

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences, and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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THE THEOSOPHICAL CONCEPT OF FREEDOM

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ALL forms of existence work towards the goal of individual freedom. Man's persistent task is to create that environment which will provide freedom from poverty and fear, freedom of thought and of conscience, of expression and of action. All men in varying degrees long for this freedom. This desire is expressed in the silent yearning of the unawakened slave of ignorance and false concepts, as it is in the mighty proclamation of an Avatar. All, in some degree, worship Truth, Knowledge, Freedom. The greatest Cause is the Cause of Human Freedom. The greatest service is the service of Freedom's Cause. The true leaders of mankind have always consecrated their lives to helping others to find freedom. They found their freedom by fighting for the freedom of others. They came to break their binding chains by working to release their fellow men from their confining bonds.

Freedom is never a gift. It is the "pearl of great price" in anguish won. Only in the heart where glows the fire of true love can freedom's flame be lit, for freedom is the child of love. Abraham Lincoln, one of the earth's great emancipators, said, "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a Master"; for, as the slave is restricted by the Master, so the Master is encumbered by the slave.

Social, political and economic freedom can only arise out of true individual freedom. This is demonstrable in any age. In this age of

darkness, the strife for individual freedom is too often prompted by the unholy desire for power. All too often those who fight for freedom do so because they resent their position as subordinates, while envying the power of a superior. When such obtain liberty of action, they hasten to impose fetters upon their fellow men as once these were imposed on themselves, thus perpetuating the vicious cycle of enslavement.

Those who would be free must strive to stand on their feet, must come out from the herds of men and be separate. This means maintaining a spirit which will not be coerced but will always desire ardently to co-operate. To be an individual in this sense means to have the desire and the resolve to judge each situation on its own merits. It means being able to stand alone, depending on nothing save on our own understanding of and love for our fellow men, which must extend to those with whom there is disagreement and even to those who look upon us with suspicion and enmity.

It is relatively simple to define the nature of freedom and the qualifications and the responsibility of the individual who would be free. The attaining of these conditions and qualities is the purpose of all true ethical systems. To be anything more than a nominal Theosophist one must have the ability to exercise some degree of independent thought. H. P. Blavatsky declares this qualification as basic in her article "What Are the Theosophists": "Be what he may, once that a student abandons the old and trodden highway of routine, and enters upon the solitary path of independent thought—Godward—he is a Theosophist." He need not necessarily be a student of Theosophy. Thus the first step in the acquisition of conscious individuality and self-development is the assertion of independent thought.

But we should be sure of our course and not pursue independence of thought just for the sake of asserting our liberty. Independence of thought and of action is not an end in itself. Independent thinking and action can be either constructive or destructive, iconoclastic or reverently creative. We may seek freedom of thought in order to sacrifice our talents on the altar of service. So we must understand and learn to use certain techniques.

The first and indispensable quality, the only one that will guarantee success, is a genuine love and sympathy for our fellow men. This will express itself as a tolerant, sympathetic, forgiving attitude towards all those we contact, regardless of their shortcomings. This quality comes from the heart and inspires the mind with an understanding of the fact that "he does good who knows how to do good." Where is the room for condemnation in either word or deed if we know that our associates act according to their ability based on their knowledge? When they know better, they will act better. Meanwhile, we must stand ready to meet them at the level which provides a common ground.

We must distinguish between theoretical knowledge or information and its application. Most of us possess a considerable amount of information. We may *know* what to do, but our ability actually to apply the facts at our disposal is limited. We have been unable to assimilate all these facts and transform them into faculties; they have not yet become part and parcel of our emotional, mental and spiritual make-up. For instance, most of us are unable always to respond to the demands which tolerance and kindness place upon us. We find ourselves constantly under emotional stress and strain because of this conflict between what we think ought to be done and what we actually accomplish.

It is necessary that we develop the ability to take the guiding precepts, and apply them to our own situation, our own internal and external environment. Just as an aircraft captain is familiar with every detail of his aircraft and periodically makes minute inspection, so should we understand our psychological nature and inspect it regularly. But it is of even greater importance that we develop the ability to keep to the right course in order to reach our destination—true individual freedom. This requires skill in the use of certain navigational instruments, chiefly the compass. The compass for our flight through the low visibility provided by sensate existence consists of our emotional reactions. These reactions we must learn to read with complete objectivity, if we are to check our course constantly and accurately.

The analogy of the aircraft can be carried further. The first item

necessary for flight is a chart, a map, of the course to be travelled. This compares to the teachings of the Philosophy, particularly the devotional precepts. Next in importance is the ability to read the navigational instruments. For the student, this means the ability to interpret properly his emotional reactions. This is an extremely complicated procedure. It calls for complete objectivity, which is almost impossible for many at the present time.

To illustrate further: in learning to wield instruments used in navigating an aircraft, the pilot's main difficulty is the psychological conflict between his mind and his emotions. In flying through conditions of poor visibility he is absolutely dependent upon the instruments. The mind must constantly interpret the readings. One instrument shows any deviation from straight and level flight; another tells the height of the aircraft; another indicates whether it is going up or down. Now to follow the indications of the instruments is a simple matter, provided the emotional and mental faculties of the pilot are properly trained. Then all that is necessary is to keep the instruments properly co-ordinated and the aircraft will fly straight and on the right course. There is, however, the all-important psychological factor.

All his life the pilot has been trained to depend on his senses for locomotion—walking, driving, etc. His sight, the sense of direction, the relative position of objects, the sense of balance, all these are the product of the sense mechanism. Now, during flight in bad weather he does not have all this to depend upon. He has no sense of direction because he has no reference points; he cannot see either sky or earth, and at this point it might prove fatal to rely on his senses and feelings. They cause him to feel as though he was going up when he is going down. He may be in a spin and feel that he is going straight. Many aircraft crashes occur because of the pilot's inability to depend on his mind for direction. The feelings are so strong that they overpower the mind, resulting in a crash.

Does this not suggest the experience of any individual in his attempt to travel the path of psychological control and spiritual development? Our emotions and instincts, interpreted objectively, will give us a true sense of direction. By observing our reactions to

our environment we shall surely know whether we are ascending or descending in relation to our goal. After accepting the Teachings of the Sages and deciding to make these the controlling factor in our lives, the next step is to learn to interpret the meaning of our emotional reactions through the use of the higher mental faculties, developed by our knowledge of the philosophy. Let us consider a few examples of the method which can be used in checking our emotional position.

Probably the most prevalent negative emotion is that of fear. This emotion is the product of incorrect knowledge; for, when we know, we cannot fear. Now what causes fear? Of course any number of external conditions can incite fear. They do so because we consider such conditions dangerous to either our present position or a desired end. When we experience this fear reaction we should immediately make a check. Our compass is giving a signal that we are going off course. How can we correct the error?

The first thing we should do is to view the problem, not emotionally, but mentally. We need firm decision and this in turn calls for courage and determination. If the factors involved in a problem are beyond our control, worry is senseless; if we can do something about them, again worry is illogical, for then we should proceed to do what we can and rest content. This is simple to state but difficult to apply.

We must endeavour, through constant practice, to resolve our emotional problems on the plane of the mind. This is the first step in our struggle for freedom.

