

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## HEART DISEASE OF SOUL-LIFE

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ONE WAY of ascertaining the strength of the Kama principle in us, of our desires and wants, is to seek the answer to a question we should put to ourselves. How many things would we desire to possess in the hour of death? What is to be the soul's weightage of desires and fancies, of longings and thoughts, when the corpus has been taken away by Karma? Having the knowledge of our Philosophy on the subjects of the human constitution and our post-mortem states, we are soon able to determine which of our desires are high aspirations, which are longings for ephemeral objects, and what are passing fancies.

In seeking the answer to this inquiry, we shall also be clarifying our thoughts about the true nature of the *Devachanee*, his powers and limitations—what he can dream about and what he cannot dwell upon, nor contact, having entered into that state. More, soon must take place within us, if our inquiry is seriously pursued, a revaluation of objects surrounding us (*my* things) and of the ideas we hold (*my* views).

Two giant forces dwell in and encompass man; not only is the visible world dominated by the centrifugal and the centripetal forces, but also the world of morals as of mind. Gravitation keeps man attached to earth and he has not learnt the art of Levitation.

Man's mind is encaged by sense-force. So long as he does not use that mind's beak to break the wires, to come out of the cage and, looking heavenward, to unfold his wings and rise in the azure empyrean, so long will he remain a prisoner in the small cage-world.

Man's heart is so thickly covered over with personal affections, personal devotions, personal sympathies, desire for personal life and personal immortality that its each throb produces a personal aversion, personal selfishness, personal antipathies, desire for death of the mere body and desire for its rebirth. He may not know of this, but it does happen.

This condition of the heart affects the mind; people sometimes ask, "Why is it that though I want to be free from sense-life and though I know with my mind that I should overcome sense-longings and make an effort to escape from the cage, I do not succeed?" The answer is that though the mind has seen the abject futility of gravitating to sense-objects and though its intelligence has glimpsed that the azure heights are there, calling it, calling it, the questioner has not seen the lure of the sick heart, has not understood the meaning of its palpitations. Ordinarily, in physical life we distinguish between a regularly throbbing heart and the irregular beats of the palpitating heart. These have correspondences in the higher life. Thousands of men and women see the lure of the evil in sense-life, but they have to see further and take note of the lure of the personal life, on which and for which the senses and the organs thrive. The virtuous man, the chaste woman, lives a personal life and so the mind gravitates to earth, cannot rise to divine altitudes.

Death is a great demolisher of personal life. But even death fails to free us from its lure; the *Devachanee* is still a person, and so results his fall once again into a body of flesh and blood. He gravitates to earth, falling from *Devachan*, and the lure of the palpitating heart continues.

There is another kind of death which does not take us to *Devachan*, whence we must return to earth. It is the death of the personal life — the rebirth into soul-life. Our original question should be posited afresh: "How many things should we possess to die that death and to be born again? Not a single sense-object is necessary. But several mind-objects, *i.e.*, ideas, are. Something more: those ideas must be assimilated so that they bring us the capacity of revaluing objects, events, peoples — individuals as well as nations — and their ways.

Loosening the mind from sense-objects because of a clear perception that one must get away from the lure of the palpitating heart, *i.e.*, personal life, implies that the force of levitation and its

spiritual source are felt by us within our consciousness. The Second Birth, *i.e.*, birth into soul-life, begins with the opening of the eye of the Soul; this awakening recognized by the embodied man enables him to persist in applying to objects of sense, to events and peoples, new values, which the ordinary world cannot do, nor can it understand that others can, or even should.

The ways of the Christ are not understood by the Devil; nay — the Devil cannot perceive how in the name of Heaven (yes, in the name of Heaven, the Devil doth exclaim!) Christ can be right! And so the personal man under the lure of the sick heart says, "How is it possible to give up sense-life and still be alive? In the name of common sense and of all the achievements of science, what *does* it mean not to feel personal affection and still to love? Not to hate the nation's enemy and yet to be patriotic?" And so on and so forth.

The phenomenon of the death of the body has a lesson which all do see, but how many make application of what they see? Most mortals perceive that man takes the journey after death all alone — *sans* money, *sans* friends, *sans* everything and everybody save his feelings and thoughts, his aspirations and ideas. Most mortals can see that there must be recompense for life's doings, somehow, somewhere. Thoughtful mortals can learn that man's longings for separate life meet with frustration at the second-death in Kama-loka, his hopes for corporate life with fulfilment in *Devachan*. And yet men and women live, love, labour, as if death were never going to come. They dread death and rejoice at birth — the apotheosis of the lure of the sick heart! Are students of Theosophy free from this?

It is not difficult to overcome sensuous desires, for their evil power is seen. It is very difficult to kill the personal affections and hopes, for without these life seems barren — nothing to look forward to! To give up the joys of personal living — for what? "Who ever saw the Bliss of the Spirit?" asks the man in the street. "Maybe a Christ, a Buddha, a Krishna! But I with my puny mind, my loving heart, my petty sins of a small man? Let me be." Let him be. But what about you, the student of Theosophy?

For the student of Theosophy meditation on sickness, decay, death is recommended. It profits him. He must begin to let go of worldly objects to which his mind is attached; then he must turn his attention to such thoughts as bind him to the feelings of sense-

enjoyments; further, he must handle such attachments and aversions as glue his mind to the world of fading flowers, of caterpillars turning butterflies. Who can know if not he that this is no life for the Soul; that living thus is merely to mark time — birth-death, birth-death, birth-death? He has to learn the mystery of mortality — the personal life — and attempt to escape the lure of his sick heart by visioning and acting out the psycho-spiritual phenomenon of Second Birth. If not, he will fall into the hell of intellectual dishonesty.

Let him weaken his sense of possession, his phantasy which feeds the disposition to be personal. Let him be reborn into Life which has no craving for life and which learns to manifest beneficence in all places wherever goes the one newly born. And in the process of time his world will widen and his beneficence manifest everywhere through the Eternities.

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MY IDEAS of today and yours are tinged with those of youth, and we will thus forever proceed on the inevitable line we have marked out in the beginning. We of course alter a little always, but never until our old ideas are extended. Those *false* ideas now and then discarded are not to be counted; yet they give a shadow here and there. But through Brotherhood we receive the knowledge of others, which we consider until (if it fits us) it is ours. As far as your private conclusions are concerned, use your discrimination always. Do not adopt any conclusions merely because they are uttered by one in whom you have confidence, but adopt them when they coincide with your intuition. To be even unconsciously deluded by the influence of another is to have a counterfeit faith. . . .

Let no man be unaware that while there is a great joy in this belief there is also a great sorrow. Being true, being *the Law*, all the great forces are set in motion by the student. He now thinks he has given up ambition and comfort. The ambition and comfort he has given up are those of the lower plane, the mere reflections of the great ambitions and comforts of a larger life. The rays of truth burn up the covers time has placed upon those seeds, and then the seeds begin to sprout and cause new struggles.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## THE SERPENT SYMBOL

THE SERPENT, which played such an important part in the imagery of the ancients, has unfortunately fallen from the lofty heights it once occupied to become a phallic emblem on the one hand and an image of Satan on the other. All through the literature of the ancient world are found records of the veneration in which this symbol (in its allegorical sense) was once held. Every scripture of antiquity tells the same story, and a visible corroboration is found in the serpentine monuments which are scattered over the face of the globe.

From the Druids to the Incas, from the Hindus to the Mexicans, the Serpent symbol seems to have been used primarily to represent Supreme Wisdom and to designate those highly evolved men who embodied that Wisdom. As Supreme Wisdom naturally includes all branches of knowledge, it is not surprising to find many of the philosophical concepts, scientific theories, religious and ethical ideals of the ancient races embodied in the various forms of this symbol.

Infinite Time in Space is pictured in the Hindu Scriptures as Ananta, the great Serpent of Eternity, which forms a couch upon which Vishnu rests. The regenerative power in Nature, which destroys worn-out forms in order to build statelier mansions for the soul, finds an expression in the power of the serpent to renew its strength and vigour by casting off its old skins. Therefore Shiva, who is a personification of this power, is shown wearing an outer garment made of serpent's skins. As Shiva is the great ascetic, and the patron of all true Yogis, it becomes clear that the serpents connected with him must have a higher meaning than the phallic one usually attributed to them.

The circle formed by a serpent swallowing its own tail is one of the most suggestive forms of this symbol. On the one hand it hints that the sphericity of the globe may have been known long before Thales of Miletus expressed his theory. At the same time it presents a truly philosophical concept of eternity without beginning as well as without end. It also forms a picture of the unending law of cycles under which all evolution proceeds, and shows how periods of non-manifestation follow periods of manifestation as night follows day. One of the most ancient books on occult learning — the *Siphrah Dzeniouta* — compares the evolution of the Universe to a serpent unwinding its coils:

Extending hither and thither, its tail in its mouth,  
Every thousand days it is manifested.

It is evident that the ancient scientists did not accept the theory of "dead matter" but viewed everything as an expression of Life, continually evolving through increasingly complex forms. This is shown in the picture of "the two serpents, the ever-living and its illusion (spirit and matter) whose two heads grow from the one head."

