

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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A FOUNT OF INSPIRATION

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THE ASPECT of Theosophy most emphasized by the Founder of the U.L.T. in his writings is the securing of self-knowledge through proper practice. Robert Crosbie preached out of self-tested experience that the duty of a student of Theosophy to himself lay in controlling and conquering, through the Higher, the lower self. “Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child,” but self-sacrifice has to be performed with discrimination. Often loving deeds performed for the helping of others injure rather than aid and, what is worse, are apt to result in vitiating the rhythmic flow of Impersonal Karma. Only long Theosophical experience brings to the ardent aspirant the “feel” and the technique of how altruism should be practised as an integral part of self-development, or self-development as an aspect of altruism.

From the point of view of the world, where acts of charity and of service are trumpeted forth, where the qualities of courage, perseverance and love have meanings other than those with which Theosophy endows these words, the grand work of Robert Crosbie cannot gain full recognition. But Those who are Masters of Truth, Lovers and Benefactors of Humanity, Embodiments of Great Sacrifice, They value such works as Robert Crosbie performed, and Their single-worded appreciation, “Well-done,” is worth all the praises of modern newspapers and of the social world.

Rare courage, rare perseverance, rare affection—rare to the world of mortals but not in the Occult world—were shown by Robert Crosbie, equally during the period when he studied and laboured under his Guru, W. Q. Judge, and after the latter’s pass-

ing, when he saw the crumbling of organizations through which he had tried to deflect the current of failure into some canal of victory. But most concretely did he show the loving understanding, the persevering efforts and the courage not to swerve from the clear path seen and chosen, from 1909 when the U.L.T. was founded.

Detachment in the continuous performance of the acts of loving sacrifice which make up the story of the first decade of the U.L.T. has and should have an inspiration for every Associate. From that fount of inspiration each can and should derive courage to fight out the field of the lower nature; to persevere in promulgating, week by week, the grand Teachings of Theosophy by tongue, by pen and otherwise; to perform deeds of friendly service with the detachment wherein alone true and pure love flows to heal and to help.

THEOSOPHY is not in conflict with any form of religion, any society, any man, any opinion—however much these may be in conflict with Theosophy. What Theosophy is engaged in, through those who believe in it, as we do, without any mental reservations whatsoever, is a battle for *recognition*. Theosophy serves to explain the hidden side, the real and inner meaning of all things, for it is a friend to understanding, an aid to knowledge. By it a man may come to know himself through and through. It is because of misunderstanding of the real Self that we have all these religions, sects, parties, dogmas, with all their vested interests and sustainers. It is the Karma of the race that meets us, so we will not cry out nor dodge it when it confronts us. What we might otherwise think is the worst, is the best thing that could come, if we meet it in the right spirit, clearing up our Karma as we go along, making ourselves better instruments for Them. We are not working because of our self-interest in the results, but for Masters and for Humanity. So, we will take cheerfully whatever comes, “enjoy or suffer whatever the Higher Self may have in store for us by way of experience or discipline.” It is for us to go on without doubt or anxiety: both are hindrances which spring from the lower nature, not the Higher. We suffer, and must continue to suffer from the bodily and mental weaknesses of the race. We can cheerfully endure all this when we are working for a better time, better minds and bodies, better understanding for the whole of humanity.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THE PATH OF MODERATION

THE GOLDEN MEAN in all things is taught in the *Gita*, by the Buddha, and perhaps there is no fuller treatment of the subject than in the records of Confucius. All agree that moderation is the only way to success, happiness and enlightenment, at every stage of evolution. But moderation in what? How is the Golden Mean to be practised?

Aristippus, the founder of the Cyrenaic school, was the first in the western world who taught that the art of life is to crowd in as much enjoyment as possible, and to do so moment by moment. But even he was compelled to admit that certain actions which give pleasure entail more than their equivalent of pain in the future. He therefore insisted that real pleasure belongs only to him who is self-controlled and who possesses prudence. Thus our young people are not even real hedonists; they are sensualists. That is the reason perhaps why moderation in its quantitative aspect is recommended by some, with the attention on the experience of happiness: drink a little; lose you temper on occasion; indulge your senses when you are minded, but not too much. But little of prussic acid kills; loss of temper, on a single occasion, by a weak-hearted man may prove fatal; by a full-blooded man may cause apoplexy; sense-indulgence colours and captivates the mind, so that more and more people are minded to indulge. If a voluptuary is told, "Avoid satiety," he will answer, "Quite, quite, but I am nowhere near the satiety line." Thirst for sense-life cannot be cheated into a permanent moderation by small doses of that which the Buddhist calls "the abomination inspired by Mara." The glutton, sick with his fill, presently is ready to eat some more. Sense-thirst like the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart expands and waxes strong every time it is fed.

At the other extremity there are the rigid ascetics, body-torturing contortionists who call themselves yogis; they also suffer from excess due to the same quantitative interpretation of the Golden Mean. They too are after happiness; and one such explained to the seeking Gautama:

"Tis written if a man shall mortify
His flesh, till pain be grown the life he lives
And death voluptuous rest, such woes shall purge
Sin's dross away, and the soul, purified,
Soar from the furnace of its sorrow, winged

For glorious spheres and splendour past all thought.

In the observance of the Golden Mean the quality of the things indulged in and not only the quantity of indulgence must be taken into account.

That which poisons life disturbs the balance and mars the harmony of Nature. The moral order of the universe is maintained by the law of the Golden Mean just as gravitation holds in form the ever-moving stellar universe. That law works in man, in his flesh and blood and brain, in his thought, will and feeling, in his corpus, psyche and nous. Man attains real happiness only when he establishes harmonious contact with Nature through the Golden Mean which operates within as without himself. Therefore the Chinese sage said that "the life of the moral man is an exemplification of the universal moral order. The life of the vulgar person is a contradiction of that order." Extremists at both ends, hedonists and ascetics, mostly unconsciously to themselves, want to defy Nature and are frustrated. They mistake the goal of evolution. It is not happiness, though Bliss (*Ananda*) is experienced in the reaching of Nirvana, in the realization of Tao, in the attaining of Perfection. That Bliss is one of a pair, creative Ideation (*Chit*) being the other. Pure Existence (*Sat*) of supreme Peace (*Shanti*) is born of active Ideation whose passive aspect is Bliss. Nirvana is not a faraway locality but the condition of self-consciousness in which life is creative *and* blissful.

Real happiness is never attained by those who neglect to look at the quality of what is eaten and drunk by body or mind. True philosophy deals with the quality of things in Nature; and numbers themselves which tell us of the quantitative aspect of Nature have their quality, as Balzac, the unconscious Occultist of French literature, and all true Esotericists have tried to show.

When man's conceptions of Nature and its processes are false, his philosophy of action is false and his practice of the Golden Mean is defective. If it is true that man is a bundle of cells in the process of disintegration, that human consciousness, like a flame, will go out when the candle of brain is finished, then what more logical than that man should strive to enjoy all he can while the brain holds good, and commit suicide when he cannot have "a good time"? A different philosophy of life is necessary for the restoration of order in the present moral disorder. It must deal with the whole of man, and teach him to reintegrate himself. Will not the result be anarchy if

man gives free play to all his members? In the sincere attempt at reintegration, named Yoga in India, and in developing the virtue of each of our constituents, we may — and do — slip into errors and lose our temper on occasion, indulge our senses, boast, and fight a little. These must be recognized as evil, and not be compromised with as partial good. On the other hand, that sincere attempt may produce excesses of asceticism; the pride of sackcloth and ashes, the holier-than-thou attitude, but these too must not be compromised with. The Golden Mean must produce harmony among spirit, soul, mind and body of man. And that raises the question which modern culture has yet to answer — “What is Man?”

THE REASONABLENESS of *Conscious* Existence can be proved only by the study of the primeval — now esoteric — philosophy. And it says “there is neither death nor life, for both are illusions; being (or *be-ness*) is the only reality.” This paradox was repeated thousands of ages later by one of the greatest physiologists that ever lived. “Life is Death,” said Claude Bernard. The organism lives because its parts are ever dying. The survival of the fittest is surely based on this truism. The life of the superior whole requires the death of the inferior, the death of the parts depending on and being subservient to it. And, as life is death, so death is life, and the whole great cycle of lives forms but ONE EXISTENCE — *the worst day of which is on our planet.*

He who KNOWS will make the best of it. For there is a dawn for every being, when once freed from illusion and ignorance by Knowledge; and he will at last proclaim in truth *and all Consciousness* to Mahamaya:

BROKEN THY HOUSE IS, AND THE RIDGE-POLE SPLIT!

DELUSION FASHIONED IT!

SAFE PASS I THENCE — DELIVERANCE TO OBTAIN.

