

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 46, No. 8

17th June 1976

## OUR LOFTY TASK

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, July 1942

—EDS.]

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 SIGNING of these words makes of a person an Associate of the United Lodge of Theosophists. There are many who sign this form without due consideration of its deep significance. But there are those who put their signature to this sentence, valuing the words seriously and sincerely; for such, it constitutes a pledge.

The clause is a practical application of the Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. That Proposition contains words of mantram value — “self-induced and self-devised efforts.” For the earnest Associate, the U.L.T. is a school in which learning and teaching are combined, and both are carried on by self-induced and self-devised efforts. In this school each is a pupil-teacher; as an Associate develops the power to teach and exercises that power without thought of reward or of recognition, he grows in the life of true discipleship. The real function of the U.L.T. is to give each Associate the wonderful opportunity to learn the art of service — the highest form of it, which is the service of human souls.

No one can whole-heartedly labour for the Cause of Theosophy without an adequate perception of its movement down the corridors of time. But that whole-hearted devotion may flower from a single seed of some love for our fellow-men: when a person, however ignorant, desires to

serve even a few whom he loves, he finds in Theosophy the necessary knowledge; when a scholar, frustrated in his attempts to teach men to be good, seeks the cause of his failure, he will find in Theosophy a very full answer to his difficulty; when a sectarian desires to touch the hearts of those outside his creedal fold, he will find in Theosophy as nowhere else the means to do this, gaining for himself the reward of becoming less sectarian; and so on and so forth.

The motive with which a person joins the U.L.T. shapes his attitude toward the work carried on, which work is dedicated to service or — soul-uplift. His understanding and evaluation of the work of the Lodge depend on the motive with which he signs the single clause which constitutes his response to the grand principles of the Declaration. The course and speed of the evolution of the Associate are determined by his own self-determination to learn and to teach, and thus to participate in the mission of mercy carried forward by the U.L.T. in the world of human minds. Only a few perceive from the very start the real meaning of that mission: “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” which is the sole object for which the U.L.T. was brought into being and which continues to energize all who sacrifice in its behalf.

The many who have joined the U.L.T. without a very clear perception of what is implicit in the Declaration can educate themselves in understanding it fully and thoroughly. Not a few have done this in the past; not a few are doing so in the present.

The answer made to his own question about his individual obligation reveals the place the Associate occupies in the U.L.T. which is an integral part of the immemorial Theosophical Movement. His perception of his obligation deepens as he learns to teach, and as he teaches, learns more and more.

To some the work of the U.L.T. appears narrow; they are not able to note that it functions on the plane of causes following the teaching that “the suppression of one single bad *cause* will suppress not one, but a variety of bad effects.” (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 644)

To some, that work seems to be merely academical and not at all practical; such have to meditate so as to comprehend the idea put forward in these words in *The Key to Theosophy*: “We believe in relieving the starvation of the soul, as much if not more than the emptiness of the stomach.”

Still others view the work of the U.L.T. as one of cold intellectualism where in the name of Brotherhood there is unbrotherliness; such have to learn the significance of these words of *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 644):

If a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats — still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some, while trying to comprehend that which has hitherto remained to them a riddle, from creating additional causes in a world already so full of woe and evil.

And again:

The coming together of the few will bring on a closer tie and bring out a stronger devotion. No doubt there will be some reactions, but even so, they will pass, and all be bettered if all hold firm. Changes will go on. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, p. 11)

These and other objections to the programme and policy of U.L.T. work disappear as the real significance of Brotherhood is seen. Those who see any gulf between the principles embodied in the Declaration and the actual week-to-week activities of the Lodge should continue to unfold within themselves "a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood." Unity manifests as Associates learn the principles of the philosophy of Theosophy. This Unity is not to be understood as subsisting only among those who are students of today. It has also to be seen and felt as subsisting between all who have been genuine students of the Wisdom-Religion or the Esoteric Philosophy down the ages. Every U.L.T. Branch enables its local Associates to come into fraternal relationship with those of every other Branch; but it does something more. Through its work every such Branch enables its Associates to feel the fraternity subsisting between the students of the present and of the past ages — aye, even of the distant past. Still more. The work of the U.L.T. unveils yet another aspect of fraternity or brotherhood: the existence of Living Brothers who teach era after era, and who are the Bearers of the Torch of Truth through the Eternities.

The idea of brotherhood, universal and impersonal, looks simple, and in one sense it is. Its profundity is perceived as we study the doctrine and test it by personal application. Through its work the U.L.T. is giving an opportunity to every Associate to study this doctrine in theory and practice and to promulgate it, and thus to realize for himself that to be

a brother to all mankind is to fulfil the highest mission of human life.

The Associate of the U.L.T. can evolve into a companion of the Great Theosophists by an ardent desire to fit himself, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others. Such companionship is the highest blessing and comes only to him who does not seek it but who labours to change the *manas* and the *buddhi* of the race. This task is too absorbing and too lofty to leave the devotee the time or inclination to take part in side issues. It is this task which, soon or late, brings the Associate to make a resolve under the inspiration of this charge:

Be Theosophists, work for Theosophy! Theosophy first, and Theosophy last. In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.

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MAGNANIMITY and contentment are very near allied; like brothers and sisters they spring from the same parents, but are of several features. Fortitude and Patience are kindred to this incomparable virtue. Moralists distinguish Magnanimity and Modesty by making the one the desire of greater, the other of less and inferior honours. But in my apprehension there is more in Magnanimity. It includes all that belongs to a Great Soul: a high and mighty courage, an invincible Patience, an immovable Grandeur which is above the reach of injuries, a contempt of all little and feeble enjoyments, and a certain kind of majesty that is conversant with great things; a high and lofty frame of spirit, allied with the sweetness of Courtesy and Respect; a deep and stable resolution founded on humility without any baseness; an infinite hope and a vast desire; all these conspire to complete it, with a severe and mighty expectation of Bliss incomprehensible. It soars up to Heaven, and looks down upon all dominion of fortune with pity and disdain. Its aims and designs are transcendent to all concerns of this little world. . . . The terrors, allurements, and censures of men are the dust of its feet: their avarice and ambition are but feebleness before it. Their riches and contentions, and interests and honours, but insignificant and empty trifles. All the world is but a little bubble; Infinity and Eternity the only great and sovereign things wherewith it converseth. A Magnanimous Soul is always awake. The whole globe of the earth is but a nutshell in comparison of its enjoyments. . . . Nothing is great if compared to a Magnanimous Soul but the sovereign Lord of all Worlds.

—THOMAS TRAHERNE

## THE ART OF PROMULGATION

The Teacher can but point the way . . . the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

ANYONE who has some experience of teaching will have found that there are types of students who are peculiarly inept at assimilating one or the other branch of knowledge, and throw it out as does the body which automatically rejects matter which it cannot absorb. Such a state in the pupil needs adjustment, and the proficiency of the teacher is best tested by the manner and method employed to overcome the innate resistance. The skill required to adjust oneself to the pupil's requirements comes only through the establishment of a broad basis of trust between pupil and teacher. It has to be mutual, but the effort to win over confidence must come primarily, if not wholly, from the teacher. It is good to remember at this stage that an excess of sympathy is resented as much as an overbearing attitude. This applies with equal force in the class-rooms of the adolescents as in the study groups of adults.

It is more than probable that a student unversed in such things may be sincere in putting a question which bothers him, but couches it in language which may offend the susceptibilities of the answerer. No offence was meant and no offence should be taken. The ideal answer is that which will be found reasonable and satisfying to the listener and will induce in the mind a desire to learn more. The promulgator of Theosophy merely throws away opportunities if he is bent on showing his own erudition or preening his own feathers. At the end of the peroration, is the questioner numbed by the charm of language into silence, or is he going to say that he now understands and his difficulty is resolved?

The expounders of Theosophy are at best pupil-teachers. They pass on what they know, but at the same time they are learning by a series of successes and failures how best they can ignite the spark that will impress ideas residing in moral equations upon the matter which they constantly use. There is a meaning to this exercise and also a method. This has to be sought for in the teachings and then imparted to the sincere inquirer and learner. For, Theosophy is no philosophy locked away in tomes for the mental delectation of the learned. It is knowledge about the unseen Universe of which modern science knows hardly a thing. It shows how manifestation awakes and sets evolution in motion. It explains what deity is and its relationship to nature and to man. It

has answers for any problem, but it expects from the student the effort to work these out for himself, and in the process to establish communion with his divine part so that he can have access to it and to its vast storehouse of wisdom and of force.

The inquirer and the new student usually have a pronounced sectarian bias. They have their roots in a religious denomination and often have rigid ideas about God, forgiveness of sins and special dispensations. He who professes one religion will consider all others false or inferior and is not likely to view the adherents of other faiths as his brothers. He who believes that god is approachable for boons will carry deep within him the impression that he can get away with transgressions. He who believes in prayers will think that he can side-step many a deserved punishment by this simple expedient. The new student cannot but bring such ideas with him, and he gets confused when expounders of Theosophy speak of a Deity that is incommunicable by prayers and supplications, of a Law that weighs motives and morals while dispensing justice, and of a progressive march upwards which brings success to him alone who merits it. This wide chasm that lies between preconceived notions and Theosophical tenets sways the student between blind orthodoxy on the one hand and what appear to him as most disquieting ideas on the other. One has to be strong and compassionate enough to perceive the inner turmoil peering from out of the inquirer's queries. An answer in strict accordance with the principles of Theosophy is good, is indeed required. But that answer must also reach into the inner consciousness of the questioner and touch upon many an allied point of confusion. It is very much like giving a thorough medical check-up and prescribing medicine instead of leaving the patient to fend for himself on patent medicines. Weaning time for infants in age or in learning is always a difficult period and heavy food which may suit other palates becomes injurious to unaccustomed digestive systems.