The ancient astronomers turned to the Serpent to illustrate the movements of the sun, the earth and the stars. "The heavens are scribbled over with interminable snakes," writes Herschel in describing the Egyptian chart of the stars. If the Serpent symbol be approached for its astronomical significance, it becomes apparent that the Heliocentric system was known at least two thousand years before the Christian era. In the Serpent Mantra of the *Aitareya Brahmana* is found a description of the earth's condition before it became a globe, when it was the "Queen of Serpents" writhing through space like a giant snake.

If facts like these were known far back in the night of time, there must be records of those who possessed such knowledge. Let us turn back a few pages of history and view in retrospect certain periods of civilization when "Serpents of Wisdom" lived and moved freely among men.

In the ancient land of Chem it was Thoth, the God of Wisdom, who is said to have introduced "Serpent worship" to the early Egyptians. Thoth himself was called a "Serpent" and he taught his people to worship the Serpent Kneph — "the original, eternal Spirit pervading all creation." He is often pictured with the serpent-rod of Wisdom in his hand, or as leaning upon a knotted stick around which a serpent is coiled. Iamblichus calls him "intellect itself, intellectually perceiving itself, and consecrating intellections to itself."

Many Egyptian names are derived from the word Aphe — meaning serpent — and it is interesting to note that the very title of the Egyptian kings — Pharaoh — is a compound of Phrah or Ra, the Sun, and Aphe, the Serpent. This clearly points to a time in Egyptian history when temporal and spiritual power was united in the great King-Initiates who ruled that land.

The Pharaohs, as will be remembered, wore high bonnets terminating in a ball, the whole being surrounded by figures of asps. The

hooded snake adorning the King's headgear was not only a badge of royalty but an indication of his power.

We cannot leave the subject of Egypt without a reference to the "Serpents' Catacombs" in which the sacred mysteries of the "circle of necessity" were performed, and where the Hierophants connected with the ceremonies were known as "Sons of the Serpent God."

Turning further to the East, we find the Pharaohs of Egypt duplicated in the Nagas of India and China. The Sanskrit word Naga means literally serpent, and was a name used to designate certain wise men who were venerated for their profound learning and great virtue.

When the Brahmans invaded India, so the legend runs, they found there a race of wise men who had been the teachers of earlier races and who became the instructors of the Brahmans in their turn. According to the Puranas, one of the seven divisions of India was known as Nagadvipa, "the Island of the Dragons," a surviving relic of which remains today in the walled town of Nagpur. Entire tribes and communities proudly derive their origin from the denizens of Nagaloka. The dynasty of Kashmir had the great Naga, Karkota, as its mythical ancestor. Kashmir and Nagpur were old Centres of occult culture and dynasties of Wise Rulers — Raja-Rishis — governed there in very old days.

The fame of the Indian Nagas must have reached far beyond the borders of India, for records show that men like Apollonius of Tyana, Pythagoras and Plotinus travelled to India to learn from them. Perhaps it was to the Nagas that Jesus referred when he enjoined his followers to be as "wise as serpents and as harmless as doves."

The great spiritual Teacher of India, Krishna, spoke of himself as Vasuki, the chief of serpents, and identified himself with Ananta among the Nagas. When his disciple Arjuna realized the full import of his instructions, he cried:

I behold, O God of gods, within thy frame all beings and things of every kind; the Lord Brahma on his lotus throne, all the Rishies and the heavenly serpents.

These Serpents, a footnote in W. Q. Judge's rendition of the *Gita* explains, "must refer to the great Masters of Wisdom," who were often called by that name.

Gautama, the Buddha, traced his lineage through the Serpent line of Kings who dwelt in Magadha, and tradition points to certain Nagas who attended him at birth. In Buddhistic drawings the hooded snake appears above his head, while in some of the Amaravati designs in the British Museum the serpent actually occupies the place usually assigned to the Buddha himself.

Serpent worship is universal and has persisted through all ages. In some ancient lands it was a Mystery Rite of the learned, who endeavoured to impart soul-knowledge to the masses through it. In later days most of the knowledge was lost and superstition took its place.

In no other part of the world is the serpent cult more widely distributed or developed in more varied and interesting forms than in India. As serpents live in holes under the earth, they are regarded as owners of the soil, who must be duly satisfied before houses are built or fields are ploughed. They are the powerful beings who know the secret of the seed, the silent process of fecundity. They are the guardians of great treasures hidden away in the bowels of the earth; custodians of gems, jewels, magic stones, wonder-working spells and talismans. Some species live in water and are regarded as guardians of rain, masters of the hailstorms. All this is of course to be understood symbolically, and all true students of occultisms are well qualified to extract the true meaning behind these and other traditional and folk beliefs.

In India, the serpent is the great symbol of the power of life, the Kundalini Shakti, the mighty secret energy of Man, which her ascetics try to arouse. So, too, the primordial solar force, semi-latent within every human being, was known to the Greeks as the Speirema, Serpent Coil. H.P.B. writes in *The Voice of the Silence*:

*Kundalini* is called the "Serpentine" or *annular* power on account of its spiral-like working or progress in the body of the ascetic developing the power in himself. It is an electric fiery occult or Fohatic power, the great pristine force, which underlies all organic and inorganic matter.

In China, wise men were called "Dragons," the word meaning "the being who excels in intelligence." Speaking of the "Yellow Dragon," the *Twan-ying-t'u* says: "His wisdom and virtue are unfathomable; he does not go in company and does not live in herds," a fact which

points to the ascetic practices and holy lives of the truly great, wherever and whenever they appear.

The serpent became the symbol of evil only during the dark days of the Middle Ages. The early Christians, according to the *Pistis Sophia*, venerated the True and Perfect Serpent which was destined to lead them out of the Egypt of the body into the Promised Land of spiritual understanding. This is merely a statement of the Christos-Principle in every man, the "winged Serpent with three heads" which every Egyptian Initiate recognized as himself, or the "Healing Serpent of Moses" of which the Apostle John says: "As Moses lifted up the Serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up."

When the "Son of Man" is recognized, not as some far-off "Saviour," but as the real, spiritual entity dwelling within the heart of every man, then will Religion become a practical, living science of life. When the modern Ophite learns to lay each thought, word and deed upon the altar dedicated to the True and Perfect Serpent of the Hidden Self, the time will come when he himself will become a "Son of the Serpent," a living expression of Wisdom and Immortality.

*The Secret Doctrine* abounds in references to the Serpent symbol, it being everywhere, in philosophy as in religious symbolism, an emblem of eternity, infinitude, regeneration and rejuvenation, as well as of wisdom. We are told:

The "Dragon of Wisdom" is the One, the "Eka" (Sanskrit) or Saka. . . . The "One" and the Dragon are expressions used by the ancients in connection with their respective Logoi. . . . The Pagans have always shown a philosophical discrimination in their symbols. The primitive symbol of the serpent symbolized divine Wisdom and Perfection, and had always stood for psychical Regeneration and Immortality. Hence — Hermes, calling the serpent the most spiritual of all beings; Moses, initiated in the wisdom of Hermes, following suit in Genesis; the Gnostic's Serpent with the seven vowels over its head, being the emblem of the seven hierarchies of the septenary or Planetary Creators. Hence, also, the Hindu serpent Sesha or Ananta, "the Infinite," a name of Vishnu, whose first Vahan or vehicle on the primordial waters is this serpent. Yet they all made a difference between the good and the bad Serpent (the Astral Light of the Kabalists) — between the former, the embodiment of divine Wisdom in the region of the Spiritual, and the latter, Evil, on the plane of matter.

Jesus accepted the serpent as a synonym of Wisdom, and this formed part of his teaching: "Be ye wise as serpents," he says. "In the beginning, before Mother became Father-Mother, the fiery Dragon moved in the infinitudes alone" (*Book of Sarparajni*). The *Aitareya Brahmana* calls the Earth Sarparajni, "the Serpent Queen," and "the Mother of all that moves." Before our globe became egg-shaped (and the Universe also) "a long trail of Cosmic dust (or fire mist) moved and writhed like a serpent in Space." The "Spirit of God moving on Chaos" was symbolized by every nation in the shape of a fiery serpent breathing fire and light upon the primordial waters, until it had incubated cosmic matter and made it assume the annular shape of a serpent with its tail in its mouth — which symbolizes not only Eternity and Infinitude, but also the globular shape of all the bodies formed within the Universe from that fiery mist. The Universe, as well as the Earth and Man, cast off periodically, serpent-like, their old skins, to assume new ones after a time of rest. The serpent is, surely, a not less graceful or a more unpoetical image than the caterpillar and chrysalis from which springs the butterfly, the Greek emblem of Psyche, the human soul. The "Dragon" was also the symbol of the Logos with the Egyptians, as with the Gnostics. In the "Book of Hermes," Pymander, the oldest and the most spiritual of the Logoi of the Western Continent, appears to Hermes in the shape of a Fiery Dragon of "Light, Fire, and Flame." (I. 73-74)

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The best soldiers show no rashness;  
 The best fighters display no anger;  
 The best conqueror seeks no revenge;  
 The best employer serves those he employs.  
 This is the Virtue of non-striving,  
 This is the capacity to be of use to others.  
 This is being wedded to Heaven,  
 As of old.

