

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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### THE PRIDE OF "ORIGINALITY"

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Occultism teaches that no form can be given to anything, either by nature or by man, whose ideal type does not already exist on the subjective plane. More than this; that no such form or shape can possibly enter man's consciousness, or evolve in his imagination, which does not exist in prototype, at least as an approximation.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

H.P.B. never tired of declaring that the philosophy she gave out was none of her invention; that she but reiterated what she had been taught; or, in the words of Montaigne quoted by her in *The Secret Doctrine* (I, xlvi), "I have here made only a nosegay of culled flowers, and have brought nothing of my own but the string that ties them." Her detractors misconstrued this and branded her a "plagiarist," claiming that her "synthesis of science, religion and philosophy" was nothing more than a "borrowing" from this source and that.

All that is enshrined in the simple-sounding aphorism "Thus have I heard" is not always comprehended. To understand H.P.B.'s declaration that the mighty, majestic and deathless truths she taught were not the result of her original thinking, one needs to grasp what is implicit in the opening words of the fourth chapter of the *Gita*. No true Teacher has ever claimed to be a revealer of a new doctrine that had not been known and taught before his time, for Truth is age-old. Early humanity got its first ideas, not only of spiritual knowledge, but also of all the arts and sciences,

from divine Teachers and Instructors who had perfected themselves in prior periods of evolution; and the ideas implanted then remain as inherent ideas to this day. Thus it can be seen that there is no foundation for the pride of ideas felt by so many of us. They are not original. We never could have evolved them ourselves, unaided; and, had it not been for the great wisdom of the divine Rulers and Guides in the beginning of our evolution, we should be hopelessly drifting now.

A Master once wrote:

Abstract enquiries into the most puzzling problems did not arise in the brain of Archimedes as a spontaneous and hitherto untouched subject, but rather as a reflection of prior enquiries in the same direction and by men separated from his days by as long a period—and far longer—than the one which separates you from the great Syracusan.

In her article "Occult or Exact Science?" H.P.B. speaks of "an old axiom of esoteric philosophy":

*"nothing of that which does not exist somewhere, whether in the visible or invisible kosmos, can be reproduced artificially, or even in human thought."*

"What nonsense is this?" exclaimed a combative Theosophist upon hearing it uttered. "Suppose I think of an animated tower, with rooms in it and a human head, approaching and talking with me—can there be such a thing in the universe?"

"Or parrots hatching out of almond shells?" said another sceptic. Why not?—was the answer—not on this earth, of course. But how do we know that there may not be such beings as you describe—tower-like bodies and human heads—on some other planet? Imagination is nothing but the memory of preceding births—Pythagoras tells us.

Even in our own day and age when "originality" is made much of, profound thinkers have corroborated this vital idea that there is nothing new under the sun, that nothing can be said or written, or even imagined, that has not been anticipated by men in the past. "As soon as we are born, the world begins to work upon us," wrote Goethe, "and this goes on to the end. If I could give an account of all that I owe to great predecessors and contemporaries, there would be but a small balance in my favour." And, according to Voltaire, "originality is nothing but judicious imitation. The most original writers borrowed one from another." Literature is full of "coincidences" which some call plagiarism. But just as, in the words of

Montaigne, "the bees pillage the flowers here and there but they make honey of them which is all their own," so also a truly creative writer transforms and mixes up what he has borrowed from others into a work all his own. As a Master of Wisdom has written:

From the right point of view, if you will know, it is only the expression of another person's *original* ideas, some independent sentence, a thought, which in its brief completeness is capable of being constructed into a wise motto or maxim that could be constituted into what is regarded as *plagiarism*—the pilfering of another person's "brain property." There is not a book but is the shadow of some other book, the concrete image, very often, of the *astral body* of it in some other work upon the same or approximate subject. I agree entirely with Dr. Cromwell when he says that "true talent will become original in the very act of engaging itself with the ideas of others"; nay will often *convert the dross* of previous authors into the golden ore that shines forth to the world as its own peculiar creation. "From a series of extravagant and weak Italian romances, Shakespeare took the plots, the characters, and the major part of the incidents of those dramatic works which have exalted his name, as an *original* writer, above that of every other in the annals of literature."

Unconscious imitation is to be found not only in the realm of literature but in *all* spheres. Emerson's essay on "Quotation and Originality" contains important truths. He writes:

By necessity, by proclivity, and by delight, we all quote. We quote not only books and proverbs, but arts, sciences, religion, customs, and laws; nay, we quote temples and houses, tables and chairs by imitation. The Patent-Office Commissioner knows that all machines in use have been invented and re-invented over and over; that the mariner's compass, the boat, the pendulum, glass, movable types, the kaleidoscope, the railway, the power-loom, etc., have been many times found and lost, from Egypt, China, and Pompeii down; and if we have arts which Rome wanted, so also Rome had arts which we have lost; that the invention of yesterday of making wood indestructible by means of vapour of coal-oil or paraffin was suggested by the Egyptian method which has preserved its mummy-cases four thousand years.

The highest statement of new philosophy complacently caps itself with some prophetic maxim from the oldest learning. There is

something mortifying in this perpetual circle.

The Esoteric Philosophy teaches that "everything that *is, was, and will be*, eternally is, even the countless forms, which are finite and perishable only in their objective, not in their *ideal* Form. They existed as ideas, in the Eternity, and, when they pass away, will exist as reflections" (*S.D.*, I, 282). Every act, every word, every thought of ours proceeds from the world of archetypes, which, in the Platonic sense, means "the world as it existed *in the Mind* of the Deity" (*S.D.*, I, 200). It is the world of primal subjective differentiation, in and from which all beings and all things are conceived and formed. In the Divine Akasha which pervades all space "lies inherent the eternal Ideation of the Universe in its ever-changing aspects on the planes of matter and objectivity" (*The Theosophical Glossary*, "Akasa"). In this Akasha and its lower and gross counterpart, the astral light, are absorbed and retained all our thoughts and images, all immortal ideas and passing fancies. Remembrance, recollection, reminiscence, receiving "bolts from the blue," or being struck by a flash of premonition or of intuition, are all related, in their higher aspect, to the world of prototypes and of archetypes, and, in their lower, to the discerning of images in the astral light.

For many of us imagination means nothing more than the creation of fantasies. It has to be given a right direction and lifted above the distorted pictures in the astral light to the Akashic records provided by Those who, at any time, have helped on the spiritual evolution of mankind. Real originality, then, lies not in trying to picture something new and unique, which is impossible, but in embodying our perception of universals in an image to which we must give form and substance in the physical world. The immortal ideas implanted as seeds in the mind of man need the deliberate and conscious exercise of will to make them sprout forth.

Let us take all knowledge to be our province, for truth is the monopoly of no individual. Let him who would be an original thinker follow the example of the Wise Men of the early Fifth Race who passed *lives* in learning the laws and principles of life handed down by their Predecessors. Original thinking in the true sense, therefore, is the tracing back of all thought to *origins*, to first principles, and the conscious evaluation of every proposition on that basis. It is not "something new" that is needed, but a new way of looking at what is before us.

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## THE SOUL AS ARTIST

FOR many men and women their daily life is one big round of drudgery, enlivened occasionally by mundane enjoyments and sense thrills in which they seek to lay aside duties and cares. All daily duties, from waking up to returning to sleep, appear to them drab and prosaic and are performed without zest or enthusiasm. They are led to believe that life has no meaning or purpose, that it is but an "empty dream," "a walking shadow," "full of sound and fury, signifying nothing." Whether rich or poor, they are forever discontented with their lot, ever craving for something which they do not possess.

This is an old, old problem. It arises because the majority of people do not try to understand the Science of Life and the Art of Living. A little reflection would lead us to the conclusion that our life need not be monotonous, that the prosaic can and should be tempered with the poetic. Life can be made truly artistic, and we can find Soul-satisfaction in the very discharge of our daily duties.

The root cause of the apparent monotony of life is lack of a definite goal. Because there is no goal to strive for, no destination to reach, the human mind muddles through existence without learning anything. It is true that many people say that they have a goal in life: some want to attain wealth; others desire to obtain fame; still others crave for human love and attention; and a fourth class even wish to serve their community and their nation. But when any or all of these classes are pressed to answer why they desire wealth or fame or love, or why they wish to serve, they are not able to explain. This shows that theirs is an impulsively conceived goal, not rooted in knowledge. The reason why so few people have an intelligent understanding of the goal they have chosen and the definite road leading to that goal is that they have made their choice in terms of impulsive desires and have not deliberately sought for a rational basis.