The greatest source of difficulty is our relation and association with others. The proper interpretation of our reactions to these associations affords the best opportunity we can have of acquiring an understanding of our self, that is, of our *kama-manasic* or emotional nature. The attempt to understand these emotions in proper context produces a very difficult and subtle psychological problem. This is because it is extremely difficult to realize that in most cases our emotional reaction to the actions of others is a reflection of our own attitudes, hopes, fears, desires, covetousness, ambition; in short, of the whole range of our *kama-manasic*

impulses.

Supposing we are associated with an individual who ignores or snubs us, or whose words and actions express a condescending attitude. Our first feeling or reaction will probably be that of resentment. When this resentment is felt we should know that our psychological compass is indicating that we are off course. We should immediately ask the question, Why is this attitude resented? Analysis will show that resentment develops because the associate's attitude makes us feel inferior. This in turn indicates that we ourselves desire to seem superior. Now if one desires to seem superior he must inevitably resent anybody who implies or declares him to be inferior. So it appears that resenting others is but an expression in us of the very quality we resent in others.

If the qualities our associate displays are actually superior, his actions will not display a supercilious attitude, and yet it may arouse in us a feeling of resentment or of jealousy. If we persist in our attitude of irritation, then further emotional reactions may develop in the form of hate, vengeance, desire for retaliation and the whole complex array of soul-destroying emotions, with attending mental obscuration, false justifications and rationalizations. Obviously, therefore, the real evil is not the attitude or action of our associate, but our own uncontrolled lower nature.

It becomes evident that, with encumbrances such as these, the road to freedom of thought and of action is a difficult one indeed. Were it not for principles of action and of understanding other than the rationalizations produced by *kama-manas*, our position would be hopeless indeed. Those completely ignorant of the deceptions of *kama-manas* appraise the actions of others on the basis of the distorted image they see in their emotional mirror, entirely unaware of its defects. But those who are attempting to free themselves from the enslaving distortions of their emotional nature are increasingly aware of the deceptive reactions they experience. They know that it is necessary to mistrust their senses, for they are false. To correct their emotional defects they must be prepared to impose upon themselves some degree of mental discipline. They must, first of all, become like the seasoned desert traveller who, seeing a mirage,

will not be deluded by it but will keep to the right course.

This course, if perseveringly maintained, will eventually require the aid of the higher mental and spiritual faculties of man's nature. This is accomplished by providing a firm and stable mental attitude which then acts as a focal point for the manifestation of the inspirational influence of the Higher Mind.

The course we are trying to hold will eventually bring us to an important destination—INTEGRATION. The emotional "off course" reactions will eventually bring us to a condition of disintegration. Who is an integrated individual? An individual is integrated to the extent he is guided by a compassionate mind and an intelligent heart.

The compassionate mind will examine things positively. It will always try to find the causes for the actions of others in terms of broad principles, not narrow prejudices. The compassionate mind will always ask the question, "Am I in possession of sufficient facts to pass a judgment? Of course we are often in possession of sufficient facts to judge routine matters, but are we ever in possession of sufficient facts to know what has motivated an act and to pass moral judgment? The compassionate mind will never do so. It will always remember: "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord [LAW]." A mind so motivated is *integrated*, is saturated with Law, Love, Beauty. It has no misshapen or distorted conception, for it recognizes that "all is soul and spirit ever evolving under the rule of law which is inherent in the whole."

The intelligent heart is the other side of our ethical coin. The heart is associated with our feelings. These must always be under the control of the mind if they are to be made intelligent. Motivation of any kind is a product of the heart, the feelings. The greatest care must be taken to determine the true basis of our motives. As we have seen, at the average stage of development *kama-manas* is the principal source of motivation, often finding justification for the most selfish and personal emotions. We may have a good motive, one which unquestionably should stimulate us to charitable action; but even this motive must be checked by the mind to determine the method and time of its application. If we look about, we shall

recognize innumerable incidents involving misery, suffering and injustice because otherwise kind hearts fail to protest against those evils because of the fear of consequences to themselves. Slavery is possible basically because of the sin of omission. Dictators and ruthless rulers are possible because a majority of the people fear to act according to the dictates of their conscience, and by this default they lose their freedom. Thus we see that the road to freedom begins with each individual.

We insist upon the exercise of our free will, our freedom to act as we choose, but the vast majority of our actions are nothing more than rationalized emotions, impulses.

H.P.B. proclaimed that the future of the Theosophical Society depended upon the clear sight and action of Theosophists. In their hands indeed are the tools with which to break the bonds of their own slavery to the wiles of the lower nature. How can we help others to free themselves unless we first win our own freedom? How can we be free of fear and other undesirable emotions unless we observe and understand carefully the signals our emotions flash upon the panel of the mind? How can we claim freedom if we stand mute and fearful in the face of injustice and oppression?

We must have the courage to affirm, as did the Founding Fathers of America: "We pledge our lives and fortunes" in the cause of freedom, and then proceed to do precisely that by making every necessary sacrifice to obtain liberty. The courage of a Gandhi is not acquired in a moment of sentimental urge, but over a period of lives engaged in continuous effort to overcome the rationalizations of the lower nature. This is continued until sufficient personal freedom from the restricting illusions of *kama-manas* is gained to permit participation with the Lords of Light in Their enduring vigilance and efforts, to make of man a potent rather than a potential God; a true, fearless ruler of himself, capable of helping those who are less progressed. What are the basic ingredients of this great endeavour? An aroused spiritual and social consciousness, an honest mind and a desire to face the issue without reservation or regrets.

HIDDEN POWERS IN MAN AND NATURE

IN the earlier years of the Theosophical Society, H.P.B. used to perform occult phenomena, which included precipitation of messages on to a piece of paper at a distance, production of objects out of thin air, making objects disappear, etc. These phenomena were not for acquiring any "cheap publicity" or to overwhelm people. They were performed to arouse the interest of the public in man's psychic and spiritual powers and in nature's hidden realms. In those days, especially, neither science nor religion admitted the existence of the occult or supramundane region, which is governed by law, or that there could possibly exist latent powers and possibilities in man. While science does not admit that there could be a supersensuous universe, religion admits of such a universe, but does not accept that, as there are laws governing the physical world or nature, so there could be laws governing super-nature.

Thus, any abnormal occurrence is attributed by religion to the arbitrary "will of God." In fact, religion teaches that only a "messenger of heaven" can have the power of working miracles. Science, being unable to find any explanation using physical and material means, dismisses all abnormal phenomena as frauds.

H.P.B. sought to arouse and utilize the spirit of curiosity through phenomena. But, unfortunately, this did not lead men of science to investigate the laws and forces—known to the occultist—behind these phenomena. H.P.B. also wanted to show that there are beings who have power over perfectly natural though unrecognized forces. A Mahatma has power over space, time, mind and matter. These powers are never conferred on anyone as a gift, but exist in each human being as germs which come to fruition after necessary training and experience.

The powers of telepathy, mind-reading, hypnotism, etc., appear to most people as miraculous, as they are not acquainted with all the planes of consciousness, as well as with man's faculties and their functions. Mind-reading and the influencing of the mind of the hypnotized subject at a distance prove the existence of a mind not totally dependent upon a brain, and that there exists an invisible

medium through which thoughts can be sent. The rationale of telepathy is that if two minds vibrate in unison or change into the same state, they will think alike. If a yogi or fakir can make a solid object move without contact, it is by projecting the astral arm, or by altering the polarity of the object in respect to the earth immediately underneath it. As Mr. Judge puts it in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, these powers are natural, though not usual, just as great musical ability is natural but not usual or common. What works in the performance of these phenomena is knowledge of electricity, magnetism, elementals, astral light and astral body, as also the power of imagination and of the perfected human will.

