

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychological powers latent in man.

# सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### THE COMING RACE

[From the stenographic report of a talk by Robert Crosbie, first published in *Theosophy* (Los Angeles) for September 1922.]

THE great quest of scientists at all times has been to discover the beginning of things. They rightly think that if they can discover the beginning of things, they can get at the meaning of existence. We know that there must have been a time when this world was not, when this solar system was not; nor stars nor any heavenly bodies. From that state of invisibility there came visibility. Standing as perceivers in that condition of invisibility, we can imagine an eternal motion always tending to a vortex; then vortices becoming more and more dense through vast ages of time and finally condensing into such bodies as our planet or sun. The beginning is on the invisible side of nature, and in that invisibility was the intelligence which could bring about the differing visible results.

Invisibility does not imply lack of intelligence nor lack of form, but rather implies the basis of all intelligence and experience, as well as the basis of all form. If we would consider that every planet and every solar system is the successor of a planet or solar system which preceded it, and that this great succession of planets and solar systems and beings had no beginning and will have no ending, we can see that when this planet began in radiant matter, all the intelligences concerned in the planet existing before this one were present, each in its own degree and kind, the result of all its past individual experience. These intelligences included not only the being, man, but all the beings above him and every being below him. For the kingdoms below man

are just beginning to get a conception of separateness of being, which increases by degrees through experience, in form and expression; there are many differing degrees, too, among mankind and in beings above man. Many planets and solar systems before this have brought into existence through evolution—"the ever-becoming"—beings so much higher than man that our highest conception of a deity would not give us an understanding of their nature.

The great evolutionary stream does not exist of itself. It is composed of every unit of intelligence concerned in it. This planet like every other planet is made up of the beings concerned in it. The mineral kingdom is necessary for the vegetable, both these kingdoms necessary for the animal, and all three for the human kingdom; then there are the beings above. But all beings rest on the one common basis of Spirit. Differing in their degrees of expression, all acting and reacting upon each other, all by that action and reaction gain a further impetus to a greater range of knowledge and expression. Evolution is not something outside ourselves, but an unfolding from within outward. The whole force behind evolution is the One Spirit—the power within us that enables us to perceive, to learn, to know, to feel, in every direction.

Going back to that form of invisibility in which every planet begins, we may understand that manifestation must proceed under certain laws which are inherent in the whole, and which arise from the interrelations of the different beings that compose the evolutionary stream. The order in which that stream divides is known. That order is on the basis of the number seven, and it is defined by seven distinct great classes of beings. The number seven is to be found everywhere in nature, most notably in the colours and sounds. There are several octaves of colour just as there are several octaves of music, and these octaves of sound and colour each relate to the different classes of beings. The septenary division moving throughout the world in every direction is expressed in man in seven "principles."

Every man is septenary in form, and every man is connected with every other being and every other element in the universe. All the different classes of beings everywhere meet in the "principles" of man, all being a part of the Great Whole. Each one *is* Spirit; each has all the acquired intelligence of the past; each has the active thinking power of mind; each has that mind as applied to physical life; each

has the life in the body—an aspect of the One Life—each has a real inner form which is the substratum of the physical form into which this gross matter is built. Thus no man is, in reality, separate from any other; all are in constant touch with one another.

Our planet, like man, has its seven "principles" and its seven states. Evolution has proceeded three and one-half times through the seven states. Now, we have passed the middle point of the fourth round on this earth, but we have to go three and one-half rounds more before the highest possible perfection of humanity can be brought about, in intelligence and substance. Every round brings a new advancement in intelligence and a new refinement of the matter used; for a change of substance goes on all the time through the refining power present in all the kingdoms, from the highest to the lowest.

Corresponding to the rounds are seven great races, which are again divided into seven sub-races, and the sub-races into family races. We are now in the fifth sub-race of the fifth great Root Race, although there are still existing on the earth today remnants of the fourth, and even of the third sub-race. Nature does not proceed by leaps and bounds. While one race is ending another is beginning, and so we also have among us now the pioneers of the sixth sub-race.

The development of the senses is concordant with the evolution of the races. Whereas now we have but five senses, in another race we shall have an added sense, which will transcend our highest sense of sight and be a synthetic sight or sense which takes in all the rest. Scientists anticipate this sense in their "fourth dimension," but what they really need to see is a sixth characteristic of matter—permeability, which will enable us to see, unobstructed by any object or substance. The power of seeing through absolutely opaque substance, as now does the X-Ray, exists latent in every one of us; it is this power manifesting in what we call clairaudience, clairvoyance, and telepathy.

It is very foolish and a waste of time to speculate, as many Theosophists do, and talk much about the coming race—what will be its nature, what will be the degree of intelligence, and the kinds of passions that the beings will have at that time. All that we have now are the conditions that now confront us. We cannot start from any place other than the one where we now are, and we must use the powers and knowledge that we have in order to reach any further advancement. Let it be well understood at the outset that whatever the

coming race may be will be due to the thought and action of mankind *now*. There is no power outside of man that will make the race any different, that will make conditions any different. The power to make the conditions, to make the race, lies latent in the spirit and soul of man. As he thinks and acts will results be. The coming race will be just what *we* make it. We cannot tell what it will be, but we can know what we ought to do now. We can take the stand that will bring us into the highest and best relations and conditions possible to us now.

No being is guiding this evolution. It is all beings. No being is sending it in this, that, or the other direction, nor turning aside the results of our own individual wrongdoings. All is caused within ourselves, and the reaction depends upon ourselves. It is true that all effects come to us through other beings, but those effects are from causes that we set in motion. So, if we have enemies, they are our own enemies. If we have friends, they are our own friends. Beings of a high degree are not doing for us what we alone can do for ourselves. The law does not exist outside of man. He is his own law. He acts from within. We exist among many, many different kinds of beings, but it is our attitude toward them that determines the reactions from them. The making of the coming race, then, is within our own hands, and nowhere else.

It is the beings on earth that make the conditions, and not the conditions that make the beings. Many have the idea that our environment makes us, that if only we could get out of our present environment, we would be all that we should be. It is not true. No matter how pleasant the surroundings might be in a fabulous heaven, if we went there, fault-finders as we are now, we would find things to find fault with right there and right off. We are not changed by environment and could not be, because, in fact, *we are our own environment*. We stand behind every change, unchangeable, ready to make a further change, whether in body—that ever-changing mass of lower substance which we use—or in mind, which, no more than body, is ourselves, because we can change it. That in us which never had a beginning and will never have an ending is continually making changes in its individual instruments of expression. Such is the meaning of evolution, and the whole universe exists for no other purpose than the evolution of soul.

Consideration along these lines brings us to a sense of our

responsibility as to the coming race. Whatever is to be in the future depends on us. It will not change unless we change it. We have to set the lines right so that others may follow on the right basis. We have to forget personality, selfishness, separateness, and realize that each one of us must work for the good of all, must see all beings as one great whole, all beings of every kind working together from the same nature in the same direction, but differing in their degree. Would man-made laws help us in that? Not at all. All must be done by the man himself. We put the machinery of human law in motion, making enactments with the idea that they will change the moral nature of man; but they never will, for the moral nature of man is responsible. We have our various loves, wise or unwise; even the love of country can do great harm, if it is of such a nature that it will make men do "what my country does," whether that country is right or wrong. We forget that other people are like ourselves, and other races just as much our brothers and sisters. There is needed the realization of one great family, however much the members of it differ, and that all are mutually interdependent and mutually related.

So long as racial doubt and hatred exist, there will be wars among the nations. Peace lies in the realization of what evolution means, of what is the purpose of life. When that realization becomes general in the world, all the circumstances which now hinder us—whether they be earthquakes, cyclones, diseases, or wars—will disappear, because if *no* man will hurt another, then there is nothing for evil to work upon. As soon as we realize our responsibility for our words, thoughts, and actions to all others, the whole basis of all wrongdoing is removed. This is one of the lessons which Theosophy teaches: It aims to make a *universal brotherhood of Humanity*, not of one race or people.