Just as a student of languages must learn the alphabet and its combinations and from there proceed to the formation of sentences and the use of these for the expression of ideas, so must the student of Theosophy be grounded in the Three Fundamentals of God, Law and Evolution. It is the duty of the student-teacher who leads the newcomer to a consideration and appreciation of these Three Fundamentals to see that the correct import of these teachings is grasped. Unless the latter is made to understand that these are basic to study and progress, he may be tempted to pay lip-profession and then continue with the previous

ideas of his sectarian creed. He who but preaches and leaves the inquirer to his own devices may unwittingly contribute towards the continuance of wrong ideas that lead the latter on to the path of error. He may thus move on from one false step to another till he lands himself in a group or sect and preaches brotherhood only in name. The danger is that he may do all this in the name of Theosophy.

The Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine* are universal, constant and eternal. These and their corollaries constitute the science of life. To become a true Theosophist — one not merely in name — each aspect of the man's behaviour has to find its anchorage in one or the other of these principles. The responsibility of the promulgator of Theosophy is therefore onerous, for when from the science (knowledge) of Theosophy, the inquirer proceeds to the art or application side, the slightest lingering doubt about the correctness of these tenets may get magnified a hundredfold. Karma will continue to dominate thought, but with it, there will be the expectancy of providential escapes. Deity will still be understood as unapproachable by the mortal and personal aspects of the man, but there will be a sneaking hope that this impersonal force may still listen to prayer and shower the personal man with worldly treasures or with immunity from stress. And so on, endlessly. In the words of a Master of Wisdom will be found chalked out the programme of teaching: "Theosophy should not represent merely a collection of moral verities, a bundle of metaphysical ethics, epitomized in theoretical dissertations" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 22*, p. 10). That society, forum, lodge or group whose teachings go not beyond theoretical dissertations is not being true to its exalted mission. The Master continues: "Theosophy *must be made practical*; and it has, therefore, to be disencumbered of useless digressions, in the sense of desultory orations and fine talk." Institutions of Theosophy that have sooner or later to send missionaries forth to bring the philosophy to the masses owe it a duty to prepare students along these lines. There cannot be half-measures.

When in a class a student volunteers to give the Three Fundamentals, his least worry should be to show that he understands them. That should have been his homework at earlier stages. He is expected to have studied his subject in depth and acquired a clear understanding which he is now to transmit to his audience. If he merely repeats the text, he becomes boring; if he departs from its import, he needs a corrective; if his effort is halting and in a poor mode of expression, help in many quarters is indicated. But the expounding of Theos-

ophy requires much more. What is required to be implanted in the pupil by example, advice and instruction is an alertness for other people's interests, especially at the time of expounding the Teachings. This demands vigilance against vanity and autocracy as also a non-shrinking or recoiling from the sins, vices and weaknesses of others. If one volunteers to serve in a hospital, one has to look upon the patients as souls, and bear the stench and sickening odours of the afflicted, the agony of the dying and the frustration of the dead.

The good doctor takes all possible precautions to immunize himself from infection. The really great physician knows his own limitations and therefore refrains from treating maladies for which he has no cure to offer. So too with those expounders of Theosophy who recognize that they are dealing with human souls and that their failures or lapses may lead to the downfall of a whole incarnation's effort. The true helper unobtrusively implants in the pupil disciplines which would lead to self-development and would immunize him from the contamination spread by harmful entities seen and unseen.

The expounder of Theosophy has to remind himself constantly that if he sows no seeds, he need expect no harvests, even though the soil be fertile and the water and the warmth ready at hand. Once the furrows are made and the planting done, the gardener works his routine awaiting the indications for growth, after which other duties and applications of a different discipline engage his attention. So, too, with the teacher. He has to sow his eternal ideas and await the time when they will take root and grow. It is only when the student is firmly fixed in knowledge that he can be led to further grades of self-discipline. These, among others, are: self-contemplation and self-study; the recognition and correction of one's faults; the purification of motives; the planning of one's life for the next twenty-four-hour period; the undertaking of a meaningful study, and the writing of letters, articles, etc., for propagating the philosophy.

At this stage study of *The Voice of the Silence* becomes essential and it is here that the teacher has a special task to perform. In this book, the verses deal with the re-orientation of the student's life based on the theoretical principles already studied. The abstract theorems have now to be applied to life and life's problems. From the commencement, the text lays stress on two aspects, the first negative, the second intensely positive. The opening sentence warns the student against the dangers that he may invite by the use of the "lower Iddhi." These are psychic

faculties and abnormal powers residing in each man, but which may be aroused under the pressure of the fight which will have to be waged against the undesirable tendencies of the student. What these lower powers are and why they cannot be relied upon has to be ascertained. It is here that the role of the promulgator of Theosophy becomes important, for he can guide the chariot of the student to the vantage point from where he can make his own assessment. It is, however, the next sentence with which the positive instructions open; and it is there, right at the very commencement, that the student is shown the goal towards which all his future efforts must converge. The student is invited to enter upon a course of discipline which will culminate in the hearing of his own inner and divine voice — the voice that speaks in the silence.

At this stage, there can be no other goal to divert the attention. Though it is true that the student's studies thus far have led him to this stage of evolution, the discipline he is now required to follow is radically different from that to which he was normally accustomed. It is now that the student needs encouragement, sympathy, adjustment, and most of all — help to pick himself up after a fall. This is a new life, a startlingly purposeful life, yet one which can no longer be trifled with, and which demands an undivided attention. There are natures that are curious, indolent, hesitating and fearful. But each of these does get fired by the spark which, hitherto latent, is fanned into life by the touch of the Wisdom-Religion. The would-be helper has to cater to each. He cannot shy away from the man of anger or the man of vice, for if these were not qualified they would never have reached to the stage of a deeper study of *The Voice of the Silence*. The true promulgator's successes and failures lie in his record of leading promising souls across the threshold. Self-sacrifice, renunciation and martyrdom come to him alone who is prepared to forgo everything in the service of others.

To be in a position to help other souls is a rare privilege though it is one where thorns are aplenty and ingratitude and thanklessness are met with at each turn. And yet, the position has its own compensation. It has nobility and a promise of divinity in the background.

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TO WILL with firmness is to triumph.

—VICTOR HUGO

# METAPHYSICAL SCIENCE IN MEDICINE

## I.—THE FIVE CAUSES OF DISEASE

[This article, the first of a series by Dr. Franz Hartmann, is reprinted from *The Word* for February 1905. Dr. Hartmann, German physician, author and Theosophist, played a prominent role in the early years of the Theosophical Movement and his prolific writings bear testimony to his devotion to Theosophy and Occultism. His works include *The Life of Paracelsus and the Substance of his Teachings*.—EDS.]

IT IS an eternal truth, which was also recognized and proclaimed by Gautama Buddha, that all suffering is caused by ignorance (*avidya*); which means, by our non-recognition and non-realization of our own higher and spiritual nature. All the great world religions teach, and the *Secret Doctrine* explains, that aboriginal, paradisiacal man before his descent into matter and long before his arrival upon this globe was an ethereal, spiritual being, not subject to disease or suffering. He desired "to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil," that is to say, he wanted to know by experience the laws of material nature, so as to become their master and employ them for his own benefit, and therefore his descent took place and he assumed himself a material body. Thus we become subject to the laws of material nature, the same as all other beings incarnated in an animal form; but in our innermost essence we are still spiritual and if we would realize our true spiritual state, overcome the resistance of our material forms, and have them spiritualized and penetrated by our spiritual power, our physical bodies would no longer be subject to disharmony, disease and suffering. Pure spirit does not suffer; but now, as we have a physical organism, composed of different principles and elements, and liable to be affected by disease, we have to seek in the elements of its composition the causes of its disharmonies.

These elements in their original state are all invisible. Substance of whatever kind consists of vibrating forces, which become perceptible to our physical senses only when they swing at a certain rate, or in other words, when that substance enters into a certain state of density, in which it becomes for us visible and tangible "matter." Physical science deals with such materialized visible forms; metaphysical science with the invisible substance from which these forms originate and with the natural laws which govern these states. All visible products of nature

have an invisible origin; we see only the vehicles in which the forces of nature act, but not the forces themselves. We see the acorn out of which an oak tree grows, but not the organizing power which causes the acorn to select its nutriment and become an oak. A medical science which is ignorant of the invisible elements from which man's visible body grows, and ignorant of the organizing power which governs the formation of the elements into a harmonious whole, can know only a very small portion of the causes of the diseases which affect the human body, and is almost helpless when called to cure any other troubles except such as arise from obstructions or other purely mechanical causes. The link which connects the spirit and soul with the visible body is the "astral," or ethereal body of man. It is this body to which the research of the scientist and physician of the future ought to be directed above all, for the purpose of detecting the invisible causes of visible phenomena.