—*Tao Te King*

## SKANDHAS—GERMS OF LIFE

MUCH CONFUSION exists about the word *Skandhas* and about the ideas it is meant to convey. Below we print some extracts on this important but difficult subject, which is generally not well understood even by students of Theosophy. *Skandhas* are germs of life on all the seven planes of Being, and make up the totality of the subjective and the objective man. Every vibration becomes a *Skandha*; every thought and wish and feeling produce *Skandhas* which are closely linked to Astral Light pictures. The Esoteric Philosophy reckons seven *Skandhas*; the exoteric *Skandhas* have to do with the objective man, the esoteric with the inner and subjective man. Further, we are taught, a mental change, or a glimpse of spiritual truth, may make a man suddenly turn to the truth even at his death, thus creating good *Skandhas* for the next life. The last acts or thoughts of a man have an enormous effect upon his future life (though he would still have to suffer for his misdeeds), and this is the basis of the idea of death-bed repentance. But the Karmic effects of the past life must follow, for the man in his next birth must pick up the *Skandhas* or vibratory impressions that he left in the Astral Light, since nothing comes from nothing in Occultism, and there must be a link between the lives. New *Skandhas* are born from their old parents. With this in mind, let the student reflect upon the following:

*Samskara (Sk.)*. *Lit.*, from *Sam* and *Kri*, to improve, refine, impress. In Hindu philosophy the term is used to denote the impressions left upon the mind by individual actions or external circumstances, and capable of being developed on any future favourable occasion — even in a future birth. The *Samskara* denotes, therefore, the germs of propensities and impulses from previous births to be developed in this, or the coming *janmas* or reincarnations. In Tibet, *Samskara* is called *Doodyed*, and in China is defined as, or at least connected with, action or *Karma*. It is, strictly speaking, a metaphysical term, which in exoteric philosophies is variously defined; *e.g.*, in Nepaul as illusion, in Tibet as notion, and in Ceylon as discrimination. The true meaning is as given above, and as such is connected with *Karma* and its working.

(*The Theosophical Glossary*)

*Skandha* or *Skhandas* (*Sk.*). *Lit.*, “bundles,” or groups of attri-

butes; everything finite, inapplicable to the eternal and the absolute. There are five — esoterically, *seven* — attributes in every human living being, which are known as the *Pancha Skandhas*. These are (1) form, *rupa*; (2) perception, *vedana*; (3) Consciousness, *sanjna*; (4) action, *sanskara*; (5) knowledge, *vidyana*. These unite at the birth of man and constitute his personality. After the maturity of these Skandhas, they begin to separate and weaken, and this is followed by *jaramarana*, or decrepitude and death.

(*The Theosophical Glossary*)

*Karma* is the guiding power, and *Trishna* (in Pali *Tanha*) the thirst or desire to sentiently live — the proximate force or energy, the resultant of human (or animal) action, which, out of the old *Skandhas* produce the new group that form the new being and control the nature of the birth itself. . . . It is the group of *Skandhas* that form and constitute the physical and mental individuality we call man (or any being). This group consists (in the exoteric teaching) of five Skandhas, namely: *Rupa* — the material properties or attributes; *Vedana* — sensations; *Sanna* — abstract ideas; *Sankhara* — tendencies, both physical and mental; and *Vinnana* — mental powers, an amplification of the fourth — meaning the mental, physical and moral predispositions. We add to them two more, the nature and names of which you may learn hereafter. Suffice for the present to let you know that they are connected with, and productive of *Sakkayaditthi*, the “heresy or delusion of individuality,” and of *Attavada*, “the doctrine of Self,” both of which (in the case of the fifth principle, the soul) lead to the *maya* of heresy and belief in the efficacy of vain rites and ceremonies; in prayers and intercession.

(*The Mahatma Letters*)

We believe in an unerring law of Retribution, called KARMA, which asserts itself in a natural concatenation of causes and their unavoidable results. And how, or where, does it act? Every labourer is worthy of his hire, saith Wisdom in the Gospel; every action, good or bad, is a prolific parent, saith the Wisdom of the Ages. Put the two together, and you will find the “why.” After allowing the Soul, escaped from the pangs of personal life, a sufficient, aye, a hundred-fold compensation, Karma, with its army of Skandhas, waits at the threshold of Devachan, whence the *Ego* re-emerges to assume a new incarnation. It is at this moment that the future destiny of the now rested Ego trembles in the scales of just Retribution, as *it* now

falls once again under the sway of active Karmic law. It is in this rebirth which is ready for *it*, a rebirth selected and prepared by this mysterious, inexorable, but in the equity and wisdom of its decrees infallible LAW, that the sins of the previous life of the Ego are punished. Only it is into no imaginary Hell, with theatrical flames and ridiculous tailed and horned devils, that the Ego is cast, but verily on to this earth, the plane and region of his sins, where he will have to atone for every bad thought and deed. As he has sown, so will he reap. Reincarnation will gather around him all those other Egos who have suffered, whether directly or indirectly, at the hands, or even through the unconscious instrumentality, of the past *personality*

(H.P.B. in *The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 138-39)

KARMA, TANHA and SKANDHAS, are the almighty trinity in one, and the cause of our rebirth. The illustration of painting our own present likeness at death, and that likeness becoming the future personality is very poetical and graphic, but we claim it as an occult teaching. . . . At the solemn moment of death no man can fail to see himself under his true colours, and no self-deception is of any use to him any longer. Thence the following thing happens. As at the instant of drowning man sees marshalled past his mind's eye the whole of his life, with all its events, effects and causes, to the minutest details, so at the moment of death, he sees himself in all his moral nakedness, unadorned by either human flattery or self-adulation, and, as he is; hence, *as he*, or rather, as his astral double combined with his *Kama* principle — *shall be*. For the vices, defects and especially the passions of the preceding life become, through certain laws of affinity and transference, the germs of the future potentialities in the *animal* soul (*Kama rupa*), hence of its dependent, the astral double (*linga sarira*) — at a subsequent birth. It is the *personality* alone which changes; the real reincarnating principle, the Ego, remains always the same; and it is its KARMA that guides the idiosyncrasies and prominent moral traits of the *old* "personality" that was (and that the Ego knew not how to control), to reappear in the *new* man that will be. These traits and passions pursue and fasten on the yet plastic third and fourth principles of the child, and — unless the Ego struggles and conquers — they will develop with tenfold intensity and lead the adult man to his destruction. For it is they who are the tools and weapons of the Karmic LAW OF RETRIBUTION.

Thus, our good and bad actions "are the only tools with which we paint our likenesses at death," for the *new* man is invariably the son and progeny of the old man that was.

(H.P.B.'s footnote to "A Buddhist Prince's View of the Universe and the Nature of Man," *Lucifer*, November 1888)

An Eastern Occultist would say that nothing that takes place, no manifestation however rapid or weak, can ever be lost from the *Skandhaic* record of a man's life. Not the smallest sensation, the most trifling action, impulse, thought, impression, or deed, can fade or go out from, or in the Universe. We may think it unregistered by our memory, unperceived by our consciousness, yet it will still be recorded on the tablets of the astral light. Personal memory is a fiction of the physiologist. There are cells in our brain that receive and convey sensations and impressions, but this once done, their mission is accomplished. These cells of the supposed "organ of memory" are the *receivers* and *conveyers* of all the pictures and impressions of the past, not their *retainers*. Under various conditions and stimuli, they can receive instantaneously the reflection of these astral images back again, and this is called *memory, recollection, remembrance*; but they do not preserve them. When it is said that one has lost his memory, or that it is weakened, it is only a *façon de parler*; it is our memory-cells alone that are enfeebled or destroyed. The window glass allows us to see the sun, moon, stars, and all the objects outside clearly; crack the pane and all these outside images will be seen in a distorted way; break the window-pane altogether and replace it with a board, or draw the blind down, and the images will be shut out altogether from your sight. But can you say because of this, that all these images — sun, moon, and stars — have disappeared, or that by repairing the window with a new pane, the same will not be reflected again into your room? There are cases on record of long months and years of insanity, of long days of fever when almost everything done or said, was done and said unconsciously. Yet when the patients recovered they remembered occasionally their words and deeds and very fully. *Unconscious cerebration* is a phenomenon on this plane and may hold good so far as the personal mind is concerned. But the Universal Memory preserves every motion, the slightest wave and feeling that ripples the waves of differentiated nature, of man or of the Universe.

(H.P.B.'s footnote to "Problems of Life," *Lucifer*, October 1891)

I maintain as an occultist, on the authority of the Secret Doctrine, that though merged entirely into Parabrahm, man's spirit, while not individual *per se*, yet preserves its distinct individuality in Paranirvana, owing to the accumulation in it of the aggregates, or *skandhas* that have survived after each death, from the highest faculties of the *Manas*. The most spiritual—*i.e.*, the highest and divinest aspirations of every personality follow *Buddhi* and the Seventh Principle into Devachan (*Swarga*) after the death of each personality along the line of rebirths, and become part and parcel of the *Monad*. The personality fades out, disappearing before the occurrence of the evolution of the new personality (rebirth) out of Devachan: but the individuality of the spirit-soul [dear, dear, what *can* be made out of this English!] is preserved to the end of the great cycle (*Maha-Manvantara*) when each Ego enters Paranirvana, or is merged in Parabrahm.... That such Parabrahmic and Paranirvanic "spirits," or units, have and must preserve their divine (not human) individualities, is shown in the fact that, however long the "night of Brahma" or even the Universal Pralaya (not the local Pralaya affecting some one group of worlds) yet, when it ends, the same individual Divine Monad resumes its majestic path of evolution, though on a higher, hundredfold perfected and more pure chain of earths than before, and brings with it all the essence of compound spiritualities from its previous countless rebirths.

