient Rishis, those men who have at different times unveiled all the possibilities of human nature; and it was through them that this revelation was made in the first place, by them it is preserved from age to age, and I quote Prof. Huxley as saying himself, where he got the quotation I don't know, that "this philosophy was presented to the world by the Masters of those who know." There are not only those who know by actual experience of the existence and powers of the human soul, but there are those who stand above even those. Who are these Masters? They are the Avatars, the Buddhas, the Christs of history, and no greater mistake was ever made by the Western world on any subject than to suppose that the infinite goodness, that the eternal spirit that pervades the universe was so poor or deficient either in power or resources that only 2,000 years ago it would send one of these redeemers to man. What was the infinite goodness doing through millions and millions of ages preceding the Christian era?

My friends, we are living today perhaps in the oldest country on the globe; the new country is nothing but the old world revived after one of these relapses or sleeps that come in the cyclic history of man. We are taught in the secret doctrine that civilization has spread around and around this globe times without number; we are the children, the youngest heirs of all this mighty past, and all the affairs of man, his governments, his civilizations, his religions, his philosophies simply follow

the pattern of individual life. They are conceived in the womb of the eternal spirit; they are born in the time of need in the life of the world, they reach their adolescence, their manhood, their old age, and finally they totter and die. That is the history of every civilization the world has ever known; that is the history of every religion that has ever inspired the soul of man and led him to look up to something higher than himself. Can we accept the statement that at this late day our religion, our philosophy, our science is the first and only one that ever gladdened the heart of man, and that we shall escape the universal destiny of old age and decay? Then comes the rejuvenescence of all these civilizations in another form, for they are under the cyclic law which obtains among the heavenly orbs, with the moving of the planets and the suns; and it is thus also concerning all human activities, civilizations, sciences, religions.

Now the basis of altruism which is put forth by the Theosophical Society is this Universal Brotherhood. I hope that no one present here in this audience tonight will, in speaking of the principle of altruism, ever again make an assertion so inapplicable to the Theosophical Movement as, "That is nothing new; we have that in other religions." That, you see, is pointless as directed against the Theosophical Society or our Movement, because the one strong point we make is that it is not new, and not exclusively the possession of any religion, any philosophy, any civilization the world has ever known. We are told by those who know, that there was never a time when it existed not upon the earth, in different quarters, at the same time with barbarous nations, the half-civilized, the wholly civilized, and finally those who through their altruism imitate the gods in their beneficence towards their fellow men. We don't claim that this is anything new or exclusively Theosophical. And certainly it is not something that belongs exclusively to the religions of the West. The very first sign of progress, I think, that we should make is to be just — not even charitable, but simply just towards the other religions, the brother-religions of the world, giving them their just due, their fair and honourable recognition; and when we do this we shall have found the same truths expressed in different languages to different people at different times, but all with the same great motive. And therefore underlying all those religions of the world, whether past or present, everything that ever deserved the name of religion, you will find this principle of Universal Brotherhood proclaimed by its redeemers, by its teachers, by its Avatars; and you will find that altruism, the

preferring of another's good to your own selfish enjoyment, is the best ethics in all of these.

Now, then, put these things together and it seems to me there need be no misapprehension as to the real motive for the organization of the Theosophical Society. It does not stand apart. It welcomes to its membership men and women, black and white, no matter what their creed may be, provided they have gone far enough in the line of human evolution, far enough above the animal plane and the survival of the fittest and the bare animal struggle for existence, to recognize the principle of Universal Brotherhood and to undertake to carry it out in their daily life in the best possible way they can. That is all that is necessary for the needs of the Theosophical Society, and we therefore invite everyone, no matter what his creed or belief may be, to join us in this movement, whether in the Society or out. The doors of the Society are always wide open, and there is certainly strength in co-operation, and we have kept this so designedly so there can be no difficulty with the members of any church, or of any creed, of any religion on earth joining our ranks; and so far as I know there is none of the religions of the world whose representatives are not also known as members of the Theosophical Society, working along these lines, laying aside everything else and endeavouring to bring about the reign of universal altruism and the Universal Brotherhood of man.

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REMEMBER that the whole point lies in really *believing* that through a certain point or part in you you coalesce and are identical with the Eternal. This seems to be the *saving* belief both in Christianity and in Vedantism. . . . It *comes home* to one only at particular times. . . . The more original religious life is always lyric — “the monk owns nothing but his lyre” — and its essence is to dip into another kingdom, to feel an invisible order.

—WILLIAM JAMES

## THE POWER TO MOULD

If thou wouldst reap sweet peace and rest, Disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests.

Accept the woes of birth.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

WITH striking simplicity the great Buddha advised: Cease from evil, follow the good — that is the Way.

In aesthetic grandeur Nataraja, the dancing Shiva, expresses the same message. His right foot is firmly planted on the dwarf-devil of mean passions and cunning lusts, his left is raised heavenward — this is the vision of perfect balance.

This simple truth, reiterated in a thousand forms, is accepted by everyone. Because of its ready acceptance there is a rush for some charm to kill the devil and at the same time to reach to God. If people waited to analyse the implications of the simple truth, they would not fall into the pit of complex living.

One of the major illusions of aspirants to a better and nobler life is the notion that if they could free their minds of evil, illumination would be theirs. Its counterpart glammers another large class, who fondly hope that if their minds could but perceive the eternal verities their passions would not matter. The truth is otherwise: minds coloured by feelings cannot see realities; purified passions alone cannot cause enlightenment; only those minds freed from desires but fecundated by universal ideas know and realize liberty in bondage, serenity in suffering, bliss in woe. There is no true liberty without the bondage of sacrifice, no true serenity without the suffering of compassion, no true bliss save in the woe of action.

The upward advance of the Soul is a series of progressive awakenings. The meaning of each awakening is most often missed. The foetus seeing the light of day does not understand the phenomenon and closes its eyes to the light. The suffering man similarly closes his mind to the lesson of his own experience. Is not this due to the foetus trying to perpetuate its own outgrown condition, and the sufferer attempting to go back to the state ere his troubles began? Memory plays a trick on us by bringing the message of the past which is dead, instead of that of the present which is alive.