The lives of those who are passively resigned to their lot and who make no attempt to improve it are coloured by the quality of *tamas*, the dark quality of indifference. To this class belong those who put up with ghastly poverty and starvation, whose mental and moral growth is stunted, and who do not know what else to do but put up with their lot.

The second class of beings are fully immersed in the quality of *rajas*—restlessness and inordinate desires. They have erected goals—vague, undefined, unintelligent, rooted in selfish desires. These people are full

of cravings and, though they may satisfy these, they have no peace. Seeking for joy, they fail to secure it, for in the hour of attainment of their goal they find out that it is not what they had hoped for.

Both these classes must reach ultimately the stage of those who are centred in the quality of *sattva*, who have formulated their goal not impulsively but will-fully and intelligently. They have a clear perception of the purpose of existence—the gaining of experience by the Soul in the world of matter, through the body and its senses, through the desires and the mind.

We cannot perform deeds without a body. But when we learn that works are not performed by the body, but are done by the Soul in and through the body, then the drab, the prosaic, the unromantic aspect of daily life undergoes a change. The Art of Living depends on the artist, and the artist is the Soul in the body. The Soul is the sculptor and the body is the marble with which he works. The Soul is the painter and the body is the canvas on which he puts his colours. The Soul is the poet and the body is the tablet on which he writes his verse. The Soul is the musician and the body is the *vina* on which he plays.

One may procure the most melodious *vina*, but if one does not know how to play, no music comes forth; so also in life. Life itself is like a wonderful instrument, but we must make the necessary effort to learn how to play that instrument, how to live our life as it should be lived. The human Soul, the artist, must work, otherwise there can be no statue from the marble, no picture on the canvas. The lives of most people are like spoilt blocks of marble, badly cut and uncouth; or they are full of discordant notes, like the *vina* with broken strings. This is because they do not recognize the Soul within to be the doer of deeds, and all actions, be they pleasurable or painful, to be avenues to knowledge and experience. A painter, in painting a picture which would give joy to the beholder, makes use of the contrast of light and shade. So also sunshine and shadow, pleasure and pain, are necessary for the Soul to reach its goal.

For an artist to attain skill in his particular art, repeated effort is required. So too the human Soul, the artist, must perfect himself by treading *Abhyasa-Marga*, the path of constant practice. Only through continuous endeavour can he make his deeds, his artistic creations, show beauty of proportion. Ordinarily we say that we must learn to do our day's work better and better. We must go one step further and recognize that

the cook, the peon, the clerk, the professional man, are all artists, and that by repeated effort they must learn to better their own creations. Only when they have done so does Nature free them for higher and nobler creations. The general tendency is not to perfect ourselves in our own duties, but to change them. Ambition is ordinarily mistaken for aspiration. He who is ambitious runs away from his duty or tries to run away. The man of real aspiration tries to perfect himself in his own tasks through *Abhyasa*, continuous practice.

Through repeated endeavour we must see the inner meaning of all our duties, even the irksome ones, and perceive the glory of the Lord inherent in those deeds and duties. This is the real meaning of dedicating all our actions to the Krishna within, to the Christos seated in the hearts of all of us. This is true meditation, which has to be practised continuously, throughout the day. We must learn to note what action of the Supreme our own duties represent. A man is a cook—his cooking but represents the effort of the Superior Spirit, Purushottama, who makes ready the food of experience at the dawn of manifestation for all Souls to eat and enjoy. A man is an accountant—his duties represent the action of Chitragupta, the silent Recorder, who keeps the account of every Soul's life, whom nothing escapes, who puts down every rupee of profit made or every pie of loss, and on whose accuracy the business of Nature greatly depends. A man is a farmer—the seeds he sows and the harvest he reaps represent the action of Karma which gives back to every creature the exact fruit of what it has sown in the past. A man is a soldier—the discords and wars in which he participates are but the outcome of the archetypal conflict, the conflict between the Self of Matter and the Self of Spirit within every human being. A man is a doctor—let him not forget that there is a healing which is not of bodies but of Souls and that there are those who specialize in such healing. A man is a servant—let him bear in mind that there are Those who have constituted Themselves the Servants of the human race, but for whose Labour of Love life would become far more difficult and miserable for us than it already is. There is not a profession, not a walk in life, not a single act done by anyone, which is not a direct reflection of some spiritual reality.

By remembering the spiritual counterpart of ordinary physical deeds, the Soul acquires proficiency in the Art of Living. The life of such a one is not drab and prosaic. Day by day he traces with the brush of romance his deeds, now radiant, now shady, on the canvas of life, and, beholding

the picture, says: "It is good, but let me make it better still."

People often complain that they are inefficient, and they begin at the wrong end; they try to improve their outer deeds. They will not succeed until they recognize that the artist, the Soul, must begin with the thinking principle, Manas. People are restless, dissatisfied, full of cravings, because the mind is agitated, turbulent and obstinate. A pure mind will make the body clean; a controlled mind will make the body steady; an illuminated mind will make the body radiant. Mental exercise is as necessary as bodily exercise. Through constant practice the mind has to be withdrawn from the world of senses and allowed to bathe in the light of the Spiritual Soul.

Without *Jnana* or knowledge we cannot become true artists, we cannot gain proficiency in the Art of Living. The Master-Artists are those perfect in knowledge. Let us, budding artists, seek the knowledge of the great Art from these Teacher-Artists who impart the understanding of how to make all lives beautiful and radiant.

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A CUCUMBER IS bitter. Throw it away. There are briars in the road. Turn aside from them. This is enough. Do not add, And why were such things made in the world? For thou wilt be ridiculed by a man who is acquainted with nature, as thou wouldst be ridiculed by a carpenter and shoemaker if thou didst find fault because thou seest in their workshop shavings and cuttings from the things which they make. And yet they have places into which they can throw these shavings and cuttings; but the universal nature has no external space. Now the wondrous part of her art is that though she has circumscribed herself, everything within her which appears to decay and to grow old and to be useless she changes into herself, and again makes other new things from these very same; so that she requires neither substance from without nor wants a place into which she may cast that which decays. She is content then with her own space, and her own matter, and her own art.

—MARCUS AURELIUS ANTONINUS

## THE METAPHYSICS OF KARMA

ONE of the greatest services Gautama, the Buddha, rendered to India and to humanity was through the light that he shed on the doctrine of Karma. The social and religious corruption prevailing in the India of his day was in no small measure the result of the misunderstood and misinterpreted concept of Karma. The metaphysical and cosmical aspect of the Great Law was a matter of debate, argument and futile discussion. There was much of airy speculation, and theology had usurped the place of philosophy. The chief result was the substitution of God and Gods in place of Immutable and Infallible Law. And because of this, the ethical aspect of the Law of Karma became corrupted and degraded; people began propitiating lords of Karma, forgetting that each one for himself was the lord and master of his own Karma. And so among the Buddha's teachings Karma occupies a significant place. The philosophy and the ethics of Buddhism cover the whole ground in a magnificent sweep.

On the metaphysical side, Karma as the Law of Causation is a line, straight and endless; it is also a circle or a chain.

*Karma as the line of causation:* Which came first, the seed or the fruit which contains the seed? Seed and fruit, fruit and seed—one issuing from the other, endlessly. This aspect of Karma makes the concept of endless Duration and boundless Space a little clear to the human mind. Modern science is not able to tell us whether the egg or the hen came first; the hen lays the egg, but without the egg there would be no hen! Our philosophy teaches that Karma or causation is a straight line which has no beginning and will never have an end. But the fact to note is that while beginning and end are inconceivable to us, we are able to perceive that which has begun and that which must come to an end. And this brings us to the second aspect of Karma.

*Karma as a chain or circle of causation:* As such it is composed of 12 links, the 12 causes of existence. "A concatenation of cause and effect in the whole range of existence" through these 12 links, called *Nidanas*, makes a chain. These links deal with that aspect of Karma which affects not only human beings, but all beings—from the cosmos to the atom. One great division of the Law touches one division of Nature, that called the human kingdom.