(H.P.B. in "Isis Unveiled and the Vishishtadvaita,"  
*The Theosophist*, January 1886)

The *skandhas*—well known in eastern philosophy—are the aggregates that make up the man. The body includes one set of the *skandhas*, the astral man another, the *kama* principle is another set, and still others pertain to other parts. In *kama* are the really active and important ones which control rebirths and lead to all the varieties of life and circumstance upon each rebirth. They are being made from day to day under the law that every thought combines instantly with one of the elemental forces of nature, becoming to that extent an entity which will endure in accordance with the strength of the thought as it leaves the brain, and all of these are inseparably connected with the being who evolved them. There is no way of escaping; all we can do is to have thoughts of good quality, for the highest of the Masters themselves are not exempt from this law, but they "people their current in space" with

entities powerful for good alone.

Now in *kama loka* this mass of desire and thought exists very definitely until the conclusion of its disintegration, and then the remainder consists of the essence of these *skandhas*, connected, of course, with the being that evolved and had them. They can no more be done away with than we can blot out the universe. Hence they are said to remain until the being comes out of *devachan*, and then at once by the law of attraction they are drawn to the being, who from them as germ or basis builds up a new set of *skandhas* for the new life. . . .

The stay in *devachan* is proportionate to the unexhausted psychic impulses originated in earth life. Those whose actions were preponderatingly material will be sooner brought back into rebirth by the force of *Tanha*. . . . The thirst for life expressed by the word *Tanha* is the pulling or magnetic force lodged in the *skandhas* inherent in all beings.

(W. Q. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, pp. 108-9, 120)

*Q. Are the three classes of Skandhas the lives of the various planes?*

A. The *Skandhas* are the lives *plus* the impulsions that have been given those lives. The lives all belong to the one who evolved them, and all they know is the direction given them. They have no power of choice; they cannot initiate impulse, but merely receive it. So the *Skandhas* are our tendencies, the quality of force which we have imparted to the various lives in the various planes or departments of nature, physical, mental and psychical. We impel the physical lives in our bodies; we impel the astral counterparts which make physical expression possible; we impel the lives that have to do with our thought processes. As they have been impelled by us, they are connected to us by magnetic or electrical attraction, and when we return to earth we draw them back to us again, or energize the *Skandhas* of the three classes, which, we may see, make possible the operation of several classes of Karma at the same time.

*Q. Then the whole teaching concerning the Skandhas is merely another illustration of cause and effect?*

A. Yes, we cannot think, feel, say or do anything without starting some of the infinitesimal colourless lives, with which the whole atmosphere pulsates everywhere, in a given direction. We are respon-

sible for those lives because we created them as that kind of life. If the force put into our thought was very little, the direction may be short-lived, but strong thoughts and feelings energize strongly. The total of these lives is always existent on the physical and astral planes, and we draw them back to us as an aggregate because we were the creators and originators of them. . . .

*Q. Do the skandhas last over more than one incarnation?*

*A.* They are whatever they may have been made from one incarnation to another, and belong always to the plane of incarnation. They are the consummation and the essence of all the tendencies. Some of the tendencies which we have acquired in past existences may not have had an opportunity to expend themselves, but we have them. Wherever there is evil, or tendency to evil of any kind in the race, every human being in the race possesses the germs of those evils, and needs only the conditions to make them sprout. If we are clear-eyed enough to see the nature of these things, we can prevent the conditions for sprouting.

(Robert Crosbie in *Answers to Questions on The Ocean of Theosophy*, pp. 166-67, 176)

The ignorant who believe in a Supreme Being with a form, fall into error and darkness at the time of their birth because of the hold which former life-recollections have upon the mind. This includes the power of the Skandhas or aggregates of sensations and desires accumulated in prior lives. At birth these, being a natural part of us, rush to us and we to them, so that a new union is made for another lifetime. In the other life, not having viewed the Self as all and in all, and having worshipped many Gods, the sensations of liking and disliking are so strong that the darkness of rebirth is irresistible. But the wise man died out of his former life with a full knowledge of the Self at the hour of death, and thus prevented the imprinting upon his nature of a set of sensations and desires that would otherwise, upon reincarnation, lead him into error.

(W. Q. Judge in *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 143-44)

Every inimical and uncharitable thought makes for disunion, and every opposite one for harmony. The *skandhas* are full of all the impressions we received; those *skandhas* wait and are ours again when we emerge from Devachan. If we meet those Egos who are related to our good or evil, charitable or uncharitable thoughts, the

force acts at once — not before — and unless the man we injured, condemned, or filled with anger meets us in next life or the one after, or whenever, we have to await his return with us (and that does not mean in family, it means wherever he can act on us) before we can tell whether he will repay in kind. If he has not become a saint meanwhile, he will at once be the cause of our hurt for hurt received, of benefit for benefit. These laws act through us with automatic regularity until we know them and bring up counteractions.

(W. Q. Judge in answer to a question in  
*The Theosophical Forum*, February 1893)

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THE “secret doctrine” has for many centuries been like the symbolical “man of sorrows” of the prophet Isaiah. “Who hath believed our report?” its martyrs have repeated from one generation to another. The doctrine has grown up before its persecutors “as a tender plant and as a root out of a dry ground; it hath no form, nor comeliness . . . it is despised and rejected of men; and they hid their faces from it. . . . They esteemed him not.”

There need be no controversy as to whether this doctrine agrees or not with the iconoclastic tendency of the skeptics of our times. It agrees with *truth* and that is enough. It would be idle to expect that it would be believed by its detractors and slanderers. But the tenacious vitality it exhibits all over the globe, wherever there are a group of men to quarrel over it, is the best proof that the seed planted by our fathers on “the other side of the flood” was that of a mighty oak, not the spore of a mushroom theology. No lightning of human ridicule can fell to the ground, and no thunderbolts ever forged by the Vulcans of science are powerful enough to blast the trunk, or even scar the branches of this world-tree of KNOWLEDGE.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I. 574

## PROMULGATING THEOSOPHY

It is sometimes asked: Is it possible to promulgate Theosophy from the U.L.T. platform without making an attempt to become a Theosophical practitioner and to lead the spiritual life? What are the marks of one entitled to preach Theosophy? The argument runs that a hypocrite may preach the grandest of ethics in an impersonal manner, and, in trying to appear "humble," seek to gain the good opinion of others.

No one can act for long in any particular field without some motive. The student who preaches Theosophy from the U.L.T. platform, without any attempt to practise it in his own life, must desire *something* — popularity, or power over others, or the gaining of favour with other students, etc.; or he may seek to serve so as to find the Masters to whose Cause the U.L.T. is consecrated. In short, he has an axe of his own to grind. Such a person finds out that with such motives he is not able to go on for long. "‘Great Sifter’ is the name of the ‘Heart Doctrine,’ O Disciple."

In promulgating Theosophy the student takes the step of facing his own nature, though he may not know that he is doing so, and soon or late, certainly soon for most people, he encounters the aid that comes from his good aspirations and the hindrance that results from his low desires. Again, he cannot go on very long doing his platform duties without a serious effort to enhance his store of Theosophical knowledge. The very method followed, the gradual and graduating rise in duties assigned to platform workers, forces him to continuous recognition that unless he learns more and more and acquires the capacity to impart what he learns in an efficient manner, he is not able to make much headway with his platform ventures.

The safeguards, for him as for the platform, lie in the impersonal basis of our policy and programme. No one desirous of money or fame comes our way. He who volunteers to serve our Cause *has* invariably a seed of right spiritual aspiration. What the Lodge does, in a variety of ways, is to help that seed to sprout in the soil of the student's personality. Here difficulties do arise, for no student of Theosophy is devoid of weaknesses to which the Kali-Yuga mortal is heir. Mental laziness, personal pushing, desire for soul-growth and for "attracting the Eye of the Master," etc., do affect, and at times

work havoc with the neophyte. The history of the Theosophical Movement is full of instances of people who have "blown up and blown out" of the ranks. That is one reason why a hypocrite cannot for long strut on the U.L.T. platform if he at all finds his way on to it; in more than one sense he stutters while he is trying to strut, and so, the end comes!

Next, a hypocrite who tries to preach Theosophy and its grand ethics in an impersonal manner must also have a motive and — murder *will* out.

For murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ.

And if Shakespeare is explicit in describing the result, Chaucer is equally true in describing the process: "Mordre wol out, that see we day by day."