—*Lucifer*, October 1887

A THEOSOPHICAL CATECHISM

FOR THE USE OF CHILDREN*

LESSON I

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

1. Q. What is your belief?
A. I believe in 'Theosophy.
2. Q. What is the meaning of the word Theosophy?
A. It means godlike wisdom, or knowledge of divine things.
3. Q. Do you believe that you have this wisdom?
A. No. I believe that there is such a divine knowledge, and that it can be attained.
4. Q. By whom can it be attained?
A. By just men made perfect.
5. Q. With what help?
A. By the help of the Spiritual soul.
6. Q. Is Theosophy a religion?
A. No, it is not a religion. It is Religion itself.
7. Q. Explain the difference. What do we mean by a religion?
A. We mean a fixed statement of belief about divine things, which men have made into a creed or articles of faith which all their followers must agree to.
8. Q. You say men have made these creeds. How?
A. They have chosen a number of truths, or their interpretation of truths as they see them, and founded churches upon them. Each such church or creed is a religion.
9. Q. What is Religion itself?
A. It is the whole body of Universal Truth.
10. Q. Into how many departments may Religion be divided?
A. Two.
11. Q. What are they?
A. Religion in the universe and Religion in man.

*It is intended that one of these lessons shall be studied four successive Sundays, the pupil learning the answers, or, preferably, giving their gist in his own terms, while the teacher should explain and illustrate with anecdotes, tales, or scientific facts. In this way the lessons can be expanded to the needs of individuals. The teachings contained in them are mainly derived from the works of H. P. Blavatsky or from oriental sources, and no claim of originality is put forth by the author-compiler.

12. Q. What is Religion in the universe?

A. It is Truth, or real Being, and obedience to divine, universal laws. The universe is founded on Truth, and its development, course, or evolution is guided by those spiritual laws which it always obeys.

13. Q. What is Religion in man?

A. The desire to seek divine truths and the will to follow them when found.

14. Q. Name another difference between religions and Religion itself.

A. Religions are made by men and perish like them. But the nature of Truth is divine and it can never die.

15. Q. What does Theosophy teach?

A. Theosophy does not teach anything, for it is divine knowledge itself. But people who believe that there is such knowledge and that it can be found, learn first that Truth is all and in all, and that no religion is higher than Truth.

16. Q. If Theosophy has no creed, how can we know some of the truths of spiritual wisdom?

A. That spirit instills the love of Truth into the hearts of men. In the world's long history many holy men, great spiritual teachers, have sought for and have found some of the divine truths.

17. Q. Are they known to any religion?

A. All religions are built upon some portion of Truth, and all reject other portions of it.

18. Q. How many religions are known to us?

A. There are said to be ten great religions, and there are many smaller ones and sects.

19. Q. Which is the true one?

A. Each one claims to be the true one and that all the others are wrong. Each one claims that by it only men can be saved.

20. Q. What do we believe that Theosophy would say of this?

A. We believe the truth to be that every religion has some divine knowledge in it, and that all are founded upon the one Truth.

21. Q. What makes religions differ?

A. The different minds of the various men who have seen different aspects or sides of the truth.

22. Q. Where do most theosophical students believe that most divine truths are to be found?

A. In a body of teaching called The Secret Doctrine.

23. Q. Tell me more about this Secret Doctrine.

A. It was known to wise men in the far East at an early period of time, long before the Christian era, and they have handed it down to our time.

24. Q. Why do you call it a Secret Doctrine?

A. Because it was only known to few men at any one period of the world's history.

25. Q. Why was this?

A. Because few men were sufficiently perfect to be taught by divine wisdom.

26. Q. What religions are most like the Secret Doctrine?

A. The Buddhist religion and the religion of the Brahmans.

27. Q. Are they two of the great religions?

A. Yes. They include more than two-thirds of all mankind.

28. Q. But you say other religions contain truths.

A. Yes, they all do. And all the great teachers from Rama and Buddha to Jesus Christ have taught these things, and all the bibles of different religions contain some of them.

29. Q. Why, then, does each religion say that it alone has Truth?

A. Because every religion has been taught in two different ways, esoterically and exoterically.

30. Q. What does esoteric mean?

A. It means secret. To teach esoterically is to teach the inner, hidden spiritual sense.

31. Q. What does exoteric mean?

A. It means outwardly. To teach exoterically is to teach the external form or creed.

32. Q. Give me some natural example of this.

A. If I show you an apple seed and say, "Here is an apple seed," that is an exoteric teaching of the outer form and fact. But if I show the seed and say, "Here is a great green tree, with branches waving in the wind and all full of rosy fruit," then that is an esoteric teaching; it tells of the hidden power of the small brown seed to become so great. The first only tells of what we now see with the outer eye—a small brown seed. The second tells the secret truth of what power and beauty hides in the seed and is only seen by the eye of faith or knowledge.

33. Q. What was the reason for these differences in teaching?

A. To each man was given only what he could understand.

Only a very few were wise in hidden spiritual things. A child, or a man who had never seen a seed grow, would not believe you about its inner power. The great number of unwise people had to be taught in a simple way just as in a Kindergarten object-lessons are given to a child.

34. Q. Name some great teachers who said that they taught in both these ways.

A. Rama, Buddha, Krishna; and the same is said about Jesus, now called Jesus Christ.¹

35. Q. In what sense are the meanings of all religions the same?

A. In the hidden or esoteric sense.

36. Q. How can this be proved?

A. By comparing or examining all religions, when we find one Truth, like a thread of gold, running through all.

37. Q. Why do not the churches see this?

A. Because they study the outward forms or object-lessons called creeds and because many men are selfishly interested in keeping churches in being.

38. Q. What should these things teach us?

A. To pay as much respect to the religion of another as we wish to have shown to our own.

39. Q. What else?

A. That Truth is above all religions, must be looked for within, and that the man who seeks Truth for himself and obeys it in himself, so far as he knows it, is truly religious, and not the man who only believes what he has heard from others without search or comparison.

40. Q. What, then, is the first action of the theosophist?

A. To do his duty.

41. Q. What is his first duty?

A. To seek Truth. To love it better than himself or any other thing.

42. Q. What next?

A. To obey it; to live by its laws when found.

43. Q. And after that, what will he do?

A. He will fulfil every duty belonging to that station in life where divine laws have placed him.

¹Read Biblical and Vedic parables here and explain them.

44. Q. Are you then a theosophist?

A. That is too much to say. It is not easy to be a true theosophist, or follower of Truth, but I am trying to become one.

ANECDOTE TO LESSON I

We are told an old story of a shield hanging at two cross-roads. One side of this shield was silver; the other side gold. Two knights came riding along, one on each road. The first cried out: "Oh! What a fine silver shield." The other knight, who was on the road where the gold side showed, laughed and said: "No, you mistake; the shield is gold." This made the first knight very angry. He cried out: "It is not gold, it is silver." "You are blind," said the other. "You are a fool," the first replied; and so they quarrelled bitterly. Just as they were getting down from their horses to fight over it, a third knight rode up and asked what the trouble was. They told him. "That is very strange," he said. "I must look for myself." So he went to look for the truth for himself, when he found out that the sides were different, yet it was the same shield.

Just in this way persons who come to Truth by different religions see different sides of it, think there is no other side and quarrel. But the man who loves Truth enough to seek it for himself finds out that the two sides exist and are parts of the same shield. So the peaceful search for Truth and the power to look on both sides are better than too great pride in self and belief in our own road.

Now this story is an example of esoteric and of exoteric teaching. The outer meaning is what I have just told you; it is exoteric. The esoteric or inner meaning is that what we call spirit and matter, or the divine and the natural, are not separate things. They are each a side of the same shield; they appear different, but it is only an appearance. The shield, the cause, is one and the same. Further on you will learn more about spirit and matter.

(To be continued)

—J. CAMPBELL VERPLANCK

LOVE is the abridgement of all theology.

—ST. FRANCOIS DE SALES

THE DESCENT

THEY STOOD on the top of the mountain and looked down at the valley below.

They saw the flickering lights go off one by one and a dark shadow creep upon the land and enter the hearts of men. They saw hunger stalk everywhere — hunger not of the flesh, but of the famished soul — and saw the hungry feed themselves on husks and fumble inside empty shells from which the substance had fled. They saw Truth chained as a slave and Crowned Vice sit in judgement upon Virtue. They saw drawn swords plunged into the heart of Beauty, and Ugliness walk the streets in the garb of the dead. They saw men worship idols of clay, veiled and gilded to appear as mighty gods, unable to rend the veil, unable to question, unable to move, standing rooted to the ground, bewildered and confused. They saw men sit behind barred windows, mistaking candlelight for the blazing sun and avowing that there was nothing else. They saw the desecration of the fire of great *yajnas*, by men sacrificing themselves for lesser men, and heard the songs and hymns die upon their lips and become a cry. They saw them — the ravaged souls — caught in the spiked nets of Black Doctrines, while on the pulpit of the land stood those whose voices fumed and roared to drown Spirit's whisperings in the hearts of men. They saw gigantic Forms glide from their Dens of Matter, trying to devour the Sparks who hid themselves from the sight of all. They saw the Blossoms of Eternal Thought planted by those gone by and nurtured by the heart-blood of those who serve, plundered and torn, their petals scattered in the dust to make a bed for the wasp and the worm. They saw the Citadels of Wisdom destroyed, to pave the path for the destroyers' feet to tread. And they saw the Ignorant teaching the erstwhile Wise who now sat at their feet, having forgotten their own wisdom. They saw the Pilgrims wander aimlessly, their Memory faded, lured from their path into blind alleys by vicious visages that allure and cheat. They saw the Dark Battalion stampede and march, with howls and raised weapons, against the ramparts of the doomed valley, and heard the anguished cry of those sentinels who stand and keep watch, calling for help. They saw the Guardians of the city tremble and fall like withered leaves that blow around on the streets, chased by wailing winds.