Karma—cause-effect, action-reaction—has a cosmical and universal aspect. It operates in the starry heavens above and in the phenomenal

world below. Crystals under the earth and pearls in the ocean depths are formed by the action of the Great Law. Seeds sprout, plants grow, trees shed leaves, and fruits yield up their seeds—all because of the Law of Causation. Dogs bark, cats mew, tigers devour—again because of the Great Law.

This is its touch upon the blossomed rose,  
 The fashion of its hand-shaped lotus-leaves;  
 In dark soil and the silence of the seeds  
 The robe of Spring it weaves;

That is its painting on the glorious clouds,  
 And these its emeralds on the peacock's train;  
 It hath its stations in the stars; its slaves  
 In lightning, wind, and rain.

(*The Light of Asia*)

The student should note that the universal and cosmical aspect of the Great Law is explained in a masterly fashion in the doctrine of the *Nidanas*. Let him further note that the eleventh link in the chain, that of *Samskara*, action on the plane of illusion, will yield much information about the operation of Karma in the human kingdom.

In Hindu philosophy the term [*Samskara*] 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*)

To understand the operation of Karma, the student must study also the doctrine of *Pancha Skandhas*, the five (esoterically seven) groups of attributes in every human being. These five are: *Rupa*, body or material qualities; *Vedana*, sensation or the perception of pleasure and pain; *Sanjana*, consciousness or the cognition of things; *Samskara*, tendencies of mind, creating propensities and impulses; *Vidyana*, mental powers or

knowledge of external things. The assemblage of these forms a man's personality. The operation of Karma in human beings is closely knit with these *skandhas* or "bundles" of attributes. They intimately affect our body nature, our psychic nature and our intellectual nature. They explain our capacities and limitations, our tendencies and characteristics, and why these vary from person to person. At birth, each one brings his characteristics—*skandhas*—from previous incarnations, and from them as germ or basis builds up a new set of *skandhas* for the new life. It is indeed the thirst for life inherent in these *skandhas* that forces reincarnation. They become the foundation of the new personality, and lay down the trend of life that is to be lived.

*Skandhas*, like *Nidanas*, belong to one of the most subtle and abstruse doctrines of the Eastern metaphysical system. They are the agencies through which our quantum of merit or demerit is brought home to us and our characteristics receive a longer or a shorter lease of life. The *skandhas* are germs of life; every vibration, every thought, wish and feeling, produces *skandhas*. At death, we leave these behind in the Astral Light, only to pick them up in our next birth. Nothing comes from nothing, and there must be a link between the lives. New *skandhas* are formed from the old ones, and in each life "our own comes back to us."

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 hundredfold 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*. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 138-39)

We must learn to study also the practical aspects of Karma which throw light on the subject of our social health and our spiritual well-being. Karma as it operates in the human kingdom is first and foremost the Law of Exertion—of active energization, not of passive submission. It is also the Law of Responsibility, and therefore the Law of Ethical Causation and Moral Retribution. It is this aspect of the Law which, if used in a practical manner, can make for the social amelioration of humankind, bringing peace and happiness to all.

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THE FOUNDERS of the Theosophical Society thought they had the best reason to believe that there existed, locked up in the ancient literatures of India, Ceylon, Tibet, China, Japan, and other Eastern countries, a very large body of truth which would be most important and valuable to the present generation, if it could be got at....The Asiatic people have publicly testified most unqualifiedly their gratitude and respect to us for what we have done on the lines of the second of our declared objects. Nor should it be overlooked that the prevalent interest in Theosophy and mystical Oriental philosophy in general, which the most casual observer is forced to see throughout Europe and America, is directly or indirectly the result of our Society's activity. With thirty-eight branches in the United States, and others in various European countries, among whose members are men and women of high culture, including many writers for the press, it is easy enough to comprehend the justness of the above claim. Of course it is not for me to say how much, if anything, the books I have myself written, and the magazines I have edited and am editing in English and French, have helped to cause this new bent of the Western mind. Suffice it that it exists. For Theosophists it is the presage of the dawn of a new religious day for the world, the harbinger of a new marriage between science and religion, and of peace between the good people of the most incongruous sects—as the world thinks them.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE PHILOSOPHER'S QUEST

MODERN philosophers and mystics who have sought a solution to the vexed problems of existence have at times proclaimed that they have found it. The intellect has endeavoured to go beyond the forms and shapes of things to where there is a gleam in the distant sky and the promise of an effulgent dawn. The elfin lights and will-o'-the-wisps of the mystic can hardly satisfy the yearning gaze of him who, looking past the summits of his familiar mountains, tries to pierce the empyrean blue for a vision of the hidden and a promise of the Unknown. In all ages, fancy has lent wings to the intellect and made it soar to altitudes which it is given to the very few to explore. Yet, the intellectual wing has always had its limitations and, finding no final solution, it has with ineffectual beatings fallen back to the comparative safety of its familiar hill.

But there are others who have sensed that there is yet another faculty in man which can provide the grand motor power which can push the soul-searchings farther, deeper, wider than can the tardy processes of ratiocinative thought. Intuition is a master faculty and can carry him who possesses it past barriers which seemingly appear insuperable. To such an one, Nature becomes the grand ally, the intelligent participator in his search for the Illimitable and the Infinite.

True Wisdom is *sui generis* and has always existed from time immemorial. The modern philosopher is too prone to think that he ploughs a lonely furrow and that he ventures into virgin fields untrodden by human foot. This is where the modern philosopher makes his initial mistake and, making it, vitiates his whole effort.

If there is a plan to this Universe, if there is a Law that has held the divergent and chaotic elements together, can it not be inferred that there must have been, nay, that there needs must be, the Knowers and Keepers of that Law who guide it intelligently along the crests of cycles? Theosophy asserts that such human Intelligences exist and have a part in the divine governance of things. The "Opened Eye of Dangma," of the highest Adept, is to be understood and His high estate envisaged. Therefore it is no dogmatism, no blind faith, which makes us say that these Great Beings have existed and still exist—men who have mastered the secrets of Nature; men, moreover, who must have presided over the great evolutionary upsurges aeons before our day and age. It is therefore presumptuous for us to say that before us no human agency had

penetrated into the arcana of Being and Non-Being, that no human entity had reached to that consciousness which for our Universe is the highest achievable. Better were it to say that our own intellect cannot soar higher than the limitations we have placed on it by the thousand-and-one obstructions which are anathema to the Divine. Any earnest student of *The Secret Doctrine* will find that the Stanzas of Dzyan go further than the highest intellection of philosophers and, moreover, show a consistency that proves itself in the sameness of its workings in the macrocosm as in the microcosm.

The yearning Soul, when it aspires towards the Divine, moves in realms that lie beyond the intellectual horizons. Those who have passed these horizons have left their sign and impress on things, have left records for those on the other side of the formidable portals that separate the ordinary world from the sacred and therefore secret realms of life. For, secrecy, though it be alien to the reasoning of the philosopher, is a rule of the Inner Sanctuary imposed by the very laws which sustain life. Records of this mysterious knowledge have always existed and can still be traced in the works of the pre-Homeric poets as in those of the master craftsmen who sanctified the Mysteries of Egypt and of Greece. And yet, these works can hardly reveal anything to the cold intellect of man. The Soul is its own Law and its own Interpreter. The Spirit of man cannot translate its message in a language foreign to the mystery language of the Highest. This Law has always remained inviolate, and many a wise one like the meek Jesus had to veil his teaching under myth and parable. The *hoi polloi* are strangers to this language, are in fact divorced from this superconscious plane by the barriers which in their ignorance they most prize—Reasoning and Intellect.

The awakened man seeks by the very force of his aspiration to reach beyond the plane of the purely mundane and the personal. Yet, the knowledge which comes, however partial, however ethereal and impalpable, must be woven into the fabric and vesture of man's existence. If that were not possible, then were our efforts a mere posturing in the void, a performance, however wonderful, of the Soul upon the high trapeze. But philosophy is not for show, or for applause, or even for personal satisfaction as at the thought of some great feat achieved. The end of philosophy is action; the heart of philosophy is an unfoldment—the burgeoning of a bloom and the spreading of its aroma upon the still midnight air.