It is only a question of time for the hypocrite to stand revealed in his true colours, and that time is short in Theosophical circles. One may try to appear humble, but even to play that part one must have intelligence and steadfastness; that is why the student who fools himself by fancying that he is humble when he is not, gets a shock when his self-righteousness and conceit are unveiled and his bluff is called. All these are not imaginary pictures; one has to look not far afield but deep in one's own vicinity to find that what is said is true.

Any person of his own free will is entitled to preach Theosophy, and in his own way. There are many who do so, though they are not well versed either in the teachings or the methods of Theosophy; hence there are pseudo-theosophists who preach in the name of Theosophy what H.P.B. never taught, and use modes and methods which are not in strict accord with Theosophical ethics.

It is true that we can judge a teacher — or rather a pupil-teacher — by his teachings; would it take an intelligent audience very long to find out that So-and-so is "as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal"? In that audience are there not other pupil-teachers who are not apt to be fooled for long? How far will mere rhetoric or mere parrotlike repetition of words and phrases, even though they be from Theosophical textbooks, go? As words are living messengers, their life-message will be felt, will be registered, however unconscious the process. Words without ideas do not penetrate the mind of the

listener; much less do they enter his heart if they do not contain the living force of experience which the practice and application of the speaker give them.

A pupil-teacher can make no personal claims. If he offers a truth, it is in the record of the philosophy; he cannot claim it as his own. If what he advances is not in the recorded philosophy, there are those who will immediately ask, "Where is that said?" If he claims for himself abnormal powers and a special position, he falls immediately in the making of the claim — there have been those who have failed thus in the last hundred years during which the Movement has been in existence. But there is strength in the "claim" which a pupil-teacher makes because he roots himself in the recorded philosophy; and there is greater strength in the silent "claim" which his assimilation of the teaching through sincere, consistent and right practice brings forth.

A pupil-teacher can lay no claim to "originality" of teachings. His motto is: "Thus have I heard." But, just as what one hears may be repeated in different tongues, so also the ideas one has assimilated may be repeated in different ways, with ever new applications. "Originality" does not exist because there is nothing new under the sun; but every object presents a new beauty every hour as the light of the sun falls on it, and that new beauty has an originality of its own. In the mere recitation of a poem a person by his own assimilation of its message conveys that meaning to his hearers; how much more, then, with the repetition of deathless ideas which have passed through the mill of an ardent soul's wakeful mind and wise heart?

Supplementing what has already been said, let us draw attention to the truth that there are those who love Theosophy and therefore labour for it, and then there are those who labour for Theosophy and come to love it. A person may begin to promulgate Theosophy with a motive all too personal; he will change that motive and, labouring for a Holy Cause, will become holy and love that Cause. Lovers of Theosophy need not worry about the lip-profession and verbal enthusiasm of others; if they themselves are loyal to their Cause they will aid these others to rise to higher impersonal (or shall we say less personal) altitudes. Let us remember the aphorism — "Each man is a potency in himself."

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# A THEOSOPHICAL CATECHISM

## FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN

### LESSON II

[Reprinted from *The Path*, November 1890.—EDS.]

1. Q. You spoke of the Secret Doctrine in our last lesson. What did you say of it?  
A. That theosophists believed it to contain more theosophical knowledge than any other body of teaching.
2. Q. By what other name is the Secret Doctrine sometimes called?  
A. The Science-Religion.
3. Q. Why?  
A. Because it is science and religion in one.
4. Q. What do you mean by Science?  
A. The search for facts or laws in nature.
5. Q. What do you mean by nature?  
A. The universe as we know or may know it.
6. Q. What do you mean by religion?  
A. Obedience to divine laws.
7. Q. Where are these laws to be found?  
A. Throughout all nature.
8. Q. What then does this Science-Religion do?  
A. It teaches divine laws, the search for them, and how to obey them in our lives.
9. Q. You speak of divine things or laws. What do you mean by that?  
A. Divine things are those that belong to the world of causes.
10. Q. Is the world which we see around us a world of cause?  
A. No. It is a world of effects.
11. Q. What is a cause?  
A. Something which makes or moulds. Causes are invisible spiritual forces.
12. Q. What is an effect?  
A. Effects are visible results produced by a spiritual invisible cause.
13. Q. Can you give me an example of this?  
A. Heat is caused by an expansive force. Cold is caused by a contractive force. We do not see the forces, but we feel heat and

see it when it bursts into fire. We feel cold, and see it when it condenses into ice or snow. Heat and cold are effects; the forces which contract or expand are causes.

14. Q. What, then, lies within the visible world of effects?

A. The world of causes, invisible to the ordinary eye.

15. Q. What do we learn in studying Theosophy?

A. The Science of cause and effect.

16. Q. Why is such knowledge divine?

A. Because it teaches us to know those causes through which all the worlds came into being.

17. Q. Can you tell me how many principal teachings the Secret Doctrine contains?

A. Three.

18. Q. What is the first?

A. That there is one universal eternal principle of Being or Life, from which proceeds all that exists.

19. Q. Name the second teaching.

A. The absolute universality of the law of periodicity, or action and reaction, ebb and flow.

20. Q. Can you give another name to this law?

A. Karma, or the law of action and reaction.

21. Q. What is the third teaching?

A. The identity of all souls with the Oversoul.

22. Q. What do you mean by that?

A. That there is one universal Oversoul, or soul of the world, and that all souls are identical with, or united to and in, that soul.

23. Q. Do you mean the souls of men?

A. No. I mean the souls of all creatures.

24. Q. Why are these three teachings so important?

A. Because all other knowledge rests upon them.

25. Q. Explain what you mean by the souls of all creatures.

A. I mean that all nature is ensouled. That is, everything has a soul of its own kind and a knowledge or instinct of its own kind.

26. Q. Why so?

A. Because the universal soul is everywhere. It is in every point of the universe. It is in all bodies and knows all things. The soul of the ant and the soul of a man are not alike, but both are in and a part of the soul substance that is everywhere.

27. Q. Do you mean as each drop of water is part of the ocean and is yet itself?

A. Yes.

28. Q. There is one great truth which we learn in these three teachings. What is it?

A. Universal Brotherhood.

29. Q. How do we learn this in the first teaching?

A. That teaching shows us one divine principle of Life, from which all things proceed. It alone never dies. Since all things, creatures, and men came from it, the one, all created things are its children and all are brothers.

30. Q. When you say universal brotherhood, do you mean the brotherhood of human beings only?

A. No. I said *universal* brotherhood. The word universal includes all things which came forth from The One.

31. Q. But we see many kinds, such as stones, plants, birds, beasts, men.

A. That is because the world soul enters first into the elements, such as air, fire, water, and then into the mineral, vegetable, animal, and human worlds. Each soul spark goes through all things thus, and slowly reaches perfection. But in the beginning all came forth from The One, and in the end all will return there.

32. Q. Explain this further.

A. The only real, the only eternal is The One. And as all things began and end there, that unity or oneness of soul is their only real state. Souls may change their bodies or dwelling places, for these are not lasting. They pass away. They are unreal. Soul-union with the all is the only real state, so universal brotherhood alone is real.

33. Q. How does the second teaching, that of the Law of Karma, display Universal Brotherhood?

A. It shows the universe as governed by one great Law. That Law applies to all that exists and knits all worlds and creatures together: all things are the children of this Law.

34. Q. How does the third teaching display Universal Brotherhood?

A. It shows that all souls rest in and are parts of the universal soul.

35. Q. What then seems to be the first fact of life?

A. Universal Brotherhood.

36. Q. Can you give it another name?

A. The spiritual identity of all Being.

37. Q. What does that mean?

A. That all came from Spirit or the Great Breath, and all will return to it.

38. Q. If it is true that we are all brothers, what should this teach us?

A. It should teach us perfect justice in all things.

39. Q. How best can we display justice?

A. By mercy, pity and love. We should do in all things and to all things, even to the very least, as we would be done by.

40. Q. Can you tell me what other teaching is contained in these three?

A. Reincarnation.

41. Q. What is meant by Reincarnation?

A. That the soul enters into many bodies and lives many lives in such bodies.

—J. CAMPBELL VERPLANCK

*(To be concluded)*

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*Ecoutons l'ensemble du concert!* The present moment is but a transitional chord — bitter, rich and cruel maybe, but it will resolve in the next phase in the chord that succeeds. Let each of us care only for playing the part allotted to him with conscientiousness, sincerity and unselfishness. And if it so happens that those whose parts belong to the noblest and deepest are misunderstood, they do not stand in need of commiseration. They are amply repaid by the joy they experience of the beautiful music which falls to their lot. What matters if "others" misjudge them? The "others" are not the judges. The judge is the Invisible Master of the Symphony.

—ROMAIN ROLLAND

# PROBLEMS OF LIFE

FROM "THE DIARY OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN"

BY DR. N. I. PIROGOFF\*

## VIII

### ON THE INDUCTIVE AND DEDUCTIVE METHODS

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, August 1891.—EDS.]