And They who suffer from woes not their own, knew the hour had struck for the descent into the world below, to give succour and sustenance to those whose helpless cries rend the air.

OF all the terrible blasphemies and accusations virtually thrown on their God by the Monotheists, none is greater or more unpardonable than that (almost always) false humility which makes the presumably "pious" Christian assert, in connection with every evil and undeserved blow, that "such is *the will* of God."

Dolts and hypocrites! Blasphemers and impious Pharisees, who speak in the same breath of the endless merciful love and care of their God and creator for helpless man, and of that God *scourging the good, the very best of his creatures, bleeding them to death like an insatiable Moloch!* Shall we be answered to this, in Congreve's words:

"But who shall dare to tax Eternal Justice?" *Logic and simple common sense*, we answer: if we are made to believe in the "original Sin," in *one* life, on this Earth only, for every Soul, and in an anthropomorphic Deity, who seems to have created some men only for the pleasure of condemning them to eternal hell-fire (and this whether they are good or bad, says the Predestinarian), why should not every man endowed with reasoning powers condemn in his turn such a villainous Deity? Life would become unbearable, if one had to believe in the God created by man's unclean fancy. Luckily he exists only in human dogmas, and in the unhealthy imagination of some poets, who believe they have solved the problem by addressing him as—

"Thou great Mysterious Power, who hast *involved*
The pride of human wisdom, to confound
The *daring scrutiny* and prove the faith
Of thy *presuming* creatures ! . . ."

Truly a robust "faith" is required to believe that it is "presumption" to question the justice of one, who creates helpless little man but to "perplex" him, and to test a "faith" with which that "Power," moreover, may have forgotten, if not neglected, to endow him, as happens sometimes.

Compare this blind faith with the philosophical belief, based on every reasonable evidence and life-experience, in Karma-Nemesis, or the Law of Retribution.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 304

WORLDS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

THEOSOPHY AND OCCULTISM

THEOSOPHY, as originally recorded for our cycle by H. P. Blavatsky and as taught and applied by her, is far removed from practical Occultism as popularly imagined. It is the very reverse of the Occultism exemplified in Mediumship and Psychism. It has nothing in common with the basic dogmas of religious revelations and sectarian creeds, nor with the theories and hypotheses with which modern science abounds.

Theosophy pure and simple is a system of philosophy and ethics, the science of their study and application in all the relations of life. In its practical bearings it is psychology in the highest sense, and is, therefore, a system of education dealing with the human mind, its elements, its acquired characteristics, its capacities for further evolution.

According to the consistent declarations of H.P.B., Theosophy is not of human origin, invention, or discovery, but is, in point of verifiable fact, an importation of selected portions of an unchanging Secret Doctrine which covers the cycle of evolution of every degree and class of permanently organized, mutably organized, and unorganized Life. It comes from perfected Men — not "Spirits."

The investigator of the claims made on behalf of Theosophy is foredoomed to failure if he confuses it with any other system, whatever its bearings on the many religions and philosophies at all times currently espoused. All this may be and should be left for subsequent consideration. The initial question to be asked in respect of any teacher or teaching should be: What do you claim to present or represent, and what are your assumed credentials? Examined on this basis of inquiry, Theosophy will be found integrally *sui generis*. It is unique because self-contained, consistent throughout with itself and with every verified fact of human experience. Its credentials exist and can be found in the whole course of recorded history, in every myth and tradition, in all objective Nature, in the subjective experiences of every man. Its teachings unite the whole of Nature in orderly and unbroken sequence, making of existence at any point and in any world a relation and not a finality, an evolution which is an ever-becoming.

The evidences of Theosophy are, then, everywhere and in every phenomenon. Its proof lies in the observation and study of any and all phenomena, physical and psychical. Its verification depends upon the will, the moral nature, the reason, the choice or conduct of the individual man — upon the use made by him of the highest faculties and powers of his own mind. As he pursues this use, the individual of today, as in all former times, will find that other men have preceded him in this research and have succeeded where most men have failed — that other men have achieved the perfection of physical, intellectual and moral evolution; in other words, have attained Divinity through the unification in themselves of *all* the elements of being. Such Beings are the conscious embodiments of the whole of Nature. Theosophy as a Teaching derives from those perfected men who have become Masters of Wisdom, and are therefore called *Mahatmas* — Great Souls. All men are Souls, so that the distinction of the *Mahatmas* lies in their greatness: they have completed the Grand Cycle of Spiritual Evolution where other men are still enmeshed in one or another of the mazes of Mediumship, Psychism, and their fruits in the religions, sciences, sects and schools of humanity at large.

The *human* mind, with all its unexplored capacities, all its unknown elements, all its latent powers, is the prism from which issue the multi-coloured rays of the Primeval Light “which never shone on sea or land,” and these spectral rays are, by their respective recipients and votaries, mistaken for “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.” One and all, they proceed from, and rest upon, the misunderstood psychological experiences of the Human Soul. That such experiences *are* misunderstood is overwhelmingly demonstrated by the simple and easily verifiable fact that not one of these revelations is either consistent in itself, or with the normal experiences of the individual in question; with the experiences normal and abnormal of other men; with the known facts of Nature. Nor do any of the numberless revelations afford knowledge in the same sense as that word is used with respect to everyday life and the conduct of its affairs. The same internal and external evidences which disclose the errancies in all these *unnatural* revelations from invisible worlds and beings, are the identical evidences which confirm the inerrancy of the Secret Doctrine. The known higher nature of every man has to be either discarded or subordinated in whole

or in part, if he is to become recipient of or believer in any particular communication or intercommunication with "Spirits." In Theosophy, it is the known lower nature of the man which has to be rigidly disciplined and subdued to the point of its complete reconciliation and unification with his higher faculties, and *their* entire ascendancy in his conduct, which is set forth as the *sine qua non* condition precedent to the Occultism of the Secret Doctrine.

Not until this drastic self-imposed discipline is completed, or at all events fully entered upon, can there be Intercommunication with the Occult world or worlds within the meaning of Theosophy as transmitted, recorded and exemplified by H.P.B. The Occultism for which her Theosophy is a preparation and a door of entrance is today, as it always has been and will continue to be, an absolute *terra incognita* on any other terms than those disclosed from cycle to cycle of human evolution by the various Messengers or Incarnations of the Secret Doctrine.

Those terms are not imposed, they are implicit. He who enters this world, enters through its door of birth and no other; he who leaves this world, departs through its door of exit and no other. He who passes from human to super-human or sub-human consciousness passes in one way and no other. And just as surely as the higher or the lower consciousness has to be left behind as the compensation for entrance into this world, just so surely has human consciousness to be parted with by him who would pass through the Gates of Occultism. Human consciousness has either to be fully assimilated by and absorbed in the Higher consciousness, or—it has to be expunged from or absorbed in the lower consciousness.

It cannot be too often or too strongly stated that in the Occult world there is no mixture of incompatible elements, as in human consciousness. This is why each self-styled Occultist, of whatever brand, is always absolutely sure that he is "right." He is, while still occupying a physical body, either in *Kama Loka* or *Devachan*, *i.e.*, one or other of the after-death states to which the Reincarnating Ego normally goes only in dreams, delirium, and at physical dissolution. This is the actual condition, according to Theosophy, of the Medium and the Psychic. He is dead, and does not even dream that he is dead, to the higher consciousness. To him the state in which he finds himself is that higher consciousness itself. He can no more be roused from it than the dreamer can be persuaded he is

dreaming, or the delirious patient be persuaded that he is unbalanced, or than the dead man can be brought back to life here. He *cannot* entertain any ideas incompatible with the dominating "meditation with a seed" which forms the substratum and support of the Occult world which has engulfed his human consciousness. One needs but to reflect that human consciousness always acts "with reservations" — mental, moral, physical. This is because it is implicitly recognized by the human being that there are "two sides to any question" — and this recognition in turn arises from the experience of contrast between "opposites." In the Occult world of the Medium and the Psychic there are *no* contrasts, *no* opposites.