Nature in us multiplies her peace and joy, but we view them with

the dead eyes of a ghost and name them strife and suffering. We are blind to the process of progressive awakenings within ourselves. We see only Nature red in tooth and claw — her storms, her earthquakes, her blows that reduce to powder all our emotions and thoughts. We see only the stronger beast preying on the weaker bird. We speak only of the might of Nature who covers with her deserts of sand the wisdom of the dead sages. Children of mortality, we befriend material forces. We fashion ourselves in pain, learn to walk by falling, and drift through life brooding on the dead past which casts a shadow — a shadow which we mistake for our goal and call Death, the only sure future. Live as best as you can while you may — be kind, gentle and merciful, be good and be true, for the hell-fires wait.

Nature without us as within us is young, is prolific, is bountiful — it ever begins. There are no ends, no nights, no deaths. We see, or should learn to see, a new beginning in every end. Each night but heralds the morn. Each death is but a new birth.

To cease from evil we must cease to dwell on the past. To follow the good we must follow the new man of the coming future. To mould the coming man is the only fit task in the present. The power to mould abides in the Eternal Now — the universal and the impersonal within us.

To feel impersonally is to cease from evil. To think universally is to do good. The former crushes the egotism in us; the latter unfolds the conscious knowledge that all power abides in the Self.

To be impersonal we must practise asceticism which expands, not contracts. To become impersonal a mother should not kill her love for her own children but expand it to embrace all orphans, all children of humanity — that is the sure way of killing her selfishness.

To be universal we must practise ideation (this implies study and meditation) which focuses the universal in the individual. That ideation must not be diffusive, for that but dissolves the individual into the universal. By the former we conquer Nature; by the latter Nature conquers us.

To be impersonal we must cease to act personally toward separate individuals; we must continue to act with the due recognition of *all* beings. To be universal we must cease to rest, but find repose in action performed with a detachment that produces no reaction. Thus human souls enter the community of Super-human Souls — Those who wear the Robes of Law, of Purity, of Sacrifice.

The tears that water the parched soil of pain and sorrow bring forth the blossoms and the fruits of Karmic retribution. Out of the furnace of man's life and its black smoke, winged flames arise, flames purified, that soaring onward, 'neath the Karmic eye, weave in the end the fabric glorified of the three vestures of the Path.

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OR, again, let us put it this way. Since we say that this universe here is modelled on the world of Spirit, every living thing must be There first; if the being of Spirit is complete it must be everything. Heaven There must be a living thing, and so not bare of stars (it is they which are really called heaven here, and the essence of heaven is starriness). There too, clearly, is earth, not barren but far fuller of life, and in it are all living beings which are called land animals here, and all plants clearly too, rooted in life. Sea too is There, and all water, in a flow and life which abides, and all the living beings in water: the nature of air is part of the universe There, and the creatures of air are There correspondingly. Must not the things in a living medium be alive, in which there are living things even here? How could it be possible for any living creature not to be There? For just as each of the great parts of the universe is There, so it must be with the nature of the living beings in them. In just the same way in which heaven is There, the living beings in heaven are There; and it is impossible for them not to be, or the heaven itself would not be There. So he who inquires whence the living things come, is inquiring whence the heaven There comes; and this amounts to asking the origin of living reality There; and this is the same as asking whence comes life, and universal life and universal Soul and universal Spirit, in that world There where there is no poverty or impotence, but everything is filled full of life, boiling with life. Things There flow in a way from a single source, not like one particular breath or warmth, but as if there were a single quality containing in itself and preserving all qualities, sweet taste and smell and the quality of wine with all other flavours, visions of colours and all that touch perceives, all too that hearing hears, all tunes and every rhythm.

—PLOTINUS

## PRECOCIOUS GENIUSES

IN bringing forward the existence of precocious children as evidence for reincarnation, students may sometimes depend too much on Mr. Judge's examples, given in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, of Mozart and Blind Tom. It would be useful, therefore, to note a few other cases, of historical times as of today.

Sir William Hamilton (1805-1865), a famous Irish mathematician, at the age of ten had learned eight Oriental languages and also Syrian and Chaldee. At thirteen, he knew thirteen languages well, and by seventeen was an acknowledged master in mathematical science. While still an undergraduate at Trinity College, Dublin, he was appointed Professor of Astronomy to the University and Astronomer Royal of Ireland. He had also a European reputation.

Maria Isidra Guzman y la Cerda (1768-1803) was the child philosopher of Madrid. King Carlos III of Spain was so impressed by her that, although by law girls were forbidden to take part in University studies, he ordered her admission to the Spanish Academy at the age of ten. At seventeen she became a doctor of philosophy and literature.

Jean Louis Cardiac, born in France in 1719, was known as the "wonder child." At three months he could repeat the alphabet, at three years, read Latin, and a year later could translate it into either English or French. By six, he could read Greek and Hebrew, and was proficient at arithmetic, history, geography and heraldry.

Jean Philippe Baratier (1721-1740) could speak French, German and Latin at four, and translated the Greek Bible at five. At six, he was made a member of an ecclesiastical synod in Berlin and entered the Berlin Royal Academy. He became a Doctor of Philosophy at fourteen, but died five years later. A short life seems to be characteristic of some prodigies (though far from all), as though the normal stages of life were compressed into a shorter space of time.

Clive Beech, in an article, "Reading from the Cradle" (*Books*, May/June 1962), gives a long list of well-known writers whose passion for books began at an incredibly early age. The following are a few examples extracted from that list:

Swift read any chapter of the Bible before the age of three. Byron read perpetually from the age of five. . . . J. S. Mill began to learn history and Greek at the age of three. *Aesop's Fables*

were his first book, *Anabasis* his second. By eight he was learning Latin. Dr. Johnson read well at three. William Morris . . . at four was deep in the Waverley Novels, had read all of Scott, most of Marryat and Lane's *Arabian Nights*. . . . Wordsworth was an omnivorous child reader. . . . Montaigne even from infancy was "transported by poetry." . . . Macaulay's only toys were books. He read incessantly from three onwards.