The work suffers much because the *tattwa* or the essence of things has not been delved into. This essence so neglected by the modern philosopher is the link between the manifested and the Unknown. By this essence are connected the metal and the star, the *deva* and the blade of grass, the heart of man and the ubiquitous Buddhi. The Indian philosopher has the advantage of his hoary tradition. The world needs martyrs, missionaries, so that the West especially may receive and adopt the soul-satisfying philosophy of the Ancients.

In any attempt at formulating a philosophy, the Knowers of Wisdom cannot be by-passed. The Rishis and Prajapatis are not the fabrication of sensitive imaginings. The institution of the Guru has always existed from hoary antiquity, and no pride of knowledge, no profundity of thought, can replace that light which the true Guru alone can give and which is the only light which can show the connection between the Permanent and the mutable, the Jivanmukta and the man of clay.

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IN what does the heaviness of the Occultist's task consist? In the immensity of its sweep as well as the infinitude of its detail. Mere sweet and delightful longing after God will not of itself accomplish it, nor is progress found in *aspiring* to self-knowledge, even when as a result of that is found partial illumination. These are excellent; but we are talking of a problem whose implacable front yields to nothing but *force*, and that force must be directed by *knowledge*.

The field is not emotional, for the play of the emotions destroys the equilibrium essential to the art. Work done calling for reward avails not unless it has produced knowledge.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## RETURN TO THE NATURAL

A RECENT British rail poster, extolling the virtues of first-class travel, invites us to enjoy the "greatest show on earth" from our railway carriage seats—the British landscape. Now this may be a "sales pitch," but it is true that Nature provides a wide variety of landscapes and panoramic views, which as things of beauty are hard to beat. Nature is a loving Mother who is always willing to heal our wounds, physically, mentally, or morally, provided we are of the right frame of mind to take advantage of the opportunities provided. Beauty is always freely available if we have the eyes to see and are willing to sacrifice our preoccupation with selfish pursuits. We have to become Nature's children if we wish to receive the "gifts" that our "Mother" is waiting to bestow on us.

The human condition is a sad one indeed. We have the power to become as the "gods," but we fritter away precious time on pursuits that serve no purpose and that lead us away from our Divine Heritage. The beauties of Nature are all around us, but we rarely take them in except on occasions when we allow ourselves a vacation, and even then our minds are full of irrelevant thoughts about the so-called "real" world we have to return to at the end of our trip. And so we often rush around so that we can get back to our "more pressing" concerns. Everything that is "true and lovable" is pushed into the background and the cult of the false and empty is brought to the foreground. When we go to the countryside, we are surrounded by sights, sounds and scents that have a therapeutic effect. Certainly a few hours of peaceful meditation in the quiet countryside is more effective than a whole course of tablets prescribed by the doctor for stress-related symptoms. But the hold of the busy city is strong and although we promise ourselves to break free for a while, there is so much to do, so much to consume our lives, so much "frothy" entertainment to be had!

There is certainly much that is beautiful in human beings who are a part of Nature. There is great beauty in the eyes of a child, or of someone who has retained or regained this childlike innocence; and there is colour and light in their lives that sheds its radiance around. True beauty in a man or woman emanates from within and reminds us that the human being is the greatest and the most profound of Nature's children. However, the qualities which make us resplendent manifest only when we allow ourselves to relate naturally to our Divine nature by living the kind

of life recommended in all the genuine spiritual writings of the world. If the "rules" set down therein seem too difficult to follow, it is because we have made them alien to us and we look upon them as external and rigid, whereas they are in fact the exact opposite. It is our lives now that are external and rigid. Indeed, even physically in childhood and youth we can see the flowering of this beauty and the promise of still greater loveliness. But what goes wrong?

In *The Secret Doctrine* H.P.B. writes:

The Demon of Pride, Lust, Rebellion, and Hatred, has never had *any being before* the appearance of physical conscious man. It is man who has begotten, nurtured and allowed the fiend to develop in his heart; he, again, who has contaminated the indwelling god in himself, by linking the pure spirit with the impure demon of matter. (II, 274)

If man has brought this "Demon" into being, he alone can exorcise it. The first step on the real Spiritual Path is a return to normality. We have to find our way back to Mother Nature and her ways. These are reminders of our Spiritual Nature. The world that we have created is dominated by a disregard for Nature and a greed that destroys for profit, as well as a sensuality that degrades the Spiritual Nature of mankind and desecrates the sacredness of bringing a soul into incarnation. At the moment, man is an alien on his own planet and it is only by returning to the Natural ways, the ways of our Spiritual Nature, that he can redeem himself.

The Soul of man can never be totally crushed and in difficult times it emerges to claim its rightful place. Perhaps this is one of the meanings of Krishna's statement in the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

I produce myself among creatures...whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world; and thus I incarnate from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of righteousness. (Chapter IV)

This could mean that the Spirit of man, when faced with adversity, springs to life and battles to overcome the difficulties it is faced with. Is this not true in our individual lives? So why should it not also be true as regards the collective Spirit of Humanity? Is it possible that this "world of illusion" can for ever prevent the inner Divinity from shining forth? It seems hardly likely! The time has come for the higher elements in man

to say, "No more," and to begin to assert themselves as the natural feeling of humanity. They have been too long in exile and now demand to be heard by those who have the "ears to hear." Genuine spiritual feeling is in a sense a return to "Naturalness," the re-establishment of sanity and the awareness that our true nature is rooted in Bliss and not in misery. Religions are man-made. They were pure at their source, and may have been essential at some point in our progress to make us aware that there are deeper things to life to contemplate, but ultimately they have become constricting and degraded.

The only true Path is the one taught by Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mohammed, H.P.B. and other Great Teachers and it is summed up in these few words from *The Voice of the Silence*: "If through the Hall of Wisdom, thou would'st reach the Vale of Bliss, Disciple, close fast thy senses against the great dire heresy of Separateness that weans thee from the rest." W.Q. Judge expresses the same idea in these words: "Let us extend help to all those who come our way. This will be true progress; the veils that come over our souls fall away when we work for others." The true Spiritual Path has always been one of breaking down barriers and learning to "love thy neighbour as thyself." They are as much a part of society as we are, and to love ourselves any more than our brothers and sisters indicates that we think of ourselves as somehow different from them and have therefore fallen victims to the "great dire heresy of Separateness" that weans us from the rest. We need to see clearly our relationship to Nature and to the people around us. We must learn to see the Divine in all things, particularly in our fellow human beings, and we should find ways to make them aware of their own Spirituality and the Beauty of their own Souls. Then perchance we will start to seek the Higher Ground of our being despite the distractions of a world obsessed with limitations.

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The pine tree lives for a thousand years,  
The morning-glory but for a single day;  
Yet both have fulfilled their destiny.

—JAPANESE SAYING

# CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

## III.—The Means and Way

ON the path that leads to concentration, it is useless, even dangerous, to proceed further until the aspirant has his lower self under complete control. Hasten slowly was never more true of human effort than in this field of human progression. The aspirant has to understand that it is impossible to employ spiritual forces if there is the slightest tinge of selfishness remaining in him. "For, unless the intention is entirely unalloyed, the spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced by it." It is to be noted and remembered at all times that whereas the powers and forces of the animal nature can be used as well by the selfish and revengeful as by the unselfish and the all-forgiving, the powers and forces of spirit lend themselves only to the perfectly pure in heart.

Therefore, the primary objective of the aspiring heart must be to stifle the voice of earthly appetites. This is not easy of achievement for the simple reason that the lower mind is too prone to mistake the fires of lust for the sunlight of life. However, even at comparatively lower levels Nature helps to check any act of desecration of the spiritual by administering temptations to the aspirant, so that even by the experience of his failure he may learn and admit that the fetters of the lower still lie heavy upon his Soul. The discipline which corrects tendencies of a lower nature requires a new orientation and a saner exercise of the faculty of discrimination. A long familiarity with vice and cravings brings on an inversion of values which is to be found not only in the bad person but also in the so-called good. Fanaticism is but one aspect of it. Bigotry and superstition are born of lust, and this is a power that often hides behind a facade of virtue. Even when the aspirant is still fighting his battles on the lower strata of consciousness, his experience will show him that lust often lurks undetected and that neither instinct nor reason are competent enough to chart his oceans for him.