Both man and nature are triune, composed, in general terms, of body, soul and spirit. The unseen physical man is composed of astral body, passions and desires, and *prana* or life-principle; while the Real Man is the trinity of *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*. So also there is physical invisible nature consisting of the astral light and the vitalizing principle, and this is overbrooded by the spirit, the source of all forces.

Occultism is that branch of knowledge which deals with the hidden powers in man and nature. Man is a miniature copy of the universe, and he has in him a centre or focus corresponding to every force or power in nature. Man is governed by the same laws that govern the universe.

Imagination, which is the picture-making power of the human mind, is described as the king faculty. The wonder-worker is able to make spectators see a snake, where there is none, by impressing them with his trained imagination. This is called *glamour*. When a man or woman is changed into the appearance of an animal, really speaking there is no change, but it is glamour affecting the eye of the beholder. Likewise an object or a person can be made to disappear from the sight of others. The explanation is given in Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* (pp. 45-46), where he says that if the luminousness natural to the object and the eye is interfered with, then the object disappears from the person's sight. It is not enough for rays of light to proceed from the object to the eye, but light must also proceed from the eye towards the object. If the latter is cut off,

then the object cannot be seen. So also by altering the luminousness of the light coming from the eye, one can alter the colour and shape of the object for the perceiver.

One of the modes of sight is seeing by the inner senses into the astral light. Within the physical body is the astral or design body, which is electro-magnetic in its essence. It is elastic in nature and can extend beyond the physical. In the ordinary person, this astral body is enmeshed in the physical like the fibres of the mango in the pulp, and can go only a few feet away from the physical body. But in the case of a trained seer, the astral body is made so coherent through training and discipline that he is able to project it to a considerable distance. This is how persons like Apollonius and Buddha could be seen at two places at the same time.

The real centres of hearing, seeing, smelling, etc., are located in the astral body. Corresponding to this astral body in man, there is in Nature the astral light, which is of a subtle substance. It has been described as the invisible canvas of the universe upon which are impressed all thoughts, feelings and events, not only of the past and the present, but also of the future, the causes for which are sufficiently well marked and made. When one exhibits the power of seeing things happening at a distance—clairvoyance—or of being able to hear at a distance—clairaudience—one is using astral organs and the astral light. But Mr. Judge cautions that one must never deliberately attempt to acquire the power of seeing in the astral light, as there is a danger of slipping into passivity. Besides, one can never be sure of what one sees in the astral region, unless one is properly trained. For instance, if an anxious mother imagines her child in danger, and very vividly pictures the child meeting with an accident, then she impresses this picture in the astral light. Now this picture of an accident is something that never really happened, but is only a product of the mother's emotion or imagination. So some people see in the astral world pictures that are solely an extension of their own inherited beliefs.

Again, just as on the retina the image is inverted, so also there is constant inversion of images and ideas in the astral light. Mr. Judge compares the astral region, which is full of strange sights and

sounds, to an untrodden South American forest. It is possible to deal with the dangers encountered in the forest, but it is very difficult to face and conquer the dangers of the astral plane.

Exhaustive explanations of various powers and phenomena are offered in H.P.B.'s *Isis Unveiled*. But the greatest power of all is the power of intuition or the *power to know*, which helps us judge whether the occult information obtained from the self within is true or not. The power to know comes from practising altruism in thought, word and deed, as that leads to purification of the sheaths of the soul.

Theosophy does not encourage the development of the lower, psychic powers. The very opening verse of *The Voice of the Silence* and the footnote that follows warn the disciple against dabbling in the psychic realm. H.P.B. describes these powers as abnormal and not super-normal. Distinction is made between the lower, coarse, psychic and mental energies, on the one hand, and the spiritual powers that result from the highest training, on the other. It is always better to reach the psychic realm from above; *i.e.*, it is not advisable to run after powers and faculties first and then hope to attain to spiritual perfection. Instead, it is better to begin by striving for spiritual knowledge and perfection, and psychic powers will develop incidentally, in due course. Again, in acquiring *Siddhis* or *Iddhis* (its Pali synonym), the motive must be pure. If there is the slightest selfish motive, then instead of attaining the higher powers one might end up getting the corresponding lower powers. Hence H.P.B.'s warning: "The spiritual will transform itself into the psychic, act on the astral plane, and dire results may be produced."

H.P.B. says that "the Ethics of Theosophy are more important than any divulgement of psychic laws and facts." In the Great Master's Letter, too, altruism is emphasized:

Shall we devote ourselves to teaching a few Europeans...the rationale of bell-ringing, of cup-growing, of the spiritual telephone, and astral body formation, and leave the teeming millions of the ignorant, of the poor and oppressed, to take care of themselves, and of their hereafter, as best they know how? Never! perish rather the Theosophical Society with both its

hapless Founders, than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of Occultism!

Occult powers must be used with discretion. Someone wanted to know why Masters did not interpose and save his business. H.P.B. explained:

There is a law that if a White Magician uses his occult power an equal amount of power may be used by the Black one. You force yourself into Master's presence and you take the consequences of the immense forces around him playing on yourself. If you are weak in character anywhere, the Black ones will use the disturbance by directing the forces engendered to the spot and may compass your ruin. It is so always. Pass the boundary that hedges in the occult realm, and quick forces, new ones, dreadful ones, must be met. Then if you are not strong you may become a wreck for that life. This is the danger. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 180-81)

There are rules for those desirous of acquiring hidden powers and faculties. These are not framed by some brain or mind, but flow from the laws of nature, of mind, and of soul. One may break them and seem to escape for a life or even more than a life, but the consequences are bound to come. "Thou shalt not steal," for instance, does not refer merely to money or other material possessions, but also to other people's ideas, their private thoughts and all that they own on all planes. We have no right to enter into the mind of another and pry into his innermost secrets. This is tantamount to burglary on the mental and psychic plane.

So also these powers cannot be gained by conquering Nature. In fact *The Voice of the Silence* says, "Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance." If we follow the laws of Nature in general and also in our individual life, then Nature will help. There is allegorical meaning behind the story of Vasudeva wanting to cross the river Jamuna, carrying the babe Krishna hidden in a basket—and the river is said to have parted and given him the way.

AFTER DEATH—WHAT?

DEATH results in the separation of the soul from the body. In life, soul and body labour together; at death, they part company. This parting is caused in three distinct ways:

(a) Spirit from above withdraws the soul from the body, as the soul has gained sufficient experience in and through that body. Spirit takes the initiative, and we have the best kind of death, called *sattvic* death.

(b) The soul takes the initiative, through one cause or another. Unable to bear the strain of life, it weakens the will to live, the will to learn, the will to experience, and even aspires to what it regards as "God" and "Heaven"—the company of its own Spirit. This is *rajasic* death. Often good people who die young, die from spiritual *ennui*; those who lose hold on life through lack of ideals, as well as a large number who are materialists but of good moral outlook, go out by *rajasic* death.

(c) The third type of death is caused by the body and its elemental life taking the initiative. Suicides are an example, as are evil-minded persons who fear to die and are ultimately forced to quit by bodily forces. This is *tamasic* death.