Of musical prodigies other than Mozart, one can mention Handel, playing marvellously at seven. Bach was equally early in his development. Beethoven, already studying hard at four, was a public performer at eight. Schubert began to compose at six, and Schumann at seven. Saint-Saens played the piano with distinction at the age of two and a half and informed his mother, "The kettle boils in A natural." Of modern composers, Benjamin Britten began playing the piano at three and composition at six. Yehudi Menuhin is an example of a musician who started his public career as a violinist at the age of seven, and whose genius has remained unfaded.

Michael Ventris was the first to decipher (in 1952) "Linear B," the ancient script of about 1400 B.C., discovered on clay tablets in the Palace of Knossus in Crete, a decipherment that, according to one well-known historian, Hugh Trevor-Roper, was "one of the great achievements of modern scholarship, more important as opening vistas than the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls. He taught himself Polish at six, bought and studied a German book on Egyptian hieroglyphs at seven. Sir Arthur Evans' archaeological discoveries in Crete inspired Ventris at fourteen and his first article on "Linear B" was published at eighteen. But for his death in a motor accident in 1956, he might have gone on to further triumphs.

At a less prominent level, other cases show an ardent bent in some unexpected direction, from an early age. In 1948, Archibald Barnes, son of the commons keeper of a small village, South Holmwood, in Surrey, passed the London Matriculation in Chinese, having passed Latin and French with flying colours the previous year. He had, however, studied languages on his own since he was seven, starting with Sanskrit, and gaining also a knowledge of Greek and Russian. It had been a sacrifice to obtain the necessary books, since his family was very poor, but pocket-money saved and part-time work enabled him to comb bookstalls for them.

A secondary-school boy, Roger Cade of Portsmouth, always fascinated

by cloud formations, made a serious study of them, collecting all the books he could find on the subject. In the middle of the 1930s he began sending to the Royal Meteorological Society regular observations on thunderstorms in the South of England. In 1937, he submitted an article on some unusual formation that inspired the Society, not knowing his age (thirteen) to send him a membership form. When it was found that, under the rules, he was too young, the rules were changed the following year to allow his admission at the age of fourteen.

It is necessary, however, to make a distinction between genuine "genius," expressing itself at an early age, when the Higher Egoic capacity is aided by an appropriate heredity, and the, so to say, instinctive skandhaic skill that belongs solely to the life atoms of the lower material principles of man's nature. Mathematical prodigies, with their ability to read instantaneously in the astral light the answers to complex calculations, are often of mean capacity in other directions. On the other hand, there can be some "mute inglorious Milton" in whom, through unfavourable circumstances (yet merited under karma), the indwelling Ego is inarticulate because the bodily instrument is inadequate to the task. Yet even here, as in the case of Helen Keller, there are examples of seemingly overwhelming outer handicaps being gloriously overcome — in this particular case, as perhaps in others, with the devoted help of a friend, since we never live to ourselves alone.

A study of these varying relationships between the "individuality" and the "personality," between the real enduring Self and its sentient instrument, built from the "deposits" of past lives, can do much to bring about a better understanding of the process called reincarnation.

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It's the present moment that matters. The past and the future are only a succession of present moments, but we are always tempted to exaggerate their importance because they are gone or because they have not yet come.

—WILFRID LEMOINE

# ON THE SOUL OF MAN

JACOB BOEHME'S REPLY TO THE SIXTEENTH QUESTION PROPOUNDED  
TO HIM BY DR. BALTHASAR WALTER, IN A.D. 1620

[Reprinted from *The Path*, April 1887.—EDS.]

TO THE SIXTEENTH QUESTION:

*How is the soul kept in union, both in the Adamical and Regenerate Body?*

1. We have mentioned before, that there are three principles which are all three in the soul, already beforehand, and are in one another as one thing! and you must understand that the strife in the soul beginneth before in the seed, while it lyeth hidden in both sexes; when also the *Turba* stirreth up itself before, in that it driveth the essence of the seed to a false desire and imagination.

2. Although the spirit tameth the body, yet at the same time it imagineth, and that the *Turba* causeth in the seed, and no man can well deny but that many times this imagination is offensive to him, and where there is a right spirit it wisheth it anathematised. And you must know that the spirit of the soul sticketh thus in a miserable strait, and cannot be loosed until the *Turba* taketh the body.

3. Now there is never any union between the outward and the Regenerate man; the outward man would always devour the Regenerate man, for they are in one another; but each hath its own Principle, so that the outward cannot overmaster the inward, if the spirit do but continue in strife.

4. They may very well depend on one another, for all three set forth God's works of wonder, if they continue in due order, each keeping its own principle.

5. For the soul hath the government of the fire, and it is the cause of the life of all three; and the spirit hath the government of the Light, in which the noble heavenly Image consisteth with the Divine Body; and the outward spirit hath the government of the earthy life, this should seek and manifest the wonders, and the Inward spirit should give it understanding to do that, and the soul should manifest the abyss (*viz.*, the Highest Secret) to the outward spirit.

6. The soul is the Pearl, and the spirit of the soul is the finder of the Pearl, and the earthy spirit is the seeker, the earthy body is the

mystery wherein the secret of greatest abstruseness is couched: for the Deity hath manifested itself in the earthliness, *viz.*: in a comprehensible essence; and therefore now three seekers belong thereto.

7. But you must not suppose that we are an enemy to the outward life, for it is most profitable to us, as to the wonders of God; there is nothing more profitable to the whole man than to stand still in his threefold life, and not go back at all with the outward into the inward, but with the inward into the outward.

8. For the outward is beast, and belongeth not to the inward, but its wonders which it hath brought forth out of the inward, and which it hath displayed in the comprehensible essence, they belong in their figure (not in their essence) to the inward: the inward spirit must receive these (which are God's works of wonder), for they shall be the joy of it forever.

9. And thus we say that the soul may be kept very well in the New Man, if the spirit of its Tincture do but hinder its longing and imagination; and although the outward spirit be Bestial, yet the inward understanding (spirit) is able to keep in and tame the outward, for it is Lord over it. But he that suffereth the Bestial spirit to be Lord, he is a beast, and hath also a bestial image in the inward figure, in the Tincture.