17th and 18th February, 1880

I AM well aware that my world-concept is not based on that inductive method which is demanded in our day from every seriously thought-out speculation. But that's just where the trouble is, as on these lines we have either to renounce any conception of the universe at all, or use for its foundations generalizations so common that they become pure abstractions. I was never destined to be a positivist; it is beyond my power to command my thought to abstain from going there where it immediately loses its way. Thus, I feel bound in my world-concept to base myself on that which, to me, seems to be beyond any doubt or cavil, even if it be more of an abstraction than a fact. These kinds of abstractions seem to me as undeniable as my own existence; to them I attribute universal unity and design; a general plan of creation; universal thought; force independent of substance; substance which, when mentally analysed, gets transformed into something eluding our senses—in other words, into force also; a principle (or force) of life, penetrating substance, yet independent of it as well as of physical forces, which it guides designedly toward the self-conservation of substance, raised by that principle to the degree of organisms and species. Accepting all these as undeniable axioms, how could I have worked out a different world-conception? Whether it is ever proved by science or not that the higher animal types, forms, and we ourselves, have developed, under the influence of external conditions and forces, out of lower forms, and these, in their turn, out of primordial organic protoplasm, makes no difference and can alter in nowise my concepts; whether life on this earth has developed in this or another way, the principle of a unity of design in its creation loses nothing by it, and it is inadequate to make the presence of univer-

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\*Translated from the Russian, by H.P.B.

sal Thought and of a Life-Principle in the universe appear thereby doubtful.

I cannot acquire the conviction — though I am unable to demonstrate this by facts — that our brain can be the only organ of thought; that everything in the universe, save *that* organ, is thoughtless and senseless, and that human thought alone should impart to the universe a meaning and an integral harmony. With such a one-sided view the importance of the brain would seem to me very strange; for it comes to this: in the whole cosmos it is our brain alone which senses external impressions without sensing itself, and serves as a test of manifestation for some *I*, which recognizes no solidarity with the source of its origin and acts as if the latter had nought to do with it. This is why I regard as far more probable this other theory, that this very hazy and very strange *I* of ours is carried into the brain, and develops in it, together with the sensations produced from external impressions brought to it; in other words the question may be asked: may not our *I* come from the outside, and may it not be universal Thought itself<sup>1</sup> which finds and uses the brain as an apparatus, cleverly constructed *ad hoc* by life-force, and designed by the latter as an embodiment and individualization of the Universal Mind? In such case the brain would be but a cleverly constructed net for the containment and the manifestation in personal form of that cosmic mind.

In every case this apparently fantastic conjecture seems to me more probable than that other hypothesis, put forward by the school of materialists *pur sang*, which teaches that our thought depends on brain phosphorus. However much fish and peas I may eat (by Moleschott's advice) never shall I consent to give away my *I* into the durance vile of a product accidentally extracted by alchemy from urine. If in our conceptions of the universe it be our fate to be ever falling into illusions, then my illusion has, at least, the advantage of being very comforting. For it shows to me a rational universe and the activity of the forces working in it, harmonious and intelligent; as also my *I*, not the product of chemical and histological elements but an embodiment of a general Universal

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<sup>1</sup> This is precisely what occult philosophy claims; our *Ego* is a ray of the Universal Mind, individualized for the space of a cosmic life-cycle, during which space of time it gets experience in almost numberless reincarnations or rebirths, after which it returns to its Parent-Source.—[TRANSL.]

Intelligence, which I represent to myself, as I did many times before, acting with free will, in accordance with the same laws which are traced by it for my own mind, but exempt from that restraint which trammels our humanly conscious individuality.

*February 20th and 21st, 1880*

But what about my autobiography? Well, writing for myself, it is of more importance to me that I should make clear to my mind *what I am*, and only then follow it by tracing out how much and in what way practical life has helped to make of me what I am now; that is to say, by what means I have arrived at accepting my actual world-concepts, my religious and moral convictions. Therefore I had to ascertain and explain to myself, first of all, how I view the surrounding universe, in what light I look upon myself, and what kind of man I take myself to be, what I believe in, that which I have my doubts about, what I like and dislike. All my past, all that I have lived through is interesting to me, but only in so far as it can explain to me my development in the process of mental evolution, and of moral being. To arrive at such results in my life-history, I have not only to recall long bygone days, but to endeavour to be constantly sincere with myself; and both are far from being easy.

There was a time when as a boy of eighteen I kept my diary, portions of which are still preserved by my wife; but there is little in it I could use now. I find in it, for instance, that I had no idea of living over thirty... which shows that I was often in a gloomy disposition in those days.... Nor is it easy for me to determine how far I can be sincere with myself; and this is more difficult than it really appears. There are events in one's life, the chief and secret motives of which it is impossible to explain unless one is absolutely frank with oneself; and meanwhile it is just in such cases that one is at a loss to determine if one is frank or not. There are motives so deeply enshrined in the secret places of our *I*, that it becomes almost hopeless to drag them out to the surface of the Soul, however much we may desire to do so. Instead of these there appear others more comely; but when they come to be examined one feels that there lurks, in the very depths of one's being, stubborn and unyielding, another motive, misty and hazy, and what is worse, resembling in nothing any of those that swim instead of it upon the surface. And this happens in cases quite different from

those in which reason and caution prohibit sincerity with other persons? Not at all; and I maintain that it is far more difficult to be frank with oneself than with others — perchance, because such sincerity is necessary only in critical and serious cases. It happens also that, in very truth, one is unable to decide what had been really the cause of such or another action committed, and finds it still more difficult to see why in doing it one's appreciation of it was quite different at that time. The very analysis of, and enquiry into the actions of our *I*, demand a great deal of experience and training. It is doubtful whether anyone who has busied himself a good deal with the analysis of the thoughts and feelings of other people, acquires thereby the faculty of correctly analysing himself.

The query — is it a normal function at all to analyse oneself — still remains for me an open question. A single-hearted man appears, lives, thinks, acts, without having any need of analysing his *I*. He is so constituted, and has so constituted himself, that his thoughts and deeds have to be what and as they are, not otherwise. The psychic process in such a man may be compared to a clock wound up once for all for the term of his life. The pendulum moves equally, accurately and regularly. There is no need to open it to examine its mechanism. But "Cannibalism"<sup>2</sup> is quite another thing. "Cannibalism" is, I am inclined to think, a pathological product, although it is on this faculty that the profound injunction of the sages — "Know thyself" — is based.

Guided by this rule one has to bid goodbye to single-heartedness, as the rending in twain, and the duality of soul become unavoidable. When our *I* becomes at the same time subject and object, the strife between the observed and the observing principles is close at hand. It is that duality that I disapprove and regret in myself, though it has played, perchance, a considerable part in my self-training and self-control. Without the duality, *i.e.*, without self-observation and self-analysis, I would have been perhaps far worse than I now consider myself to be. Yet it has been a great hindrance to me in my professional practice, having been the means toward the development of combativeness and opposition. This spirit of opposition has always manifested in me as strongly in the analysis of the actions

<sup>2</sup> This term was adopted in Russian literature at one time to denote selfish and uncharitable persons, ever ready to tear their neighbours to shreds. A "Cannibal" is one who eats up and devours, metaphorically speaking, his own kind.—[TRANSL.]

and opinions of other persons as of my own.

I could never take a one-sided view of anything. Whenever I come into contact with anything new for me I proceed forthwith to get a glimpse of its opposite side. It was perhaps a suggestive fact that I was born with a squint in my left eye. But this twofold view of things, while being occasionally useful, is pernicious in its action, inasmuch as it deprives me of the means of hitting the mark, of quickness and concentration. I have experienced it, to my regret, more than once during my life. On the other hand that faculty has preserved me from being injudiciously led away, by showing to me at once the bad side of things that fascinated me. Moreover, it has proved very useful to me in chronic cases, when there is sufficient time before acting to weigh and judge a thing or an action from its different standpoints.

Strange and incomprehensible<sup>3</sup> is this faculty of our *I* to rend itself in twain. I could not certify, meanwhile, whether it is our individual *I* or something else in us which has that strange faculty. What I know by experience, however, is that neither of the two opposite frames of mind (the joyful and the gloomy) has ever taken complete hold of me; it has always seemed to me as if one of my *I*'s was rejoicing while the other felt miserable, and kept analysing the cause of the other's joyfulness. Thus with regard to actions in which passion or fascination was concerned, everything depended on the degree of their intensity: the *I* which was carried away brought hastily forward its motives; the other, the restraining *I*, gave as rapidly its reasons to the contrary; and the first generally prevailed, but acted only when its motives and reasons were laid before some *third "I,"* and by him found more potent and conclusive than those of the restraining Ego. To a psychologist, all this, of course, will appear arrant nonsense.<sup>4</sup> The *I* of every person is an indivisible unit;

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<sup>3</sup> Perchance it would appear less "strange and incomprehensible," were the scientific psychologists to look into that doctrine of occultism which shows in man two *Egos* (two aspects of the same divine principle), the higher, or *Individuality*, and the lower, or *Personality*, in other words, the *divine* and the *animal* man. It is these two that during our lifetime are in incessant struggle, the one trying to gravitate heavenward, the other dragged down by its animal nature to the earth earthy.—[TRANSL.]