There is only one spirit and one substance, but a great variety of gradations and forms. Man is made up of a scale of such gradations, from the lowest state of matter rising upwards towards the highest spiritual state. The higher states of substance penetrate the lower ones; spirit penetrates thought, thought penetrates the ether, ether penetrates the air, air penetrates water, water the earth. The higher or more refined elements in man's constitution penetrate into the lower ones, seek to transform them and to raise them up to a higher state. The divine power within the sanctuary in the heart of man sends out a ray called intuition and thereby guides and elevates his intellect; his intellectual power protects and guides his psychic states and emotions, and these again with the co-operation of will and the instrumentality of the ethereal body guide the functions of the physical body, be they voluntary or involuntary. Each scale of forces may be regarded as being positive to the next lower one, and negative to the next higher one. If the lower ones would offer no great resistance to the influence of the higher ones, the progress towards health, happiness, spiritualization and perfection would be easier.

Each of the principles or elements in the constitution of man has its own origin and belongs to its own region, from whence it was born and to which it will return at the end of its journey; but as long as they are connected with each other, an interaction and correlation of forces takes place, from which a great variety of states may arise.

Theophrastus Paracelsus, the great reformer of the science of medicine, recognized and taught five original causes of disease. They are as follows:

1. *Astral conditions.* (Prenatal and such as exist during life)
2. *Impurities and poisons.* (Physical, psychical, and intellectual)
3. *Inherited diseases.* (Physical, moral, and mental)
4. *Spiritual influences.* (Hypnotism, suggestion, telepathy, witchcraft, etc.)
5. *The law of divine justice.* (Karma, or as Paracelsus calls it, "the will of God"; *i.e.*, the result of causes created in previous existences)

We now propose to examine in a short way these separate causes.

### *I. Astral Causes*

This subject will not be fully understood, unless we know the laws of reincarnation. Metaphysical science teaches that the astral elements composing the astral body of man are combined and formed before the physical body is formed; in fact the former is the ethereal prototype of the latter; the physical body, the visible image of the invisible ethereal form. These elements, going to form the astral body of anything, be it a mineral, a plant, an animal, a human being, or a whole planet, cannot come from anything else but from the same elements existing in the universal storehouse of nature, and as the whole universe consists of a collection of celestial bodies or stars (*astra*) and their ethereal emanations and influences, of which the suns and stars and planets are the visible, materialized centres, everything that exists in nature is necessarily built up of these astral influences. Thus, for instance, our visible sun is such a star and visible centre of power, whose heat and light, electricity, magnetism, etc., give life to everything and build up all forms on our globe.

The influences represented by the visible Moon and emanating from her are also known, owing to the observation of the action of the moon's rays upon the earth, sea, plants, and animals. Less known, because less prominent, are the other forces represented by the visible planets of our solar system. Nevertheless they have a great influence upon the formation of our astral body and this is proved by the fact that every good astrologer can predict, from the horoscope of a person, by what diseases, and at what periods of his life, that person is liable to be affected; or he may, by observing the character and state of health of a person, know under what planetary influence the same was born. Everything, even our physical bodies, are built up of such influences, which may be

called "spiritual"; but pure spirit cannot act directly upon gross matter; it needs an ethereal medium for that purpose, and this constitutes the astral bodies of things. Not the planet Jupiter, visible in the sky, but the "Jupiter" in the constitution of man makes him powerful; the power called "Mars," which his soul has breathed from the spiritual atmosphere of our globe, makes him daring and strong; Venus in him makes him affectionate; Mercury, intelligent; etc. These "planets" are the external representatives of universal spiritual powers, called by those names.

Not only is everybody subject to the astral influences ruling before and at the time of the birth of his physical body, but all his life long he is more or less dependent on planetary influences of various kinds. His body is affected by heat and cold, sunshine and rain, by the state of the atmosphere, electrical and magnetic currents, miasmas and infections, states of the earth and water, psychic surroundings, mental and moral influences, etc., etc. Each principle, power and element in the organism of man is intimately correlated with its corresponding principle, power or element in the universe, in which he is born and whose product he is. Thus the ancient philosophers were right in saying that man, according to his divine nature, is a son of the gods, his soul is a child of the stars, and his physical body formed of the physical elements of this Earth.

## II. *Impurities and Poisons*

Everything is pure, when free of any foreign admixture; if so, there exists in it no cause for disharmony. If two or more things are united in harmony, that union is also pure. Purity produces harmony; impurity, disharmony; and disharmony is disease. Everything that hinders the establishment of harmony or causes disharmony is a cause of disease. We may regard everything in nature, from a stone up to a thought, as a compound of vibrations, representing a note in the grand musical scale of nature. Some tunes produce an harmonious accord, others a disharmony. The law of harmony is the law of nature; all evolution and progress strive to produce harmony, and the higher by its contact with the lower tries to raise the latter up to its own level. All things are relatively good and also relatively bad. That which is conducive to man's higher evolution is good for him; that which prevents his progress or causes him to sink lower, is evil for him.

Owing to man's organism being a compound of many elements and being subject to receive different influences, impurities of various kinds may enter his system, causing disease. Many impure states are caused

by improper food; but the most dangerous poisons are Alcohol, Morphine, Cocaine and similar poisons, as well as the endless number of so-called "nervous tonics," all of which have a paralysing effect upon the vital currents which form the link between the astral body and the brain, causing a partial exteriorization of the astral body, which ultimately results in degeneration of the substance of the brain or in any of the various forms of insanity, obsession, etc.

But not only the physical body is subject to the detrimental action of impure matter, microbes, and other things; the world's psychic and mental atmosphere is also full of impurities, poisoning the soul and mind of mankind, producing all sorts of states of immorality, perverted thoughts and opinions, such as may even throw whole nations into war and bloodshed, especially if the impure thoughts take possession of crowned heads or other influential persons. An unlawful desire or an erroneous thought or prejudice may be compared to a physical obstruction in the body, preventing a free circulation. The presence of such impure thoughts prevents the perfect action of reason, and hinders the light of truth from entering the mind. There is no remedy against such obstructions except their removal, and this can be done only by the light of knowledge, a remedy which such patients are often unwilling to take.

Occult science, aided and corroborated by clairvoyance, teaches that the bad states of men's minds poison the spiritual ether surrounding our globe, and this state of the ether again influences men's minds. Thoughts are not airy nothings, but substantial, although the stuff of which they are made is invisible to our physical eyes. There are thoughts which lift the mind upwards and others that rest upon the soul as heavy as lead. Like attracts like and any psychic germ, any immoral aspiration of prejudice in the mind, may attract corresponding elements from the psychic region or the mental plane and open the door for deleterious influences, causing even epidemics of moral or mental diseases.

Perhaps the most widespread injurious effects are caused by the psychic and mental quackery of our times. Stuffing the mind with all sorts of dogmas and theories which constitute only a burden for memory, goes to paralyse the self-thinking faculties of the brain and hinder the self-perception of truth. Still more detrimental and quick in action are the now fashionable experiments with hypnotism, spiritism, and so-called Yoga practices, made for the purposes of obtaining occult powers. They poison the soul, injure the mind, ruin the astral body, cause diseases of the physical organs, produce weakness of will and character, cause

mediumship, obsession, moral and intellectual insanity, and not rarely suicide. Beware of such quacks.

### *III. Inheritance*

There are three modes of inheriting. The soul of the new-born child inherits from the preceding incarnation the qualities which it has acquired in former existences; the physical body inherits certain qualities from its parents; and finally, people inherit during their lives things from others with which they are in some way connected.

Everyone, when he enters this world, brings with him certain talents and inclinations which often greatly differ from those of his parents or grandparents, and the conclusion lies near that he must have acquired them in some previous incarnation. Even if these qualities resemble those of his parents, it is no proof of his having inherited them from the same; the probability is that a similarity of aspirations attracted his spirit to that family where his talents could be developed, no other action of the law of Karma directing it otherwise. But with the physical body it is somewhat different. Spiritually, everyone is his own father, or the son of his "father in heaven"; the physical body is the house that was built for the spirit to dwell therein; and of this the parents are the builders. The material of which that body is built comes from their substance and consequently diseased states may be transmitted to the child. In this way, syphilis, scrofula, cancer, tuberculosis, etc., may be inherited. If the parents were of feeble health, the child's constitution may be weak; if they were drunkards, the child's brain may be diseased and the result be a congenital idiot.

Mental and moral diseases point to a more distant origin. The children of great scientists or speculative philosophers are frequently very stupid and narrow-minded, while on the other hand people of high moral standing often have their "black sheep" in the family. Children are often born with criminal tendencies or moral perversities whose origin cannot be traced to any other cause except acquisitions made in a previous incarnation, or impressions received during the foetal state.

Man's nature, however, is a whole, and in his Microcosm the whole of the Macrocosm is represented. Therefore everybody has within himself all the seeds of good and of evil; difference exists only in the degree of their development. Some seeds may be as dormant as the seed of a wheat, which was found in an Egyptian mummy and made to germinate

after some thousand years; others may have germinated in a previous incarnation; others be developed, bearing flowers and fruits. It is a generally observable law that like attracts like. Therefore the presence of the wise acts beneficially upon those who are inclined to wisdom, and the present example and conduct of the foolish or wicked may easily produce fools or knaves. In this way moral diseases (drunkenness, profligacy, etc.) or intellectual diseases (orthodoxy, superstition, intolerance, insanity, etc.) may be transmitted from parents to child, or developed by a false education; but these inheritances belong rather to the chapter of psychic impurities engrafted upon the mind.