10. And he that letteth the fire spirit, *viz.*, the *Turba*, be Lord, he is an essential devil in the inward image; therefore here it is necessary that the outward spirit pour water into the fire, that it may hold that strong spirit captive, and that seeing it will not be God's image, it may remain a beast in the inward image.

11. Now if we consider ourselves in the union, the outward spirit is very profitable to us, for many souls would perish if the bestial spirit were not present; for it beholdeth the fire spirit captive, and setteth before the fire spirit earthly bestial labour and joy, wherein it may busy itself until it be able by the Wonders in the imagination, to discover somewhat of its noble image that it may seek itself again.

12. My beloved children who are born in God, I tell it you: it was not for nothing that God breathed the outward spirit (*viz.*: the outward Life) into Adam's nostrils, for great danger did attend this Image.

13. God knew how it went with Lucifer, and also what the great Eternal Magic could do; yet Adam might have been a devil, but the outward glass hindered that, for where water is, it quencheth the fire.

14. Also many a soul by its wickedness would become a devil in a moment, if the outward life did not hinder it, so that the soul cannot wholly inflame itself.

15. How many are there that are so full of poison and evil that they do murder and commit villainy; but this their fire hath water, or else they were past remedy. As ye see in gall which is a fiery poison, but it is mingled with water, and so the violence of the fire is allayed.

16. Thus it is also with the inward essence; the spirit of this world hath wound itself into the abyss of the soul, and in its source hath killing water, wherewith it often bedeweth the soul when it would spit fire.

17. Moreover the outward spirit could not have life without this fire, seeing it hath fire in all creatures, but this fire is only the wrath of the inward fire.

18. The inward fire consumeth earth and stones, also the body and blood, yea, even the noble Image, if it be inflamed in the will; but then the water is a medicine for it, which pulleth down its aspiring force whereby it laboureth to get above the meekness of God as Lucifer did.

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EVERYTHING which has any sort of beauty of its own is beautiful of itself, and looks no further than itself, not counting praise as part of itself. For indeed that which is praised is made neither better nor worse thereby. This is the case also with everything that in common parlance is called beautiful, such as material things and works of art. Does, then, the authentically beautiful need anything beyond? Nay, no more than truth. Does an emerald forfeit its excellence by not being praised? Does gold, ivory, purple, a lyre, a poniard, floweret, a shrub?

—MARCUS AURELIUS

## THE SIN OF SELF-MURDER

ACCORDING TO WHO estimates, about 1,000 people commit suicide in the world every day. A large number of suicides go unreported because of the stigma that attaches to this extreme and irrevocable step. The number of attempted suicides is eight times the number of successful ones. One can well imagine the degree of frustration, loneliness and despair prevalent in our society.

The fact that the suicide rate is steadily increasing shows that the cause is still undiscovered, the effect still unrecognized, the cure still a matter of conjecture. The scientific world stands as helpless as the clergy before the onslaught of such moral waves. The psychiatrist attributes them to melancholia, to complexes of inferiority or superiority, to dementia praecox, hallucination, hysteria. But to the layman these are mere words describing the *effect* of some antecedent condition, not the primary *cause*. Can the pathologists and psychologists themselves explain what lies behind these words? Has the cause of these abnormal mental conditions ever been brought under a hypothesis capable of withstanding the challenge of an uncompromising investigator?

Before the actual cause of suicide can be satisfactorily explained, the field of scientific research must be extended into regions beyond the range of the human eye or the most sensitive instruments yet devised. The whole nature of the human being — physical, psychic, mental, emotional and spiritual — must be fathomed; the laws of magnetism and other imponderable agents must be more thoroughly investigated; the still hypothetical “astral light” must become more than a mere speculation, and the effects of the images contained in it upon the human brain and mind must be taken into account. Until these subjects are more fully understood than they are at present, it is useless to moralize, for in these days of fearless investigation and critical analysis, mere moralizing is not enough. If we would help the man who hopes to end his troubles by committing self-murder, we must be able to show him the *futility* of his act, the uselessness of trying to counteract the law of Life.

The arguments put forth by material science, religion and spiritualism give us but little encouragement to continue the battle of life. If we are but a “fortuitous concurrence of atoms,” and the flame we call “I” expires when the body is destroyed, why should we not try to extinguish it when the heat becomes unbearable? If — as the Church affirms — our sins may be forgiven even at the moment of death, why

not avail ourselves of this "moment of grace" and at the same time end our troubles? If Death transports us into the "Summer-land" of the spiritualists, why struggle longer against the wintry blasts of earth? The rise in the suicide rate is a tacit confession that science, religion and spiritualism have failed to give us the facts of life and death, for, as Daniel Webster once said: "There is no refuge from confession but suicide, and suicide is confession."

Where then shall we turn for enlightenment? Why not within ourselves? Within the heart of each one of us there lies the feeling — sometimes the full conviction — that the flame we call "I myself" is one which may flicker but can never utterly expire. A few simple experiments will prove that the *Self* is not the body, the senses, the emotions or the mind, but on the contrary is that which acts through the body, uses the senses, controls the passions and trains the mind. If the Self is other than its instruments during life, it is but natural to conclude that, although the body be burned to ashes and the earthly thoughts and desires be scattered to the four winds, the *Self* still remains, indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible. If the flame of Self cannot be extinguished, suicide is a waste of time and a useless expenditure of energy. All the suicide can hope to achieve by his act is the loss of his body, the instrument through which he expresses himself on the physical plane. But where is the violinist who would wilfully smash his instrument because its strings were out of tune? The analogy is not far-fetched, for as the learned Kabalist, Eliphas Levi, once said:

Our souls are, as it were, a music, of which our bodies are the instruments. The music exists without the instruments, but it cannot make itself heard without a material intermediary.