The coming race will, no doubt, affect America. Here are representatives of almost every race, and the mingling of the physical strains of the egos now in incarnation is bringing about the beginnings of a new race. Peoples are gathering from all corners of the earth in this westernmost land. Moving along on the lines of their own nature, they are drawn together by the very magnet of what is going on here to form a new people, and little by little they are actually improving the physical body, improving the conditions, improving the intelligence, and gaining a wider range of thought. The pioneers of the coming

race, we may understand, are already here, beginning the work that will be continued by other egos who will follow.

The great Teachers of all time are waiting and preparing for Their actual appearance among us, but "the coming saviour" of whom we have heard will not be in our generation, nor are we ready for him. Such a being could do us no good now—and not until we have taken the Message that those Beings have already left us *and used it*, could Their actual coming be of benefit to us. Their Message is Their forerunner—the voice crying in the wilderness to make the Path of the Lord straight—a preparatory Message that will take these souls, awake and awakening, into right thought and action.

Great, then, is the responsibility which is laid upon us. All that we may need by way of help is there for us. All the information necessary may be had for the asking. That Message has been given time and time again in other and ancient cycles. But it was taken advantage of by a very few, and misused by the great majority. The same will occur this time, undoubtedly. Yet the Truth exists. The power is there. The help is there. Both, if we but know enough to seize them.

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WHEN we come to consider that the purpose of life is to learn and that it is all made up of learning, the circumstances by means of which we learn become of minor importance. As Mr. Judge once wrote me under similar circumstances: "The ocean of life washes to our feet and away again, things that are both hard to lose and unpleasant to welcome, yet they all belong to life; all come from the Great Self that is never moved. So lean back on the Self—be like the great bed of the ocean that is never moved though storms may ruffle its surface."...It does not mean that we should cease to do the best we can at all times, but we know that whatever comes, all is well. Everything is taken as merely a lesson from which growth and knowledge may be obtained, and while we may appear to struggle for many things, our minds may not be set upon the things themselves, but upon the performance of our duty as our expanding knowledge gives us perception. Thus would we be like the ocean, the surface in action, the greatest part of us calm—unmoved.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## SELF-EDUCATION

EVERYONE recognizes the necessity of education, but very few, even among reformers and teachers, accept the concept of self-education and make its practical application in the field of the school and the college. The true system of education, says Theosophy, is the unfoldment, the bringing out, of that which is latent in the mind and the heart of the person, be he or she child or adult.

In each one of us, whether young or grown-up, there are latent possibilities. Many kinds of talents are locked up in the hollow of the brain. Only a few come out when, under the influence of parents or teachers, the child is growing in body and in mind. Many more emerge in later life, in the stress of business competition, in the struggle for existence.

Some interesting questions arise. First, how long will this process continue in each one of us? Can new powers come to birth in those old in body? Can latent powers be developed at this late stage? Next, who put those latent powers in each one of us? Was it God who gave the wise his wisdom and the fool his folly? Is it God who makes one person good-natured and charitable, and another quick-tempered and repulsive? Did God create both Jesus and Judas, or Ivan the Terrible and his opposite, Akbar the Great? If not God, then could it be heredity, as modern science would have us believe? Mozart showed his astonishing musical talent even as an infant—whence this talent? Have we not known unbusinesslike sons of business magnates? Why are children born of the same parents so different? If heredity be the full answer, then why is it that, whereas the young of a bulbul warbles like a bulbul, the young child of a genius does not turn out like its parent? Neither religion nor science can explain in a satisfactory manner why it is that the powers of mind and heart, of brain and body, differ from person to person. Every intelligent parent, every observant teacher, notices the phenomenon, but only a few press for an answer.

The answer is—reincarnation. Justice rules the world, and each babe is born with a mind and a body which in previous lives, by thought and action, it began to fashion. Why is one born in the palace of the prince, and the other in the hovel of the pauper? Merciful and wise God could not be so unjust! They are so born because they have

returned to earth to reap the harvest, good or bad—for most of us good *and* bad—sown in a previous life. Through many lives on earth the immortal soul that is man grows from savagery to the exalted condition of a saint and a sage.

Education, then, means bringing out from within the brain, the mind, the heart, the soul, all that is locked up therein. Parents and educationists should learn to look upon children as immortal souls in young bodies. They may possess the mind of a genius or that of a congenital idiot; they may show forth differences in character, and their very brains contain different kinds of lobes, different types of grey matter, different grooves. Just as their physiognomy is varied the lines of their palms and soles are also different. The lips, the nose, the eyes, the voice are all outer and visible signs of an inner and spiritual grace, or the lack of it! So the question that needs reflection is: If we happen to be parents or teachers, what shall we do with the type of children who come under our care and tuition?

The other question in which all of us adults—adults in body at any rate—are greatly interested is: If there are powers latent in each, has the elderly man or woman something that can still come out, which has not emerged so far?

Would not life be a different experience, would it not lose all its boredom, all its endless repetition of drudgery and recreation, if we realized that within ourselves is a wonderful world—a veritable mine full of precious gems, which we can by effort and knowledge dig out to our own advantage and that of others, thus enhancing our own beauty of mind and character? What a rich life, full of interest, awaits the man or the woman who is convinced that education does not end with the graduation day but continues throughout life? What a fundamental change in outlook and attitude immediately takes place when we take seriously, as a working rule of our lives, that which we only prate about and then forget—"Life is the greatest of all schools." Are not most of us grown-ups like those children who take French leave? We start out to go to school—the school of life—but are lazy, playful, naughty, and instead of fulfilling the purpose of life, which is to learn, we sidetrack to where mischief awaits us.

However old the body, the soul is ever young. Never was it born and never does it die. The Puranas refer to the souls who first incarnated into the men of the Third Root-Race as Kumaras, virgins

youths. The age belongs to the body and to the feelings wedded to senses and body. But the soul within is ageless, is ever young. Can, then, a person of 50 or 60 or 70 continue to learn, continue to develop, continue to bring forth fresh powers? Of course he can.

Therefore when we speak of self-education, we should begin with defining to ourselves the self. The devil in us, the assemblage of evil passions, petty vanities, egotism, cunning, etc., masquerades as the soul. What is it that we mean when we say, "I want to learn," "I want this," "I don't want that"?

There are two souls or selves in us, the lower and the higher, and they fight one against the other. St. Paul speaks of the "law in my members warring against the law of my mind"; and again, "What I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I." It is the same idea that lies behind the dual powers of the Zoroastrians, *Spentaman* and *Ahriman*; both are in us. The Father in Heaven, the Krishna in the Heart, the Light of Allah, the Fire of Ahura-Mazda, are all but names of the Higher Self in us. And so also Satan, Mara, Iblis, Ahriman are but names of the lower, carnal self in us. Knowledge begets the former, ignorance produces the latter.

If we desire to educate ourselves, we must first know that each of us is a dual entity; in us are both Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. This primary fact needs to be recognized as a fundamental guide in life. The moment we clearly note this fact, we shall desire to identify ourselves with the noble and the good. That is the second point to note—our own desire to be good and noble—and if we remain firm in that desire, we shall transform it into a resolve.

Let us, then, first learn that we are both good and bad; second, desire to identify ourselves with the good; third, transform our desire into a resolve. We have still to overcome our weaknesses, blemishes and vices; the time for that has not yet come. Many a sincere and earnest person wastes his time by beginning this fight, this holy war, without prior preparation. The next important step is the conviction that man is the maker of his own destiny. Let us not fool ourselves by saying, "I am helpless before my own fate." A wise man rules his stars, a fool obeys them. What a wonderful philosophy Shakespeare expresses in these words:

Men at some time are masters of their fates:  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

So let us practise what the Lord of Duty, Bhishma, taught on the field of battle, lying on his bed of arrows: "Exertion is greater than destiny." Let us obtain the conviction that we ourselves, and no one else, is responsible for what we are and what we have, and half the battle is won. The universe, said the Pythagoreans, was a mathematical figure, and Plato repeated the doctrine. The moral aspect of it is that justice, not of human courts, but of Mother Nature, is the foundation of the universe. Our own actions, now and here, can change our environment; our own control of feelings and desires, now and here, can remove discontent and usher in bliss; our own thought and deliberate meditation can change our character within a short period. We are all painters and should use the brush of our mind on the canvas of our character. But we need to learn the technique; a block of marble and a chisel will not make us sculptors, nor will our noble resolve to educate ourselves in the art of living transform our body of flesh into the temple of a living god. We will have to labour for it, and for that we need knowledge.