Let us apply the ethical lesson before we go further. All should aim to die a *sattvic* death. The first step in this direction is not to be afraid of death. On the other hand, let us not be anxious to die, and the sure way not to have such a feeling is to learn that all experiences, good and evil, have their uses and their lessons. So let us neither fear nor tempt death, but try to learn the lessons of life. Maintaining and sustaining the learning attitude, we shall avoid *tamasic* death.

Next, to avoid *rajasic* death, let us give up that view of life which holds that higher than the thinking mind there is nothing and that mind dies when body dies. Let us gain knowledge and get rid of the idea that our powers and intelligence diffuse and disperse themselves after death. If we are devoid of spiritual ideation, if we are only moral men and women, in course of time the soul will leave the body, drifting towards its own spirit, and we will die a *rajasic*

death.

If we are idealistic, if we have spiritual leanings, we will in due time attract the attention and benediction of our own Guardian Angel, or Spirit, and it will radiate its power on the soul and pull it out in a grand harmony and rhythm of *sattvic* death.

So, what causes death is the disturbance, the change in the existing relationship between our three principles—spirit, soul and body. When spirit takes the initiative and brings about the change, we call it death by *sattva*. When the soul brings it about, we call it death by *rajas*. When the elemental nature of the body brings about the change, we call it death by *tamas*.

Whatever the cause, the first scene of the first act in the drama of death occurs *before* the soul actually leaves its tenement of flesh. The departing soul sees in full detail all the pictures of his earthly incarnation just coming to a close. Each man, woman, or child, sage or idiot, materialist, religionist, or spiritualist, each and every one without exception faces the panorama of his own life-pictures. In full detail all our acts, words and thoughts pass before us; and the soul sees them in a review, *before* actually leaving the body.

After leaving the body, the soul seeks more direct contact with its own spirit. According to its own efforts in life, this task becomes simple or difficult. Having discarded its body of flesh, the soul has now to "give up the ghost." This phrase is a meaningful one, but it does not apply to the first act of separation between body and soul; it refers to a subsequent step. Each one of us must "give up the ghost," and if it is virile, strong and vital, it causes some inconvenience and trouble to the soul. Only those who have killed their "ghost" in life have a swift, easy and pleasant transition from the world of matter to that of spirit. Immediately after separation from its body, the soul arrives in the world of ghosts—*Preta Loka* of the Hindus, *Kama Loka* of the Theosophists—not hell, but a locality where *pretas* or ghosts or soulless entities live. The kind of ghost or *preta* or *kama rupa*—form of desires and passions—a person leaves behind, depends on his own lower nature. Wicked people leave behind ugly, soulless desire-forms, ordinary good men and women leave behind commonplace *kama rupas* which fade away

without doing harm to others; sages and high chelas do not leave behind any such form. But let us repeat—the soul, the self-conscious thinker, the Real Man or *Manas*, is not in that form. It is these empty soulless forms which visit the spiritualistic seances. So-called "spirits" of the dead are but soulless ghosts, *bhuts* or *kama rupas*. The practical lesson of this is that all of us must weaken our passions and desires while we are alive, so that they do not cling to us when the time comes for the desire-form to depart. Our passage from *Preta Loka* to *Pitri Loka* or the land of the gods, will then be a rhythmic one. The only exception are those who commit suicide, or die by capital punishment, or in some other violent manner. They discard their physical body, but not their "ghost."

Once the soul has separated itself from its own *kama rupa*, it enters *Pitri Loka* or *Devachan* or *Svarga*—the heaven world. Devoid of the body and its senses, freed from passions and longings, the soul is like a *deva* or god. This state is similar to that of meditation, *Dhyana*, in waking life, or of *Sushupti* in the sleeping condition. It is called *Devachan* or *Deva Loka* because, freed from the body of senses and the body of desires, we are clothed in our mind-body and are "shining beings" engaged in *tapas* or meditation, the true kind of active, creative dreaming.

The first phase is meditation on concrete images or idols of relatives, friends, others we have held in esteem and have unselfishly loved. According to the power and purity of our love, its unselfish nature and its liberal character, will be that after-death meditation in *Devachan*. It is not an *extension* of earth-life; it represents the pure fragrant essence of earth-life. Just as out of hundreds of roses the *attar* is distilled, so hundreds of acts of unselfish love become the basis of this meditation. And as out of weeds no *attar* of roses can come, so also it is only from acts and thoughts and words of pure love that this meditation results.

The next phase is meditation on abstract ideas, universal concepts. Thoughts that are potent and creative become the subject of the second kind of meditation. All that we have gathered of knowledge, all the ideas we have registered but have not worked

out and assimilated, are before us, and in that prolonged meditation we work them out. So, let us not neglect knowledge of impersonal ideas. Let us get away from our butterfly existence, from a self-centred existence, and gather metaphysical and philosophical ideas as the basis of thought.

These two types of after-death meditation are called the *Rupa-loka* and *Arupa-loka* of *Devachan*—heaven of forms and of formlessness. The Buddhist term for this state is *Sukhavati*, the Land of Bliss and Happiness, because meditation there is solely on bliss-producing subjects and ideas. Love and knowledge, compassion and wisdom, are the powers and energies on which the human soul dwells in *Devachan*.

This meditation continues for long, long years. Just as one may finish reading a book within hours, but to contemplate on its propositions and fully assimilate it one requires a far longer period, so also with life. Experiences gathered in 70 years or so require an average period of 1000 to 1500 years to be digested and assimilated.

When our twofold meditation or *Dhyana* is over, we have finished our task. Out of our meditation, which is compared to a prolonged gestation period, ultimately comes a new seed. The twofold meditation culminates in the spiritual soul seeing the basis of his life, which is the logical consequence of all his previous lives. Just as the Theosophic knowledge of any one of us at this time is dependent on all our past study, so also our present life-activity is the result of all our former lives. This after-death meditation unfolds that past basis in great fullness, and we see what passage we have been through, and out of that vision arises in us hope, aspiration, expectation, anticipation. And then a new incarnation is projected by the Spirit, and the soul is ready to assume a new body on earth. He reincarnates.

For sincere Theosophists, aspirants to chelaship, as for those who are regular chelas, the after-death condition is somewhat different. Those who lead spiritual lives, the best they know how, those who study occultism and practise Theosophy, have in their after-death meditation a special energy which draws to them the

help of the Great Gurus. Their meditation meets with a special response. The Living *Jivanmuktas* are Masters of Death, the Immortal Ones who have overcome mortality, and in the after-death meditation They help Their chelas as well as Their would-be chelas to overcome death and mortality. They are the true Fathers of the human race, the true Resplendent Ones. They are the *Bodhisattvas*, Wisdom and Truth incarnate, who make us taste the Bliss of *Sukhavati*, the Land of Bliss. Theirs is not the bliss of sleep or of death; Theirs is the bliss of a Life of Labour, of Ceaseless Sacrifice. May we walk in Their direction, passing from this world of darkness into Their World of Light!