But the physical body is not the only instrument of the Self. There is that ethereal counterpart of the body, with senses capable of working independently of the outer sense-organs, as demonstrated in trance states and somnambulism; there is the emotional nature and the lower reasoning mind which perceives through comparison and contrast. All of these instruments, finely or badly tuned as the case may be, are self-earned inheritances, effects of causes previously set up. This intricate chain of causes already set in motion requires a definite period of time to work out as effects, and determines the natural span of life for any individual. This period of time cannot be shortened, nor can a man's contract with Life be annulled by the wilful destruction of his physical instrument. The lower half of the hour-glass may be smashed

by a careless hand, but the stream of sand remaining in the upper receptacle will continue to run on until exhausted. Those misguided souls who, through ignorance of the laws of Life, believe they are annihilating *themselves* when they destroy the body, find to their sorrow that this has not occurred, and that they

... like sentries, are obliged to stand  
In starless nights, and wait th' appointed hour.

During life, the ethereal counterpart of the body, the emotions and the mind are closely interwoven with the physical instrument. When natural death occurs, these leave the body and form an entity of themselves. The *real* man, the "I myself," leaves both the physical body and this superphysical entity behind to disintegrate in their own way and time, and gradually enters into a subjective condition where he assimilates the experiences of his late earth-life and builds them as faculties into the soul. Natural death — as Shelley once said — is a wonderful experience, and is no more to be feared than its brother Sleep. It is a tender act of great Mother Nature, who folds her wings around her tired children and lets them slip for a time into the land of dreams, there to find rest and recuperation from their past labours, and renewed strength for the coming day.

But natural death is quite another thing from suicide, for *suicide is not death*. It is only an intermediary condition between life and death, and the suicide is only a "Half-way," as Sutton Vane's play *Outward Bound* so aptly describes it. In cutting himself off from earth-life, the man has destroyed but *one* of his instruments — the physical body. His senses are still as alert, his desires still as ravenous, his mind still as tenacious of life as before. For the *man himself is still there*, chained to his superphysical form, unable to discard it until the "appointed hour" strikes. His still living mind reviews in endless reiteration the chain of circumstances which culminated in his final act. Like Sisyphus, he rolls the stone of thought up the steep hill of memory, only to see it roll down and compel him to climb the road of agony again and again. His vivid thought-pictures are impressed upon the sensitive minds of discouraged mortals, inciting them to the same act. And so the suicide wave grows and grows.

Chained to his earthly thoughts and his mortal passions, the suicide discovers that all the cravings which embittered his earth-life are still with him. But now he is unable to gratify them save by proxy. He seeks avenues through which they may be vicariously satisfied, and

finds them in mediums who throw themselves open to what they consider "angel guides," but which are in reality these obsessing entities. These are the *Incubi* and *Succubi* of mediaeval times, the "spirit brides and husbands" of today. These psychic vampires not only ruin their victims, but prepare themselves for eventual annihilation. Rather than submit to such annihilation, they will even seek refuge in the organism of a beast when no human vehicle is available — explaining perhaps the stories of "were-wolves."

Woe to those mortals who passively and unresistingly allow themselves to become the victims of such obsessions! Little do we dream that two-thirds of the monstrous crimes of the world have their origin in this mediumistic capacity, and that many of those who perish on the scaffold are but the ignorant victims of these obsessing entities. Passive mediumship is a deadly weed, and should be starved out wherever and whenever recognized.

Who then can save the suicide from such a fate as this? No one but the man himself. No burning of candles, no prayers to gods or saints can prevent the suicide from reaping the effects of causes which he himself has sowed. But the suicide still has the power to avert a worse fate than the one he is now suffering. There is still hope for him if he realizes his mistake, determines to bear his cross, strives against his carnal appetites without allowing them to conquer him or affect living mortals. If he continues along these lines until the last moment of his "appointed hour," he will at that time be able to disengage himself from the entity which has chained him to a living death, and pass on into the subjective condition which brings peace and rest.

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EACH is responsible for the evil anywhere in the world.

All that unites with the universal is virtue. All that separates is sin.

You are a part of the Infinite. This is your nature. Hence you are your brother's keeper.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

# THE SEVEN DWIPAS

FROM THE INDIAN PURANAS

## II

[Reprinted from *The Path*, May 1889.—EDS.]

PLAKSHA DWIPA, the nearest to Jambu dwipa, is divided into seven provinces. Existence there is always that of the Treta yuga, a perpetual silver age. In the five dwipas (all except Pushkara dwipa and Jambu dwipa), the people live 5,000 years without sickness. The four castes, with different names, exist on each of them.

In the *Bhagavat Purāna* it is said of the inhabitants of Plaksha dwipa: The four castes, purified from passion and darkness by the touch of the water of the rivers, live a thousand years, and resemble the gods.

It may be noted of this text that the purification of these castes from passion and darkness leaves them only one of the "three qualities," goodness, which is said to be the distinctive mark of the true Brahman; so that the measure of spirituality on this dwipa is much higher than in Jambu dwipa.

An ocean of sugar-cane juice separates Plaksha dwipa from Shalmali dwipa, which is also divided into seven Varshas. It has four castes who worship Vishnu in the form of Vayu (air). Here the vicinity of the gods is very delightful to the soul.

This dwipa is surrounded by an ocean of wine, whose exterior shore is compassed by Kusha dwipa; here the inhabitants are men dwelling with Devas, Gandharvas and other beings.

In the *Mahabharata*, it is said: No one dies in Kusha dwipa; the people are fair, and of very delicate forms.

Kusha dwipa is surrounded by a sea of clarified butter, of the same compass as itself: around this sea runs Krauncha dwipa. *Vishnu Purana* says: In all the pleasant divisions of this dwipa, the people dwell free from fear, in the society of the gods.

A sea of curds encompasses this dwipa, which is of the same circumference as itself. This sea is surrounded by Shaka dwipa, of which the *Vishnu Purana* says: These are the holy countries whose holy rivers remove all sin and fear. There is among them no defect of virtue, nor any mutual rivalry, nor any transgression of rectitude in the seven

Varshas. Here the people are holy, and no one dies, says the *Mahabharata*. Shaka dwipa is surrounded by an ocean of milk, outside which lies Pushkara dwipa where men live ten thousand years, free from sorrow and pain. There is no distinction of highest and lowest, of truth and falsehood [because all alike are good and true]; men are like gods; there are no rules of caste, and happiness dwells with all.