In all cases of congenital inheritance the cause of the disease will be found in the astral body, because the physical body is the ultimate expression of the condition of the astral; and therefore inherited diseases may remain latent for years before they become manifested in the physical form. Generally speaking, all contagious diseases have their origin on the supersensual plane, although when once developed they may be engrafted upon another body or transmitted by contact. Disease is caused by a state of disharmony among the fever molecules of the ethereal body. Syphilis, for instance, is not caused by the carnal intercourse of two persons in harmony with each other, but by a promiscuous intercourse of one with many it may be generated even if each of these persons was not afflicted with any disease. If modern science wishes to know the real cause of diseases, it will have to look somewhat deeper than to the external shell and to study the nature of the astral body and the laws which govern it.

#### *IV. Spiritual Causes*

Paracelsus says: "The wisdom of the civilization of one century will often be laughed at by the generation of the next, and things which appear absurd and foolish today may be admired tomorrow as the apex of all human science." His saying has proved true; a science which is based only upon external appearances continually changes its dress. Hypnotism, Suggestion, Telepathy, Mediumship, Obsession, the powers of will and imagination, etc., were all known 300 years ago, and perhaps better known than now, although they were called by other names. These powers were laughed at by the scientists of the last century and are ignored or ridiculed even now by many of the representatives of modern learning; nevertheless the majority of thinking people have their attention called to it and regard them as something new. Even one of the

most prominent German university professors of psychology (Professor Wundt of Leipzig) says in his handbook of psychology: "The theory that there is a soul (psyche), is, as a hypothesis for the study of psychology, not to be entirely rejected."

At the present day it seems hardly necessary to proclaim on the public market the doctrine of the soul and its hidden powers; on the contrary, it seems that it would be better if less had been said, for everything that can be used can also be misused. The practice of dealing with spooks is widely spreading; mediumship, hysteria, insanity, crime and suicide are on the increase; schools which claim to teach, for a money consideration, how celestial powers may be acquired are springing up like mushrooms after a rainy night, and there are thousands of persons greedy to obtain such powers for the purpose of employing them for low or devilish purposes. It seems as if a new era of witchcraft and sorcery were near at hand and the whole world turning into an insane asylum in which few only are able to retain their true self-consciousness.

Leo Tolstoy rightly says that our present generation does not deserve to possess the great inventions of which we are so proud, such as gunpowder, dynamite, electric batteries, etc., as they are only used for mutual destruction in war, and for fighting petty quarrels. Now if these forces of nature are already misused to such an extent as to deprive many thousands of soldiers of their physical lives in one battle, how much more dangerous will be the knowledge which teaches how to develop and employ spiritual powers, which, if universally known, will undoubtedly be universally misused for the destruction of souls. The psychic plague and immorality spreading today and the disappearance of true religious sentiment (not to be confounded with religious credulity) are the forerunners of a period of black magic and its terrors, which may call for the destruction of the civilized world.

We know that thoughts are substantial and that they receive living force through the influence of the will and intelligence. A mature thought made alive by the will causes a corresponding substantial thought-form to come into existence, endowed with the intelligence of its creator. Good thoughts will produce beautiful, and devilish thoughts horrid, forms, which are guided by the will of the one whose products they are. Thus we may send a blessing or a curse to another in the shape of an angel or a devil, and the more a person is weak of mind or "mediumistic" and unaccustomed to using self-control, the easier will he be influenced and possessed and become a victim of such influences. Our jails, peniten-

tiaries and insane asylums are full of such victims, while so-called spiritism and a pseudo-occultism are hard at work to increase the number of such unfortunates. There are perhaps many more bodily diseases caused by deranged minds and consequently disordered brains than such as are caused by purely physical conditions.

Of course, divine man has the right to investigate all the laws of nature, be they occult or non-occult; but for the purpose of obtaining these prerogatives in regard to divine powers, he ought to become divine himself. At the present time, when selfishness is everywhere on the increase, the world's atmosphere is filled with the creations of evil, and those who call them to their aid will work their own destruction.

### V. *The Law of Karma*

The law of *Karma*, or retribution, is the law of divine justice, the law of exact correspondence and harmony between cause and effect. Paracelsus calls it "the Will of God" and rightly so; for the will of God is the law which rules the order in the universe, and it is not an artificial law made by any "law-maker"; the will of God is not anything separate from God; God, being the highest state of everything, the highest wisdom, the highest justice, the highest love, etc., is also the highest law of harmony in the universe, whose power is manifest everywhere in nature, provided it is not resisted.

This law acts upon all planes, in the intellectual and moral kingdom as well as in the physical world. According to it everything returns to the source from which it is born. As sure as a stone thrown up in the air falls back upon the ground, equally certain the consequence of an act, be it good or evil, falls back upon the one who caused it.

Man's descent into matter was easy, his ascent towards spiritualization is difficult and consists of a school of many classes and grades. In each incarnation he gathers experience and suffers or enjoys the consequences of his acts; his errors and sins are the steps which guide him to wisdom. There are many diseases which are of purely Karmic origin; that is to say, caused by errors committed in previous incarnations, and they are incurable as long as the effects of such causes last, but when the evil Karma which thus has been created has become exhausted the disease will disappear or the right remedy will be found.

It ought not to be supposed that these five causes of disease stand separate or that this or that disease is produced by only one of such

causes; in fact they all co-operate together, although one or the other of these causes may be prominently active. Thus, for instance, a man may be born an idiot, owing to his father having generated him while in a state of intoxication; but the son's own evil *Karma*, created in a previous incarnation, was the cause that attracted him to the family of a drunkard to become reincarnated therein. The workings of Karma are as intricate as the thoughts and motives and actions of man are complicated, and it is impossible to trace every consequence to its source; neither is this necessary and may even be injurious; because we ought to avoid doing evil not for fear of the punishment which it will bring, but we ought to do good because it is wise to do good, and we ought to abandon evil because it is wise to abandon it. Gautama Buddha says: "To purify the heart, to avoid doing evil, and to strive for goodness, this is the religion of the Enlightened"; and the Bible says: "Seek ye above all the Kingdom of God, and all the rest will be given to you." The Kingdom of God is the Kingdom of eternal truth. The self-realization of truth is divine wisdom, or what is called "Theosophy," in the true sense of the word.

(*To be continued*)

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TALENT is nurtured in solitude, character is formed in the stormy billows of the world.

We are never deceived, we deceive ourselves.

It is in the half fools and the half wise that the greatest danger lies.

He is happiest, be he king or peasant, who finds peace in his home.

Life is the childhood of our immortality:

A useless life is an early death.

He who is firm in will moulds the world to himself.

Wisdom is only formed in truth.

—GOETHE

## ROBERT CROSBIE SPEAKS

[Collated from *The Friendly Philosopher*]

WE are all links in the great chain of the Theosophical Movement. What affects one affects all, and in degree. Everyone who endeavours to help others in any real way, puts himself in the position where he must take the reactions. . . . We and all other students are linked with the Great Lodge by aspiration, by service, by following the Masters' programme as nearly as we know.

We know such an effort as ours is needed, and we know that what we present is eternal Truth itself, the effects of which will go on forever. . . . There is much of wrong, of error, of mistaken idea, and these we have to recognize where found, take a lesson from them, and so avoid the pitfalls into which so many have stumbled. We need not care for what is said about any of us personally, though we shall have to meet it so that "U.L.T." will not be affected by anything of the kind. All attacks upon Theosophy and Theosophical work have been directed, not at the philosophy or the Objects of Theosophical work, but at those who were at the front and looked upon as the directors of the Movement. We will discount this as much as possible by keeping ourselves in the background, so that if attacks should come, as is not improbable, they will affect the work as little as possible.

Theosophists, if they would follow the one safe, true and royal road, have to forget persons and leaders and attend to Principles, and be loyal to Those who gave them out. In order to be loyal to H.P.B. and W.Q.J., they have to follow the lines laid down by the Teachers. If we are loyal to H.P.B. and Judge and what They stand for, we shall not be found running after leaders who cry lo here, and lo there.

Theosophy and its application go together, if there is to be real progress. It is not for us to say, "Do this," or "Don't do that." It is for us to put the case, Theosophy and its individual application, and leave each student, each inquirer, to make his own decisions. People get into tight places right along by following "advices," instead of exercising their own discrimination, and then invariably blame the "adviser" when matters do not go according to their expectations.

Many hear, but few heed the Message, and of those who heed, few are they who take to heart the warnings of the Teachers. Some think,

evidently, that all warnings are a sort of scarecrow to test their courage. They forget or ignore the real test is not of our courage but of our discrimination. If the philosophy is true and Masters are behind it, then what They say is meant. They have said other things besides warnings, and these also are meant, as fully and as truly as their warnings.