All Mediums are marked with the inextinguishable mark of Vanity; all Psychics are marked with the unmistakable mark of Egoism. The one represents the dispersion of personal consciousness, the other its extreme of concentration. Discrimination lost, how can the victim know that he has lost it? Poles of consciousness reversed, how can either Pole know that it has become inverted? Mediumship and Psychism, however pure the one or exalted the other, arise from the complete Personification of the religious instinct. Both spring from that final, because both highest and lowest, *Maya* or Delusion in Spiritual evolution — the delusion that Self in the individual is distinct from Self in the race, from SELF in all Nature. A study of *The Voice of the Silence*, with its intimations of the Paths trodden by the *Dharmakaya*, the *Sambhogakaya*, the *Nirmanakaya*, gives the rarest and subtlest of all Occult presages of the final resultants of the personification through many incarnations of the religious instinct. The highest Psychism, the purest Religion, can never open the mystery of the *Nirmanakaya* Path — the Path pursued by the great Masters of Wisdom and their Messengers and Disciples, the Path to which the philosophy, the ethics, the science of Theosophy give *natural* entrance when its precepts have become the constitutional *practice* of the Neophyte in this true Occultism.

Psychism in religion, like Psychism in science and in daily life, is founded upon "facts," *i.e.*, *phenomena*. Theosophy and the Occultism to which it leads is based on the Principles of all existence and existences, their *conscious* recognition, study, application. Principles do not arise from phenomena, even the noblest, any more than Life originates from "matter." Theosophy comes direct from *living Men*, the "Knowers of the SELF"; from Divinity Incarnate — not from

disembodied spirits of any degree.

Psychism, mistaken for Spirituality, has vitiated all the great Messages of the past through the unconscious substitution of the idea of Revelation for the Principle of evolution — *moral* education. The longing of the disciples for intercommunication on their own account led them to “wander from the discipline enjoined by the Teacher.” Little by little what was originally intended to become a School for Instruction in the Mysteries was turned into religion and religious austerities. This tendency, the Karma of the whole human race, has been once more quickened by the Theosophical Movement of our times. Devotion to Masters as to a Personal God or a Communicating Spirit is affecting many Theosophists in whom the religious instinct is naturally strong. Misconceiving the nature of the living Messenger, they could but misconceive the *spirit* of her recorded Message. From this point of departure it is inevitable they should proceed on their own motion to try to open up “communication with the Masters” — and get results in accord neither with the Teaching nor the Example of the Messenger. This is “natural” — but it is not Nature’s order: “When the disciple is *ready* the Master *will appear*.”

Not upon the Medium or the Psychic, not upon the religious-minded Theosophist, depends the future of the pure Theosophical Movement, but upon those few, those all too few, who hold un-deviatingly to the straight and narrow Path of the Predecessors.

THE REAL ATHEIST is the man who, in the life which he lives and the thoughts of his heart, denies the possibility of any noble purpose greater than himself and greater than mankind as he knows it, with which men and women can hopefully co-operate, and in which they may find rest to their souls. Though such a man profess with his mouth all the articles of religion, though he say, “Lord, Lord,” a hundred times a day, he is in essence more atheistic than many who explicitly deny the existence of God.

—LOUIS A. FENN

PROBLEMS OF LIFE

FROM "THE DIARY OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN"

BY DR. N. I. PIROGOFF*

VII

ON THE UTILITY OF ILLUSIONS, ON WILL, DESIRE,
AND PURE REASON

(Continued)

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

February 12th, 1880

Is it all, indeed, just as I imagine it?

Is not precisely that which seems to us incomprehensible, namely, infinitude, illimitation and eternity, an illusion? Beginning and end, birth and death, we meet and realize at every step. All our existence on earth is in constant dependence on things determined, finite and temporary. Our chief means for the knowledge of things — our senses — are constructed exclusively for the fixing and measurement of the limits of space, time and motion. Where, then, is there any illusion in this? The best we can do is to see no illusion, and failing to perceive it, to act as if there were none. This would be practical, for to reason oneself into the belief that we live in a world of illusions leads to nothing, or rather it leads more to evil than to good. All this is so; but then it is enough for me to throw a glance heavenward for infinitude to become in my sight an incontrovertible fact; suffice it for me to think of the universe, the force and substance it contains, and the thought of the eternal, immutable principle involuntarily appears before me, striking my thought with its fathomless depths. And if the illimitable eternal is not only a postulate of our reason but a gigantic fact in itself, how then are we to reconcile the existence of the limited and temporary with this fact? The illusion lurks just in this: limited, conditioned and evanescent are only the manifestations of the illimitable and eternal principle, and even that which is limited and finite in them in truth is only their changes of form. These manifestations, owing to eternal motion and the incessant passage of forces and substance and their transformation into

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

one another, cannot be constantly the same. The universe is a colossal, ever-revolving kaleidoscope. The figures change incessantly, but its guiding thought and energy are eternal and immutable.

It is thus that my mind and fancy, which I take to be inseparable, convince me of the existence of an infinite and eternal Principle. Without fancy even the minds of a Copernicus and a Newton would have been inadequate to give us that inkling of the Universe which has now become the property of the whole civilized world. Nothing great in this world has ever been achieved without the participation of fancy. And it is to this argument-loving fancy that we have to turn for the solution of the unsolvable question concerning the relation of substance to this eternal universal Principle.

And I maintain that in the mental analysis helped by fancy, substance is volatilized, so to speak, and, instead of its atoms, force remains in our imagination. What this force is, we know no more than we do what the fundamental atoms of substance are. One thing I feel certain of, and this is that neither this imaginary basic force, nor these imaginary fundamental atoms have, nor can they have, the same sense-faculties, which experiment, observation and science discover in the surrounding universe. This basic force and basic substance are just as much of an abstraction as are the universal mind and the principle of life — but an abstraction, which manifests in the mind involuntarily and unavoidably whenever we reflect and imagine, and then also involuntarily (I am ready to say “unconsciously,” though I regard the term as nonsensical) our mind finds itself, along with the aspirations toward an aim and plan peculiar to it — outside of itself. Such is the faculty of the mind. But it is endowed with it, just because this faculty exists outside of it (our mind) in the whole universe, or, in other words, because our human mind is only the manifestation of another, higher, universal mind.

February 16th, 1880

I catch myself still talking, in my world-speculations, of Universal Mind and Universal Thought, but where is the Universal Brain? Thought without brain and speech! What a fallacy in the mouth of a physician! Nevertheless, the insect world thinks without a brain, and the animal kingdom cerebrates, in its way, without expressing its ideas in words. If you choose to limit the term *thought* only to

the brain-produced, speechified, wordy, human and humanly-conscious thought, in my turn I refuse to do so. For me, human thought is but a radiation of the World-Thought, universally diffused, creating and ruling all. Brain itself and even speech, regarded by us as the organ and condition of thought, are the productions of this World-Thought — and most assuredly no chance creations. If, for a reason unknown to us, the construction of organisms was necessary, then it stands to reason that creative Thought had to find, for the expression of itself by word and consciousness, some substratum or other, the best fitted for its design, and such a substratum, as we now find — is the brain in man and animal. Why human cerebration necessitated just such convolutions, cells, glands and tissues as we have and no others, this we do not know; just as we are unaware why the evolution of the actual, and not of some other animal types was found necessary. We cannot know it, just because, as the formation of our organ of thought, so the evolution of specified animal types is the production of a higher, Universal Thought, conceivable to us only through its manifestations. As said many a time before, in discovering at every step outside of ourselves an (in our sense) unconscious thought, we get gradually accustomed to regard it as our own humanly conscious ideas.

Meanwhile, we know now for a certainty that in our actions, especially in the activity of the organ of sight, the so-called unconscious cerebration participates considerably; without it, we could not sense and conceive of the objects we see, such as they are, or as they seem to us to be. We reason, calculate, imagine, remember, desire, in many a case unconsciously; doubtless we can also feel unconsciously, as reflex action shows, or forget the moment of the sensation at its very beginning. It seems to me that the time has come when we ought to discern the consciousness of our *I* from other psychic acts, such as sensation, cerebration, will and imagination, without mentioning the fact that the degrees of consciousness itself may be very different. I believe that the brain is exclusively the organ of individual consciousness¹; and our cerebration depends on the brain, in so far as it is the organ of speech and sensations conveyed to it by other organs. But neither the brain nor the other organs sense themselves consciously. Whence then the consciousness

¹Theosophists would say “of *personal* consciousness,” individuality pertaining exclusively to the higher Ego, and personality to the *I* of Dr. Pirogoff.—[TRANSL.]

of our *I* in the brain? What is this strange transformation of various outer and inner sensations conveyed to the (*per se*) unconscious brain-stuff, into a feeling of our personality! Perchance it, too is brought to us from without. I mean, may not this personal consciousness be communicated to the organism from without, along with other element-bearers of the Life Principle?