Of the seven dwipas, the *Mahabharata* says: Each doubly exceeds the former in abstinence, veracity, and self-restraint; in health and length of life.

Prajapati, the lord, governs these dwipas. All these people eat prepared food, which comes to them of itself. To finish its account, the *Vishnu Purana* says: Pushkara dwipa is surrounded by an ocean of water which envelops all the seven dwipas.

On the other side of the sea is a golden land of great extent but without inhabitants; beyond that the Lokalaoka mountain, ten thousand yojanas in height and ten thousand yojanas in breadth.

It is encompassed on all sides with darkness, which is enclosed within the shell of the mundane egg.

Thus ends the account of the Seven Dwipas, as told by the Indian Puranas.

The objective point from which this cosmogony starts is Bharata Varsha, or India, bounded southward by the salt ocean, and reaching northward to the Himadri, or Himalaya.

Perhaps the other Varshas, in one of their interpretations, are the lost continents of former races with Meru, the north pole, in their centre.

But it seems to us from what is told of the other Varshas, and, above all, of Uttara Kuru, that these Varshas are not to be found on earth, but represent the various planes rising from the physical to the spiritual, from Bharata Varsha, taken as the type of physical life, or waking consciousness, to the Uttara Kurus, the highest spiritual stage that dwellers on this earth can reach.

We are led to believe that these Varshas which I have described and explained in my last paper are not located in the physical world from what is told of the perfection of their inhabitants, the length of life, which is measured by thousands of years, and, above all, by the specific statement that these Varshas are the abodes of those who are reaping the fruits of their merits, while Bharata is the Varsha where this fruit was earned, the world of works, or physical life.

We observe that these Varshas are nine, though when we mark their position in the circular island of Jambu dwipa according to the directions of the Puranas, we find that while nine Varshas are mentioned they fall into only *seven* strips; and moreover, while a great symmetry reigns among the various dwipas we find it absent in this particular, for five of the other dwipas have only *seven* Varshas.

Perhaps therefore the nine Varshas of Jambu dwipa, or our earth, are only a veil to conceal the seven, or the real mystic number of the planes.

Perhaps, however, these nine Varshas represent the nine phases of consciousness as explained by Mr. T. Subba Row; this division, which appears in *The Theosophist* for January 1888, being as follows:

Jagrat	{	Jagrat, 1. waking life.
		Swapna, 2. dreaming.
		Sushupti, 3. deep sleep.
Swapna	{	Jagrat, 4. waking clairvoyance.
		Swapna, 5. trance clairvoyance.
		Sushupti, 6. Kama loka consciousness.
Sushupti	{	Jagrat, 7. Devachan consciousness.
		Swapna, 8. Consciousness between planets.
		Sushupti, 9. Consciousness between rounds.

*Jagrat*, *swapna*, and *sushupti* mean, respectively, waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

This division falls, as will be seen, into three groups of three each; just as the nine Varshas fall into three groups of three each. The ninth form of consciousness in this division is an *arupa* consciousness; that is to say, a state in which the consciousness does not take cognizance of forms. In connection with this it will be remembered that it was said of the ninth Varsha, Uttara Kuru, that "if thou shouldst enter, thou couldst behold nothing. For no one can perceive anything here with human senses."

But this would hold equally true of the seventh plane of consciousness; if we take the nine to be a veil for seven.

It seems, therefore, that the seven or nine divisions of Jambu dwipa may mean our physical earth, or the physical life known to us, and its higher planes or principles; the mountain ranges being the points of separation between the planes. If this be so, and if we credit the authors of the *Vishnu Purana* with adeptship and transcendental knowledge, which they have imparted in it in a veiled form, it would seem that

valuable knowledge of the superior planes might be gained by a careful analysis of what is said in the *Vishnu Purana* of the other Varshas of Jambu dwipa.

If we are right in identifying Jambu dwipa with our earth, we may conjecture that the salt ocean which surrounds it, besides meaning the sea, may also mean the aura of the earth; that part of the astral light which clings round our planet. If then we are right in considering Jambu dwipa to be the earth, what view are we to take of the nature of the other six dwipas?

It is clear that they are connected with our earth, and with the evolution of life on it. It is also said that the dwipas are in an ascending order of spirituality, Jambu dwipa being the lowest, and Pushkara dwipa the highest; while the other five dwipas have many attributes in common, and are classed together.

Moreover, each of these five dwipas has seven Varshas; and if we are right in considering the Varshas of Jambu dwipa as planes, or principles, may we not suppose that the Varshas of the five dwipas are also planes or principles?

Jambu dwipa is said to be a circular island; but there is no doubt that the Hindus knew the earth to be a sphere. Therefore this may simply mean that if Jambu dwipa is a sphere, in that case we are perhaps justified in believing that, when the other six dwipas are represented as annular, they are really spheres, and that the statement that each lies outside the preceding, and separated from it by an ocean, really means that these dwipas are spheres, isolated from each other, but surrounded by some more subtle medium which serves as a connection between them.

Are we justified then in considering that the seven dwipas mean a system of seven spheres united to each other by a subtle medium, and co-operating in the work of human evolution by furnishing man with a series of dwellings in an ascending scale of spirituality?

It has doubtless already become apparent to our readers that this idea is, in almost every particular, identical with that of the Planetary Chain, as expounded in *The Secret Doctrine*. A careful review of all the statements we have collected as to the other dwipas will give further indications of the identity of these two ideas, and will elicit many facts of great interest.

What is meant by the oceans of sugar, wine, curds, and milk? Is this hint of the nature of the auras of these different planets? Are the

colours and properties of these liquids taken as symbolizing these auras?

If so, then the ocean of pure water which surrounds the whole system may mean the ether which extends through all space, as distinguished from the aura which is differentiated and condensed around each planet.

The outer darkness which shuts in the golden wall cannot but be the void space between our solar system and the stars, the mundane egg which encloses it being the limit of the life of the system to which we belong.

For the mundane egg is not the boundary of the whole universe, nor does our system exhaust the infinitude of life.