Every great spiritual Teacher, every Prophet and Sage, has affirmed that there is knowledge. Among modern sciences there is only one science that is exact—mathematics. Since the days of Pythagoras, who learnt first in Egypt and then in India his sacred and secret science of numbers, sounds and colours, the outside world has lost the true knowledge; but it still exists. If the soul of man is immortal, then the Immortal Ones must exist: Jesus did not die on the cross; he rose from the dead, and so did many others before him and some after him.

It is through self-education that we can rise from the dead; it is self-education that makes the difference between the quick and the dead. How many millions are dead! How many millions in Christendom worship only the crucified Christ, *i.e.*, one who died for them, when they should worship the living Christ—he who rolled away the stone of flesh and marched out a triumphant soul, wearing that glorious Robe of which the Gnostics sang! How many millions of Muslims misunderstand the teaching of their Holy Prophet, he who tolerantly proclaimed that there are as many ways to Allah as there are breaths of the children of men! What a glorious thing it would be if millions of our fellow men who follow the word of the Prophet of Arabia saw the truth that he was more keen that souls fight their own flesh and

transform their mortality into immortality! How many millions of Hindus worship Krishna only in name, and how many millions more read Shiva, the Lord of Resurrection, the Master of Renovation, the Great Nataraja who dances to the Song of Life Divine, and dances it on the burning ground where passions lie dead, where feelings fall away, where thoughts, noble and immortal, alone dwell!

Self-education draws out the hidden powers that each one of us possesses; within us is the Christ, the Krishna, the Shiva, who make all life interesting and instructive and inspiring. The hell of boredom, the hell of drudgery, are thus through self-education transformed into the Land of Bliss where the Immortals dwell, where Krishna plays his lute, where Shiva dances to the Song of Life. Thus this earth which is a hell becomes a heaven, because within our Heart we have ascended the ladder of Self-Education.

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IF science has made such colossal strides during these latter days— if we have such clearer ideas of natural law than the ancients—why are our inquiries as to the nature and source of life unanswered? If the modern laboratory is so much richer in the fruits of experimental research than those of the olden time, how comes it that we make no step except on paths that were trodden long before the Christian era? How does it happen that the most advanced standpoint that has been reached in our times only enables us to see in the dim distance up the Alpine path of knowledge the monumental proofs that earlier explorers have left to mark the plateaux they had reached and occupied?

If modern masters are so much in advance of the old ones, why do they not restore to us the lost arts of our postdiluvian forefathers?...The more archaeology and philology advance, the more humiliating to our pride are the discoveries which are daily made, the more glorious testimony do they bear in behalf of those who, perhaps on account of the distance of their remote antiquity, have been until now considered ignorant flounders in the deepest mire of superstition.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I, 239

## STAGES OF MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

THE human mind is an evolving entity. In teaching the evolution of the human body, modern science has shown us many links, though the missing link still persists; but science knows nothing about the links of evolution of the human mind.

According to ancient science, there are five kinds of mind in the human kingdom and each of them may be regarded as a link of mind evolution: (1) impulsive mind; (2) confused mind; (3) mind possessed by an idea; (4) mind in possession of an idea; and (5) free mind. One can make one's own practical application and place oneself in one or another of these classes. There can, however, be overlapping between one and another kind of mind in this fivefold division. The human soul has lived before in other bodies and its mental faculties have grown in the process of evolution. How else can we explain the stupendous difference between a born genius and a congenital idiot? These five types of mind evolve stage by stage and it takes many successive lives on earth to do so. Just as aeons of evolution lie between the gross body and brain of a savage and the sensitiveness of a poet's body and brain, so also between the wandering mind of the social butterfly and the serenity of the sage there is the majestic curve marking unfoldment.

(1) *Impulsive mind* : Most men and women are immersed in their likes and longings, their petty enmities and fragile friendships, their hates and jealousies, all dominated by the spirit of competition and rivalry, which spirit manifests in a hundred forms of pride and vanity. A person dominated by attachments and aversions has made his own mind bond-maiden to feelings, desires and passions. The thinking power of the mind is pressed by our prides in the race of rivalry. Swayed by impulses and emotions, the mind wanders. When we say to ourselves, "My mind is wandering," we shall do well to stop and enquire, "From what is it wandering and to what is it drawn?" From place to place, from one object to another, the mind moves, unsteady and swayed by feelings and desires. This wandering mind is compared to a butterfly because it darts aimlessly from one object or subject to another, without a purpose, without a meaning, till it drops down exhausted. A wandering mind produces an aimless, purposeless life. Our desires fashion our moods, and our moods become the guiding

force of our mind. The cure for this wandering mind is to offer to it some definite goal or objective to which all its energy and capacity can be diverted and devoted. What is our object in life? Have we a goal, definite and precise? Our mere wishes and desires, even our aspirations, are not definite goals. A goal is an end in view, to the attainment of which our will and our mind have been dedicated. Will and mind are creative forces; that is why it is said that "as a man thinks, so he becomes." An impulsive or wandering mind does not think, therefore the life of most people is a medley of confused and unrelated events. Without any basis of knowledge, aimlessly, the mind wanders, guided by impulse, goaded by many, many desires.

(2) *Confused mind*. When our desires are frustrated, when the bitter dead-sea fruit is all that mere emotions bring to us, our lives become divided; within ourselves we evolve a goal, an ideal, some objective to which we offer the services of our mind; but in another part of us that definite and precise objective is absent. Here is the stage to which many men and women have arrived. For most of us our life is not a whole and complete integrity; it is a disintegrated life. The good in us has to struggle against the evil; beauty and ugliness, selfishness and compassion, knowledge and ignorance fight against each other. What are called conflicts of duties arise. A few of our desires may be frustrated, but the principle of desire still persists, and we are torn between pleasure and profit, between labour and refreshment, between work and recreation. The remedy for the impulsive, wandering mind is to bring it back, again and again, and put it on the goal and the objective we have fixed for ourselves. The remedy for the confused mind is study of the Laws of Nature. Without knowledge there is always confusion. For instance, when a street-accident occurs, only the person trained in first-aid is of use; others just look on, confused, not knowing what to do. In the accidents and incidents of daily life, most people not possessing knowledge are confused; aimless wandering or standing still in confusion results. Study is necessary—that study which will assist us in coping with the problems of life, of human nature. Our age is not lacking in information and worldly knowledge; we have to evaluate what we should read and study. Fixed in our intention to do well with the body, we neglect the soul; full of this world, we neglect the hereafter, and so on. Unless comprehensive knowledge, however

little, which embraces the whole of life is gained, our confused mind will go on in its confused state. But frustrated desires and confusion of duties bring to birth in us the third type of mind.

(3) *Mind possessed by an idea.* We are now contacting rarer stages of mental development. If a dominating idea develops in us *before* knowledge is gained, we are heading for trouble. When the fixed idea is rooted in some unfulfilled desire without the light of knowledge, the person possessing it loses mental balance. But in the course of mind-evolution, knowledge brings to each one of us one great idea which becomes our goal and ideal; we become slaves of that idea. Great achievements are possible at this stage, but there are dangers. In this stage, the mind becomes possessed by the idea, and to that mind nothing else matters. Contrast this with the next type:

(4) *Mind in possession of an idea.* Though ordinarily we are not able to discern the distinction between a mind possessed by an idea and a mind possessing an idea, there *is* a real difference. To take an example: Napoleon had an idea which he used and was capable of controlling; but when the idea possessed his mind he blundered, as on that fatal march to Moscow. "Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty," it is said. This is true psychologically; if we want a free mind, like that of a Buddha or a Shankaracharya, we must be on the lookout never to allow our thoughts to obsess or possess our minds. Then only will we reach the highest stage:

(5) *Free mind.* It is the mind freed not only from worry and anxiety, but also from ignorance. It is the mind capable of alighting on a subject and illuminating it, of enlightening other human minds, of inspiring other human hearts. Buddha and Shankaracharya are outstanding examples. But there are others too in human history.