Theosophy must be understood to be a gift to mankind by more progressed beings than ourselves. We must learn and *apply* the fundamental principles which underlie that grand philosophy, and understand the operation of law as disclosed therein. Then, and then only can we begin to make Theosophy a living power in our lives. We should preserve a willingness to give and receive instruction, but we should in either case be sure that such instruction is in exact accord with the principles and laws set forth in the Theosophic philosophy. If each student did this, all would have one aim, one purpose, one teaching, and a sure basis for united effort. Such differences of individual opinion as might arise would be solved by a careful adjustment of these to the philosophy. Thus all would be united; all preserve the utmost freedom of thought; all progress most rapidly by self-induced and self-devised efforts.

It is a mistake to allow the impression to grow in anyone's mind that *he* is of importance to Theosophy. Theosophy was restored to the world for the sake of those who are looking for light, not for those who are satisfied with things as they are and life as they find it. So, to try to interest special persons is not worth the effort expended. The very effort made prevents by arousing either opposition or erroneous notions. To let as many as possible know about Theosophy, but to seek out no one in particular, is the wiser course.

All that any of us can give is Theosophy. We did not invent it. It was given to us; we stand in line and pass it along, as people used to do at fires in passing the buckets of water. People are grateful to the one who passes the "water of life" along to them, but the "passer" knows where gratitude belongs, and says: "Don't thank me; thank Theosophy — as I do. It enables me to help others; it will also enable you." Thus he helps them and helps himself to get rid of the personal idea.

The Authority which we recognize is . . . the authority of one's Self-discrimination, intuition, the highest intellection. . . . This means no slavish following of any person — a distinction which some are unable to grasp.

H.P.B. wrote: "Don't follow me or my Path: follow the path I show, the Masters who are behind." We point always that the most and the best anyone can do is to do as Judge did — follow the lines laid down by H.P.B., regardless of any others. All that we are doing is to help others to find those lines. We do not want attention paid to us. It is true that "U.L.T." necessarily centres around those most active in it, but they could do nothing if history, evidence, and energies were not in the lines taken. So we point to those lines of direction as the things to be seen and known. For ourselves we are merely some who are able to grasp and apply, as well as aid in direction.

What is at the root of the schisms that have disrupted the Theosophical Society that H.P.B. left? Personalities every time. What is the opposite and corrective of Personality? Nothing less than Impersonality which seeks nothing for itself and everything for the Cause of Theosophy pure and simple. There is no worldly fame, glory or profit in such a course, yet it, and it alone, removes every obstacle that might intervene between the Message of Theosophy and those who desire to study and apply it on its own merits. . . . The mind of the race is still obsessed by the idea that it is important and essential to know *who the active agents are*, whereas the important thing is *the merit of the thing done*.

Our value and aid in this great work will be just what we make them by our motive, our judgment, our conduct. . . . It is the effort and the sacrifice that bring the ultimate results. . . . We are to hold, wait, and work for those few earnest souls who will grasp the plan and further the Cause.

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MEANS and ends are convertible terms in my philosophy of life. The means may be likened to a seed, the end to a tree; and there is just the same inviolable connection between the means and the end as there is between the seed and the tree.

They say, "means are after all means." I would say, "means are after all everything." As the means so the end. . . . There is no wall of separation between the means and the end. Indeed, we have control (and that, too, very limited) over means, none over the end. Realization of the goal is in exact proportion to that of the means. This is a proposition that admits of no exception.

—M. K. GANDHI

## REINCARNATION IN ENGLISH POETRY

The soul cannot come into the form of a man if it has never seen the truth. This is a recollection of those things which our soul formerly saw when journeying with Deity. . . . By making right use of these things remembered from a former life, man becomes truly perfect, an initiate into the diviner wisdom.

THUS Divine Plato, the inspiration of so much that is best in English poetry. Certain it is that he believed in Reincarnation and taught it. To recollect "those things which our soul formerly saw when journeying with Deity" implies pre-existence as well as re-existence, and so it was taught in the old philosophies. The great doctrine did not have to be proved; it was understood. Even down to Christian times it was implicit in faith. Then, as the old teaching degenerated, partly by the false belief in the soul of man after death entering the bodies of animals, it lost caste, and was discarded after 500 A.D. when the Church condemned it. The dark ages in Europe had begun, and a more and more materialistic philosophy and belief came to prevail. So one does not find in the poetry of that period much mention of reincarnation, though here and there one comes across it, as, for instance, in the words of Taliesin, the Welsh bard of the sixth century:

What can a tyrant do but slay? And what is death but freedom? If ye seek freedom to betray and debauch your manhood, lo, ye have it. And then what? Death shall set ye free indeed from the reins of Wisdom. And when ye return to the earth for future lives, shall Wisdom be yours for the asking? Or shall ye begin again at your beginnings, and earn in sorrow, little by little, again the Wisdom that was yours, but ye would not use it?

We know that reincarnation is the embodiment in human form of a divine being, a being that to complete its spiritual evolution is working out its destiny, its probation, not for the first time but this last of many times, to be fit to be joined again to Deity. We recall Wordsworth's "Ode on the Intimations of Immortality":

Not in entire forgetfulness,  
And not in utter nakedness,  
But trailing clouds of glory do we come  
From God who is our home.

"All knowledge is reminiscence," said Shelley, and it is an old adage that the Muses are the daughters of Memory. But what kind of memory

is it which can produce the poet, the painter, the musician, the dancer, the sculptor, the orator, the writer, the mask of comedy and tragedy, the muse of history? Yes, what kind of memory? Not recollection, because we do not consciously recall; it is rather something registered in us, which we call forth again from some pigeon-hole of the past. And in what strata of our sevenfold complex being do we find it? Not in the senses, not in the mind. One of the Great Ones refers to the "whisperings of the Buddhi to the Manas," the intuition of the soul to the mind, something impacted on it, its seal, its stamp. "The Soul that rises with us, our life's Star, hath had elsewhere its setting and cometh from afar." It is the *Manasa Putra*.

Many of the poets intuitively realize this. We get slight allusions to it in Shakespeare and some of the Elizabethans, but the flowering of the idea of reincarnation was reached towards the end of the last century. And we know, as students of Theosophy, why that is a natural effect, for toward the end of each century the Masters make a special effort and send a special messenger to help the world of ideas and ideals. So it is to the Victorian poets that we look for a fuller expression of the doctrine of reincarnation. But Wordsworth and Shelley were forerunners. Many will remember the "Ode to the West Wind" in which Shelley likens himself to it — "One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud."

. . . Be thou, Spirit fierce,  
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe  
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!  
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth  
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!  
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,  
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

How like the spring he was, ushering in the glorious summer of the great Victorians, of Tennyson, Browning, Swinburne, Rossetti, Matthew Arnold, A.E., W. E. Henley; and in America, of Longfellow, Whittier, Walt Whitman, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and many others; and later, of Edward Carpenter, Kipling, and Stephen Phillips, who in his poem "Marpessa," when the maiden must choose between wedding the god Apollo or a mortal and chooses the mortal, gives her lover these lines:

Not for this only do I love thee, but  
 Because infinity upon thee broods  
 And thou art full of whispers and of shadows.  
 Thy voice is like to music heard ere birth,  
 Some spirit-lute touched on a spirit-sea;  
 Thy face remembered is from other worlds.  
 It has been died for, though I know not when,  
 It has been sung of, though I know not where.  
 It has the strangeness of the luring West,  
 And of sad sea-horizons; beside thee  
 I am aware of other times and lands,  
 Of birth far back, of lives in many stars.

Is not this a reminiscence of the soul itself, not the substance, but the essence of a past experience? For that which remembers is not the personality, but something that breaks *through* the mind, *to* the personality, from a higher source than either — from the Buddhi. Such a love should awaken all the faculties and powers of the soul. “Thy shadows live and vanish,” says *The Voice of the Silence*; “that which in thee shall live for ever, that which in thee *knows*, for it is knowledge, is not of fleeting life.” Many poets have felt this, and that something deathless within them forever persists. We have the confession of John Masefield:

I hold that when a person dies  
 His soul returns again to earth;  
 Arrayed in some new flesh-disguise,  
 Another mother gives him birth.  
 With sturdier limbs and brighter brain  
 The old soul takes the road again.

But how often these half-memories that haunt us, these veiled glimpses that we get into the past, are sorrowful with old frustrations that partly explain, but mostly hide, what we fain would know! W. E. Henley voices this:

When, in what other life,  
 Where, in what old spent star,  
 Systems ago, dead vastitudes afar,  
 Were we two bird and bough, or man and wife?  
 Or wave and spar?  
 Or I the beating sea and you the bar  
 On which it breaks? I know not, I!  
 But this, O this, my very dear, I know:

Your voice awakes old echoes in my heart;  
 And things I say to you now are said once more;  
 And, sweet, when we two part,  
 I feel I have seen you falter and linger so,  
 So hesitate, and turn, and cling — yet go,  
 As once in some immemorable Before,  
 Once on some fortunate yet thrice-blasted shore  
 Was it for good?  
 Oh, these poor eyes are wet;  
 And yet — O, yet —  
 Now that we know, I would not if I could,  
 Forget.