WHAT is Superstition? True, we dread that which we cannot clearly explain to ourselves. Like children in the dark, we are all of us apt, the educated equally with the ignorant, to people that darkness with phantoms of our own creation; but these "phantoms" prove in no wise that that "darkness"—which is only another term for the *invisible* and the *unseen*—is really empty of any *Presence* save our own. So that if in its exaggerated form "superstition" is a weird incubus, as a belief in things *above* and *beyond* our physical senses, yet it is also a modest acknowledgment that there are things in the universe, and around us, of which we know nothing. In this sense "superstition" becomes not an unreasonable feeling of half wonder and half dread, mixed with admiration and reverence, or with fear, according to the dictates of our intuition. And this is far more reasonable than to repeat with the too-learned wiseacres that there is nothing "nothing whatever, in that darkness"; nor can there be anything since they, the wiseacres, have failed to discern it.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE BASIS OF PEACE

THE world is being compelled to take cognizance of the problem of war and peace. The aftermath of war proves for many to be as terrible as war itself. Threats of war, if not global then regional war, have not disappeared as a consequence of attempts to abolish war by violence. Thinking people suspect that no solution to the problem can be found along orthodox lines. They want more direct and satisfying answers that are both workable and ideal. Solutions are necessary for the betterment of human relations instead of allowing them to drift from bad to worse.

Aside from sordid motives of lust for power and domination, incentives to war are found in a supposedly righteous cause, in self-defence, or even in the determination to abolish war altogether. The question arises: Can we ignore the vast differences in thinking and character among varied peoples so as to reduce the problem to one common level for all?

In spiritually brighter ages, the friends of mankind have inspired the masses to rise to the level of universal peace. An instance of this may be found during the noble reign of Emperor Asoka of old India. Asoka actually realized what mankind at large has yet to learn, namely, the folly and futility of warfare. His attempt to establish peace was successful. It must be so again.

Is there a noble way for people to arise with unifying purpose in pursuit of an ethically higher life, spiritually and otherwise constructive for all?

The reflective mind is bound to recognize that for ages past there have been the opposite extremes of the warlike character and the peace-loving sage whose wisdom and compassion preclude the possibility of abuse of the power that comes with spiritual knowledge. There is no reason to believe that, so long as these diametrically opposite natures exist, their equally opposed tendencies will cease to be. It is in the nature of many to wage war or believe it should be waged for what is regarded as a righteous purpose. Likewise it is in the higher nature of enlightened men to recognize the folly of internecine conflicts. Those who face, fight and win the

greatest of all wars, within themselves, become truly wise. This leads to the ability to co-operate with fellow-warriors in the cause of brotherhood. Men have yet to learn the significance of this fact.

The endeavour to accomplish any objective, great or small, necessitates consideration of the means. That the nature of the means employed determines the nature of the end achieved is implicit in the Theosophical aphorism on Karma which says the effect is wrapped up in and is not succedent to the cause. Since Karma is effect flowing from cause, action and reaction, exact result for every thought and act, a living application of this principle of law requires complete consistency.

Even evident conflict between means and ends never occurs to the thoughtless. Can it be that the warlike spirit of unconquered human and even brutal nature leads to war, and that peace can never emerge from it? Is it true that only self-conquest can establish an unshakable internal peace as the only sure foundation for external peace in the world? Theosophical teachings indicate these to be facts. The problem for consideration is how to apply this in a practical way, in the midst of the varied and conflicting ideals and natures in the world today. This suggests a three-point programme effective in the transformation of human nature itself, which is at the root of the failure to establish lasting peace:

(1) As for the accomplishment of any great work, study and philosophical research into fundamental principles at the foundation of Life is the first requisite. Neither religion nor science offers any such basic knowledge free from both the entanglements of corrupt creedal notions and sectarian exclusiveness as also from materialistic negation and skepticism. Theosophy alone presents a rational basis for apprehending the Law of Karma. A study of this Law in its fullness as in all its ramifications can reveal the true impersonal foundation.

(2) Only the practical everyday application of real knowledge can awaken the human heart to the eternal reality for which it yearns. Self-conquest is then no mere exotic exercise or fanatic discipline, but an absolute necessity for fulfilling the higher purpose of life.

(3) The battle won involves helping others to win it also by the furnishing of an example. Given a true and workable ideal as a focus toward which the vast congeries of human efforts and struggles may be directed, evolutionary progression can be quickened toward that spiritually higher level of life in which mankind shall know no wars.

At the centre of human nature there lies the potentiality of the realization of truth and of a peace that is dynamic, not merely static. Radiating from that centre are the countless energies that either are consciously used for the good of all life, or, as is more generally the case, become involved in matter because of countless earthly and so-called "heavenly" desires. Deception lies in these. It is this involvement that gives rise to the paradoxical conflicts in human nature, reflecting themselves in the chaos of confused human relations and misunderstandings. The advocate of war may glimpse a worthier end, but be blind to any other way than war to attain it.

Pacifists can be divided into two general classes with numerous subdivisions. First, there is the minority of evaders through sheer cowardice and laziness. Secondly, there are those who perceive more or less clearly the futility of warfare. To call them all passive is an error in judgment. Neither are they all wise. But seeing something of the folly of war, they have started in search of means more consistent with the better ends they have in view. The objector to war is either conscientious or he is not. He may have yet to learn the meaning and grasp the full significance of the Law to which he at present aspires in his heart. Theosophy affords the means for clarification. There is a practical application of the power of peace which surpasses all mortal understanding. Herein lies a way to immortality, not only for the individual, but ultimately for the human race.

Those who have attained to the peace of wisdom cannot be shaken from it. Their conviction is absolute, their knowledge perfect and their efforts for the good of mankind are ceaseless. Shall we not strive to take advantage of this privilege by overcoming pride and reaching up to their higher level? No one can do so completely alone, nor can any aspirant leave his fellows altogether

behind. Only those on the selfish downward path can do that. Herein lies not only hope but also the power to do good even beyond mortal ken. The attainment of peace is a dynamic accomplishment that requires recruits to the army of workers for eternal Truth and a new order of the ages, founded on the laws of peace and not on the tactics of war.

THE whole past construction that now stands against man, against his farther progress, it is agreed, has to be broken down, thrown aside, but in what way? The past still in its present form continues because it maintains its own inner life and spirit. So long as that inner spirit is there you may break one form but another or many others will appear inspired by the same spirit. That is why the French proverb says: "The more it changes, the more it remains the same." For the truth is that destruction is not the aim. The aim is the creation of a new spirit, change of the inner nature....

The prison need not be altogether a prison, it may be an occasion, an opportunity for the human consciousness to make a breakthrough to create a new dimension. Here is then our immediate work—to conquer inner domains, the inner truths: for all truths are found first within the consciousness, established there before they become facts. So then let us harness our power and prowess, our aspiration and sincerity, all our life-energy, to the labour of the inner conquest. Let us stop awhile from the temptation and the urge for destruction and turn it round towards a higher inner adventure—that of construction. Yes, the truth that we want to see established in the outer world, let us establish it in ourselves, in each one of us, in our consciousness, in our impulses and activities. We always wanted liberty and equality and fraternity in the world at large; the ideal has not been realized because we did not care to realize it in the consciousness and life of each one of us. In the collective life of mankind that truth will alone become a fact which is a fact in the inner existence and consciousness of every human being.

—NOLIN KANTA GUPTA

"THE WIDER TRACK OF THE KARMIC LAW"

THE term "unmerited Karma" may seem strange to those who have thought that every effect has its antecedent cause, and that both are linked to the actor, the sufferer, or enjoyer. It seems to cut the ground from under our feet, for, if we are to trust the Law, the perfect adjustment of cause to effect-cause, how can any Karma be unmerited?