What is the good of all this to us? What can we do at our stage of evolution? We can deliberately learn to acquire the power of concentration that we desire. People wish for an attentive, methodical, creative mind. But many are like naughty children who do not wish to go to school. We want an ordered mind, but we do not want to labour for it, to take pains to achieve. There are some, however, who do want to change the fatiguing run of sense-existence. What can such do? Here are some rules for them:

(a) Recognize that above and beyond the mind is the controller of that mind—the soul. Distinguish between mind and its superior, the

soul. When the mind wanders, let the soul control its movement, bring it back to where it belongs. This will prove to us that soul *is* different from mind and is the superior controller of the mind.

(b) Hindrances and impediments arise from our passions, desires, feelings and emotions. These befog and hinder the march of the mind. Control of desires is necessary. We control rank vices and do not give way to them because we recognize their vicious nature. But all do not see the viciousness of many other things they indulge in, and so they give way in ignorance and are carried away by impulses. Therefore desires and senses need to be controlled.

(c) To achieve this control, obtain knowledge—knowledge of our psychology, guarding against the superstitions that go under the name of religion, and the dogmatism that passes for science. Do not believe or disbelieve anything on mere hearsay; try to *know*.

(d) Give to the mind a concrete image as an example to which that mind will cling. Mould yourself after a pattern. Take Buddha or Krishna, Jesus or Plato, Shankara or Lao Tzu as examples. Dwell upon their sayings and their life-actions. Thus slowly will we become like them. And what is their state? In them both action and inaction have found room—their bodies busy in the service of others, their minds tranquil, their souls as limpid as a mountain lake.

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WHAT if I wish to be honest, did I possess that which was really my own, beyond capacity and inclination to see and hear...and render with some skill? I owe my achievements to thousands of things and persons outside myself, which constituted my material. Fools and sages, clear-brained men and narrow-minded men, children and young people, to say nothing of ripe seniors—they all came to me, all told me how things struck them...and all I had to do was to catch hold of it, and reap what others had sown for me....The main thing is to have a great desire, and skill and perseverance to accomplish it....Mirabeau was quite right to make as much use as he could of other people and their capabilities....My work is that of a composite being, and happens to be signed—GOETHE.

—GOETHE

## MATERIALISTIC AND SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS IN CIVILIZATION

OFTEN a line is drawn between Eastern and Western culture and civilization and expressions such as the spirituality of the East and the materialism of the West are bandied about. Such a one-sided view of ancient civilizations, unfortunately prevalent, constitutes an obstacle to the mutual understanding and *rapprochement* between East and West so important in our modern world. The heroes of ancient India were by no means only recluses; there were wise teachers and just kings, masters of the art of living *in* the world while not being *of* it. Great Empires were built by great minds and they had the grandeur of the present without the latter's spiritual penury.

The might and glory of ancient India did not rest only on its profound soul-knowledge and its other-worldliness. But while there were aesthetic refinements in ancient Indian life beside which modern luxuries are crude, sybaritism was never the cult here that the modern Western world has made of it. The masses of old India followed wise leaders. These showed them the True, the Good and the Beautiful, pertaining to the realm of the Spirit, as superior to mere sense gratification. The body, the material aspect of life, was not neglected, but neither was it exploited as it is in the West today where sense-life drowns soul yearnings and blinds spiritual perception.

It is quite true that the civilization of Europe and America has its spiritual side. The West has had its teachers too—Pythagoras, Plato, Jesus, Ammonius, Paracelsus. It has had its dramatists and its novelists with their psychological insight. It has had its poets with their glimpses of truth, their perception, not always momentary or wavering, of the intimations of immortality. But their words have too often fallen on deaf ears. The voice of Jesus is drowned in the clamour of Wall Street and the roar of airplanes and armaments. Plato's wisdom, Shakespeare's intuition, fail to make themselves heard above the cacophony of jazz. The best even of the great men of the West is not accepted in practice by the modern leaders or the masses. But is that any reason why educated Indians should not profit by them?

The West has something to give to the East, undoubtedly, but woe to the East if it takes the proffered gifts blindfold! What are some of the gifts that might profit us if discriminatively accepted? The

reverence of true science before the inscrutable mystery each new discovery reveals. The recognition, theoretical at least, of the worth of the individual as a unit. The respect for human life, however sinned against in these days. Standing up and fighting for liberty as Milton and Shelley and others taught.

The West can give us physical sanitation and hygiene, but what does it know of magnetic purity? It can give us machines, but not tell us how to meet resulting unemployment. It can give us radio and television, but not show us how to use these properly to educate the emotions and to elevate the mind. It can give us a social conscience awake sufficiently to prompt welfare measures, but not sufficiently to attack basic inequities effectively. It can give us the urge to be helpful, but not the wisdom to do good works without the risk of incalculable harm. It can give us inventiveness, but not tell us how to restrict it to constructive ends.

So let us not look to modern Western civilization for the true balance between materialistic and spiritual elements. Modern Western civilization is mechanistic, commercial and carnal, because the masses are not taught that Spirit and Soul are verities. The very existence of Spirit and Soul is ignored; they are non-existent for science, mere fading flowers for the millions of followers of that science.

The organized religions of the world have proved impotent to keep the ship of modern civilization from careening to the side of the life of the senses and of selfishness. Has the existence of and familiarity with the *Gita* enabled the Brahmana to banish the degrading influence of untouchability? Has the deep faith of Muhammad in tolerance and charity checked the fanaticism of the children of Islam? Organized religions have always become graves of Wisdom and Religion and Universal Brotherhood. And without true Knowledge and enlightened Faith and loving Charity how can there be civilization worth the name? The swing from sensuous hedonism to thoughtless asceticism will most likely come. The roll in the opposite direction may result in no less dangerous a list to the side of objectionable asceticism, of extreme sacerdotalism which imprisons intellect. The remedy is the achieving and the preserving of balance. For fulfilling that mission modern India must awaken her soul from the slumber of ages. By its grace her body will be restored to beauty and to strength.

India's fall was caused by her own Karma. By caste arrogance and

unbrotherliness we forged our own chains. And it is not by copying the things of the West that we shall become free. Enlightenment will not come by following Christian missionaries or orthodox sectarianism of any creed. The new trend in human evolution is towards international unity. India cannot remain isolated though she dare not fail to be discriminative. The nation, no less than the individual, is its brother's keeper, and each can aid all if only each will take not a national or a sectarian but a world view.

This can be achieved if at least a number of Indians will work with assiduity on the cultural plane. It seems necessary that some Hindus learn Arabic, some Muslims learn Sanskrit; also that all educated Indians learn about the literatures of regions and languages other than their own. We should not allow political work to submerge cultural development. India must find and express her own soul. Reforms in the spheres of commerce and economics might bring material gain, but without wisdom and culture India will not be in a position to fulfil her mission to the world.

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WHY does dedication to the supreme and unknown good engender a striving so invincible? For three reasons. First, because the object of devotion which then inspires the striving is invaluable, being the best there is in all reality actual and possible, and hence worth everything that may be endured or given. Second, because it is not irrevocably identified with any known object or undertaking, these all being more or less tentative and exploratory; hence failure or disaster to any of these does not blot out from life the star of value which leads on. Third, under the dominance of such a devotion all experience becomes a seeking of this highest value, an adoration of it and a reaching after it. Hence all experience becomes a way of experiencing the best there is in all reality. Even failure of any specific enterprise, even pain and all evil, since these along with pleasure and successful fulfilments make up the medium of experience in which we seek for and reach after the supreme good, are ways of experiencing this object of our supreme devotion.