The Life Principle, or Life Force, the Spirit of Being, call it as you will, can have of course no personal *I*; nor can it have an individually human consciousness. It is universal; but in guiding the forces and elements toward the formation of organisms, this organizing Principle of life becomes self-sensing, self-conscious, universal or individual. Even in every animal species there exists, besides the consciousness (more or less clear) of its individuality, that of its own kind; and in man, besides the consciousness of the individual *I*, there exists that of human kind, or one common to all humanity. These different forms of consciousness, the organs of which are mostly the nervous centres, are, in my view, nothing less than the embodiment of the world-thought actioned by life force. This is no empty statement in my opinion. I have a right to believe it; firstly, because I know of no other explanation of the origin of our *I*; secondly, it is impossible to doubt the existence of a life-principle (of a force) as the *x* that rules substance in the organism, and the physical forces, and directs them toward a given, determined aim, namely, toward the support and the preservation of the organism; thirdly and finally, the substance ruled and directed by the life principle, is organized according to a general and determined plan into various given types; and does not this mean that the organization of types and forms represents in itself the expression and embodiment of a creative world-thought? But as this Thought is not, and owing to its essence, cannot be an individuality, therefore it has no need, very naturally, of a special organ such as our brain, the latter being exclusively appointed for individuals. Nor is there any more need for the expression of the World-Thought, of words, speech, or sensations, which are necessary for our personal cerebration.

Generally speaking, we have no right to maintain that such or another organ is formed for such purpose, or for such function as our experiments and scientific observations attribute to it. We cannot maintain that our legs are given us to walk, our brain to think; for we walk because we have legs, and think because we have a

head. But to argue that we have a head, in order that we should think, is equivalent to saying that the creative force of life had no other means but the one chosen by it for its purpose. We have to remember that we are ignorant of the reason why that creative force has consciously embodied itself in the type and form of man and not in any other; and at the same time we have no right to maintain that man is the last expression of the divine creative thought, or that its embodiment is limited to man in whom it has developed and culminated as self-consciousness. We have no cause to reject the possibility of the existence of organisms endowed with such properties as would make of them the direct embodiment of the Universal Mind, a perfection inaccessible to our consciousness or human mind.

(To be continued)

LOGIC shows us that as all matter had a common origin, it must have attributes in common, and as the vital and divine spark is in man's material body, so it must lurk in every subordinate species. The latent mentality which, in the lower kingdoms is recognized as semi-consciousness, consciousness, and instinct, is largely subdued in man. Reason, the outgrowth of the physical brain, develops at the expense of instinct — the flickering reminiscence of a once divine omniscience — spirit. Reason, the badge of the sovereignty of physical man over all other physical organisms, is often put to shame by the instinct of an animal. As his brain is more perfect than that of any other creature, its emanations must naturally produce the highest results of mental action; but reason avails only for the consideration of material things; it is incapable of helping its possessor to a knowledge of spirit. In losing instinct, man loses his intuitional powers which are the crown and ultimatum of instinct. Reason is the clumsy weapon of the scientists — intuition the unerring guide of the seer. Instinct teaches plant and animal their seasons for the procreation of their species, and guides the dumb brute to find his appropriate remedy in the hour of sickness. Reason — the pride of man — fails to check the propensities of his matter, and brooks no restraint upon the unlimited gratification of his senses. Far from leading him to be his *own* physician, its subtile sophistries lead him too often to his own destruction.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I. 433

EVOLUTION THROUGH REINCARNATION

Remember, thou that fightest for man's liberation, each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time.

—*The Voice of the Silence*, pp. 68-69

A QUESTION that might engage our attention is: What evolves? The thoughtful person comes inevitably to the conclusion that there is that in each one of us which is permanent, and which is the Perceiver. It ever *is*. Its perceptions and analysis of these perceptions may alter, but *it* does not. For, it is said:

All is impermanent in man except the pure bright essence of Alaya. Man is its crystal ray; a beam of light immaculate within, a form of clay material upon the lower surface. That beam is thy life-guide and thy true Self, the Watcher and the Silent Thinker, the victim of thy lower Self. (*Voice*, p. 63)

Going back to the question about what it is in us that evolves, again *The Voice of the Silence* gives us a clue:

... thou must have mastered all the mental changes in thy Self and slain the army of the thought sensations that, subtle and insidious, creep unmasked within the Soul's bright shrine.

If thou would'st not be slain by them, then must thou harmless make thy own creations, the children of thy thoughts, unseen, impalpable, that swarm round humankind, the progeny and heirs to man and his terrestrial spoils. (p. 61)

The clue offered to us here is that we are "thought-formed." The lower personal man, and that includes our body, is in constant change and is being evolved. It is developing, under our guidance, a cohesive and co-operative consciousness of its own as instrument.

In Christianity and its derivatives, the distinction between "Soul" and "Spirit" often seems to be vague, whereas in the Eastern philosophical systems one can constantly trace the concept that between the changing lower man and the unchanging Spirit is the link, the intelligent and sensitive Soul. In the *Voice* (pp. 61-62), this link is called "Antaskatana — the path that lies between thy Spirit and thy self, the highway of sensations, the rude arouasers of Abankara the 'I' or feeling of one's personality, the 'I-am-ness')." It is also called the "Mind-Soul."

The concept of evolution implies a goal to be reached. Progress must lead somewhere. We already have three things that we may be certain of: (1) the body, or "I am," a personality; (2) the feeling-mind, or soul, or "I am myself"; (3) the Spirit, or the permanent Individuality, or "I am THAT." These three cannot be denied or separated from any consideration. Obviously the word "Spirit" implies a unity with the immutable, impersonal and eternal "Source" of all manifestation, of all Nature.

A little reflection will show that Nature includes everything, both the known and the unknown. Every scientist studies Nature, its departments and its laws. The ancient Scientists, the wise Adepts, said:

Help Nature and work on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance. (*Voice*, p. 15)

To the student, the follower of the Adepts, the *Voice* says:

... within thy body — the shrine of thy sensations — seek in the Impersonal for the "Eternal Man"; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha. (pp. 28-29)

In his search for the "Goal," the seeker finds:

There is but one road to the Path; at its very end alone the "Voice of the Silence" can be heard. The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue. Woe, then, to thee, Disciple, if there is one single vice thou hast not left behind. For then the ladder will give way and overthrow thee; its foot rests in the deep mire of thy sins and failings, and ere thou canst attempt to cross this wide abyss of matter thou hast to lave thy feet in Waters of Renunciation....

Kill thy desires, Lanoo, make thy vices impotent, ere the first step is taken on the solemn journey.

Strangle thy sins, and make them dumb for ever, before thou dost lift one foot to mount the ladder. (*Voice*, pp. 16-17)

Evolution proceeds in the school of Life, and as in all educational endeavours, it has its "professors," the Master-Adepts of the race. Each one of us is, to some degree, Their disciple, whether consciously or unconsciously. Thus, we come to the concept of how we can advance in evolution. What is the process? The Esoteric Philosophy has always taken reincarnation for granted, as a *sine qua non*.

This doctrine has almost been lost in the West, but, thanks to Plato, to the Neo-Platonists of ancient Alexandria, to the scholars of the Renaissance, and, finally, to the Theosophists of modern times, it has been kept alive. The "soul" is conditionally immortal. It *acquires* immortality; and the process is through the refinement of the virtuous life; that is, the conscious attunement of one's life to Nature. This demands the constant attention of the mind of man to each circumstance that he finds himself in, and the dedication of his life to sacrificial and sacramental ways. "Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest," says the *Voice* (p. 17). And, further:

... within there burns a steady golden fire, the flame of Prajna [Consciousness, or the capacity for perception] that radiates from Atma. (p. 70)

The light from the ONE MATER, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the Disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick, dark clouds of matter. Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*, the sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage. (p. 19)

The firmly held understanding of the embodied mind that it is a ray of the Higher Self, of the ONE MASTER — Buddhi-Atma — and that within the secret chamber of our highest aspirations is the true "I" — the "Buddha" within, our Spirit — this is the process that brings about soul-evolution or spiritual unfoldment.

Many ancient mythologies depict the "gods" as sacrificing themselves for man and bequeathing to him the light of mind, usually symbolized as "fire." And, as a consequence of this gift, the gods" were punished. Consider what we have already presented: The "god" within (*Atma-Buddhi*) projects from itself a "ray" (*Manas*). This individual ray is reflected on the screen of the personality, which is what we now call our mind and our feeling nature (*Kama-Manas*). Our minds cannot easily be detached from the way we *feel* about things. Further, the embodied mind is closely attached to its body, and to its memory of feelings concerning past events. We all know

that the body is made up of countless atoms, molecules, cells, all coming and going, guided by our marvellous synthetic consciousness and by Nature's laws. Something subtler, but more permanent, acts as a model, or a stabler structure on which these "lives" assemble and disband. The *linga-sarira* ("astral body," made of electro-magnetic substance) is this model, and with it are closely associated the "life-currents" (*Prana-Jiva*) that permeate every being in Nature.