But it is not enough to know that we *have* been; what we want to know is, Why have we forgotten? And what can explain this to a seeking heart but the old doctrine that, though the Ego comes again and again to earth to learn, yet each time his instruments, his body and brain, are new. He has to train them all over again; he has to learn to assimilate a new era, he has to reassemble his faculties, his powers, all that has become an integral part of him in the past; he has to recapture, in short, his experience, and then apply it to a wholly new set of circumstances, perhaps in a different civilization. Is it any wonder he does not remember his past life? Think how different exterior conditions are today from those that prevailed in the past. The average time between lives is said to be from 1,000 to 1,500 years. Think of Rome, then — the mighty empire breaking up through foreign wars and through civil degeneration at home. But Rome was a part of Europe and Europe rose again. So did Britain to an unsurpassed record of achievement in many fields. Gradually, through the centuries, other Egos from other past civilizations came in, bringing their arts and crafts, their love of the good, the true, the beautiful, to add to the old Roman sense of law and order, of power and authority. Scholarship began to spread among the masses; the dark ages began to retreat. There came the efforts of the Lodge of Masters, from the 14th century onwards, to enlighten the mind and soul of the race, as great beings began to be born, fit to teach, fit to guide the recurrent impulse. Humble and great, well-born or lowly, the souls came in with work to do, with initiations to win, with lives to bless the ever-struggling humanity, loved and served by the Masters through dark ages and light. Of such souls were Giordano Bruno, Galileo, Jacob Boehme, Paracelsus, Mesmer, Comte de St. Martin, Comte de St. Germain, Cagliostro and many others, very different in degree of

knowledge, but seeking again the old paths in truth. And then came the great effort of our day — and beyond — through Madame Blavatsky, and the outpouring of Wisdom that revitalized the mind of the race, in many countries and continents. In the later poets we have examples of that fructification that comes from great ideas.

Why are the Muses called the daughters of memory? Or, to put it the other way round, why is memory the mother of the Muses? We recall Mr. Judge's vivid expression, "the line of life's meditation." Every life has a certain bent, a leaning towards some purpose, be it fame, or wealth, or art, or political power, or success along a chosen line; or be it the usual life-experience of home, love, children — the ordinary "common or garden" happiness, but something that tinges and colours the whole life and is often repeated for many lives, a kind of memory, though unconscious. When it becomes conscious, we have the beginning of genius. Genius is never acquired in one short life, but is a kind of memory carried forward, not in the personality but in the permanent individuality, in the Ego. Genius is Egoic memory. That is why it is so very rare to be able to bring it through from the immense storehouse of the past. Remember Browning's lines:

I shall never, in the years remaining,  
Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues,  
Make you music that should all-express me;  
So it seems: I stand on my attainment.  
This of verse alone, one life allows me;  
Verse and nothing else have I to give you.  
Other heights in other lives, God willing:  
All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

So, in his last incarnation he was a poet. Who knows how many lives it takes to make a great poet? The memory of the soul carried forward through succeeding incarnations is called by H.P.B. reminiscence, not memory in the ordinary sense of recollection, or remembrance, not as definite as that, but the essence of the experience of the higher, immortal nature. On its own plane, the Soul, the Ego, is omniscient — one with its Oversoul; but here, on this physical plane, imprisoned in the body, hampered by conditions foreign to its real nature, it forgets its divine origin, except, perhaps, in those wonderful "flashes" of intuition that suddenly light up a life and reveal it to itself. "Poets utter great and wise things which they do not themselves understand," said Plato. So Walt Whitman may have felt when musing:

Long having wander'd since, round the earth having wander'd,  
 Now I face home again, very pleas'd and joyous,  
 (But where is what I started for so long ago?  
 And why is it yet unfound?)

Yes, why is it yet unfound? Is it that, in spite of "the line of life's meditation," other "lines" came in, diverting the soul's attention from its primary purpose, causing it to lose its way in the maze of the world and delaying it for more lives yet, till the true path is again found, again followed? For, when it is refound, when in any life one can say, "This is my work," and consciously set about it, then is the beginning of genius, one's own contribution to the life of humanity, fruit of many lives of effort, fruit of the Tree of Life-experience. Many, many streams run into our great river as it flows seaward, so with genius, whether it be for speaking, writing, painting, music, or what not; these faculties are inherited from its own memory, the mother of its art. Sometimes it is so great a thing that many arts combine in one Individuality, as in the case of Leonardo da Vinci, poet, painter, sculptor, architect, inventor, lover of mankind. But in his case we have a hint that he was more even than these, that he may have been what is known as a "resting Adept," losing partially the memory of that great purpose in order, perhaps, not to attain too rapidly that height of universality before he could wholly endure it. "Other heights in other lives, God willing," as Browning said. But now do we begin to see how the Muses are the daughters of memory? And not only the Muses are, but the great qualities are also — Fearlessness, Patience, Peace, Love, Joy, Endurance, Faith. These are the progeny of the Soul itself, wedded to its true memory.

It is not only in the great poets like Tennyson that one finds suggestive hints like these:

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood  
 And ebb into a former life, or seem  
 To lapse far back in a confused dream  
 To states of mystical similitude,  
 If one but speaks, or hems, or stirs a chair  
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,  
 So that we say, all this hath been before,  
 All this *hath* been, I know not when or where—  
 So, friend, when first I looked upon your face,  
 Our thoughts gave answer, each to each, so true,  
 Opposèd mirrors each reflecting each—  
 Although I knew not in what time or place,

Methought that I had often met with you,  
And each had lived in other's mind and speech.

But also in the lesser poems one finds these intimations. One of Kipling's, not so well known as some others, is about the British in India in an ironical argument:

"Blessed be the English and all they make or do.  
Cursed be the Hereticks who doubt that this is true!"  
"Amen," quo' Jobson, "but where I mean to die  
Is neither rule or calliper to judge the matter by:

"But Himalaya heavenward-heading, sheer and vast, sheer and vast,  
In a million summits bedding on the last world's past;  
A certain sacred mountain where the scented cedars climb,  
And — the feet of my Belovèd hurrying back through Time!"

So in their different strains the poets sing, some sadly of "old, unhappy, far-off things, and battles long ago," some joyously, some philosophically, but all apparently with the certitude of immortality. For this is the old truth impacted on the soul by its first Divine Instructors. It is inherent memory. Its many lives are symbolized in "The Chambered Nautilus" by Oliver Wendell Holmes:

Year after year beheld the silent toil  
That spread his lustrous coil;  
Still, as the spiral grew,  
He left the past year's dwelling for the new,  
Stole with soft step its shining archway through,  
Built up its idle door,  
Stretched in his last-found home, and knew the old no more. . . .

Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul!  
As the swift seasons roll!  
Leave thy low-vauked past!  
Let each new temple, nobler than the last,  
Shut thee from heaven with a dome more vast,  
Till thou at length art free,  
Leaving thine outgrown shell by life's unresting sea!

With such a consummation surely we shall regain — re-cognize — the long, long chain of lives that came from Primeval Spirit to Earth — and back again to Spirit in higher and higher realms. And then we shall know we have been "journeying with Deity" all the way — that it was always there within us, the hidden oracle in the heart, the god of our

inmost life. But before that, there are worlds to be conquered — worlds to be “re-made nearer to the heart’s desire.” And all the Muses can contribute to this, for they are the divine builders, through the centuries, of the finest concepts of man. In conclusion, let us think of an ideal presented to us in Gilbert Murray’s translation of *The Medea of Euripides*:

The sons of Erechtheus, the olden,  
Whom high gods planted of yore  
In an old land of heaven upholden,  
A proud land untrodden of war:  
They are hungered and, lo, their desire  
With wisdom is fed as with meat:  
In their skies is a shining of fire,  
A joy in the fall of their feet:  
And thither, with manifold dowers,  
From the North, from the hills, from the morn,  
The Muses did gather their powers,  
That a child of the Nine should be born;  
And Harmony, sown as the flowers,  
Grew gold in the acres of corn.

And Cephisus, the fair-flowing river—  
The Cyprian dipping her hand  
Hath drawn of his dew, and the shiver  
Of her touch is as joy in the land.  
For her breathing in fragrance is written,  
And in music her path as she goes,  
And the cloud of her hair, it is litten  
With stars of the wind-woven rose.  
So fareth she ever and ever,  
As dews on the winds of the river,  
An hunger of passions unknown,  
Strong Loves of all godlike endeavour,  
Whom Wisdom shall throne on her throne.

Harmony — the child of all nine of the Muses — the fulfilling of the Law. And that “hunger of passions unknown” — not the Venus love, not even the love of “the good, the true and the beautiful,” but “Strong Loves of all godlike endeavour, whom Wisdom shall throne on her throne.”

And that consummation is for Mankind to achieve in the great on-coming races of the Future, when, as H.P.B. says, we can make this earth a Paradise compared to what it is now.

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## KABALISTIC VIEWS ON "SPIRITS"

### AS PROPAGATED BY THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

[This article by H. P. Blavatsky appeared originally in the *Religio-Philosophical Journal* (Chicago), January 26, 1878, and is included in Vol. I of *H. P. Blavatsky: Collected Writings*.—Eds.]

EDITOR, *Journal*:

Dear Sir, — I must beg you to again allow me a little space for the further elucidation of a very important question — that of the "Elementals" and the "Elementaries." It is a misfortune that our European languages do not contain a nomenclature expressive of the various grades and conditions of spiritual beings. But surely I cannot be blamed for either the above linguistic deficiency, or because some people do not choose or are unable to understand my meaning! I cannot too often repeat that in this matter I claim no originality. My teachings are but the substance of what many kabalists have said before me, which, today, I mean to prove with your kind permission.