It is a human failing to think that things are either white or black, lawful or lawless; in point of fact, while black is black and white is white, there are many grades and differences as one merges into the other. So with the strict law of cause-effect, action-reaction.

In *The Key to Theosophy* we read:

ENQ. But, surely, all these evils which seem to fall upon the masses somewhat indiscriminately are not actual merited and INDIVIDUAL Karma?

THEO. No, they cannot be so strictly defined in their effects as to show that each individual environment, and the particular condition of life in which each person finds himself, are nothing more than the retributive Karma which the individual generated in a previous life. We must not lose sight of the fact that every atom is subject to the general law governing the whole body to which it belongs, and here we come upon the wider track of the Karmic law. Do you not perceive that the aggregate of individual Karma becomes that of the nation to which those individuals belong, and further, that the sum total of National Karma is that of the World? The evils that you speak of are not peculiar to the individual or even to the Nation, they are more or less universal; and it is upon this broad line of Human interdependence that the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equable issue....

It is impossible that Karma could readjust the balance of power in the world's life and progress, unless it had a broad and general line of action. It is held as a truth among Theosophists that the interdependence of Humanity is the cause of what is called Distributive Karma, and it is this law which affords the solution to the great question of collective suffering and its relief. (pp. 200-1, Indian ed.)

We have here corroboration of the fact that no man lives by himself alone; he affects others, they affect him. But it should be noted that "the law of Karma finds its legitimate and equable issue" along the "broad line of Human interdependence." There is nothing unjust or unlawful about this. It is just that in certain cases it is the intermingling of different aspects of the one Law that brings apparent injustice to some.

What, then, is "unmerited" suffering? It is referred to more than once in *The Key to Theosophy*:

We say that man suffers so much unmerited misery during his life, through the faults of others with whom he is associated, or because of his environment, that he is surely entitled to perfect rest and quiet, if not bliss, before taking up again the burden of life. (p. 35)

We might say that we would rather be without the reward than suffer misery we did not deserve! We need to understand this issue.

If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal which is not the direct fruit and consequence of some sin in a preceding existence; on the other hand, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in his actual life, and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, and therefore thinks he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest, and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence.

(*Key*, p. 159)

This is further explained in a footnote where it is stated that the essential idea behind the word "unmerited" is that "men often suffer from the effects of the actions done by others, effects which just do not strictly belong to their own Karma—and for these sufferings they of course deserve compensation."

What does this mean? We can never act alone or live alone, and therefore there is such a thing as collective Karma. We suffer or enjoy because of the collective Karma of the times in which we are born. What causes us to take birth in a particular environment? Each birth takes place in the environment and with the opportuni-

ties which are the most suitable and the best possible for the Ego. It is owing to our particular Karma that we cannot find the perfect environment and have to use whatever is available to us. So in the real sense a bad environment is not unmerited, though the suffering personality, not seeing the causes, feels that he suffers unjustly.

There is, however, another aspect we should ponder over. Emerson tells us that "everything has its price." In some cases it brings joy and happiness; in some cases it involves suffering. Did the Christ earn his early death by crucifixion? We know that such a terrible Karma does not come to an Adept because of his past misdeeds. Why then did he suffer? Anyone who reveals spiritual truths has to pay the price for so doing. If a man decides that he will, for one purpose or another, go to another country, then he has to pay the price by facing the effects of that country's environment upon him. He has not technically earned the Karma of suffering from heat, noise, pollution, or other disagreeable factors, but to suffer in this wise is a natural consequence of his decision to go to that country. Similarly, a soldier goes to war. It may not be his individual actions in the past that bring him wounds or misery; but the fact of his joining the army necessitates that he must pay the price for that act. Let us not forget that the soldier came into incarnation among warring people under Karma, and that he is linked with the consequent collective suffering.

One of the most wonderful and stimulating passages on Karma is in *The Secret Doctrine*:

It is only the knowledge of the constant re-births of one and the same individuality throughout the life-cycle; the assurance that the same MONADS—among whom are many Dhyān-Chohans, or the "Gods" themselves—have to pass through the "Circle of Necessity," rewarded or punished by such rebirth for the suffering endured or crimes committed in the former life...that can explain to us the mysterious problem of Good and Evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and *apparent* injustice of life. Nothing but such certainty can quiet our revolted sense of justice. For, when one unacquainted with the noble doctrine looks around him, and observes the inequalities of birth and

fortune, of intellect and capacities; when one sees honour paid fools and profligates, on whom fortune has heaped her favours by mere privilege of birth, and their nearest neighbour, with all his intellect and noble virtues—far more deserving in every way—perishing of want and for lack of sympathy; when one sees all this and has to turn away, helpless to relieve the undeserved suffering, one's ears ringing and heart aching with the cries of pain around him—that blessed knowledge of Karma alone prevents him from cursing life and men, as well as their supposed Creator. (II, 303-4)

Later on, H.P.B. likens the reincarnating ego to an actor who plays different parts.

The *inner*, or real man, who personates those characters, knows the whole time that he is Hamlet for the brief space of a few acts....And he knows that he was, the night before, King Lear, the transformation in his turn of the Othello of a still earlier preceding night; but the outer, visible character is supposed to be ignorant of the fact. In actual life that ignorance is, unfortunately, but too real. Nevertheless, the *permanent* individuality is fully aware of the fact, though, through the atrophy of the "spiritual" eye in the physical body, that knowledge is unable to impress itself on the consciousness of the false personality. (S.D., II, 306)

The following words should also be engraved on our hearts:

But verily there is not an accident in our lives, not a misshapen day, or a misfortune, that could not be traced back to our own doings in this or in another life. (S.D., I, 643-4)

It is therefore much safer for us to stick to the idea of universal justice and hold ourselves responsible for our misshapen days than to attribute it all to unmerited Karma! Acceptance of what looks like unmerited Karma can be turned to good account, for it offers us opportunities for building qualities and powers. So, instead of indulging in self-pity for having to suffer "through no cause of our own," let us "welcome each rebuff" and strengthen our character.

POWERS LATENT IN SPEECH

LORD Buddha taught the Noble Eightfold Path as the right mode of living, and one of the steps on that Path is *Right Discourse*. In Sir Edwin Arnold's *Light of Asia* (Book VIII) it is very beautifully put as follows:

Govern the lips
As they were palace-doors, the King within;
Tranquil and fair and courteous be all words
Which from that presence win.

Obviously great importance is attached to Right Speech, and this includes not only the words themselves and their import, but also the tone used and the way in which these words are spoken. It will be worth our while to consider speech from its occult aspects.