—HENRY NELSON WIEMAN

## THE LAWS OF PROGRESS

Such is the Law which moves to righteousness,  
Which none at last can turn aside or stay;  
The heart of it is Love, the end of it  
Is Peace and Consummation sweet, Obey!

—*The Light of Asia*

ALL life moves, and its movements are governed by laws and axioms, formulae and principles, codifications and abstractions. There are laws that are universal and whose sweep is not limited by either time or space. There are other laws that govern limited periods, areas and manifestations. These are laws that are particular to the yuga, the season, or the moment. They fall into abeyance with the passing of the circumstance but reappear as soon as the appropriate occasion returns. Life is inseparable from the law which brings it into manifestation. Each law is the emanation of the One Law, just as each life is the emanation of and in the One Life. Law thus fills the vastness of space and thrills in every heartbeat of the Great Breath. Whatever may be the law that governs a particular portion of time, place or being, it is that law which becomes for that circumstance the impersonal monarch, the impartial judge, the all-wise arbiter. Man in his blindness has invested this force with human frailties and called it God. Because this impersonal monarch, judge and arbiter (the abstract is clothed with names only to make its actions understandable) is the intangible law that inheres in life or motion, each action has within itself its own reaction. The effect is wrapped up in and is not succedent to the cause.

In all circumstances, in all evolution, whether there be man or not, law and those who are agents of that law hold sway. These agents form an aggregate of beings who are intelligent and of whom it may be said that individuality is the characteristic of their respective hierarchies, not of their units. They do not possess human attributes and they cannot be propitiated. The action of law being what it is—pre-eminently impersonal—it must follow that it requires implicit obedience and a following of rules and guidelines. Any departure from these must, in the human kingdom, produce an effect on the offender as well as on those who have abetted him or have shared in the fruits of his offence.

Since all laws are emanations of the One Law, they embody in their totality as well as in their parts the harmony, the oneness and the strength that resides in the whole. Therefore, even when the seemingly least of these rules is violated, it follows that the individual has pitted his little quota of strength against the vastness and the stupendous power of the universal momentum. The nemesis for the transgression becomes decreed by the very act of transgression though no human eye be there to perceive the deed. Its fruition cannot be denied. Yet, so long as the effects have not ripened, the transgressor may, within certain limits, mitigate the effects of his wrongdoing by a strenuous and conscious effort to restore the harmony which he has broken. If no such remedial measures are taken and the karmic effects ripen, he may find himself and his creations fighting against the vast momentum of nature. If he still fails to learn the lesson, he may see his own adverse vibrations fragmented and finally borne involuntarily along the current of the vast universal impulse. An incarnation or a whole series of manvantaric existences may thus be lost and erased till a new impulse opens up a new avenue of evolution under the aegis of Law.

However, Karma is not all nemesis. It is an intelligent and discriminative force that adjusts, guides and instructs. It imposes justice, but then it embodies mercy also. In the direst of its decree, in the torture of the pain that it inflicts, in the anguish of an utter despair where hope itself seems hopeless, the devoted mind will perceive the play of justice-mercy, which translated for human understanding is seen as mercy-justice. When a person is on the way to see Karma in this light, he is already well advanced on the highroads of knowledge.

From the One Law and its stupendous ramifications as it descends through dense and denser planes of matter, there emerge ethics which are the laws that govern human behaviour. These deal with the relationship of one person to another; the governance and control over one's hidden thoughts; the maintaining of a poise and dignity befitting one's humanity and the conforming of action to standards which are themselves derived from the realms of universality. As the cycles run their rounds and as periods of light and darkness succeed each other as day does night, there come times when these laws cease to be honoured by the people and ages of darkness descend upon the face of the earth. At such times, the ancient perennial wisdom gets lost to

large masses of men, and as ignorance like darkness creeps over the minds of the people, the rule of the jungle begins to prevail more and more.

In our own century, the desire-oriented laws which society has framed for itself are the antithesis of ethics and the negators of religion. For centuries now, man seems to have forgotten his humanity, and dubbing the unknown as the unknowable has sought his solace in the somnolent intoxication of sense pleasures. There are today vast multitudes who deny the existence of the divine, whether in themselves or in the great nature outside. True that from time to time in those dark centuries there have risen men who have lighted beacons of hope and have each in his own way rediscovered the old laws and applied them openly to the problems of the day, thus establishing a ready and living testimony of the applicability of these laws to the modes and manners of the times. But when they left, the pall of darkness settled once again on the minds of men. Yet, even in the darkest days of human conflicts when rivers of blood flowed dark and deep, there remained on earth for those who coveted it, a knowledge they could garner and a wisdom they could cherish.

Towards the close of the 19th century, the volumes of *Isis Unveiled* and *The Secret Doctrine* disclosed to an unbelieving world the ancient source of the Wisdom-Religion. They hinted at the existence of Adepts, Mahatmas and Initiates who had acquired mastery over time, space, mind and matter. The era of Western Occultism was ushered in. It has been a long time since those far-off days in 1875 when the initial band of students assembled and grew. Failures and successes have marked out the months and years of stresses and strivings. Even today, each student is making entries in the ledger of his life. Elated or frustrated, joyous or gloomy, he still remains a warrior of sorts, still a martyr to the cause. What are the laws that even such as he has to observe? Is his task lighter or his burden heavier for the added knowledge, the larger brotherhood?

Sprung from a homogeneous essence, each fragment that is man is kin to other fragments who like him are undergoing the circle of necessity. A ray from the one, evolution builds around him mansion upon mansion in order that he may be able while occupying any mansion to shed his benign influence on beings he will encounter through the several states of consciousness, beings moreover who are

a part of himself and without whom he cannot realize in himself the infinitude and the puissance of the whole. His the task, at any level that he be, be it even the lowest, is to strike the keynote of unity, awakening its reverberations in the depths of the surrounding points of conscious, animated life. It is the burden of the Master, the Guru, and the devoted disciple to steer the individual to a realization of the kinship of his spirit with God-spirit, and to demonstrate that in unity alone lies the salvation of the human animal.

Stemming from the urge towards the one and the impersonal, there emerge concepts that are fundamental and that in the mind of the disciple must remain inviolate, ever sacred, though large masses of people reject their authority and deny their value. Altruism, patience, non-violence, generosity, modesty and purity are but the many-splendoured facets of the all-pervading oneness. To reach to the plane of consciousness on which alone the potency residing in the oneness would be felt and exercised, the disciple has to duplicate the work of the hierarchies on planes which are nearest to those on which he functions. It becomes his duty to impress upon the plastic materials that he uses the stamp and image of the laws that represent the grand momentum—the rhythmic pulsation of the "Great Breath."

The convulsion that is produced on the denizens of the material world by the awakening of one of their units to the larger life is surprisingly great. When the seemingly pure waters of a muddy well are stirred, they but dislodge the mud and the waters become turbid. The disciple of the higher wisdom invites to himself ridicule, ostracism, criticism, anathema and the censure of society, family and friends. If he is able to absorb the punishment and in the midst of the turmoil still feel that the price for wisdom so demanded and paid is but a trifle, then may he become worthy of a higher life. It is as though he waits in the womb of time for a new birth. That waiting is to be done in silence and in a solemn seclusion that is really always provided in the midst of confusion. He has to wait his time out till the moment when he shall emerge from the chrysalis with new-found wings to soar into a newer atmosphere, to join his true family of the dedicated ones whose abiding thrill is to serve in duty and expect no returns. As the student progresses, he will realize the grand truth that "where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."

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## THE TRUE PATH

The whole essence of truth *cannot be transmitted from mouth to ear*. Nor can any pen describe it, not even that of the recording Angel, unless man finds the answer in the sanctuary of his own heart, in the innermost depths of his divine intuitions.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 516

THE question that may arise from the above quotation is: If this is true, then why bother about studying at all? Can we not find the truth without having to spend years ploughing through complex teachings and trying to understand them, to meditate on them? Some people are convinced that, as the truth is within them, it is within their power to realize it with little or no effort. If we compare this attitude with that of a devotee who has great reverence for the spiritual teaching and the teacher, then we shall see the vast gulf that lies between the two attitudes.