But if Nature seems to mock the individual in his efforts at reform, she does so only to egg him on to newer discoveries and higher virtues. Karma never visits him with difficulties unless there is strength in him to awaken a power that will remove the difficulty. The agitation of the mind and the nervous approach which usually supervene at each depar-

ture from the normal have to be replaced by a non-argumentative and confident faith in the Teaching, and later in the Teacher when merit permits his guidance and recognition.

The eradication of evil and the doing of good which are implicit in the paths of *yama* and *niyama* bring about changes not only in the mental make-up of the person but also produce psycho-physiological changes in his being, heightening his sensitivity and opening up channels and doors which had hitherto remained unopened. These new developments have also to be understood and mastered. It is at this stage that the utmost caution becomes necessary. A false sense of separateness, of being a thing apart from the masses; an undesirable elation at the progress achieved; a thirst for the attainment of psychic powers that now appear within reach—all these may yet mar the work and plunge the seeker into viscous swamps of doubt. Not only does it become imperative that the reactions to one's own achievements be kept under rigid control, but it becomes vital at this stage to control one's behaviour—inner as well as outer—to the fast-moving environment in which one finds oneself placed.

It is as if his personal Krishna guides his chariot from one theatre of war to another in rapid succession; and, as the occasion demands, the aspirant has to switch from one weapon to another if the needs and circumstances of the fight are to be met in adequate measure. In the thickness of the fight as in the bivouac of life, the mind must be intent on Krishna, ready to listen to his voice and eager to do nothing save his bidding. The inner General who admonishes and guides is incapable of defeat. No reasoning can justify this act of obedience and surrender to the invisible and the soundless save faith and intuition, and both transcend the laborious earth-bound reasoning that binds the Soul in chains. Faith, says *Light on the Path*,

is a great engine, an enormous power, which in fact can accomplish all things. For, it is the covenant or engagement between man's divine part and his lesser self. The use of this engine is quite necessary in order to obtain intuitive knowledge; for unless a man believes such knowledge exists within himself, how can he claim and use it?

However, long before the voice of intuition can become more than mere imaginings and whispers, the aspirant must have learnt of his intimate ties with other human beings. If *yama* and *niyama* have ought

to impart, it is the science of the manner of meeting and facing the happiness, the unhappiness, the good and the evil which dwell in or emanate from other persons. The stamp and impress of his discipline and asceticism will make the aspirant meet the happiness in another with all the joy and fervour of a devoted friendship. He can no longer frown upon, nor be antagonistic to, nor covet the happiness, rank or circumstance of another. If the gladdened heart of another does not find a responsive chord in his being, then he can rest assured that he has a long and arduous way to go. The unhappiness of another must necessarily evoke in him the feeling of sympathy. A feeling of satisfaction at somebody's fall or discomfiture, or a judgment rashly passed that the unhappiness was well deserved, puts a stop for the time being to all progress in the Occult life.

Such thoughts and feelings but lacerate brotherhood and help strengthen the lower passional nature. The good of another has to draw out from us a feeling of genuine gladness. Envy at another's good; pain because another has outstripped us in occult knowledge, practice or behaviour; a snobbish looking down the nose at the good, however microscopic, of another, are sufficient indications that the aspirant is unconsciously on the way of throwing himself out of the Brotherhood of the elect. If the outside good is to be met and welcomed with gladness, the evil that emanates from another has to be faced and met by a studied and calculated indifference. Hatred for evil may prove to be as strong a cementing force as attraction and may bind the person to the very evil which he abhors and which sends tremors of revulsion down his spine. Says *Light on the Path*:

...before you can attain knowledge you must have passed through all places, foul and clean alike. Therefore, remember that the soiled garment you shrink from touching may have been yours yesterday, may be yours tomorrow. And if you turn with horror from it when it is flung upon your shoulders, it will cling the more closely to you. The self-righteous man makes for himself a bed of mire. Abstain because it is right to abstain—not that yourself shall be kept clean.

This abstention is to be practised when passing through foul and unclean places where sin and evil are met as outside forces. The disciple fails if these attract him. He fails also if they repel him. The abstaining from evil is achieved by a supreme indifference—a non-linking of the mind, senses and desires with the passing pageant of the evil and the

vicious.

Strange as it may seem, the negation of vice and the establishment of purity are not ends in themselves. Exoteric religions have made fetishes of them and have by that very act stayed the further progress of their votaries. For, virtue and purity are stepping-stones which when mounted help one to reach out into the beyond. If this idea is not constantly kept in mind, those same virtues and purity may become clogging attachments that bind as rigidly and as inexorably as do impurity and the host of passions that besiege one's consciousness on the lower planes of life.

What, then, is it that is required to make virtue benign and purity luminous? To answer this question, a factor hitherto unconsidered has to be taken note of. Thus far, it was instinct, higher reason and a certain amount of faith that had motivated the individual and had enabled him to rise above his fellows. But now he finds that reason stops short at relatively lower levels, with the result that its area of utility is too circumscribed to carry him into realms which he senses but which he cannot yet cognize since they are beyond the reach and power of his reason. The process of moving from premises to conclusions which the personal man had erstwhile taken to be the ultimate crown of his eminence appears to have no longer the power of progression. It is as though a different atmosphere is to be breathed for which new and different organs of respiration have to be developed.

Even as the aspirant considers this new medium of instruction, he finds that there are certain aspects of his thinking which will have to be tailored to suit the schedule and programme of his studies. For, at this stage the paths bifurcate. Does the aspirant desire *Nirvana* where he merges himself with the highest and enjoys his supreme reward over long vistas of time? For such an one there is one distinct path of attainment. But there are others also who desire that after perfection they will return to earth again and again so that they may by their sacrifice lead less fortunate brothers upon the upward way. For such, attainment is by a more arduous path. For the *Nirvanees*, incarnation as an obligatory pilgrimage is ended, but with it ends also all opportunity to serve those fellow men who still labour on earth in profound gloom. *Nirvana* is an effect and must cease as soon as the stock of merit that sustains it is exhausted.

In the case of the Renunciator, his high service, his mute uncom-

plaining lives of agony and torture will earn for him *Nirvanas* which he will gain and voluntarily lose through boundless pity and compassion for the world of deluded mortals. The knowledge required for the work that the Renunciator will have to do is not limited to the achievement of his own ends of an exalted yet selfish freedom. He will require extra strength, deep insight and innate wisdom to be able to guide, succour and heal countless others through aeons of time. He will require the fortitude of a martyr, the patience of a philosopher and the wisdom that embraces all cycles and yugas as also all planes on which consciousness functions from the grossest to the most refined. He will have to be a humble servant—even with the eminence which he has attained—who will have trained himself to obey faithfully the orders which he may receive from the great Brotherhood of White Adepts to which he will find admittance by reason of his desire to serve humanity.

Concentration, meditation and *Samadhi* are for the Renunciator also, but the use to be made of these is different. The power to probe into Nature's hidden lore, or to control and manipulate the elements, or to read and understand the minds and hearts of men has to be laboriously acquired and then renounced, to be taken up only for benefiting humanity. After use it has to be released back into its primal source so that no attachment is allowed to be developed for the particular power or for the denizens of the sphere in which the power inheres. This imports not a mere questing for knowledge, nor the growing of wings to soar out of the atmosphere of this earth. It is in fact a gathering of such knowledge—physical, psychic, spiritual—as will be required to deal with humanity in the raw. It is the looking into the future of humanity and preparing for cycles which may start running thousands of years hence. It is a constant endeavour to strengthen and extend the Guardian Wall that shields men from further and far greater misery and sorrow.

Theosophy advocates the choosing of this Path and its instructions are so imparted as to train disciples for service of the Cause during future incarnations, when their help will be needed as Companions to preserve and advance the great work which can be sustained and progressed by sacrifice alone.

(*To be continued*)

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# THE NUMBER SEVEN

## II

[Collated from *The Secret Doctrine*]

IF the mysterious Septenary Cycle is a law in nature, *and it is one*, as proven; if it is found controlling the evolution and *involution* (or death) in the realms of entomology, ichthyology and ornithology, as in the Kingdom of the Animal, mammalia and man—why cannot it be present and acting in Kosmos, in general, in its natural (though occult) divisions of time, races, and *mental* development? And why, furthermore, should not the most ancient adepts have studied and thoroughly mastered these cyclic laws under all their aspects? (II, 623 fn.)