Feeling nature (*Kama*), lower mind (*Kama-Manas*), life-currents (*Prana*), astral body and physical body are the constituents of the personality. This personality is assembled under Karma (Law) when the time comes for the Real Man to reincarnate. The elementals that make up the lower, embodied man are the carriers of Karma. They are of several categories, and are sometimes called "*skandhas*," or "*samskaras*," or tendencies. Each one co-operates with all the others. Each is an eternal "life." The difference between them and "men" is a difference in consciousness and experience. Man's consciousness, once like theirs, has now widened, through countless embodiments, to a perception that stretches out to the Infinite, to the Great Life of ALL, which it senses within itself and which it now knows is a part of THAT.

And now thy Self is lost in SELF, Thyself unto THYSELF,
merged in THAT SELF from which thou first didst radiate.
(*Voice*, p. 22)

We now begin to see that man, being thought-formed and eternally thinking, is the embodied consciousness, or the co-ordinator of a vast assemblage of living units. The more experienced help the less advanced. Every one of these is *potentially* a man, a thinker. At this stage in their evolution, however, they have not yet achieved self-consciousness. The embodied mind is a self-conscious unit. It is the mind-man (Soul) that is the reincarnating entity. The purpose of incarnation is the awakening and training of the faculties of the mind, and the channeling of the emotional-desire nature into ways of virtue — ways that are guided by consideration of others' rights and fairness to all beings.

In *The Voice of the Silence* (p. 30) we find the process of conscious evolution described as follows:

"Great Sifter" is the name of the "Heart Doctrine," O Disciple.

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the karmic heart.

True knowledge is the flour, false learning is the husk. If thou would'st eat the bread of Wisdom, thy flour thou hast to knead with Amrita's clear waters. But if thou kneadest husks with Maya's dew, thou canst create but food for the black doves of death, the birds of birth, decay and sorrow.

Therefore it is incumbent on every man to "help Nature and work on with her." It is the "Diamond Soul," the Higher Self within each one of us that we need to bring into practical rulership of our everyday lives. The embodied mind (*Kama-Manas*) has to use the lever of aspiration and the power of practical brotherliness to do this for himself.

Learn that no efforts, not the smallest... whether in right or wrong direction — can vanish from the world of causes....

Thou canst create this "day" thy chances for thy "morrow." In the "Great Journey," causes sown each hour bear each its harvest of effects, for rigid Justice rules the World. (p. 37)

This leads us to the ultimate sacrifice, to live not for oneself but for others' sake. "For this, thou hast to live and breathe in all, as all that thou perceivest breathes in thee; to feel thyself abiding in all things, all things in SELF." (p. 54)

This is the process, self-induced, whereby each of us may become a disciple, a "Lanoo-Shravaka... attuned to the Upadhyaya's mind — one with the Over-Soul — or, break away" (p. 56). It involves the transformation of the whole man. The example of the Masters, of H.P.B., W.Q.J. and others, is always before us, to guide us on our way to rebecoming true men (embodied *Buddhi-Manases*), and thus making ourselves the servants of Humanity and helpers of all evolution.

NOT death is to be feared but fear of death.

—EPICTETUS

MODERN IDEALISM, WORSE THAN MATERIALISM

[This article by H.P.B. was published posthumously in *The Theosophist* for October 1896 and was introduced by the Editor with these words: "The following vigorous article, from the pen of H. P. Blavatsky, has quite recently come into my hands and, like all her writings, will repay perusal."—Eds.]

THAT which is herein presented will be, as a matter of course, Dead-Sea fruit to blind materialism; withal it may prove still more distasteful to advocates of *Hylo-Idealism* — as that modern cross-breed between misunderstood Protagoras and Büchner is now named.

Theosophy has no bitterer enemy than *Hylo-Idealism*, the great ally of materialism, today. This is because, though repudiating the systems of both, we accept most of the *physical* facts of science, rejecting their conclusions only; while we recognize a good deal of Vedantic doctrines in European Idealism, but none of its highly philosophical and consistent logic. The conclusions of Materialism and Idealism, in fact, are so far stretched, that in their final synthesis they almost meet in their atheism and pessimism. The last word of both — the Alpha and the Omega of Modern Thought, whether traced to the potencies of brute matter or to the nihilism of idealistic speculation — is a dreary negation of any possible future existence in spirit. Apparently — there is an abyss between the two in sober reality — a platform on which both shake hands. The materialism of today is only a shade more scientific than the crass fallacies of Büchner and Moleschott. It is the same Death's-Head, with its stereotyped rictus grinning hideously, but now crowned with a wreath of rhetorical flowers woven by Mr. Tyndall's unparalleled oratory. As to Idealism — of whatever school — it has become "a double caricature" on Kant and Schopenhauer. The "rigour and vigour" type of generalization is prevalent; witness the attitude of Materialists (or Realists) and Idealists toward what J. S. Mill terms the "battle-ground of metaphysics" — the question of an external world.

The Materialist asserts that matter — or the external Universe — exists independently of a perceiving mind; that the object in short has evolved the subject, which latter in its turn mirrors its author in its consciousness.

The (pure) Idealist, on the contrary, will say — "Not so; so far

from Mind being the resultant of an evolutionary process from Matter, the latter exists only in consciousness. All we know, or can know, are states of our own consciousness; objects are such only by and through a perceiving Ego — *its sensations*, and as such, are necessarily phenomenal; with the destruction of Mind, the whole fabric of seeming objectivity collapses.”

In what respect is such an *idealist* more “ideal” than the Materialist? One denies point-blank anything existing outside of matter; the other, that anything *is* — no more matter than Spirit — that these two positions do not exhaust the alternatives. While it is clear that the Realist is unable to postulate the independent existence of the *External World*, except by *projecting into space the visions of his own subjectivity*, the (*pure!*) Idealist is brought face to face with the assertion of science, that the objective universe existed aeons before the first dawn of human consciousness.

It is from this predicament that we might be rescued by the compromise between the two opposing systems, known variously as *Transfigured Realism*, *Transcendental Realism* or, better, objective (as opposed to pure) Idealism — if only that transfigured Realism were to conceive of Object and Subject in the way Vedantic occultists do. According to this system, the external world of this our present consciousness is the joint product of Object and Subject. While non-existent *per se* — it is said, the creation of the individual mind — matter is equally the *sensible manifestation of the objectivity of an unknown Substance* (unknown to the profane only). Mind *translates* the impressions received from without — impressions radiating from the world of *Noumena* into panorama of purely subjective ideation. The object as it is given in consciousness is phenomenal, but the primary stimulus comes from *without*. Subject and Object — as *Noumena* — are equally real, but the SENSE-OBJECT is a subjective creation. Take, for example, the case of the Sun. To the Realist the glorious orb exists outside of, and independently of Mind, *just as it appears in consciousness*. To the Idealist it is the creation of Mind and perishes with it. To the *objective* Idealist, with Mind perishes the phenomenal Sun, but an *unknown Substance — removed beyond the possibility of human conception as to its nature — remains*.

This — except the “Unknown Substance” — the Occultist will deny. For him, the subject as much as the object, *Ego*, Sun, Mind

and the Universe itself is — a *Maya*, a huge illusion. But, as both the Perceiver and the Object perceived belong to the same plane of illusion, they are mutual and reciprocal Realities *for such time as the Manvantaric illusion lasts*. In Reality, and outside and beyond Space and Time, it is all the effect and result of Ignorance. Nevertheless, reverting to the conclusion of one of the greatest thinkers of the day — Mr. Herbert Spencer, where he argues that “If, then, the object perceived is self, what is the subject that perceives?” and concludes that such a process is only conceivable on “the annihilation of both” (*First Principles*, p. 66) — we say that according to the views of the Occultist he is entirely wrong. Mr. Herbert Spencer knows, it appears, of but one grade of subjectivity, and has no idea of the occult (*Yogic*) teaching, of the existence of other and higher planes of consciousness, vision or perception, than those of Mind; of the existence, in short, of the “Transcendental Ego” or true *self* (Buddhi) — a spark from the radiant essence of the Universal Spirit. Consequently, to the query of Mr. Spencer, “If it is the true self which thinks, what other self can it be that is thought of?” (*Ibid.*), we reply: The *true Self* is, *per se*, impersonal; the *personal* or brain-consciousness being but an illusory reflection in incarnated existence. Western Psychology errs in regarding this *personal* ego as the only factor to be considered in its researches. The argument, therefore, as to the inconceivability of the Subject perceiving itself — which, *if we limit subject to Mind* (Manas) is absolutely valid — collapses the moment we assert with Kant and his modern exponents, the existence of a Higher Self or “Transcendental subject.” For, in the act of self-analysis, the *Mind* becomes in its turn an object to the spiritual consciousness. It is the overshadowing of the Mind by *Buddhi* which results in the ultimate *realization of existence* — *i.e.*, self-consciousness in its purest form. But it must at the same time be borne in mind that the *full* realization of the spiritual Self is impossible for an incarnated Fourth Rounder. The Spiritual ego reflects no varying states of consciousness; is independent of all sensation (experience); it does not *think* — it *KNOWS*, by an intuitive process only faintly conceivable by the average man. “The subject that perceives” Mind, as an attribute of itself, is this Transcendental or spiritual Ego (Buddhi). He who would know more, let him study *Vedanta* and Patanjali’s *Yoga Philosophy* — *esoterically*. Let him understand the real meaning of these sentences: “The knower of

SELF passes beyond sorrow" (*Chhandogya Upanishad*, VII, i, 3); and again, "he who knows the Supreme Brahma, becomes Brahma." (*Mundaka Upanishad*, III, ii, 9).