I am accused (1) of "turning somersaults" and jumping from one idea to another. The defendant pleads — not guilty. (2) Of coining not only words, but philosophies out of the depths of my consciousness: defendant enters the same plea. (3) Of having repeatedly asserted that "intelligent spirits other than those who have passed through an earth experience in a human body were concerned in the manifestations known as the phenomena of Spiritualism": true, and defendant repeats the assertion. (4) Of having advanced, in my bold and unwarranted theories, "beyond the great Éliphas Lévi himself." Indeed? Were I to go even as far as he (see his *La Science des Esprits*), I would deny that a single so-called spiritual manifestation is more than hallucination, produced by soulless Elementals, whom he calls "Elementary." (See *Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*.)

I am asked, "What proof is there of the existence of the elementals?" In my turn, I will inquire, what proof is there of "diakkas," "guides," "bands," and "controls"? And yet these terms are all current among Spiritualists. The unanimous testimony of innumerable observers and competent experimenters furnishes the proof. If Spiritualists cannot or will not go to those countries where they are living, and these proofs are accessible, they, at least, have no right to give the lie direct to those who have seen both the adepts and the proofs. My witnesses are living men,

teaching and exemplifying the philosophy of hoary ages; theirs, these very "guides" and "controls" who, up to the present time, are at best hypothetical, and whose assertions have been repeatedly found, by Spiritualists themselves, contradictory and false.

If my present critics insist that since the discussion of this matter began a disembodied soul has never been described as an "elementary," I merely point to the number of the London *Spiritualist* for February 18th, 1876, published nearly two years ago, in which a correspondent, who has certainly studied occult sciences, says:

Is it not probable that some of the elementary spirits of an evil type are those spirit-bodies which, only recently disembodied, are on the eve of an eternal dissolution, and which continue their temporary existence only by vampirizing those still in the flesh? They had existence; they never attained to being.

Note two things: that human elementaries are recognized as existing, apart from the gnomes, sylphs, undines and salamanders — beings purely elemental; and that annihilation of the soul is regarded as potential.

Says Paracelsus, in his *Philosophia Sagax*:

The current of astral light with its peculiar inhabitants, gnomes, sylphs, etc., is transformed into human light at the moment of the conception, and it becomes the first envelope of the soul — its grosser portion; combined with the most subtle fluids, it forms the sidereal (astral, or ethereal) phantom — the inner man.

And Éliphas Lévi:

The astral light is saturated with souls which it discharges in the incessant generation of beings. . . . At the birth of a child, they influence the four temperaments of the latter — the element of the gnomes predominates in melancholy persons; of the salamanders, in the sanguine; of the undines, in the phlegmatic; of the sylphs, in the giddy and bilious. . . . These are the spirits which we designate under the term of occult elements. (*Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, Vol. II, chapter on the conjuration of the four classes of elementaries)

"Yes, yes," he remarks (in Vol. I, *op. cit.*, p. 164), "these spirits of the elements do exist. Some wandering in their spheres, others trying to incarnate themselves, others again already incarnated and living on earth. These are vicious and imperfect men."

Note that we have here described to us more or less "intelligent spirits other than those who have passed through an earth experience in a

human body." If not intelligent, they would not know how to make the attempt to incarnate themselves. Vicious elementals, or elementaries, are attracted to vicious parents; they bask in their atmosphere, and are thus the paternal wickedness. The unintellectual "elementals" are drawn in the paternal wickedness. The unintellectual "elementals" are drawn in unconsciously to themselves; and in the order of nature, as component parts of the grosser astral body or soul, determine the temperament. They can as little resist as the animalcules can avoid entering into our bodies in the water we swallow.

Of a third class, out of hundreds that the Eastern philosophers and kabalists are acquainted with, Éliphas Lévi, discussing spiritistic phenomena, says: "They are neither the souls of the damned or guilty; the elementary spirits are like children curious and harmless, and torment people in proportion as attention is paid to them." These he regards as the sole agents in all the meaningless and useless physical phenomena at *séances*. Such phenomena will be produced unless they be dominated "by wills more powerful than their own." Such a will may be that of a living adept, or as there are none such at Western spiritual *séances*, these ready agents are at the disposal of every strong, vicious, earth-bound, human elementary who has been attracted to the place. By such they can be used in combination with the astral emanations of the circle and medium, as stuff out of which to make materialized spirits.

So little does Lévi concede the possibility of spirit-return in objective form, that he says:

The good deceased come back in our dreams; the state of mediumism is an extension of dream, it is somnambulism in all its variety and ecstasies. Fathom the phenomenon of sleep and you will understand the phenomena of the spirits.

And again:

According to one of the great dogmas of the kabala, the spirit despoils itself in order to ascend, and thus would have to reclothe itself to descend. There is but one way for a spirit already liberated to manifest itself again on earth.—it must get back into its body and resurrect. This is quite another thing from hiding under a table or a hat. That is why necromancy is horrible. It constitutes a crime against nature. . . . We have admitted in our former works the possibility of vampirism, and even tried to explain it. The phenomena now actually occurring in America and Europe unquestionably belong to this fearful malady. . . . The mediums do not, it is true, eat the flesh of corpses, but they

breathe in throughout their whole nervous organism the phosphoric emanations of putrefied corpses, or spectral light. They are not vampires, but they evoke vampires. For this reason, they are nearly all debilitated and sick.

Do those in Europe and America, who have heretofore described the cadaverous odour that, in some cases, they have noticed as attending materialized spirits, appreciate the revolting significance of the above explanation?

Henry Khunrath was a most learned kabalist, and the greatest authority among mediaeval occultists. He gives, in one of the clavicles of his *Amphitheatrum Sapientiae Aeternae*, illustrative engravings of the four great classes of elementary spirits, as they presented themselves during an evocation of ceremonial magic, before the eyes of the magus, when, after passing the threshold, he lifts the "Veil of Isis." In describing them, Khunrath corroborates Éliphas Lévi. He tells us they are disembodied, vicious men, who have parted with their divine spirits and become elementary. They are so termed, "because attracted by the earthly atmosphere, and are surrounded by the earth's elements." Here Khunrath applies the term "elementary" to human doomed souls, while Lévi uses it, as we have seen, to designate another class of the same great family — gnomes, sylphs, undines, etc. — sub-human entities.

I have before me a manuscript, intended originally for publication but withheld for various reasons. The author signs himself "Zeus," and is a kabalist of more than twenty-five years' standing. This experienced occultist, a zealous devotee of Khunrath, expounding the doctrine of the latter, also says that the kabalists divided the spirits of the elements into four classes corresponding to the four temperaments in man.

It is charged against me as a heinous offence that I aver that some men lose their souls and are annihilated. But this last-named authority, "Zeus," is equally culpable, for he says:

They (the kabalists) taught that man's spirit descended from the great ocean of spirit, and is therefore, *per se*, pure and divine; but its soul or capsule, through the (allegorical) fall of Adam, became contaminated with the world of darkness, or the world of Satan (evil), of which it must be purified, before it could ascend again to celestial happiness. Suppose a drop of water enclosed within a capsule of gelatine and thrown in the ocean; so long as the capsule remains whole, the drop of water remains isolated: break the envelope, and the drop becomes a part of the

ocean, its individual existence has ceased. So it is with the spirit; so long as its ray is enclosed in its plastic mediator or soul, it has an individual existence. Destroy this capsule (the astral man, who then becomes an elementary), which destruction may occur from the consequences of sin, in the most depraved and vicious, and the spirit returns back to its original abode — the individualization of man has ceased. . . . This militates with the idea of progression, that Spiritualists generally entertain. If they understood the law of harmony, they would see their error. It is only by this law that individual life can be sustained; and the farther we deviate from harmony the more difficult it is to regain it.

To return to Lévi, he remarks (*Dogme et Rituel de la Haute Magie*, Vol. I, p. 319):

When we die, our interior light (the soul) ascends, agreeably to the attraction of its star (the spirit), but it must first of all get rid of the coils of the serpent (earthly evil — sin); that is to say, of the unpurified astral light, which surrounds and holds it captive, unless, by the force of will, it frees and elevates itself. This immersion of the living soul in the dead light (the emanations of everything that is evil, which pollute the earth's magnetic atmosphere, as the exhalation of a swamp does the air) is a dreadful torture; the soul freezes and burns therein, at the same time.

The kabalists represent Adam as the Tree of Life, of which the trunk is humanity; the various races, the branches; and individual men, the leaves. Every leaf has its individual life, and is fed by the one sap; but it can live through the branch, as the branch itself draws its life through the trunk. "The wicked," says the Kabala, "are the dead leaves and the dead bark of the tree. They fall, die, are corrupted, and changed into manure, which returns to the tree through the root."

My friend, Miss Emily Kislingbury, of London, Secretary of the British National Association of Spiritualists, who is honoured, trusted and beloved by all who know her, sends me a spirit-communication obtained, in April 1877, through a young lady, who is one of the purest and most truthful of her sex. The following extracts are singularly *à propos* to the subject under discussion:

Friend, you are right. Keep our Spiritualism pure and high, for there are those who would abase its uses. But it is because they know not the power of Spiritualism. It is true, in a sense, that the spirit can overcome the flesh, but there are those to whom

the fleshly life is dearer than the life of the spirit; they tread on dangerous ground. For the flesh may so outgrow the spirit, as to withdraw from it all spirituality, and man become as a beast of the field, with no saving power left. These are they whom the Church has termed "reprobate," eternally lost, but they suffer not, as the Church has taught — in conscious hells. They merely die, and are not; their light goes out, and has no conscious being.