<sup>4</sup> We do not see why. To the materialistic psychologist, (*i.e.*, physiologist), the whole of Dr. Pirogoff's world-concepts will appear "nonsense," of course; but the metaphysician and the theosophist will applaud almost every word he says; regretting only that men of such profoundly intuitional nature should be so rare among the men of science. What scholar with a reputation to lose would have such honesty and frankness?—[TRANSL.]

and the feeling as though two or several quite different *Egos* were acting in me, is again one of my illusions. From the very day we begin to be self-conscious and to our last hour we are clearly cognizant of our *I*; and this, however much we may alter during the course of our lives, in character, habits, modes of life, and so on. We feel the changes in us and acknowledge them; in the meantime we are quite conscious that these changes have not changed us into other persons.

*February 23rd and 27th, 1880*

Just so; our *I* is an integral entity, indivisible and ever identical during the whole of our life. It is only lunatics, and even not all of these, who do not probably realize the identity of their present with their past *I*. Whence, then, the illusion which makes us believe that we can think and feel in two or more different ways simultaneously, and not only differently but in complete contrast, one feeling counteracting the other and one thought chased by another thought?

Firstly, we may be erring as to time; between one sensation and another sensation, one thought and another, there must always be a certain interlude of time, however short it may be in reality and however imperceptible to our senses.

Secondly, the illusion is produced by and depends on the fact that our *I* is able to come into contact, so to say, simultaneously with several organs, each having its own set of functions, differing from each other: that same *I*, moreover, being, as it were, woven out of contrasting sensations.

What is it then, finally, this protean *I*? Is it only a personal pronoun? Or is it, again, but an illusion? I believe we shall have to distinguish between the two aspects of our *I*. One of its aspects is no more than the feeling or the sensation of its individual being, a property which all the animal species have in common. In its other aspect and along with this sensation there exists in it, moreover, a more or less clear conception of itself, *i.e.*, of its personality. It is this conscious cognizance of the inherent feeling in us, of our individual being, *i.e.*, of our personality, which is precisely the human *I*, expressed by the personal pronoun, by adults in the first, by children in the third person. Even the animals express the sensation of their being in sounds; only with them it is always expressed in connection with a feeling of either pleasure or pain.

I would compare our *I* in its connection with sundry psychic faculties with a musician playing simultaneously on several instruments; sweeping over them by means of various movements of the body, he is enabled to give harmonious concerts. The *I*, woven out of the most varied sensations, has the faculty of touching lightly and simultaneously the elements of the different portions of the brain and of stimulating psychic functions, bringing at times the activity of these organs into unison, and at others producing an intolerable *cacophony* for itself as for others. In whatever way we may localize the different psychic faculties in various portions of the brain, sensation and the conscience of being, *i.e.*, our *I*, *cannot be localized*. In order to perform without breaking the law of harmony some mental piece, the *I* (or consciousness) has to touch simultaneously the organic elements which preserve in themselves the impresses of external impressions (*i.e.*, of memory) and the convolutions of the brain which serve as organs of speech, as also the organs of imagination and reason, never yet discovered by the modern localisators — the psycho-physiologists. This the *I* must do, because we cannot cerebrate and reason without calling forth into action our memory, our reasoning faculty and imagination, or fancy. It is by this faculty of our *I* to bring into action, simultaneously or in succession, with the shortest intervals and without interfering with its own integral nature (without dividing itself) — different organs of sensation and various psychic faculties, that I explain to myself its apparent duality, so finely expressed by the Apostle Paul in one of his epistles. Not only between our wish or will and our action, but even between the early germs of our own thoughts, sensations and desires, it is but too easy to perceive in us contradictions and a twofold nature.

Quite recently *I* was in a bad humour (after great pain produced by stomach catarrh), and though feeling very angry, yet never ceased to observe how, while displeasure against certain persons was filling my heart, the germ of a thought contained already excuses in their favour; I was ready to abuse and at the same time to excuse them, even to reproaching myself with injustice. Does it not mean that my *I*, while penetrating into the midst of the dirty sensations carried by my diseased organ (the intestinal canal) into my imagination, had not plunged deep enough into my angry feelings to get drowned therein, leaving memory (with its certain agreeable associations con-

cerning those persons) and reason in full activity?

What is our *I*, woven as I have said out of our sensations, without or bereft of these sensations — *ignoro et ignorabo*. We physicians and naturalists who have devoted ourselves from early years to sense-experiments on dead and living organisms and organs, get so accustomed to life bound up with organic elements, that we end by viewing it as an effect instead of as a cause. Through one trifling puncture in the *medulla oblongata*, we put an end instantaneously to a life full of health and vital powers. How can we physicians be accused then, even if we do conclude that life stops like unto a clockwork mechanism at an injury done to one of its springs? Is it not a natural deduction that our life is nothing else than a motion regulated by organic mechanism? The key to the mechanism lies in that point of the *medulla oblongata* which has, therefore, to be referred to as the life knot — *nœud vital*. At the moment when we are born into the world the machine is wound up, and the first manifestation of our mechanism is the motion of breath. If we do not regard as the outside world of the human fœtus, the uterus which contains it for nine months, then its first communication with the external universe consists in the movements of its chest. After this what can be to us our *I*, minus sensations and disconnected with the organs which receive and convey them to it? To those who devote themselves to the study of organic nature these careful investigations prove abundantly that the same laws and forces that act in the inorganic world act in the organic. Are we not fully authorized thereby to conclude that all that which we observe in the animal organism, relates, as in inorganic bodies, to the properties and functions of the material elements which are the compound of that organism's parts and organs?

(*To be concluded*)

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We may regard matter as being constituted by the regions of space in which the field is extremely intense. . . . There is no place in this kind of physics both for the field and matter, for the field is the only reality.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Though conventional science looks askance at faith healing, some scientists nevertheless believe that something real might be happening when a healer works. In an article on "Faith Healers in the Laboratory" (*Science Digest*, May 1982), Lygeri Koromvokis describes some of the experiments by researchers to test the powers claimed by "psychics." The tests were conducted by San Francisco State University's biophysicist Beverly Rubik and her collaborator, nuclear physicist Elizabeth Rauscher, on Olga Worrall, who claims to be able to heal the sick by the laying on of hands.

Where human beings are concerned, the healee's faith can play a significant role in effecting a cure, so the experimenters got Olga to apply her power to microscopic creatures in the controlled setting of a laboratory. She was given sealed test tubes containing bacteria treated with toxic chemicals which are normally injurious to them. In repeated experiments, the bacteria in the test tubes clasped by Olga in her hands fared better than those left alone. The researchers consider it "quite spectacular" that Olga was able to overcome the effects of the chemicals. After a few more experiments, they hope to publish a report on the laying on of hands in a "reputable, first-class scientific journal" — something that has never been done before.

Other researchers who have tested other healers are equally baffled by the latter's success with human patients, and many theories are advanced to explain what takes place. After one experiment, in which the healer was not even in proximity with the chronic-pain patients she was concentrating on, a researcher was prompted to say: "What we saw went far beyond just a mental contact. It's as if she were manipulating a real energy." Some consider that the critical factor could be body electricity. The *Science Digest* article states:

The energy to which healers commonly refer isn't energy in the strict sense in which a physicist would use the term. Scientists have no equations to define it, no equipment to detect it. . . .

Certain emotions also appear to be involved with the laying on of hands. Healers commonly speak of empathizing with and loving their patients. And several studies indicate that such feelings may play a critical role in the outcome of healing experiments.

"Emotional states may be at the heart of this phenomenon," says McGill University biologist Bernard Grad. "It seems that

if anyone who does not feel calm, empathic or loving attempts healing, there can be negative anti-life effects."

Some researchers speculate that a healing energy may yet be found beyond the presently known limits of the electromagnetic spectrum, perhaps even on another, still undiscovered spectrum. But others are uncomfortable with the idea of a force apparently not governed by the known laws of physics. . . .

There may be some aspect of electromagnetic energy that has been discovered but not yet connected with healing. "If the 'power' of healers is electrical and analogous to the kinds of current we've used to heal," says Dr. Robert Becker, "then it could heal." . . .

Dolores Krieger [a professor of nursing at New York University] has probably done more than anyone else to bring the laying on of hands to the attention of the medical community. In her classes at NYU, during hospital grand rounds and at workshops around the country, Krieger has taught about 6,000 health professionals "therapeutic touch," her version of the laying on of hands. . . . Krieger, who taught herself these techniques, believes that almost everyone can learn to feel what she calls the energy field around the human body to rebalance areas of excess or deficient energy. Although she does not claim that therapeutic touch can cure, informal studies strongly indicate that it does ease pain, and brain-wave recordings have documented a profound relaxation effect.

"Therapeutic touch isn't magical or religious," says Krieger. "It's a return to something very natural. If you start with the assumption that we don't stop at our skins, that we are open systems of energy, then everything else falls into place."

H.P.B. called the human vital force "the most potent of all known agencies," and health of body or mind requires "a perfect magnetic equilibrium" in one's system. "The 'healer' heals," she added, "simply by restoring that balance in his patient by the force of his benevolent desire and will."