It is the "collective aggregate of *Ignorance*," as the *Vedantasara* puts it, that led to *scientific* definitions by opponents; as one for instance that we find among the many pearls scattered by Dr. Lewins' *What is Religion?* For beauty and clearness of language, we recommend it; and though its critic (*An Examination and Popular Exposition of the Hylo-Idealistic Philosophy*, by Wm. Bell McTaggart) recommends likewise the reader to remember that "Dr. Lewins' philosophy does not lie on the surface" (Preface), yet one may be excused for insisting on a close scrutiny of a system which aims at supplanting every philosophy, archaic, ancient or non-existent, by *Hylo-Idealism*, which, it is claimed, is the *scientific* union of Materialism and Idealism — or that of oil and water; as says the reviewer — "matter, matter, everywhere," and justly adds of the pure Materialistic and Idealistic hypotheses, that "both positions lead to gross — nay *unthinkable* — absurdities of thought" (p. 3). But what does Dr. Lewins say?

... by Hylo-Idealism I mean nothing else than a less ambiguous and self-explanatory form of the term "Psychology" [which term] ... is the accredited creed of all rational human knowledge, *in contradistinction to the occult and morbid mysticism of ontology or metaphysics*. . . . Psychology is thus relative and phenomenal, the doctrine of life . . . and *human* knowledge, beginning and ending as anthropomorphosis, and *automorphosis*, which is quite one with Hylo-Idealism, the rational or cerebral theory of mind and matter. . . . Without further preamble, let me state that the Hylozoic theorem of life and the world may be formulated as the utter and self-evident impossibility, in the nature of things, to transcend or escape in any way from the limits of our own anatomy, our own conscious Ego [which is thus made one with anatomy!], the Non-Ego — or, falsely so-called, "external universe" — being but the objective or projective image of our own *egoity*, not the *vera effigies*, or absolute substance, of any "thing" external to self. . . . Entities, or non-entities, abstract or concrete, from Divinity downwards, are merely ideal or phenomenal imagery . . . the essential physical basis, protoplasm, or *officina* of which is THE VESICULO-NEURINE or grey tissue of the hemispherical ganglia, . . . — the function, namely, of a somatic organism,

itself *fons et origo* of all cognition. . . . It seems perfectly clear that, as now mirrored in modern thought, the objective can have no other than a relative existence. . . . This is only, in other words, formulating the *solidarité* of the Ego and Non-Ego, as *psychosis is now diagnosed by medico-psychological symptomatology*, as VESICULO-NEUROSIS IN ACTIVITY!

This is the *clear* and forcible rendering of the conclusions arrived at by *modern thought*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

Socrates: Then we must do no wrong?

Crito: Certainly not.

Socrates: Nor when injured injure in return as the many imagine; for we must injure no one at all?

Crito: Clearly not.

Socrates: Again, Crito, may we do evil?

Crito: Surely not, Socrates.

Socrates: And what of doing evil in return for evil, which is the morality of the many — is that just or not?

Crito: Not just.

Socrates: For doing evil to another is the same as injuring him?

Crito: Very true.

Socrates: Then we ought not to retaliate or render evil for evil to anyone, whatever evil we may have suffered from him. But I would have you consider, Crito, whether you really mean what you are saying. For this opinion has never been held, and never will be held, by any considerable number of persons; and those who are agreed and those who are not agreed upon this point have no common ground, and can only despise one another when they see how widely they differ. Tell me, then, whether you agree with and assent to my first principle, that neither injury nor retaliation nor warding off evil by evil is ever right. And shall that be the premise of our argument? Or do you decline and dissent from this? For so I have ever thought, and continue to think; but, if you are of another opinion, let me hear what you have to say. If, however, you remain of the same mind as formerly, I will proceed to the next step.

Crito: You may proceed, for I have not changed my mind.

—PLATO

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

How a single human egg becomes a complete human being is still a mystery to scientists. "It is as if a single dab of white paint turned into the multicoloured splendour of the Sistine ceiling." A feature on "How Human Life Begins" (*Newsweek*, January 11) describes the biologists' new findings regarding the molecular processes that explain *how* embryos develop; but they are still in the dark about its *why*.

A developing baby is known as an embryo (from the Greek word meaning "to swell") during its first eight weeks of gestation. The process starts at the moment of conception. Out of the hundreds of millions of sperm that swim to the waiting egg, only one manages to penetrate. It releases digestive enzymes, eating its way into the egg, and alters the egg's surface so that no other sperm can follow. Then the sperm merges its genes with the egg's. Somehow — scientists don't know exactly how — that union creates a new life, and raises the scientifically unanswerable questions of just when that life becomes human and whether it can be ethically aborted....

What an embryo can and cannot become depends, at the most basic level, on its genes.... Biologists now believe that the laws of development are not as indelibly written into the genes as they once thought; genes are necessary, but they are not sufficient. At a recent conference on development, researchers concluded that "the role of genes... is at too many removes from the developmental processes that actually give rise to the animal.... The solution to the problem of development lies at the cellular and intercellular level rather than a genetic level." There is a growing suspicion, in other words, that living creatures, including people, don't follow a "genetic program" of development. Not only is the embryo molded by cellular forces acting on the genes, it is even influenced by the world outside the womb. "This is stunning from an evolutionary viewpoint," says Dr. Ira Black of Cornell Medical College. "It means that instead of being locked up in an insulated vault, the embryo is subject to the vicissitudes of the maternal environment." It is, in part, a child of chance.

Biologists believe that some embryonic cells pick up clues to their future from the cells next door. Occasionally they seem more clever than the scientists who study them.... Scientists

aren't sure what makes cells stop moving once they get to the right place. But gradually the concentration of hyaluronic acid around them drops and they begin to coalesce. They are very selective about the company they keep, aggregating only with similar cells so that organs form properly. Even when biologists mix up different kinds of cells in a culture, they sort out, liver cells clumping with liver cells, brain with brain and kidney with kidney....

From recent studies, James Weston of the University of Oregon concludes that the environment inside the embryo "plays a major role both in determining cell type and in directing the cells' movement"... Even the maternal environment — the chemicals that flow through the umbilical cord — can drastically change an embryo....

A normal, healthy adult has about 200 different kinds of cells; arranged into patterns, they form into human shape and make the connections that let muscles move and brains think. Until they reach this crucial stage of pattern formation, the cells have been like members of a marching band standing on the sidelines with their instruments — they know what part they will play but they haven't organized themselves into formation. Making patterns — arms, legs, organs — requires cells to coordinate their movements as precisely as the band's....

Embryologists have found answers to some of the hardest questions of development, but it sometimes seems as if every answer raises another question. For example, it is not enough to know that intercellular signals inform cells which of their genes to switch on. Scientists also need to learn how genes recognize and react to the signals; how they guide — even if they don't determine — an embryo's progress....

Human hands and minds can make nothing as complicated as a simple sea urchin, and human language, nearly mute before the feat of embryonic development, has offered no better explanation than to call it a miracle. Science today is catching a glimpse of the processes that make a sea urchin — and a human. But that learning still has a long way to go, and not even the most complete explanation is likely to detract from the wonder of the journey. For a miracle explained is no less a miracle.

As stated in "In the Light of Theosophy" for March 1982 (p. 199), there are forces at work in the formation of the foetus and in the "hereditary transmission" of likeness, physical, moral or

mental, that modern science knows nothing of, nor will it "till the day when scientists condescend to accept the Occult theories." (*S.D.*, I. 223)

An unknown influence radiates from a focus in the incipient embryo, differentiating the cells as it proceeds, so that certain cells become lungs, others become skin, and so on. This unknown invisible factor is absolute master of its materials and of the future form. Theories have been advanced by scientists to explain how cells form patterns, but none is satisfactory. This pattern, says Theosophy, is precisely that which exists prior to the physical, and is not of physical matter; it is the ideal form—idea, energy. What did Plato mean by teaching "privation, form and matter" as the essentials to the formation of a body? What forms the "astral body" described in Theosophical literature? The matter of which it is composed is said to be "electrical and magnetic in its essence." The first manifestation of life in the germ is an electric thrill. All life is marked by electrical action, for *Life is Electricity*. (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 258)

Doubtless skeptics will refuse to concede that consciousness is the governing factor in embryology. But they cannot successfully deny it. Till such time as scientists are prepared to go beyond the mere physical explanation of embryonic development, some of the mysteries connected with it must continue to remain *terra incognita* to them.