“There are thousands and tens of thousands of such mundane eggs; nay, hundreds of millions of millions.”

—CHARLES JOHNSTON, F.T.S.

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THEY that love beyond the world cannot be separated by it.

Death cannot kill what never dies.

Nor can spirits ever be divided that love and live in the same Divine Principle, the root and record of their friendship.

If absence be not death, neither is theirs.

Death is but crossing the world, as friends do the seas; they live in one another still.

For they must needs be present, that love and live in that which is omnipresent.

In this Divine glass they see face to face; and their converse is free as well as pure.

This is the comfort of friends, that though they may be said to die, yet their friendship and society are in the best sense ever present, because immortal.

—WILLIAM PENN

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In the June *Science Digest*, the well-known science writer, Isaac Asimov, raises the issue: What lies beyond our universe? If we could leave it, what mystery might we find? Does "something" lie beyond, or just nothing? He writes:

We might say, "Never mind the confines of the three-dimensional Universe. What exists beyond the boundaries of the Universe in the direction of the fourth dimension? What lies in those four dimensional regions into which the Universe has not yet expanded? What lies in those four-dimensional regions out of which the Universe has long since expanded?"...

Suppose there is nothing outside the Universe. Really *nothing*. I don't mean a vacuum, but truly NOTHING.

We are always talking of the vacuum of outer space, the emptiness between the stars and galaxies. What we call a vacuum, however, is far from nothing. It may not be as full of material particles as our immediate surroundings are, but even those places farthest away from any stars, deep, deep in the "emptiness" of space, probably contain at least one material subatomic particle per cubic meter.

Besides, every particle of matter produces a gravitational field, an electromagnetic field, a strong nuclear field, a weak nuclear field — or some combination of them. Of these, the gravitational and electromagnetic fields are long-range and can exist in measurable intensities even at astronomic distances.

Every smallest portion of space, then, however far from any material object it may be, is constantly criss-crossed by gravitational waves and electromagnetic waves. They are also criss-crossed by certain immaterial particles called neutrinos. If we include these waves and immaterial particles, then the Universe is full and always will be full, no matter how large it gets and no matter how thinly the material portion of it is spread out.

If we pass beyond the Universe in the direction of the fourth dimension, however, suppose we enter a region in which there is not only no matter, but no immaterial particles either, and no fields and no waves — only NOTHING.

How could we possibly study the properties of nature of such NOTHINGNESS? The instant we or our instruments emerged into it, we or they would serve as the foci for gravitational and electromagnetic fields spreading outward in all directions at the speed

of light.

In other words, any attempt we made to study NOTHING would convert it at once into ordinary space. Even if we left the Universe, we would carry the Universe with us and manufacture new Universe about us, and *still* never reach the end.

But suppose beyond the Universe is not NOTHING, but SOMETHING, and that the Universe in mixing with the SOMETHING would change its nature and give us something new to study, something that would tell us what lies beyond the Universe.

However, the Universe, in that case, as it expands, always is mixing with SOMETHING and ends, in the process, as the Universe we study. If we go beyond it, we will extend the mixing and, again, produce merely more Universe.

Whatever we do, then, we will carry the Universe with us; we can never leave it; there is no end even though it is finite. and the question as to what lies beyond that end is finally seen as meaningless.

*The Secret Doctrine*, at the very outset, in its Proem, presents the occult viewpoint on the subject and refers to "the abstract, ever incognizable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul, although the two are one":

It is the ONE LIFE, eternal, invisible, yet Omnipresent, without beginning or end, yet periodical in its regular manifestations, between which periods reigns the dark mystery of non-Being; unconscious, yet absolute Consciousness; unrealisable, yet the one self-existing reality; truly, "a chaos to the sense, a Kosmos to the reason." Its one absolute attribute, which is ITSELF, eternal, ceaseless Motion, is called in esoteric parlance the "Great Breath," which is the perpetual motion of the universe, in the sense of limitless, ever-present SPACE. That which is motionless cannot be Divine. But then there is nothing in fact and reality absolutely motionless within the universal soul.

Almost five centuries B.C. Leucippus, the instructor of Democritus, maintained that Space was filled eternally with atoms actuated by a ceaseless motion, the latter generating in due course of time, when those atoms aggregated, rotatory motion, through mutual collisions producing lateral movements. Epicurus and Lucretius taught the same, only adding to the lateral motion of the atoms the idea of affinity — an occult teaching. . . .

Locke's idea that "pure Space is capable of neither resistance nor Motion" — is incorrect. Space is neither a "limitless void,"

nor a "conditioned fulness," but both: being, on the plane of absolute abstraction, the ever-incognizable Deity, which is void only to finite minds, and on that of *mayavic* perception, the Plenum, the absolute Container of all that is, whether manifested or unmanifested: it is, therefore, that ABSOLUTE ALL. There is no difference between the Christian Apostle's "In Him we live and move and have our being," and the Hindu Rishi's "The Universe lives in, proceeds from, and will return to, Brahma (Brahmâ)": for Brahma (neuter), the unmanifested, is that Universe *in abscondito*, and Brahmâ, the manifested, is the Logos, made male-female in the symbolical orthodox dogmas. The God of the Apostle-Initiate and of the Rishi being both the Unseen and the Visible SPACE. Space is called in the esoteric symbolism "the Seven-Skinned Eternal Mother-Father." It is composed from its undifferentiated to its differentiated surface of seven layers.

"What is that which was, is, and will be, whether there is a Universe or not; whether there be gods or none?" asks the esoteric Senzar Catechism. And the answer made is — SPACE. (I. 2-9)

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The birth of a male baby with a five-cm.-long tail, at the Rama-krishna Mission Seva Pratisthan Hospital in Calcutta, on May 29, is said by the hospital pediatricians to be "a freak of nature." Though some 200,000 babies have been delivered in the hospital over the past 30 years, senior doctors of the Department of Pediatrics there cannot recall having seen such a case before, though, they say, "theoretically the malformation is not impossible." The tail, since removed by a team of surgeons, was smooth, soft and fleshy, with a diameter of half an inch (1.27 cm.) at the root and one-fifth of an inch (.51 cm.) at the top. The baby is apparently healthy, with no other abnormality.