In *The Theosophist* for April 1883 (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, April 1978), H.P.B. published an article, "The Power to Heal," in which she described the wonderful cures effected by the American healer, Newton, and explained:

The familiar analogy of the law of electric and magnetic conduction makes all plain. If a metallic body charged with +

electricity, be brought into contact with a body negatively electrified, the + fluid is discharged from the first into the second body. The phenomenon of thunder and lightning is an example in point. When two bodies similarly electrified meet they mutually repel each other. Apply this to the human system. A person in health is charged with positive vitality — *prana*, Od, Aura, electro-magnetism, or whatever else you prefer to call it; one in ill-health is negatively charged: the positive vitality, or health element, may be discharged by an effort of the healer's will into the receptive nervous system of the patient; they touch each other, the fluid passes, equilibrium is restored in the sick man's system, the *miracle* of healing is wrought, and the lame walk, the blind see, deaf hear, dumb speak, and humours of long standing vanish in a moment! Now, if besides health, power of will, knowledge of science, and benevolent compassion on the healer's part, there be also faith, passivity, and *the requisite attractive polarity*, on that of the patient, the effect is the more rapid and amazing. Or, if faith be lacking and still there be the necessary polaric receptivity, the cure is still possible. And, again, if there be in the patient alone a faith supreme and unshakable in the power of a healer, of a holy relic, of the touch of a shrine, of the waters of a well, of a pilgrimage to a certain place and a bath in some sacred river, of any given ceremonies, or repetition of charms, or an amulet worn about the neck — in either of these or many more agencies that might be named, then the patient will cure himself by the sole power of his predisposed faith.

Addressing those who feel a call to heal the sick, H.P.B. goes on to say:

It is of supreme importance that the one who attempts to heal disease should have an absolute and implicit faith (a) in his science; (b) in himself. To project from himself the healing aura he must concentrate all his thought for the moment upon his patient, and WILL with iron determination that the disease shall depart and a healthy nervous circulation be re-established in the sufferer's system. . . . Those who may feel a call to heal the sick, should bear in mind the fact that all the curative magnetism that is forced by their will into the bodies of their patients, *comes out of their own systems*. What they have, they can give; no more. And as the maintenance of one's own health is a prime duty, they should never attempt healing unless they have a surplus of vitality to spare, over and above what may be needed to carry themselves through their round of duties and keep their

systems well up to tone. Otherwise they would soon break down and become themselves invalids.

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The developments in various fields of modern science are raising at the same time several ethical problems. In a special section in the magazine *Health*, Isaac Asimov and six other thinkers tackle some of the ethical questions in the field of health — questions such as: “Is it the inalienable right of every human being to have the world’s best medical care — at any cost?” “Every human being has a right to determine what shall be done with his body, but should that right extend to the mentally ill?” “When there is a chance to save a transplantable organ, should a dying patient’s final minutes be sacrificed so that someone else might live?” “Should we have the right to choose our own unorthodox medical treatments?” “Does the public have the right to know about the latest medical research — even if the information be confusing, frightening, or dangerous?” “Scientific research can, and perhaps will, present humanity with overwhelming danger. Should the Government have the power to step in?”

Isaac Asimov in his concluding essay on “Government vs. Science” urges that human beings, with their faculty of intelligent choice, make that choice as effective as possible by constantly increasing their knowledge of the potential dangers to be avoided and of the benefits to be chosen:

Who among us can feel at ease as scientists learn more about nerve gases, sophisticated space weapons and genetic engineering? Who can fail to be alarmed at the pileup of radioactive wastes, the prospects of ever more deadly war, the possibilities of modifying human structure and behaviour?

There is a strong impulse to try to protect ourselves from the dangers science can pose by controlling the direction science is allowed to take. . . . But it’s not so easy. The curious human mind makes strange leaps, and a discovery aborted here is duplicated there. . . .

Certainly, increased knowledge of explosives produced new and deadlier weapons by the end of the century. But nitroglycerine did not result only in destruction. Alfred Nobel tamed the substance to produce dynamite, and there’s no need to go into all of that invention’s constructive uses.

We must, in other words, make a distinction between knowledge itself and the uses to which it is put.

Almost any piece of knowledge can be used in either constructive or destructive ways. In prehistoric times, stone axes and stone-tipped spears made it possible for human beings to face the larger predators with greater chances of survival. They also made it easier for human beings to maim and murder other human beings. The ability to start a fire at will yielded the advantages of cooked food, pottery, glass and metals — and the disadvantages of accidental conflagration and arson....

There is no doubt, then, but that humanity must at all times question and inspect the uses to which knowledge is put. And, in actual fact, we do....

Nowadays, because our ability to do harm has grown greater, because we have learned that even clearly constructive uses may have unexpected harmful side effects, because our technological society has made us all so interdependent... — nowadays, we are condemned to strive harder to foresee and avert danger.

However, this does not and should not mean that the acquisition of knowledge itself must be regulated, directed or stopped. Knowledge increases options, offering us additional opportunities to manipulate the universe for good or for evil. If we choose wisely, we end with more opportunity for good....

Even where new knowledge offers little good and much evil, isn't it possible for us to select the little good and discard the much evil? Or is humanity so certain to choose the evil that ignorance is the only way out?

If the latter is true, nothing will save us. A humanity riddled with malevolent stupidity, intent on destroying itself, will find the opportunity to do so. We are doomed....

Is it better to shield a child from all harm by imprisoning it in a nursery with padded walls or to bring it out into the world, teaching it to recognize danger and to learn to avoid it? If you have a child, which course have you followed?...

Scientific research can, perhaps always will, present humanity with overwhelming dangers. From time to time governments have arrogated unto themselves the power to save us by stepping in. But, ultimately, isn't it up to us to save ourselves by learning to make the right choices — by making sure that our wisdom keeps pace with our knowledge?

“Civilization has ever developed the physical and the intellec-

tual at the cost of the psychic and spiritual" (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 319). Mere head-learning with no soul-wisdom to illuminate and guide it is responsible for many a problem that humanity faces today. As time rolls on there is a growing latent fear everywhere as to what the future might hold in store for us. It is not unlikely that our civilization may be destroyed by the very forces which it has had the knowledge to create but not the wisdom to control. Civilizations more mighty and glorious than our own have come to dust, and there is no reason why ours should be an exception. But that does not mean the stoppage of the progress of mankind. Human souls must go on and on in their divine pilgrimage. The ascending arc of the spiral of human evolution may bring to us a better time of which Mr. Judge has spoken: "...out of anger and disturbance will arise a new and better time; yet not without the pain which accompanies every new birth."

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"In the Light of Theosophy" for April 1982 noted that Antarctica was in remote antiquity joined to India, Australia and other lands, all forming a single land mass. The recent discovery in Seymour Island, located off the north-eastern tip of the Antarctic peninsula, of a "treasure trove" of animal fossils, including land mammals, goes to support the theory that what is now the frozen continent was not always so.

An AP dispatch from Washington printed in *The Times of India* for March 22 states that the mammalian fossil find is ranked by the National Science Foundation, which sponsored the research, as "one of the most significant scientific discoveries in recent years." According to Dr. William J. Zinsmeister who headed the research team, "The confirmed presence of land mammals in Antarctica clearly shows that Antarctica and South America were attached during the late cretaceous and early tertiary periods, about 65 million years ago." Scientists are veering round to the view that Antarctica must have been connected to Australia on one side and to South America on the other.

The recent interest in Antarctica's past is also in evidence in an article in the May *Science Digest*:

The land was lushly fertile. Snow was abundant but so were thick, spreading forests. Temperatures were brisk but certainly

bearable, and the adjacent ocean was sometimes an invigorating 50 degrees Fahrenheit. This idyllic sanctuary was not a remote outpost. You could walk there from South America. Or Australia.

This was the state of things 55 million years ago on the vast, frozen expanse we call the Antarctic. Only now are scientists beginning to understand how this promising wilderness became a wasteland and how its transformation affected the rest of the world.

In hopes of unravelling Antarctica's history, Dr. James Kennett, a marine biologist at the University of Rhode Island, has been studying the age and composition of fossils and ocean floor in the area. Some striking theories are developing. . . .

About 50 million years ago the great tectonic plate on which Australia sits began to move, according to Kennett's ocean-floor studies. About 20 million years later, the South American plate began to go north. Antarctica, now an island continent, was soon surrounded by the circum-Antarctic current, a chill water now undiluted by the warmer equatorial currents. Kennett notes that the continent "began to resemble a self-contained refrigeration system." Temperatures fell, vegetation died and the south-polar ice cap began to creep northward. . . .

Kennett believes land mammals were affected throughout the Southern Hemisphere: "These climatic alterations created important changes in the world's vegetation belts." Cooler, drier weather caused forests as far away as East Africa to be replaced by grasslands. Forest dwellers gave way to the grazing breeds of the savannas. Some of the primates who came out of the woods at that time included our own ancestors.

The Occult teaching shows "the (now) polar regions as the earliest of the seven cradles of Humanity, and as the tomb of the bulk of the mankind of that region during the Third Race, when the gigantic continent of Lemuria began separating into smaller continents." This was caused, according to the explanation in an Occult Commentary, by a decrease of velocity in the earth's rotation

When the Wheel runs at the usual rate, its extremities (the poles) agree with its middle circle (equator); when it runs slower and tilts in every direction, there is a great disturbance on the face of the Earth. The waters flow toward the two ends, and new lands arise in the middle belt (equatorial lands), while those at the ends are subject to pralayas by submersion. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 324-25)

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