(Question): "But is this not annihilation?" (Answer): "It amounts to annihilation; they lose their individual entities, and return to the great reservoir of spirit — unconscious spirit."

Finally, I am asked: "Who are the trained seers?" They are those, I answer, who have been trained from their childhood in the pagodas, to use their spiritual sight; those whose accumulated testimony has not varied for thousands of years as to the fundamental facts of Eastern philosophy; the testimony of each generation corroborating that of each preceding one. Are these to be trusted more, or less, than the communications of "bands," each of whom contradicts the other as completely as the various religious sects, which are ready to cut each other's throats, and of mediums, even the best of whom are ignorant of their own nature, and unsubjected to the wise direction and restraint of an adept in psychical science?

No comprehensive idea of nature can be obtained except by applying the law of harmony and analogy in the spiritual as well as in the physical world. "As above, so below," is the old Hermetic axiom. If Spiritualists would apply this to the subject of their own researches, they would see the philosophical necessity of there being in the world of spirit as well as in the world of matter, a law of the survival of the fittest.

Respectfully,

H. P. BLAVATSKY

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OF the unspoken word thou art master; the spoken word is master of thee.

—BUDDHIST PROVERB

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

"Wraparound" in *Harper's* for December 1975 contains illuminating articles and quotations on "The World of the Brain," by some of the leading figures in the brain sciences. Introducing the symposium, Michael Aron, editor of "Wraparound," remarks that one of the amazing things about the men who are the most prominent in the field "is the degree to which each comes around to a religious or mystical feeling about life after forty or fifty years of probing, resecting, stimulating, and staring into the human brain":

Sherrington wrote that the brain — which he liked to call the "enchanted loom" — would be the last of nature's mysteries ever to make itself comprehensible to man. Penfield this year capped an illustrious career with a book in which he admits being forced to conclude that "mind" is somehow greater than brain, mind being a primordial "motivator" not accountable in the organic functions of the brain. Eccles's writing is full of references to "the great unknown," the "significance of creation," the "feebleness of science"; "truth," says Eccles, "can never be fully attained except at a trivial level." And none of these men has been so nearly reduced by his experience as the brilliant Karl Lashley, who spent thirty years searching for the memory trace — the fabled "engram" — and ended by laughing cynically at his own foolishness in thinking that it existed.

What is it about the brain that inspires such humility in men who have devoted lifetimes to exploring its convoluted landscapes? Partly it lies with that truism about science in general: the more one learns, the more one realizes how little he knows. (Einstein said, "The mystery of the universe is its comprehensibility," a remark forever endearing him to brain scientists.) But the greater reasons lie with the remarkable organ itself. Although it weighs only three pounds, and looks so unspectacular that for centuries men assumed the seat of mentality must lie elsewhere, the brain is a mystery no less vast than the universe.

In an article adapted from Dr. Wilder Penfield's recent book, *The Mystery of the Mind*, referred to above, this eminent brain scientist writes about the mind-brain question:

Throughout my own scientific career, I, like other scientists, have struggled to prove that the brain accounts for the mind. But now, perhaps the time has come when we may profitably con-

sider the evidence as it stands, and ask the question, Do brain mechanisms account for the mind? Can the mind be explained by what is now known about the brain?

The great psychologist William James looked upon the difficulty of stating the connection between mind and brain as "the ultimate of ultimate problems." My teacher Sir Charles Sherrington, who received the Nobel Prize in 1932 for his studies of reflexes, turned in his later years from animal experimentation to a scholarly and philosophical consideration of the brain and the mind of man. In the end, he could say only that "we have to regard the relation of mind to brain as not merely unsolved, but still devoid of a basis for its very beginning." In 1947 he wrote a foreword to a new edition of his book, *The Integrative Action of the Nervous System*, the last paragraph of which expressed his conclusion: "That our being should consist of two fundamental elements (brain and mind) offers, I suppose, no greater inherent improbability than that it should rest on one only."...

Because it seems to me certain that it will always be quite impossible to explain the mind on the basis of neuronal action within the brain, and because it seems to me that the mind develops and matures independently throughout an individual's life as though it were a continuing element, and because a computer (which the brain is) must be programmed and operated by an agency capable of independent understanding, I am forced to choose the proposition that our being is to be explained on the basis of two fundamental elements. This, to my mind, offers the greatest likelihood of leading us to the final understanding toward which so many stalwart scientists strive.

"As long as the brain is a mystery," said Ramón y Cajal (considered by many the greatest neuroanatomist of all time), "the universe, the reflection of the structure of the brain, will also be a mystery." And according to Dr. Oliver Sacks, neuropsychologist:

There is nothing in the universe deeper or more complex than the phenomenon of consciousness... Consciousness arises when life arises: consciousness is "inner life," or the inward side of being alive.

Consciousness does not yield to dissection or analysis. It needs to be grasped and studied as a whole. Similarly, it evades definition; we can never say what consciousness *is*, we can only suggest its nature by metaphors and images...

It is clear that the cerebral cortex is needed to *mediate* con-

sciousness. But this does not mean that "the cortex is the sole organ of consciousness in man," as William James described it. . . . The inner images which constitute consciousness can even be fundamentally altered by disturbances in the periphery of the body. The entire organism is a functional unity: thus we are not conscious with our cortex alone; we are conscious with the whole of ourselves.

One must go further. It is not merely we who are conscious. It cannot be supposed that the origination of consciousness lies in us alone. Our consciousness is like a flame or a fountain, rising up from infinite depths. We transmit and transfigure, but are not the first cause. We are vessels or funnels for what lies beyond us. Ultimately we mirror the nature which made us. Nature achieves self-consciousness through us.

Memory, of all the functions of the brain, has for long proved the most mysterious to scientists. Lines of investigation which have sought to localize memory in a specific part of the brain have proved fruitless. Current scientific thinking on the subject is epitomized in an article by Dr. Paul Pietsch, neuroanatomist:

The stored stuff of our minds has incredible capacity to survive massive injuries to the brain. . . . Any equipotential brain theory would predict that stored facets of the mental world do not depend directly on the brain's anatomy, though it doubtless is essential in loading and calling upon information or in putting programs to specific uses, such as in vision or in language. . . . The implication is that memory is hologramatic; all memory is contained in the smallest unit of memory, whatever that may be.

These few quotations are enough to show the fluidic nature of scientific thinking on the subject of the brain. Theories once widely accepted are being discarded and giving place to new ones. Theosophy has much to say on the subject. Every organ, as every cell, has a consciousness of its own kind, but the brain has a special importance. "In that mansion called the human body," H.P.B. wrote, "the brain is the front-door, and the only one which opens out into Space." Elsewhere, she remarks that "the human brain is simply the canal between two planes — the psycho-spiritual and the material" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 25*, p. 5). It is in the brain that sense impressions, received as vibrations, are perceived by the mind as ideas. But the brain's function cannot be fully understood without recognizing that the mind in incarnation is dual.

It is owing to the greater perfection and sensitiveness of man's brain cells that his lower mind, "animal cognition," is more highly developed

than the beast's intelligence. But the brain is less subservient to the action of that personal mind than other organs are. The very bringing into personal awareness of superconscious mental experiences of the Higher Ego depends on certain brain cells of whose function science is wholly ignorant. As H.P.B. puts it: "The phenomena of divine consciousness have to be regarded as activities of our mind on another and a higher plane, working through something less substantial than the moving molecules of the brain." ("Psychic and Noetic Action")

With entire dependence on the brain and its memory, the creative faculty, the intuition, becomes latent and passive. Man's noble mission cannot be fulfilled merely through memory and a quick brain. And is memory in the brain only? That which we learn, realize and apply by practice *is* our most sure and permanent memory which is never lost. That through which the creative energy functions is quite distinct from the brain. Soul-wisdom or the Heart Doctrine is independent of brain learning or the Eye Doctrine, as *The Voice of the Silence* teaches.

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The following from the pen of the late Dr. K. M. Munshi appeared in *Bhavan's Journal* for May 23:

Perception of beauty depends not upon the natural beauty which surrounds us but upon the presence and the power of the fundamental aspiration. In this age of speed, we neglect the spirit. We seek amusement instead of beauty. We are afraid of being alone. The fundamental aspiration is naturally stifled. . . .

If, therefore, we want beauty in life, not only in our own, but in that of the world as a whole, we must at all costs learn some time or the other to be alone with Nature and with ourselves when we can give time for our aspirations to rise and to raise us from our sordid day-to-day existence.

When I am alone, quiet and patient, I enter into an all-embracing calm. Then I live in the beauty that lies in the stream that makes the music, or the birds that twitter in ancient trees, or in the vast spaces on every side. The tree, the cloud, the flower, the stream, which give us this mysterious satisfaction, are but magic symbols of the beauty that lies within. It is there, real, insistent, undeniable. It is a symbol of Reality.

If once the spirit of beauty is captured, the gates of Life Divine are opened and not even death can close them.

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