Many today prefer money-making to soul-culture. A casual conversation with a man of the world will reveal that he has strange conceptions about the spiritual life and the rigours it involves. Many of them have not considered the idea that it involves a series of sacrifices, and see no reason why they should abandon immoral practices, laxity of life, alcohol, etc. In fact, they may do their best to argue in favour of these and smugly deprecate any other viewpoint on the matter. In fairness, there are many who are trying their best to see things in a true light, but they are exceptions; and the vast majority are victims of the conditioning of the age. Some may *think* that they are making progress, but mistake the living of a comfortable and easy life for some kind of spiritual peace won by what they consider to be the "right attitude of mind."

If the path to enlightenment is an easy one, then what has been the use of great teachers coming among us and trying to enlighten us as to the real meaning of life? And what about all those devotees of the Truth who have given up a life of stultifying luxury to pursue right knowledge for the good of all? Are they merely deluded fools who deserve the contempt poured on them by the self-righteous followers of the broad path? The truth of the matter is that we cannot really gain an understanding of the spiritual path without preliminary guidance from those who have already trodden that road. The Theosophical

Masters were well aware of the limitations of human consciousness towards the end of the last century, and that is why they prepared and sent into the world their chosen agent, H. P. Blavatsky. If they had believed that Occult knowledge could be obtained as easily as many people think, then they would have needed only to produce a small simple guidebook and with that the whole of the world would have reached the goal easily. H.P.B. produced works of incredible spiritual depth and went to great lengths to explain accurately some of the finer points of occultism. She also repeatedly warned the aspirants of the many dangers they would have to encounter if they took the subject too lightly.

There are many examples in modern society of people who have only half understood the teachings, or not understood them at all, and who yet set themselves up as spiritual guides. These individuals have often exercised a hypnotic influence over their followers. As a result of this influence, they have been able to obtain money and servile obedience from their guileless devotees. They have even managed to convince a great many people that immorality is permissible and that there is no need for restraint in such matters. Yet, despite all this, the modern seeker still believes that there is no need for the Brotherhood of Enlightened Ones to remind us periodically of the true path! As the quotation at the head of this article suggests, the ultimate truth must be found within oneself, but guidance is needed as to how we can best go about becoming aware of the Self within; otherwise we may mistake shadows for realities and fall into terrible errors. We shall become easy prey for the forces that attempt to disrupt the progress of genuine Theosophical thought.

In the final analysis, all religions, and even Theosophy mechanically interpreted, are no more than conditioned ideas. To really be "free" we have to transcend all such concepts and become aware of Truth as a living reality. This requires a great deal of study and practice. We need to forget our personalities and become aware of our Oneness with all things. This is certainly not as easy as most people seem to think! It requires *constant* study, meditation and soul-researching as well as the practice of true brotherhood and morality.

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## LIGHT ON THE PATH

[P. Sreenevas Row's annotations on *Light on the Path*, continued here from our last issue, appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for September 1885.]

AFTER thus recognizing the Soul and allowing it to fight the battle, the disciple should listen to its advice and obey it implicitly.

5. Listen to the song of life.
6. Store in your memory the melody you hear.
7. Learn from it the lesson of harmony.

The teachings of a pure Soul are the songs of life. There is a natural melody, an obscure fount though it be, in every human heart. At first the disciple may not find it, or may find only discord. But he should look deeper; and if he is disappointed, he should pause a while and look deeper still; and then he *will* find it; for sure enough it is there. It may be covered over, and utterly concealed and silenced, but it is there. At the base of our nature we shall find faith, hope and love; and he who chooses evil, does so simply because he refuses or neglects to look within himself, and shuts his ears to the melody of his heart, as he blinds his eyes to the light of his Soul. He finds it easier to live in desires and does not care to look beyond what is necessary for their satisfaction. But underneath all life is the strong current that cannot be checked; the great waters are there in reality. Seek diligently then, and you will perceive that none, not the most wretched of creatures, but is a part of it, however he blind himself to the fact and build up for himself a phantasmal outer form of horror. In that sense we may fairly say that all those among whom we struggle on are fragments of the Divine. And so deceptive is the illusion in which we live that it is hard to guess where we shall first detect the sweet voice in the hearts of others. But we must know that it is certainly within ourselves. We should only look for it; and once having heard it, we shall the more readily recognize it around us.

I may say that this song of life is what in common parlance is called the voice of pure conscience—which is a natural, original faculty forming a part of the human constitution. From his make, constitution and nature, man may fairly be presumed to be a Law unto himself. He has within him a Rule of Right which the Vedas call

*Ritam*, as explained in the early part of this work. That some people go amiss is no proof against the existence of this Rule of Right; for we must remember what a great philosopher has said, that Conscience is the Sovereign *de jure*, and to her belongs the command. But, as she is not the Sovereign *de facto* at the same time, her command is likely to be respected or disregarded by man according to his choice. When so disregarded, Conscience stands in the position of a Sovereign dethroned in the season of national anarchy and rebellion; but the Conscience, like the Sovereign, never dies. She may lie dormant for a time; but she exists all the same. All that is wanted is that man should listen to the voice of conscience, the song of life as it is, and he will go right.

There seems to be some difference of opinion among Western philosophers on this subject, to elucidate which I beg leave to quote the following passages from the work of Dr. Bain, which is extensively read in these days. The learned doctor says:

It is contended that the human mind possesses an intuition or instinct, whereby we feel or discern at once the right from wrong: a view termed the doctrine of the Moral Sense, or Moral Sentiment. ...On the one side, Conscience (*i.e.*, Moral Sense above alluded to) is held to be a *unique* and ultimate power of the mind, like the feeling of Resistance, the sense of Taste, or the consciousness of Agreement. On the other side, Conscience is viewed as a growth or derivation from other recognized properties of the mind. ...Practically it would seem of little importance in what way the moral faculty originated, except with a view to teach us how it may be best strengthened when it happens to be weak. Still a very great importance has been attached to the view that it is simple and innate; the supposition being that a higher authority thereby belongs to it. If it arises from mere education, it depends on the teacher for the time being. If it exists prior to all education, it seems to be the voice of universal nature or God.

This is not the time or place for discussing this puzzle in morals; nor do I in the least pretend to be able to solve the riddle to the satisfaction of all. I have already stated my conviction in favour of the simple and intuitive character of conscience, and would conclude this subject with the words of Dr. Bain: "Ethical Theory embraces certain questions of pure Psychology, *viz.*: the psychological nature of

Conscience, the Moral Sense, or by whatever name we designate the faculty of distinguishing right and wrong, together with the motive power to follow the one and eschew the other. That such a faculty exists is admitted."

It behoves the disciple to listen to and respect this song of life; store all its instructions in memory, and learn from them lessons for his guidance. The result of obeying this song is described in the Text:

8. You can stand upright now, firm as a rock amid the turmoil, obeying the warrior who is thyself and thy king. Unconcerned in the battle save to do his bidding, having no longer any care as to the result of the battle, for one thing only is important, that the warrior shall win, and you know he is incapable of defeat—standing thus, cool and awakened, use the hearing you have acquired by pain and by the destruction of pain. Only fragments of the great song come to your ears while yet you are but man. But if you listen to it, remember it faithfully, so that none which has reached you is lost, and endeavour to learn from it the meaning of the mystery which surrounds you. In time you will need no teacher. For as the individual has voice, so has that in which the individual exists. Life itself has speech and is never silent. And its utterance is not, as you that are deaf may suppose, a cry: it is a song. Learn from it that you are a part of the harmony; learn from it to obey the laws of the harmony.

I can add nothing to this Rule 8. It is exceedingly clear, and the disciple who has read and mastered all that has been said above will have no difficulty in understanding this Rule.