In order to gain some understanding of the powers latent in speech, we must first examine sound; for speech is sound—and it is more than sound alone, for behind all speech lies the motive, or feeling, or passion, that brought that speech to birth. *The Secret Doctrine* has much to say about this:

Thus speaks the ASCETIC in Anugita.... "Space is the first entity....Now Space (*Akasa*, or the noumenon of Ether) has one quality...and that is sound only...." (*S.D.*, I, 534)

We say and maintain that SOUND, for one thing, is a tremendous Occult power....Sound may be produced of such a nature that the pyramid of Cheops would be raised in the air, or that a dying man, nay, one at his last breath, would be revived and filled with new energy and vigour. (*S.D.*, I, 555)

"To pronounce a word is to evoke a thought, and make it present: the magnetic potency of the human speech is the commencement of every manifestation in the Occult World. To utter a Name is not only to define a Being (an Entity), but to place it under and condemn it through the emission of the Word (*Verbum*), to the influence of one or more Occult potencies....The Word (*Verbum*) or the speech of every man is, quite unconsciously to himself, a BLESSING or a CURSE; this is why our present ignorance about the properties or attributes of the IDEA as well as about the attributes and properties of MATTER, is often fatal to

us." (Quoted from P. Christian in *S.D.*, I, 93)

The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols; it was never expressed in so many words. All the thoughts and emotions, all the learning and knowledge, revealed and acquired, of the early races, found their pictorial expression in allegory and parable. Why? Because *the spoken word has a potency unknown to, unsuspected and disbelieved in, by the modern "sages."* Because sound and rhythm are closely related to the four Elements of the Ancients; and because such or another vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be. No student was ever allowed to recite historical, religious, or any real events in so many unmistakable words, lest the powers connected with the event should be once more attracted. (*S.D.*, I, 307)

After the mind of man had been lit up and he had acquired the knowledge of Good and Evil (expressed allegorically, when he had eaten the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge) he also attained the power of speech. And this important power was by no means an unmitigated blessing, for it could be used for evil as well as for good. Like everything else in Nature, it is septenary, ranging from the maleficent to the beneficent.

We would be more careful of the words we utter if we would understand the occult potency of speech and sound. We can start by examining our everyday use of speech.

H. P. Blavatsky speaks of cant and hypocrisy as unpardonable sins; therefore "fair and courteous" words are not only useless but are positively injurious when spoken with venom or scorn in the heart. Yet how often does this happen in politics and in "polite society"! How often does Mrs. A. gush over Mrs. B. and pretend to be "so pleased to see her" when in her heart of hearts she has the deepest antipathy to the lady! It may be said that it is impossible to go about the world advertising the fact that one dislikes so-and-so intensely. Granted; but here two points arise. First, our likes and dislikes belong to our desire nature and are no part of the real immortal man. They are evanescent and transitory. This can be proved by seeing how often hate turns to love, and love to hate. So,

recognizing this, and rising above likes and dislikes, one should be able to speak "fair and courteous" words even to one's enemy, not with cant or hypocrisy, but from the heart. But that stage is a long way off for most of us, and here we come to our second point: What are we to do when we *have* to consort with those to whom we are antipathetic? Here no better course can be adopted than to try to follow the occult maxim which enjoins one to say only what is true, kind and necessary. Thus one will be saved from many pitfalls.

Another aspect of speech we should consider is that every sound, and to a greater degree every word—because the latter has an image-thought behind it—produces a vibration on the occult plane, and by linking itself with certain elemental forces on that plane becomes a definite power, capable of increasing the harmony of Nature or producing discord. So, great is our responsibility when we use the power that is speech. To begin with, the motive and thought behind the speech must be considered. How can hurtful, cruel words produce aught but a hurtful and ugly effect on the occult plane, even though these words may be spoken in silvery tones? In fact, the silvery tones make matters worse, for thereby hypocrisy is added to the unkind motive. Then, we should be careful about the tone used. Many blind people can tell at once, by the mere tone of a person's voice, if that person is kind, loving and warm-hearted, or calculating, cold and hard. The rhythm, too, is important. Is each word given its full value, each syllable being sounded so that the sentence forms an easily comprehended and harmonious whole? There is, indeed, much to learn about speech and its correct use—and abuse.

"Govern the lips as they were palace doors, the King within." These are solemn words. Speech is a divine, creative power; and to speak untrue, unkind and uncharitable words is to prostitute one of the creative powers in man. In the distant future, when man has learnt to use rightly this power that is his, then indeed will all his words, because they are an outward and visible sign of the inward, invisible grace, be "fair and courteous," and he will be a co-worker with Nature in creating the Harmony of the Spheres.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The omnipresence of life has always been one of the fundamental teachings of Occult Science, and modern science too is now veering round to this view. Recent findings confirm that life in the form of micro-organisms exists even under the most inhospitable conditions—deep down in the Earth's crust and underneath the ocean floors, kilometre after kilometre. (*New Scientist*, 7 March)

For most of this century, writes Stephanie Pain, "the deep Earth was considered no fit place for living things." Microbiologists believed that bacteria could live no deeper than a few metres underneath the topsoil or ocean mud, but new research has dispelled the idea of a sterile subterranean zone.

If you could peel away the planet's surface fuzz [states the author], siphon off the oceans and delve far beneath the surface, you would discover an incredible new world: a planet within a planet. This deep, dark biosphere inside the Earth may well contain as much life as the airy, sunlit world on the outside.

The resident micro-organisms don't look strikingly different from those living in the world above, but their existence changes our perception of Earth's interior as a lifeless realm where chemistry reigns, aided and abetted by immense physical forces. These tiny organisms with their quirky survival strategies may be the creators of rich seams of minerals, nuggets of gold even, and perhaps the reservoirs of oil and gas the world has come to depend on....

Not only are there micro-organisms everywhere, they come in a huge diversity of species....Even the igneous rocks, created at lethal temperatures, harbour a huge variety of organisms....

This is the only ecosystem on the planet that is totally independent of the surface world and solar energy. With such capabilities, it could go on indefinitely. The varied and innovative means by which the inhabitants of the deep biosphere acquire nutrients and energy explains how they could have survived cut off from the outside world for so long.

The very existence of this deep biosphere is forcing researchers to rethink about life on other planets. If the interior of the Earth is

filled with life forms that relish the heat, the crushing pressures and the starvation diet, why cannot life survive elsewhere in the Universe, even under what seem to us most inhospitable conditions?

All the world religions, though derived from a common source of Truth, have in the course of time been overlaid with the human element. Some have changed out of all recognition, others are showing signs of early decay. There is not one that has escaped the hand of time.

Ron Sellers, writing in *The Futurist* about the future of religion, says that as we approach the 21st century, changes in the sphere of religion are taking place at a faster pace than ever before. Some futurists are examining current trends affecting religion in order to see where the logical conclusions lead. Sellers' article investigates these major trends on a global scale:

Trend One: Religion is still firmly entrenched in even the most secular states.

Trend Two: There is a natural sequence that seems to occur when science and religion meet. First, they are at odds with each other....Gradually, they become mutually tolerant and sometimes accept and aid each other....Clashes in viewpoint between science and religion will increase in the near future. The applications of technology, and the ethical and moral dilemmas those applications can pose, is a debate that will rage like a forest fire into the next millennium.

Trend Three: Expect to see increased co-operation between science and religion, even as (and sometimes because) these moral debates rage on...In fact, religion now often uses science to back up its claims. Science is reciprocating. For instance, medical scientists increasingly are willing to re-evaluate their purely scientific world view....Other fields are beginning to realize that science and religion are not mutually exclusive. The debates between the secular and the religious may increase, but so will the co-operation.

Trend Four: Religion will continue to play a major part in

international politics....In fact, expect religious conflicts to increase on a more local, and thankfully much less severe, scale. One reason for this is the ability of major faith groups to propagate their beliefs through the Internet, radio, television and personal travel.

Trend Five: Expect governments to get more involved in religious issues in the coming decades.

Trend Six: One area of expression that will prove very difficult to control is electronic communication, particularly the Internet. As the Internet spreads internationally, look for religious groups to try to use this tool to evade governmental controls.