Those interested in the subject are referred to *The Secret Doctrine*, I. 184, 219, 222-24; II. 131-32, 187-89, 258-59, 684-85.

Dr. Fritjof Capra, author of *The Tao of Physics*, who lectures and researches in particle physics at the University of California, has found what he believes are very powerful parallels between the world views of modern physicists and the Eastern mystics. They both aim for a deeper understanding of the world, and the fundamental things that physicists and mystics are telling us about reality are, according to Dr. Capra, the same.

In a B.B.C. programme, "Einstein and the Buddha" (*The Listener*, March 11 and 18), he talked to Jocelyn Ryder-Smith about these parallels:

The scientific world view which you could call mechanistic because it sees the world as a machine, made of separate objects working together...changed dramatically during the first three decades of this century. For the first time physicists studied atoms, the structure of atoms and then the structure of sub-atomic particles. And they found that most of the classical concepts could not be maintained any longer to describe this new atomic and sub-atomic reality. Now, the new view that emerged no longer sees the world as a machine consisting of separate objects, but rather as an organic whole or a network, a web of relationships, which include the observer in a very essential way....

When you study these, then one overriding and crucial result is that these sub-atomic particles cannot be understood as isolated separate physical entities. Instead, they are interconnections or correlations between various processes of observation and measurement. So you are forced to conclude then that it is all right to say that an object consists of molecules, these molecules consist of atoms, the atoms consist of particles, but these particles are no longer independent entities — they are interconnections in one dynamic network of relationships. And then, of course, by implication, if the particles are not independent, then the atoms are not independent, and then the solids, liquids and gases formed by atoms are not independent, so everything is interconnected and everything is one single whole....

The point that you cannot separate anything in the universe from the rest is precisely one of the strong points in mystical traditions — in Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism and so on, but also in Western mystical traditions. They always tell you that reality is one unified whole, and when you talk about separate objects they say it's an illusion....

Among the main parallels between physicists and mystics, two aspects stand out. The first one is the fundamental unity and interdependence of all phenomena; the second one is the intrinsically dynamic nature of reality. There are other parallels, but these are the two basic themes....

My belief is that although our theories will change, they will change in such a way that these parallels to mystical tradition will be enforced, rather than weakened, in the future. And one indication of this is that similar developments now happen in all the sciences. I wrote *The Tao of Physics* about six years ago and I was concerned only with the parallels between mystical traditions and physics. In the meantime I have also studied

some biology, psychology, social sciences and so on, and I noticed that these parallels also occur in other fields — so it seems to me that science as a whole is undergoing a very profound change. A change towards a view of the world which you could call a holistic view, or an ecological view, a view which shows great similarities to mystical traditions. . . .

The revolution of modern physics can go in two directions. You can say modern physics can lead us along two different paths, to the Buddha or to the Bomb. And today, about a third to a half of our scientists and engineers work for the military and use this incredible potential of human creativity and ingenuity to devise weapons of ever greater power of destruction. And I think in this situation it's extremely important to point out that modern physics can also lead along a very different path, towards a view which is close to those of mystical traditions. It's a view that implies a certain way of life where you would not hurt your brothers and sisters, you would not hurt other creatures. You would work for the preservation of life rather than for the destruction of life.

So I think the parallels to mysticism are extremely important: they are not only fascinating, but also socially and culturally extremely important.

In his new book, *The Turning Point*, Dr. Capra advocates the systems view, the view which tries to understand the whole in terms of the interdependence and interrelatedness of its parts. We talk of an economic crisis, the crisis of nuclear weapons, an ecological crisis, a rising wave of violence, inflation, unemployment, and so on. Dr. Capra sees these as manifestations of one and the same crisis. He calls it the "crisis of perception" and it arises because most people are still wedded to an out-of-date world view and seek answers mainly through analysis. We divide our problems into parts and then concentrate on putting the parts right, instead of also emphasizing the connections between the parts and looking at problems in a wider context.

There is now a very profound change in all sciences [says Dr. Capra]. However, this change is just beginning and this is the turning point that I am talking about: we are approaching the turning point but we are not there yet. In all these fields, in biology, in medicine, in psychology, in economics, in physics, the systems view is the minority view, but it is the growing view. It is not only advocated by scientists, it is also advocated

as more general ecological awareness by various social groups and various movements, and they are all just about to flow together into what I call the rising culture.

Everything in the Universe follows analogy. "As above, so below"; Man is the microcosm of the Universe. That which takes place on the spiritual plane repeats itself on the Cosmic plane. Concretion follows the lines of abstraction; corresponding to the highest must be the lowest; the material to the spiritual. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 177)

Recent scientific discussion has centred round the question whether the Universe is rotating, and scientists still seem to be undecided. Much of the difficulty arises because when we talk of a rotating body we have a background in mind against which the rotation is measured — as, for instance, the rotation of the earth. The Universe by definition includes everything; there is no "outside background" against which its rotation could be measured. The law of analogy, however, can help in resolving the issue.

In an article, "Is the Universe Rotating?" (*Science Today*, December 1981), Professor J. V. Narlikar of the Astrophysics Group at the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Bombay, states:

It is said that man made a significant advance in surface transport when he discovered the wheel. From the wheels of a bullock cart to the motors which drive our present technology, we see numerous practical uses of rotation. But, apart from these man-made discoveries, rotation forms an intrinsic and vital part of natural phenomena. From the spinning sub-atomic particles to planets and stars, we have a wide range of examples of rotation. Indeed, astronomers tell us that even such large systems as galaxies containing a hundred thousand million stars also rotate. And these findings have led to the speculation about the largest system that can be conceived: the Universe. Is the Universe itself rotating?

We have seen how slowly galaxies can rotate. Can we not expect the Universe to rotate even more slowly — completing one rotation in, say, ten thousand million years? For, this is the characteristic time-scale to emerge from cosmological observations. A rotation rate so slow would be very difficult to measure directly; but can we detect its effect indirectly? . . .

Though *The Secret Doctrine* treats mainly of our own planetary system, there are enough hints, veiled in the language of analogy and symbolism, about the Central Spiritual Sun which is the heart of the Universe and around which the latter rotates. Quoting the views of the Kabalists, *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 240) states: "The *Central Sun* . . . was to them (as much as to the Aryans) *the centre of Rest*; the centre to which all motion was to be ultimately referred." It is explained further:

While the Western and Jewish Kabalists (and even some pious modern astronomers) claim that in this sun the Godhead is specially present — referring to it the volitional acts of God — the Eastern Initiates maintain that, as the *supra-divine* Essence of the Unknown Absolute is equally in every domain and place, the "Central Sun" is simply the centre of Universal life-Electricity; the reservoir within which that divine radiance, already differentiated at the beginning of every *creation*, is focused. Though still in a *laya*, or neutral condition, it is, nevertheless, the one attracting, as also the ever-emitting, life Centre. (II. 240 fn.)

We maintain that . . . the solar system is as much the *micro-cosm* of the ONE Macrocosm as man is the former when compared with his own little Solar Cosmos. (I. 593-94)

Recent research has made startling revelations about diet and disease and it has been proved that flesh consumption increases the tendency towards chronic complaints. Its highly saturated fat content is prone to raise blood cholesterol levels dangerously, leading to heart attacks and strokes. Studies have also found a remarkably lower incidence of cancer among vegetarians. Nutritionists are of the opinion that there are several protein-rich vegetarian foods that can give adequate nourishment and in a form far less toxic than meat. (See "In the Light of Theosophy," March 1981.)

In the U.S.A., there is a marked swing towards vegetarianism, with seven million Americans turning away from flesh foods in recent times. On the other hand, in India, where centuries-old religious tradition kept many away from non-vegetarian diets, the proportion of meat eaters has now been increasing. Only 28 per cent of the entire population are pure vegetarians — people who won't

eat meat or fish or eggs (*The Times of India*, January 24). The trend away from vegetarianism is attributed to many factors:

It is a kind of revolt of the younger generation against their flesh eschewing ancestors. In many families which are staunchly vegetarian, digressions among school and college youngsters are common. Friends who have sampled the fare and extolled its merits, the desire not to be difficult at parties, or the whim to just sample the forbidden flesh, have all resulted in converts to the creed. . . .

Flesh consumption can be hazardous in a tropical climate like India, where decomposition is fast on account of the heat and where no proper refrigeration facilities exist to keep it safe. It is generally sold exposed to sun and flies with scant regard to hygiene. In the few places where cold storages do exist and dressed chicken and pork products are sold, power cuts and slow sale play havoc with the quality of the stored flesh to the misfortune of the poor consumer.

UNEMPLOYMENT, like war, is only a vast symptom of a disease yet vaster — the ancient, deadly malady of human selfishness. I am thinking not only of selfishness in its spectacular forms, of the unscrupulous profiteer, or of the trafficker in deadly drugs, but of the quiet, apathetic selfishness of so many ordinary folk, and they exist in all classes.

—B. SEEBOHM ROWNTREE