While thus the disciple ought to seek out and look for the inner man and make him fight the battle, he ought not to be indifferent to all that is outside. The Text says:

9. Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you.

10. Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.

11. Regard most earnestly your own heart.

12. For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes.

Study the hearts of men, that you may know what is that world in which you live and of which you will to be a part. Regard the constantly changing and moving life which surrounds you, for it is formed by the hearts of men; and as you learn to understand their constitution and meaning, you will by degrees be able to read the

larger word of life.

This task of the disciple looking into his own heart and the hearts of other men, and of regarding the life that surrounds him, should be accomplished, be it remembered, from an absolutely impersonal point of view; otherwise his sight would be coloured. Therefore impersonality must first be understood. O Disciple, understand that Intelligence is impartial; no man is your enemy; no man is your friend. All alike are your teachers. Your enemy becomes a mystery that must be solved, even though it take ages; for man must be understood. Your friend becomes a part of yourself, an extension of yourself, a riddle hard to read. Only one thing is more difficult to know—your own heart. Not until the bonds of personality are loosed can that profound mystery of self begin to be seen. Not till you stand aside from it will it in any way reveal itself to your understanding. Then, and not till then, can you grasp and guide it. Then, and not till then, can you use all its powers, and devote them to a worthy service.

But in order to be of service to others, the disciple should possess the power of speech, that is, such speech as has been elsewhere explained. The Text says:

13. Speech comes only with knowledge. Attain to knowledge and you will attain to speech.

It is impossible to help others till the disciple has obtained some certainty of his own. When he has learned the first twenty-one Rules and has entered the Hall of Learning with his own powers developed, and senses unchained, then he will find that there is a fount within him from which speech will arise—*i.e.*, such speech as will enable him to help others.

Now the Treatise sums up all the acquisitions which the disciple has by this time made, and declares the extent of the progress he has achieved in his journey, in these words:

14. Having obtained the use of the inner senses, having conquered the desires of the outer senses, having conquered the desires of the individual soul, and having obtained knowledge, prepare now, O disciple; to enter upon the way in reality. The path is found: make yourself ready to tread it.

*(To be continued)*

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Ignorance breeds fear, and one of the great fears that besets men and women the world over is that of death—one's own or that of a loved one. Lately, a growing number of people who have "died" (which is to say that their heartbeat and breathing stopped), and then been revived, have found the experience nontraumatic, even illuminating and blissful. Survivors of these "near-death experiences" typically say, as reported by Timothy Ferris in the May issue of *Parade*, that they felt themselves rushing through space, saw their lives pass before their eyes, and then entered a realm of light. The prevailing emotion, they maintain, is euphoria. Of course details vary.

But [writes Ferris] one is impressed by the overall uniformity of the many reports that describe a rush through darkness, then heavenly light everywhere, a review of one's life, an encounter with the departed and what Dr. Raymond A. Moody, author of *Life After Life*, which drew widespread public attention to the phenomenon, calls "intense feelings of joy, love and peace."

What does it all mean? If such experiences provide a glimpse of life beyond death, then they present us with the prospect of a parallel universe, closer at hand than the stars in the sky. And if they tell us nothing about an afterlife, they still may constitute evidence of a harmony between mind and nature extending to the very horizons of mortal existence. In the zone near death, it seems, falls the shadow of a great mystery. Why, when death approaches and we have been abandoned by virtually every known agency in the material cosmos, should we experience not oblivion but (in some instances) transcendent joy? The search for an answer to this riddle takes us into the deepest workings of the brain, and back through the course of cosmic history....

What intrigues people about the near-death-experience phenomenon is, of course, not just its emolients against the prospective pain of death, but the tantalizing possibility that those who have near-death experiences are bringing back glimpses from the great beyond—that, to put it bluntly, they have caught sight of heaven....

The appreciation of life and nature that one finds in creative artists and scientists alike constitutes both an example and a result of large harmonies operating throughout nature. Perhaps the bliss we experience when death approaches is a kind of major chord

played on the nervous system by the plectrum of stress, a final note that bespeaks our resonance with the wider world, and the message of an easy death is that, in some uncomprehended way we really do belong in the universe. If so, death is a cosmological event.

Present-day investigators are so imbued with the need for so-called scientific evidence that they are not yet willing to accept that there is that which is immortal in man and dies not with the death of the body. Near-death experience does not constitute for them proof of "eternal life," as Timothy Ferris states. They admit, however, that they still have a lot to learn about death and what follows it.

The Great Sages have always taught that what we mortals deem life is from the real Ego's position, death, and so when it is time for our body to die, death comes as a deliverer and a friend. There is in us that which knows not death, but without an understanding of the nature of man, which Theosophy presents so clearly, how can the very existence of man's immortal part be recognized?

To the ordinary person, death seems like the sudden shutting of a door. It is not. Like all natural processes it is gradual. Forms come and go eternally; the process of the constant and gradual death of the body goes on all through life. The babe dies that the child may develop and only by dying as a youth does the being become a man, each stage overlapping the next. Yet through all these minor births and deaths the indwelling synthesizing spirit remains the constant factor. So it is with the larger cycle of death. If we were not so utterly blind to "the spirit in the body" during the bodily changes of life, we should not be so incapable of perceiving it during the bodily changes after death, when the physical vehicle gradually gives place, not to another transformation of the physical, but to the ethereal vesture of the "heaven world." To look then for the presence of the Spirit in the body, as distinct and separate from its instruments of thought, feeling, name and form, is the first step to victory over the fear of death, whether fear for ourselves or for those we love.

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An interview with Captain Jacques Costeau, founder of the Costeau Society, appears in the Winter 1992 issue of *Lotus*, subtitled *The Journal of Inner Peace, Mindfulness and Compassionate Living*. The

main point made is the need to educate the public in the urgent problems that we face concerning the environment. People are better informed today in these and other matters, he believes, than, say, 15 years ago, but they are less human; nor are they necessarily better educated. Drawing a distinction between education and instruction, he says:

A person is well educated when he knows how to act or to behave in difficult situations. Since antiquity, the problems of education have consistently been the subject of masterpieces in tragedy and theatre, in the books of our souls. No masterpiece has ever been written on mathematics or chemistry or physics, all of which are labeled education. But it's only instruction....

When you stuff the brain of a kid or of a student with things to remember or things to be interrogated about on a final exam, the kid has no time and no incentive to think about anything other than proving what he has learned. That's all. And what they learn has nothing to do with real life and real problems. We are social beings, and to live in society with the high degree of mind that we have requires education. As soon as education declines, the behaviour of societies goes to chaos. It's a danger that is comparable to the atomic bomb.

One who is truly educated, Costeau believes, has an ethic that puts value on protecting life and the rights of others. Today, few give a thought to future generations, and that is a consequence of lack of education:

As soon as people become what we call "developed," they centre all of life on themselves—having a good time, a good life, short-term benefits, short-term pleasure—to such an extent that we come to the stupid conclusion that the only yardstick we have to evaluate anything is money....

There is a cost/benefit analysis on everything, which means nothing, because it's evaluated only in dollars. How do you evaluate the loss of a child? How do you evaluate the death of a bird? How many dollars is a butterfly? How many dollars your son? It's nonsense. Why do we want to quantify everything?...Beliefs and feelings and enthusiasm and joy and sorrow and terror are all human feelings that cannot be quantified....

We are vandals of the earth. We are destroying everything we inherited. And when I say destroying, I don't mean polluting. We

also pollute, and pollution may bring about destruction after a long time. But we do it even faster by sheer vandalism. When you dry marshes, for example, to build a development, it's an act of vandalism because it is suppressing life in this area—nurseries for all sorts of creatures that will never exist again. You take a river and change its course for a big public works. That's vandalism because it is sentencing an area to death.

We need to think more in terms of long-term consequences and solutions than short-term gains. The future of humankind, and of all life on earth—for man and nature are inseparable—is what ultimately matters, and it is only when we think in these terms that we are well educated.