Trend Seven: Along with the worldwide mixture of peoples and faiths, and the ability to communicate across geographic lines, another noteworthy religious trend is *faith syncretism*, in which a person will combine bits and pieces from other faiths into a blend of his own. This doesn't happen just with religious practices, but also with theology itself. This trend leads to a highly individualized view of religion, rather than the traditional corporate practice of faith.

The Theosophist sees no chasm between true religion and true science. Both have as their aim the pursuit of truth. Conflict between the two arises because falsehoods, dogmas, fanatic beliefs and materialistic sophistries have come to be accepted as truth. Truth is ever one, even if sought for at two different levels; and it is hoped that in the coming century the supposed rift between religion and science will be seen as an optical delusion that it truly is.

Many parents are at a loss when children ask about God. Perhaps this is because the parents' own views on the subject are based on mere belief, or on poor understanding of abstract spiritual concepts. "Yet talking about God can be the best way to meet some of a child's greatest needs," writes Kristin von Kreisler (*Reader's Digest*, May 1998, Indian ed.). It "can also help make children secure...[and] provide kids with an anchor, a moral compass, in a world where things are so transient."

The article goes on to offer tips on how to talk about God to children of different age groups. But, in all likelihood, parents often end up emphasizing their own beliefs, instilling into the child's mind ideas such as that of a personal God, that will last all through life.

How a Theosophical parent or elder would deal with a child's questions about God is dealt with in books such as *The Eternal Verities* and "*Because—*" *For the Children Who Ask Why*:

"God cannot be less than Space."

God is the highest in us. God is everywhere. God is Life, the Self, Spirit, Consciousness....God cannot be a being. Because any *being* is in space, and so Space is greater than any being....

Our Inmost Self is the Real God, and all we can know of that God is in and of ourselves. Is it any wonder that Theosophy is called God-Knowledge? When we know that Knowledge, then, we are the highest beings in the universe. But, the highest beings are not God; they are gods, each one. So, we are *a* God within, but we do not *know* it, here on earth. Someone once said that we are Gods in the making!....

Many think "God" is a Spirit, who is everywhere outside themselves, so that they can "pray" to Him for what they want to receive, or to be relieved of; that He may do for them what they cannot do for themselves. Suppose someone could do all our walking for us? Would we ever know how to walk ourselves? Suppose someone could do all our thinking for us? Suppose someone could do all our work for us? Can someone be happy for us, or can one be miserable for us? "Praying" in the real way, can we not see, is *acting* for and as the God within ourselves, not just now and then, but *all the time*. (*The Eternal Verities*, pp. 46-48)

"Of the so-called exact sciences," said H.P.B., "medicine, confessedly, least deserves the name." Antibiotics, once hailed as "wonder drugs," are now giving medical men second thoughts. In most countries they are too easy to buy—but many of them just do not work any more. "Asia is quickly becoming a breeding ground

for multi-drug-resistant bacteria—capable of evading even the most sophisticated antibiotics. People will suffer because of it," warns *Asiaweek* (February 13).

A recent survey by the Health Systems Research Institute in Bangkok found that hospitals prescribed antibiotics to some 70% of patients, regardless of their diagnoses. Another study of three university hospitals revealed that, in most cases, antibiotics were prescribed for ailments for which they were useless—*e.g.*, for the treatment of the "common cold." What is more, some countries' lax drug policies mean that anyone can buy antibiotics from unlicensed vendors.

The result of misuse and overuse is that many diseases have developed resistance to antibiotics.

Like all evolving organisms, bacteria populations include members with unusual characteristics. Often, these traits allow bacteria to withstand antibiotic attack. By taking an antibiotic, the patient kills the defenseless bacteria, but the maverick bugs survive the chemical assault. Then they multiply quickly (millions of times a day) and a new, tougher, drug-resistant strain is born. Even with responsible antibiotic use, this is bound to happen, but the process is accelerated when the course of treatment is too short, the patient stops and re-starts taking the medication, and when the wrong type of antibiotics are used.... In other words, these drugs kill a variety of species, but let hardy breeds develop resistance.

The studies, while they are critical of the overuse of antibiotics, do not bring out that these drugs can produce strong adverse reactions at times, sometimes even death.

New drugs are not going to solve the problems raised by the old drugs. What is really required is a different kind of treatment, biological rather than chemical, taking the evolutionary aspect into account, and realizing that germs and bacteria are not necessarily harmful; that there are other ways to prevent them from doing the harm that they do. Attempts to poison them off merely make them more vicious.

Let medical men and patients take a fresh look at what illness is

for and ask not only "What caused this illness?" but "What are these symptoms trying to tell me?" We may remind ourselves that if it were within man's power to remove all the illness in the world today, still the root of illness would not be affected. The mind needs the right kind of medicine, and where is it to be found but in true Knowledge?

There is increasing interest today in holistic health and well-being, and a growing feeling that body, mind and environment are all interconnected and together play a role in the healing process. Growing scientific evidence, clinical experience and changing community attitudes are making people turn to alternative forms of healing for a variety of ailments.

Recent studies corroborate that there exists a strong interplay between our lifestyle and the onset and progression of many diseases. Dr. K. M. Mishra, writing editorially in *My Doctor*, explains that all our routine activities, our eating habits, our personality, the way we interact with other people, etc., go to make up our lifestyle. Some people are more predisposed to certain diseases like heart ailments and diabetes, and it is generally believed that this predisposition is genetically determined. However, the individual's lifestyle and environmental influences, both inner and outer, also play a predominant role in the manifestation of the disease.

Over the past quarter of the century [writes Dr. Mishra], our understanding of the pathophysiology of many diseases has increased and it is now common knowledge that most of the ailments that strike the adult population are a consequence of their lifestyle. Thus the present paradigm for most medical therapies is the concept of "healthy living." People are advised to adhere to certain lifestyle measures that are beneficial. A modification in our living methods so that it harmonises with our body needs or disease management requirements is essential. The conclusion that healthy living habits prove beneficial in attenuating the morbidity associated with many ailments

has now been more or less established with research data.

Researchers have known for some time that chronic stress often leads directly to certain illnesses, including heart disease, hypertension, depression, immune suppression and diabetes. Recently, they have found that stress also causes developmental abnormalities, unhealthy weight gain and neurodegeneration.

Fortunately, reports *Scientific American*, some of the new insights suggest better means for combating excess stress. One of them may be to widen one's circle of friends and put on a "socially affiliating personality style." The worst thing may be to remain isolated.

The vital importance of social relationships in individuals' lives is also highlighted in research conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston, U.S.A. A study by researcher Lisa Berkman suggests that having friends who offer emotional support by "being there" to listen and talk to, has a remarkable effect on improving a patient's chances of healing and survival. (*The Times of India*, June 1)

Berkman says that public health is yet to recognize the vital role of "talking interventions"—meaning talking and listening to patients—because such interventions are difficult to define and measure. She stresses the need for designing and studying such programmes in worksite and community settings.

Dr. Leon Eisenberg likewise supports the need to encourage interaction in doctor-patient relationships. Physicians fail to give patients, especially the elderly, time and encouragement to talk about themselves and what is making them unwell. Eisenberg notes that upto 70 per cent of medical diagnosis is based on detailed medical history, while not more than 10 per cent each is based on physical examination and laboratory findings. Doctors provide the best care when they listen to their patients and when patients are involved in their own treatment decisions, he adds.

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The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great Founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the Philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

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

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.