Everything in the metaphysical as in the physical Universe is septenary. Hence every sidereal body, every planet, whether visible or invisible, is credited with six companion globes....The evolution of life proceeds on these seven globes or bodies from the 1st to the 7th in Seven ROUNDS or Seven Cycles....Our Earth, as the visible representative of its invisible superior fellow globes, its "lords" or "principles," has to live, as have the others, through seven Rounds. During the first three, it forms and consolidates; during the fourth it settles and hardens; during the last three it gradually returns to its first ethereal form: it is spiritualized, so to say....(I, 158-59)

The one eternal LAW unfolds everything in the (to be) manifested Nature on a sevenfold principle; among the rest, the countless circular chains of worlds, composed of seven globes, graduated on the four lower planes of the world of formation (the three others belonging to the Archetypal Universe). Out of these seven only *one, the lowest and the most material of those globes*, is within our plane or means of perception, the six others lying outside of it and being therefore invisible to the terrestrial eye. Every such chain of worlds is the progeny and creation of another, *lower, and dead* chain—*its reincarnation*, so to say. To make it clearer: we are told of the planets—of which *seven only* were held as sacred, as being ruled by the highest regents or gods, and not at all because the ancients knew nothing of the others—that each of these, whether known or unknown, is a septenary, as is the chain to which the Earth belongs. For instance, all such planets as Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, etc., etc., or our Earth, are as visible to us as our globe, probably,

is to the inhabitants of the other planets, if any, because they are all on the same plane; while the superior fellow-globes of these planets are on other planes quite outside that of our terrestrial senses....These invisible companions correspond curiously to that which we call "the principles in Man." The seven are on three material planes and one spiritual plane, answering to the three *Upadhis* (material bases) and one spiritual vehicle (*Vahan*) of our seven principles in the human division. (I, 152-53)

There were portions of the Secret Science that for incalculable ages had to remain concealed from the profane gaze....Doctrines such as the planetary chain, or the seven races, at once give a clue to the sevenfold nature of man, for each principle is correlated to a plane, a planet, and a race; and the human principles are, on every plane, correlated to sevenfold occult forces—those of the higher planes being of tremendous power. So that any septenary division at once gives a clue to tremendous occult powers, the abuse of which would cause incalculable evil to humanity. A clue, which is, perhaps, no clue to the present generation—especially the Westerns—protected as they are by their very blindness and ignorant materialistic disbelief in the occult. (I, xxxv)

The hierarchy of Creative Powers is divided into seven (or 4 and 3) esoteric, within the twelve great Orders, recorded in the twelve signs of the Zodiac; the seven of the manifesting scale being connected, moreover, with the Seven Planets. All this is subdivided into numberless groups of divine Spiritual, semi-Spiritual, and ethereal Beings. (I, 213)

According to esoteric teaching there are seven primary, and seven secondary "creations"; the former being the Forces *self-evolving* from the one *causeless* FORCE: the latter, showing the manifested Universe emanating from the already differentiated *divine* elements. Esoterically, as well as exoterically, all the above enumerated creations stand for the (7) periods of Evolution, whether after an "Age" or a "Day" of Brahma. This is the teaching *par excellence* of Occult Philosophy, which, however, never uses the term "creation," nor even that of evolution, "with regard to *primary* 'Creation'"; but calls all such *forces* "the *aspects* of the Causeless Force." In the Bible the seven periods are dwarfed into the six days of creation and the seventh *day* of rest, and the Westerns adhere to the letter. In the Hindu philosophy, when the active Creator has produced the world of gods, the *germs* of all the undifferentiated elements and the rudiments of future senses (the world of noumena, in short), the Universe remains unaltered for a "Day of Brahma," a period of 4,320,000,000

years. This is the *seventh* passive period or the "Sabbath day" of Eastern philosophy, that follows six periods of active evolution. (I, 446-47)

Geometrical figures, when closely studied, will yield not only a scientific explanation of the real, objective, existence of the "Seven sons of the divine Sophia," which is the light of the Logos, but show by means of other yet undiscovered keys that, with regard to Humanity, these "Seven Sons" and their numberless emanations, centres of energy personified, are an absolute necessity. Make away with them, and the mystery of Being and Mankind *will never be unriddled, not even closely approached*. (I, 430)

In the "Laws" or "Ordinances of Manu," it is said that Brahma first creates "the *ten* lords of Being," the ten Prajapati or creative Forces; which ten produce "*seven*" other Manus...or holy Beings, which are the Seven Angels of the Presence in the Western religion. This mysterious number Seven, born from the upper triangle, the latter itself born from the apex thereof, or the Silent Depths of the unknown universal soul (*Sige* and *Bythos*), is the sevenfold *Saptaparna* plant, born and manifested on the surface of the soil of mystery, from the threefold root buried deep under that impenetrable soil. This idea...the reader has to notice carefully, if he would grasp the metaphysical idea involved in the above symbol. In man as in nature, it is, according to the cis-Himalayan esoteric philosophy (which is that of the *original Manu* Cosmogony), the septenary division that is intended by Nature herself. The seventh principle (*purusha*) alone is the divine SELF, strictly speaking; for, as said in Manu, "He (Brahma) having pervaded the subtile parts of those six of unmeasured brightness," created or called them forth to "Self"-consciousness or the consciousness of that *One SELF* (V. 16, ch. i. *Manu*). (II, 573-74)

"The earliest forces," [says Gerald Massey] "recognized in nature were reckoned as seven in number. These became seven elementals, devils (?) or later, divinities. Seven properties were assigned to nature, as matter, cohesion, fluxion, coagulation, accumulation, station, and division—and *seven elements or souls to man*." All this was taught in the esoteric doctrine, but it was interpreted and its mysteries unlocked, as already stated, with *seven*, not two, or at the utmost, three keys; hence the causes and their effects worked in invisible or mystic as well as psychic nature, and were made referable to metaphysics and psychology as much as to physiology. "The principle of *sevening*"—as the author says—"was

introduced, and the number seven supplied a sacred type *that could be used for manifold purposes*"; and it was so used. (II, 631-32)

Thus proceed the cycles of the septenary evolution, in Septennial nature; the Spiritual or divine; the psychic or semi-divine; the intellectual, the passional, the instinctual, or *cognitional*; the semi-corporeal and the purely material or physical natures. All these evolve and progress cyclically, passing from one into another, in a double, centrifugal and centripetal way, *one* in their ultimate essence, *seven* in their aspects. (I, 267)

It is the knowledge of the natural laws that makes of seven the root nature-number, so to say, in the manifested world—at any rate in our present terrestrial life-cycle—and the wonderful comprehension of its workings, that unveiled to the ancients so many of the mysteries of nature. It is these laws, again, and their processes on the sidereal, terrestrial, and moral planes, which enabled the old astronomers to calculate correctly the duration of the cycles and their respective effects on the march of events; to record beforehand (prophecy, it is called) the influence which they will have on the course and development of the human races. The Sun, Moon, and planets being the never-erring time measurers, whose potency and periodicity were well known, became thus the great Ruler and rulers of our little system in all its *seven domains*, or "spheres of action." [The spheres of action of the combined Forces of Evolution and Karma are (1) the Super-spiritual or *noumenal*; (2) the Spiritual; (3) the Psychic; (4) the Astro-ethereal; (5) the Sub-astral; (6) the Vital; and (7) the purely *physical* spheres.—fn.] This has been so evident and remarkable, that even many of the modern men of Science, Materialists as well as Mystics, had their attention called to this law. Physicians and theologians, mathematicians and psychologists have drawn the attention of the world repeatedly to this fact of periodicity in the behaviour of "Nature." (II, 621)

More than one physician has stood aghast at the periodical *septenary* return of the cycles in the rise and fall of various complaints, and naturalists have felt themselves at an utter loss to explain this law. "The birth, growth, maturity, vital functions...change, diseases, decay and death, of insects, reptiles, fishes, birds, mammals, and even of man, are more or less controlled by a law of completion in *weeks*," or seven days. Dr. Laycock (*Lancet*, 1842-3), writing on the Periodicity of Vital Phenomena, records a "most remarkable illustration and confirmation of

the law in insects." ...Having given a number of illustrations from natural history, the doctor adds: "The facts I have briefly glanced at are general facts, *and cannot happen day after day in so many millions of animals of every kind, FROM THE LARVA OR OVUM OF A MINUTE INSECT UP TO MAN, at definite periods, from a mere chance or coincidence....* I think it impossible to come to any less general conclusion than this, that *in animals, changes occur every three and a half, seven, fourteen, twenty-one or twenty-eight days, or at some definite number of weeks*" or septenary cycles. Again, the same Dr. Laycock states that: "Whatever type the fever may exhibit, *there will be a paroxysm on the seventh day...the fourteenth will be remarkable as a day of amendment...*" (either cure or death taking place)...(II, 622)

To demonstrate more clearly the seven in Nature, it may be added that not only does the number seven govern the periodicity of the phenomena of life, but that it is also found dominating the series of chemical elements, and equally paramount in the world of sound and in that of colour as revealed to us by the spectroscope. This number is the factor, *sine qua non*, in the production of occult astral phenomena.