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In many European countries, vegetarianism is gaining popularity, and there are several reasons for it, writes Uma Ranganathan in *The Times of India* for April 18. Her many trips to the West and conversations with friends have given her an insight into the reasons why more and more people are turning away from meat-eating to the vegetarian way of life. And the reasons vary from wanting to keep teeth in a better condition to "soul-growth." In Cologne, for instance, a city with a population of less than a million, she discovered no less than eight vegetarian restaurants. During a recent trip, she writes, a doctor friend explained: "Vegetarianism is healthier, it's cheaper, it's ecologically more sound and—well—more spiritual."

A vegetarian diet works wonders supposedly for just about every part of your body from your kidneys to your heart. The first step in eating right, according to food *guru* Otfried Weise who runs a vegetarian snack bar in Munich, is to acknowledge your responsibility towards yourself and start caring for your body. Physical health is a crucial part of our lives and eating the right kind of food is what helps us stay healthy.

Meanwhile doctors, dieticians and psychotherapists in the U.S. and in Europe are busy authoring books telling you what to eat, how and why....A carnivorous diet, say its adherents, pulls you down into the animal depths instead of lifting you to that higher plane which every human being ought to aspire to.

A majority of vegetarians in the West seem to prefer raw fruits and vegetables. Cooking, according to some dieticians, destroys the "energy" and "light" that vegetables have to offer. Apart from natural food stores, even supermarket shelves these days are stocked with fresh produce and vegetarian delicacies.

Theosophy does not take a fanatical attitude in regard to vegetarianism. "Shall anyone say," H.P.B. questions, "because he is a strict vegetarian—*elephants and cows are that*...that he is a theosophist according to the Masters' hearts?" ("The Theosophical Mahatmas": *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*). The eating of meat is not *prohibited*, but if the student of Theosophy can maintain health on a vegetarian diet, the latter is *recommended*. A meat diet strengthens the passional nature, increases the difficulty of the struggle with the lower nature, and retards one's progress a little; but "it is no crime." (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 259)

If the advisability of a sudden change of diet is contested, at least moderation in flesh-eating should be recommended, and a proof of the possibility of maintaining one's full powers given by those who desire the physical and moral sanity of the race. Setting aside all arguments drawn from not generally accredited sources, such as the codes of the great teachers of the past, and the synthesis of all experience, physical, psychic, and spiritual, we may bring into court the medical faculty, who are unanimously of the opinion that a reduced quantity of meat would improve the general health, and that many of the common ailments are due solely to excess in the use of animal food in particular, and to overfeeding in general; while chemical analysis proves conclusively that vegetable foods, especially cereals, contain nutritive qualities vastly in excess of animal. ("The Struggle for Existence": reprinted from *Lucifer*, April 1889, in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1969)

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"That man has lived in America at least 50,000 years ago, is now proved scientifically and remains a fact beyond doubt or cavil," H.P.B. declared in 1880, in her article "A Land of Mystery." Yet conventional belief till lately has been that the Americas first came to be inhabited a mere 12,000 years ago. An American archaeologist has

now overturned this belief. A human handprint on a lump of baked clay from a cave in New Mexico shows that people lived there 28,000 years ago, says Richard MacNeish, head of the Andover Foundation for Archaeological Research near Boston. (*New Scientist*, January 18, 1992)

According to MacNeish, the clay lined a stone fireplace. Heat from the fires baked the clay, preserving the handprint. Carbon dating of charcoal from the fireplace gave an age of 27,960 plus or minus 970 years. Deposits in the cave include the bones of extinct animals, and rocks which MacNeish says are crudely fashioned tools.

Other archaeologists are sceptical about his findings and controversy continues to rage over when the Americas came to be inhabited.

Attention is invited to "In the Light of Theosophy" in our March 1992 issue. There was a time when the geography of the Earth was entirely different from what it is now and there existed a giant densely populated continent comprising the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia. It was only after the cataclysm that brought to the surface the Atlantic Ocean that the Americas were separated from the rest of the land mass. The question of when humans "arrived" in the Americas does not arise. They had lived in this part of the world for untold ages, long prior to the cataclysm that separated the continents.

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The Indus Valley civilization, with its frontiers extending from Manda on the Chenab near Jammu in the north to Daimabad on the Godavari in Ahmednagar district in the south, embraced several sites in the Kutch-Saurashtra region of Gujarat. These Harappan sites dating back from around 2500 B.C. to the late Harappan period around 1500 B.C. included a number of maritime centres which are believed to have been exporting merchandise to Mesopotamia and other Gulf countries. This is evidenced from the recent discovery of a seal in the Harappan mound of Rangpur in Surendranagar district, and an Indus seal in Mesopotamia. (*The Times of India*, April 15)

The Rangpur seal is said to be unique and suggests a probable Egyptian connection. Archaeologists are of the view that the Harappans quite probably had trade relations with ancient Egypt, when the latter had reached the pinnacle of its power and glory. That the Harappans

had trading partnership with the countries of West Asia like Bahrain, Oman and Mesopotamia has been amply documented by excavations in all these countries. From Babylon and Ur in ancient Iraq, items of Harappan origin including seals have been recovered. All these suggest a two-way traffic of maritime commerce during the Harappan times.

Excavations at Kuntasi in Saurashtra have recently brought to light a port-cum-mercantile complex that had trading relations with West Asia. The seal from Rangpur is said to constitute an important milestone in the context of the Harappan studies.

Historians have repeatedly had to revise their ideas not only about the areas to which the Indus Valley civilization had spread, but also about the extent of its trade links with distant lands. In both respects, it is now known that the area was far more extensive than was thought likely at first.

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The snowflake is one of nature's most exquisite creations, as also one of the most mysterious. It may be a single crystal or a group of crystals that form high in the atmosphere, and is then blown through varying layers of temperature and humidity, each set of conditions shaping it differently, until it finally falls to the earth—a thing of fleeting and at the same time eternal beauty.

In the May *Reader's Digest*, Jeff Rennie writes of Wilson Bentley's study of snowflakes, chronicled in some 6000 photographs. Bentley envisioned a flake as "an idea dropped from the sky, a bit of beauty incomparable, that if lost at that moment is lost forever to the world." That each flake is unique and unduplicated is the common and persisting belief, though "scientific proof" has evaded those who have studied snowflakes.

The perception of a snowflake's uniqueness is likely to continue [writes Rennie]. Part of the reason lies in a belief all of us want to hold: that nature is so abundant it can toss these jewels down from the skies in uncountable numbers, and yet is so creative it can make each of them different.

A snowflake is a symbol for the eternal side of nature. It falls, drifts and melts, only to rise again in a forever-changing form.

Snowflakes form infinite geometrical patterns, varying from six-pointed stars to tree-shaped and needle formations. Whence this infinite variety? "God geometrizes," says Plato, and H.P.B. explains that "God" in ancient philosophies has always meant "the collectivity of the working and intelligent Forces in nature."

Materialists have the option of saying "Nature," or still better—"Law geometrizes" if they so prefer. But in the days of Plato, the average reader would hardly have understood the metaphysical distinction and real meaning. The truth, however, of Nature ever "geometrizing" is easily ascertained. Here is an instance: Heat is the modification of the motions or particles of matter. Now, it is a physical and mechanical law that particles or bodies in motion on themselves, assume a spheroidal form—this, from a globular planet down to a drop of rain. Observe the snowflakes, which along with crystals exhibit to you all the geometrical forms existing in nature. As soon as motion ceases, the spheroidal shape alters; or, as Tyndall tells us, it becomes a flat drop, then the drop forms an equilateral triangle, a hexagon and so on. In observing the breaking up of ice-particles in a large mass, through which he passed heat rays, he observed that the first shape the particles assumed, was triangular or pyramidal, then cubical and finally hexagonal, etc. Thus, even modern physical science corroborates Plato and justifies his proposition. (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 143)

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SCIENCE and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be the religion of the future, and if we can work it out we may be sure that it will be for all times and people.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

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# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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