Anil Grover's article, "The Tailbearer" (*Sunday Standard*, June 22), challenges the description of the child as "a freak of nature." "Nothing is a freak of nature, there is always a pattern, always a probability of occurrence."

Other doctors [the author writes] said that such cases were not uncommon in Western countries, and curiously enough a high incidence has been reported from Ireland, the land of leprechauns. Tails as long as three inches have been recorded at birth, and there is one recorded case in which the tail had sprouted to a length of nine inches by the time its owner was 12 years old. However, it was admitted that no accurate statistics were im-

mediately available.

Every baby, while still in the womb, has an embryonic tail, a relic of its heredity according to Darwin, which gradually regresses and is inconspicuous by the time of its birth. The tail reaches its maximum length when the embryo is six weeks old, at which time the appendage may be about a sixth of the size of the embryo. Subsequently, it shortens and is lost to view.

On August 11, 1978, a Madras newspaper reported a case remarkably similar to that of the Calcutta child. . . . Dr. K. A. Krishnamurti, Director of the Institute of Child Health in Madras, explained that the abnormality occurs when the lowermost portion of the vertebrae is not properly formed. The defect causes a protrusion of fibrous and fatty tissue, abnormally soft and covered with skin, and it is this that resembles a tail. . . .

Dr. D. P. Mukherjee, Deputy Director of the Anthropological Survey of India, a geneticist of international fame, challenged the description of the child as a "freak of nature" and denied that it was the first of its kind born in India. . . . "Admittedly this finding is of a low probability," he said. "But it is certainly not new or inexplicable. It is primarily because no proper documentation is done that these findings go unrecorded." . . .

Dr. Mukherjee explained that there is always a mutual interaction of genes when a child is conceived. It may not be immediately possible, therefore, to locate the presence of a rare gene or the absence of a normal one. An unequal growth of one part of the body relative to another is called allometric growth (Sir Julian Huxley originally called the process "heterogony"). Different parts of the body grow at different rates and these change from time to time. Any arrest of growth or irregularity in allometric growth leads to different anomalies — what are popularly called "freaks of nature." Various factors like environment, inbreeding, drugs, malnutrition, etc., tend to cause imbalance in the body, and hence an arrest of development.

*The Secret Doctrine* takes note of similar cases of babies born with tails and explains:

If the Darwinian theory is *not the true one* — we are told — if man and ape do not descend from a common ancestor, then we are called upon to explain the reason of . . . the presence of *rudimentary organs* in man, *i.e.*, traces of former organs now atrophied by disuse. Some of these organs, it is asserted, could not have had any scope for employment, except for a semi-animal,

semi-arboreal monster. Why, again, do we find in Man those "rudimentary" organs (as useless as its rudimentary wing is to the *Apteryx* of Australia), the vermiform appendix of the *caecum*, the ear muscles, the "rudimentary tail" (with which children are still sometimes born), etc., etc.?. . .

Here again Occultism comes to our assistance with the necessary data. The fact is that the human type is the repertory of all potential organic forms, and the central point from which these latter radiate. In this postulate we find a true "*Evolution*" or "*unfolding*" — a sense which cannot be said to belong to the mechanical theory of natural selection. Criticizing Darwin's inference from "rudiments," an able writer remarks: "Why is it not just as probably a true hypothesis to suppose that Man was created with the rudimentary sketches in his organization, and that they became useful appendages in the lower animals into which man degenerated, as to suppose that these parts existed in full development in the lower animals out of which man was generated?" ("Creation or Evolution?" Geo. T. Curtis, p. 76)

Read for "into which Man degenerated," "the prototypes which man *shed* in the course of his astral developments," and an aspect of the true esoteric solution is before us. . . .

The process of human foetal growth epitomizes not only the general characteristics of the Fourth, but of the Third Round terrestrial life. The diapason of type is run through in brief. Occultists are thus at no loss to "account for" the birth of children with an actual caudal appendage, or for the fact that the tail in the human foetus is, at one period, double the length of the nascent legs. The potentiality of every organ useful to animal life is locked up in Man — the microcosm of the Macrocosm — and abnormal conditions may not unfrequently result in the strange phenomena which Darwinists regard as "reversion to ancestral features." Reversion, indeed, but scarcely in the sense contemplated by our present-day empiricists! (II, 680-85)

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A laugh a day may keep the doctor away, according to Raymond Moody Jr., M.D. A psychiatrist and researcher and writer on the subject of life after death, Dr. Moody recently taught a philosophy course at the University of Virginia called "Humour in the Healing Process" and has just completed a book on the subject, *Laugh After Laugh*.

"Laughter was once recognized as a great curative agent," Dr.

Moody states, adding that a sense of humour "may indeed reinforce the will to live, without which, as any doctor can verify, no medicine or treatment can do much good."

"Clowns are able to bring withdrawn people back to participation in reality," Dr. Moody once told an audience. "In one case, a 95-year-old man in severe depression and unable to communicate was smiling and talking after 30 minutes." In another instance, the psychiatrist said, "a catatonic schizophrenic child responded so strongly to the clown's antics that an attending nurse fled the room in search of a doctor."

Study of laughter and humour appears to have been somewhat neglected by modern psychologists and psychiatrists, though some among them have begun to explore the possibilities of using humour therapeutically. If it be true that laughter is peculiar to man, the advantages of knowing the psychological processes involved in it are obvious. There is great scope for research here which psychologists should not neglect. Because it raises us above our usual level of comprehension and allows us to accept what would ordinarily be unacceptable, our sense of humour is a coping mechanism of the highest calibre.

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Psychology Professor Mahlon Wagner and researcher Mary Monnet, of the State University of New York at Oswego, surveyed 1,100 professors about their attitudes toward extrasensory perception [ESP]. Two-thirds of them, mostly in the arts, humanities and education, believed in ESP, while a recent Gallup poll found that only one-half of the general public does. The professors had reservations, however, about plants and animals having ESP. Most skeptical were those in the social sciences and most hostile of all were the psychologists. (*Parapsychology Review*, January-February 1980)

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