Thus, if the chemical elements are arranged in groups according to their atomic weights, they will be found to constitute a series of groups of seven; the first, second, etc., members of each group bearing a close analogy in *all* their properties to the corresponding members of the next group. (II, 627)

It is needless to refer in detail to the number of vibrations constituting the notes of the musical scale; they are strictly analogous to the scale of chemical elements, and also to the scale of colour as unfolded by the spectroscope, although in the latter case we deal with only *one* octave, while both in music and chemistry we find a series of *seven* octaves represented theoretically, of which *six* are fairly complete and in ordinary use in both sciences....

Verily, then, as Rabbi Abbas said: "We are six lights which shine forth from a seventh (*light*); thou (Tetragrammaton) art the seventh light (the origin) of us all; and—"For assuredly there is no stability in those six, save what they derive from the seventh. FOR ALL THINGS DEPEND FROM THE SEVENTH."

The (ancient and modern) Western American Zuni Indians seem to have entertained similar views. Their present-day customs, their traditions and records, all point to the fact that, from time immemorial, their

institutions—political, social and religious—were (and still are) shaped according to the septenary principle. Thus all their ancient towns and villages were built in clusters of six, around a seventh. It is always a group of seven, or of thirteen, and always the six surround the seventh. Again, their sacerdotal hierarchy is composed of six "Priests of the House" seemingly synthesized in the seventh, who is a woman, the "PRIESTESS MOTHER." Compare this with the "seven great officiating priests" spoken of in *Anugita*, the name given to the "seven senses," exoterically, and to the seven human principles, *esoterically*. Whence this identity of symbolism? (II, 628)

This number is closely connected with the moon, whose occult influence is ever manifesting itself in septenary periods. It is the moon which is the guide of the occult side of terrestrial nature, while the Sun is the regulator and factor of manifested life; and this truth was ever evident to the Seers and the adepts. Jacob Boehme, by insisting on the fundamental doctrine of the seven properties of everlasting mother Nature, proved himself thereby a great Occultist. (II, 595)

(*To be concluded*)

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MATERIALISM coarsens and petrifies everything; makes everything vulgar and every truth false. To crush what is spiritual, moral, human, to form mere wheels of the great social machine, instead of perfect individuals, to make society and not conscience the centre of life, to enslave the soul of things, to depersonalize man—this is the dominant drift of our epoch. What is threatened today is moral liberty, conscience, respect for the soul, the very nobility of man. The test of every religious, political or educational system is the man it forms. If a system injures the intelligence, it is bad. If it injures the character, it is vicious. If it injures the conscience, it is criminal.

—HENRI-FREDERIC AMIEL

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

There are many world problems facing us today, yet their solution evades us, writes Rene Lefort (*Unesco Sources*, March 1994), because individuals, organizations and nations do not try to find the "missing link" required for dealing with them:

Mounting intolerances, deepening inequalities, increasing exclusion, irreversible damage to the environment and pandemics: the symptoms are clear but we are in a quandary as to how to treat them. Today, though, we at least know what is happening and are even able to quantify the future impact of our present disorders. This is both a source of fear, because it reveals the gravity of the situation, and stimulation for those willing to attack the problems.

However, denouncing the dangerous path upon which we find ourselves and wanting to change direction in the name of what are now accepted as universal values is not sufficient. We need to work out how to do it....

The obstacles are considerable. Firstly, the equation of contemporary problems increases daily in complexity—as quickly as the factors that make it up. The second major difficulty lies in the destabilization of the traditional institutions that regulate society and to which we have recourse—beginning with the State....

Surely the effacing of the frontiers, not only between nations but disciplines as well, and the exponential growth of knowledge, are immutable. As surely, human rights and its ethical corollary of solidarity and sharing is today the only truly universal ideal. Our point of departure towards this goal must be the planet's ills. The radical changes that are creating global upheavals must be taken into account. But we cannot hope to achieve the ideal—or know what to do and with whom—unless we first identify the mechanisms that have created today's reality.

Does not the real cause of the "planet's ills" lie in the "great dire heresy of Separateness" that weans each of us from the rest? It is from this belief in the separateness of oneself from all others—from "the One Universal, Infinite SELF"—that springs selfishness and its brood. Looking for mere physical panaceas for our present ills will lead us nowhere. These ills are the legitimate and due effect of causes set in motion by humanity itself. True ideas are the crying need of humanity. Unless our ideas are changed, unless the ideal of Universal Brotherhood—which

includes nature as much as fellow human beings—replaces the concept of "might is right," we shall find ourselves nowhere near a solution of our problems.

Many see the condition; few have an effective remedy. We are not willing to acknowledge in full measure that there can never be world improvement without individual improvement; that there is no world problem—there is only the individual problem. We need to educate the individual and make him aware of his own responsibility, and above all of his true nature, for it is only through self-reform of individual units that humanity *en masse* can be made whole.

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The 1993 T. L. Crombie Memorial Lecture, delivered at the Indian Institute of World Culture, Bangalore, by T. S. Ananthu and published as the Institute's *Transaction No. 91*, deals with some dramatic developments within the framework of science which carry with them possibilities of a major revolution that could completely transform the scientific world-view. These developments, in fields such as physics, chemistry, biology, psychology, neurophysiology, the medical and social sciences, have gathered considerable momentum during the past few years. Those who are contributing to this revolution, though far outnumbered by those who are still seeking for a purely mechanistic explanation of the physical universe, have impeccable credentials and include physicist David Bohm, biologist Rupert Sheldrake, neurophysiologist Karl Pribram, psychologist Carl Rogers, doctors Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and Michael Sabom, chemist Illya Prigogine, to name but a few.

The mechanistic or "building-block" model of the universe, which at the turn of the century was being seen as *the* scientific model, was completely overturned with the contribution of the giants of 20th-century physics who gave to science the relativity theory and quantum mechanics. Though some scientists, like Max Planck, have declared in categorical terms that the world of matter is an illusion, yet science in general has chosen to ignore it for the greater part of this century

The only possible explanation [says Ananthu] can be that it challenges the materialistic world-view that has become so entrenched in science; and taking cognizance of Planck's statement would amount to abandoning it in favour of the "mystic" world-view, with all its spiritual ramifications....

Schroedinger has not only termed the material world of phenomena an illusion the way Planck did, he has made reference to mystic experiences and the Indian spiritual traditions in this context. The other giants of 20th-century physics have done much the same, as for example Niels Bohr, Robert Oppenheimer and Arthur Eddington....

This "startling redirection" of the trend of scientific thought took place in the first two decades of this century, but perhaps equally startling is the fact that it had practically no impact on scientific activity for over half a century. This was especially the case with the application sciences, which went merrily along the "building block" path. In fact, the goal in these disciplines became, and still is, to explain even the most intricate phenomena, including subtle ones such as pain, emotions, personality characteristics, even mind, consciousness and life itself in terms of these "building blocks."...

Simultaneously, the implications of relativity and quantum theories have become the subject of many new books, some of them by physicists of great eminence. Over the last 15 years or so, a large number of interesting publications, each of them carrying new ideas with the seeds of revolutionary potential, have appeared....

The central message of all these books may be summarized in just one sentence: the visible has to be explained in terms of the invisible, not the other way round. In the earlier world-view, the goal was to explain the invisible in terms of the visible: electromagnetic phenomena in terms of electrons, light in terms of photons, mind and its characteristics in terms of RNA-DNA molecules, etc. In the new world-view, it is the invisible that is seen as primary, with the visible being delegated to the category of an "epiphenomenon." Thus, matter may seem real, but is actually accountable by the invisible EM fields, which in turn are caused by something even subtler. Eventually, the chain leads to what Planck was pointing to—the subtlest, the Mind (and who knows, something even more subtle than that), as the matrix of all matter.

We must not overlook the silent and invisible influence of Theosophical ideas which have been circulating in the universe of thought for over a century and the impress they have made and still continue to make on the *Akasha* which pervades all space and which in a subtle manner affects the Manas and the Buddhi of the race. A spirit of inquiry is discernible and there are hopeful signs. Orthodox science is fast losing its materialism, orthodox religion its dogmatism. Old dogmas, accepted formulas, are no longer worshipped as fetishes, nor regarded as chart and

compass not to be questioned. New ideas about the vastness of space, the infinity of the universe, the omnipresence of life and of intelligence are revolutionizing the realm of thought. Changing concepts of mind and of matter have shattered the mechanistic view of the universe. There is greater interest in the mystical and the occult. The unexplained laws of nature and the psychical powers latent in man are being studied with increasing seriousness, and that too by scientists. One-time scoffers have turned into serious investigators of the unseen realms. Major revisions in the science of human evolution are taking place and the age of man on earth is being pushed back further and further. The intimate relation between man, the microcosm, and the universe, the macrocosm, is being perceived by the perceptive. Recent researches have, above all, made investigators in various fields of study realize how little they know in comparison with what needs to be known, thus evoking in them a sense of humility. These are some of the signs of the times, portents of more momentous breakthroughs to come.

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Morality is now a "fashionable subject," but, asks Mary Warnock in *The Sunday Times* (London), who defines what is right and wrong? The philosopher? The educationist? Or the common man? Today, moral philosophers are expected to be interested in contemporary issues and to advise on such topics as genetic screening, euthanasia, and the rights and wrongs of certain medical practices. The writer argues that there is a danger in such expectations, not just for morality, but for philosophy:

It is difficult for non-academics to realize that there are not, and never have been, philosophical solutions, only further questions, and a greater recognition of complexity. When philosophers fail to provide answers to moral questions, people tend to become impatient, and turn against the whole thing. Better, they think, to trust their own gut reactions than listen to all this sophisticated argument which comes to nothing. Second, there is a danger of creeping amateurism. Since moral issues are the fashion, and since philosophy is now seen to interest itself in these issues, should there not be made available some instant philosophy, like instant coffee, designed to produce the same outcomes but without the trouble?

The fact is, however, that instant philosophy is not only useless but harmful. Bringing philosophy to bear on such issues as genetic engineering, abortion or the deployment of force by peace-keeping

soldiers must be serious. By this I mean not solemn, but professional and informed. Philosophy is, more or less, a seamless whole; and departments within universities cannot specialize without loss.

"Why is it that, confused and ambiguous though the demand may be, the thought that moral values must be reinstated appeals to so great a number of people?" asks Warnock. "Why is it that the vocabulary of right and wrong, of duty and the neglect of duty, of sin or of shame, has become so difficult to use?" There are those who put this down to the decline of religion, yet it has never been the case that only the religious were able to assert moral values and uphold them. The philosophy of morals down the ages has quite often been independent of religious belief.

Another question that needs to be addressed relates to the limits of what is possible in teaching people about right and wrong, or causing them to embrace moral values. There is much misapprehension, writes Warnock, of the nature of moral decision-making:

Of course one needs to analyse the problem, any problem, if one is to decide what to do about it. Nobody would deny that. But if one is to decide on moral grounds, then there must be a commitment to certain values which one holds to be important, and this must be a matter not of logic but of feeling or emotion. If there were no feeling in favour of a particular value, such as, for example, that of fairness or truthfulness, if there were no love for these ideals and hatred of their opposites, there would be no morality at all. There would be nothing except a calculation of what would be most expedient to do in the circumstances. If it were impossible to distinguish between the good and the expedient, then the concept of the good, that is, the morally good, would wither away altogether.

We have been overimpressed with the need for tolerance of moral views and moral feelings different from our own, observes Warnock. Yet, in spite of different cultures within our society, there exists far more of unanimity than of difference about what values must be upheld. Most people prefer, for instance, the rule of law to its opposite, prefer freedom to suppression, and have a common dislike of violence, injustice and deceit in public life. "It is important, indeed crucial," says Warnock, "that this unanimity, a consensus morality based on shared sentiments, should be built up, and passed on to children from the earliest age."

Badly needed in the world today is the Theosophical concept of the

complete moral autonomy of the individual, a God in the making, divine in his essence and potentialities, his own saviour or his own destroyer, learning to live in accordance with the universal ethics based on brotherhood and harmony as taught by all great sages.

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With the movement for nature conservation gaining momentum, man's relationship with nature, his rights and responsibilities towards it, has become a much-discussed topic. Herbert W. Schroeder, a research and social scientist for the Forest Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, comments on the "wild metaphors" that have often been used for understanding and thinking about the natural world: nature as a "machine," controllable and created for human benefit, and nature as a "person" with equal rights (*The Futurist*, March-April 1994). Neither of these metaphors, the writer observes, conveys the whole truth about the natural world. We need to find a balance between how we can operate and steer nature so that it helps us, and at the same time respect its autonomy, care for it for its own sake and grant it a measure of freedom to follow its own path.

Nature is more than just a collection of physical and biological resources [writes Schroeder]. It is also an image in our minds and in our hearts. This image includes all the thoughts, feelings, and values that nature evokes—a place of refuge from the demands of society, of encounter with natural forces, and of personal and spiritual transformation.

In thinking about the future, we are confronted with a basic question: To what extent are we willing to live in a world that includes natural processes that are not under our control? Our answer to this depends on the fundamental beliefs that we hold regarding nature and our place in it....

In the words of poet John Daniel, nature allows us to experience the joy of "listening to what lives outside of our lives." I believe that keeping this joy alive will be one of our most important responsibilities as we head into the next century.

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Do films influence society, or does the state of society influence filmmakers? Huned Contractor's article, "Chickens and Eggs, Cinema and Society," in the December 1993 issue of *Humanscape* (a magazine which has for its object "placing the human being as the central value"),

focuses attention on this debate.

In some murder cases, killers have gone on record that they were influenced in their *modus operandi* by what they had seen in films. Likewise, there have been thefts, smuggling operations, kidnappings, etc., in real life which clearly indicate that ideas were borrowed from fictional fantasies seen on the screen.

Filmmakers, on the other hand, argue that, in fact, the reverse is true; that their ideas for plots or scenes are often derived from what they observe around them, or from crime reports in newspapers.

It seems as if equal ratings can be given to both parties [writes Contractor]. In short, it's a stalemate. To shift the focus a little and explore the theoretical end, one must, of necessity, conclude that cinema and culture or the state of a nation are interdependent and share a symbiotic relationship. Such a study was conducted by Keith Reader, whose findings on the subject of the culture and identity of a nation as reflected in cinema have been published in the form of a book titled *Cultures on Celluloid*. His findings are conclusive—the history, ideology and sub-culture of a country does emerge in its cinema, which is what makes the cinema of each nation so different from the other, so original and at times so complex.

The article takes a look at the changes in Indian cinema over the years, from the first feature film made in 1913 to the latest ones—how they have reflected the prevalent state of society, the level of culture, the period in history, and the problems of the common man. But one look at today's films, it is deplored,

is evidence of the sorry state of affairs today. Violence, Romance, Violence, Romance. Like a pendulum, our filmmakers continue to swing from one to the other, seeking a hit so desperately that cinema seems to have become a mere joke.... And then Subhash Ghai comes out with *Khalnayak* wherein the hero is the villain. Isn't this one example enough to show that society has changed? Isn't the deterioration evident in this topsy-turvy status?

Cinema and television today share with the press what H.P.B. referred to as "its more than royal power," and power is always inseparable from responsibility. The problem is not only how to minimize cinema and television's influence for evil, but, equally important, how to utilize their possibilities for good.

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