

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

---

---

Vol. 66, No. 8

June 1996

---

---

### A BASIS FOR UNITY—STUDY—WORK

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, June 1964.]

We have but to keep continually in mind and heart the *original lines* laid by H.P.B. and W.Q.J., namely UNITY first, as a focus for spiritual growth, and mutual strength; STUDY, that a knowledge of the Movement, its purpose, its Teachers and its Message, may be had; WORK, upon ourselves in the light of that study, and for others first, last, and all the time.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

THIS magazine prints every month on its back cover the Declaration of the United Lodge of Theosophists—a document in which Robert Crosbie has put together statements from the writings of his trusted and trustworthy guru, William Quan Judge. Every U.L.T. Associate has, in becoming such, avowed his "sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its 'Declaration,' " and found in this living document something to which his inmost feelings respond. Its five brief paragraphs point most clearly to a Way of Living.

To the individual, the Declaration shows the way to self-effort at Devotion, Knowledge, Right Action. It helps each to become a centre of work in himself, round which might eventually form a nucleus from which information and spiritual influence would radiate and towards which higher influences would be directed.

Independent devotion to the Cause of Theosophy; loyalty to the Masters; study, exemplification and dissemination of right ideas; realization of the One Self; co-operation with others on the sound basis of similarity of aim, purpose and teaching; true service of Humanity and brotherliness towards all creatures—to practise these is to live in the spirit of the Declaration.

For U.L.T. as a whole, the Declaration provides a functional basis for integrated effort at Unity, Study and Work. It serves as a focus around which all those bound by similarity of teaching, which brings similarity of aim and purpose, can come together as a voluntary Association. It may be compared to a map showing certain safe routes, however difficult, at the same time warning against pitfalls and short cuts which look attractive and easy.

U.L.T. Associates must ponder over the Declaration with calmness so that what is implicit in it may become explicit. The more earnestly they set about living up to the principles enunciated in it, the better the position in which they will be to establish a living nucleus of Brotherhood instead of just talking of it, for there is a danger in talking of Brotherhood and not establishing the nucleus of it. They must think out new ways of applying the basic principles of the Declaration to ever-changing needs and ever-fresh opportunities. But in labouring for Theosophy they have to remember that in their zeal and enthusiasm they must not substitute their Lodge for Theosophy. This would be fatal and would set at nought the Declaration in its spirit and letter. Theosophy is like the Spiritual Soul; U.L.T., like the body in and through which that Soul functions.

The following extracts from the writings of the Founder of U.L.T., Robert Crosbie, whose death anniversary, commemorated as U.L.T. Day, falls on June 25, throw light on what prompted him to compose the Declaration—a document from which he also drew inspiration:

" 'U.L.T.' is a *name given to certain principles and ideas*; those who associate themselves with those principles and ideas are attracted and *bound by them only*—not by their fellows who do

likewise or who refrain or who cease to consider themselves so bound. The DECLARATION, with its signature by the Associates, is a wide departure from anything that exists as an organization."

"The basis of successful work is Unity: this is the constant cry of H.P.B. and W.Q.J. To be able to afford a basis for Unity to individuals or organizations, without demanding any relinquishment of affiliation or belief, is no small thing. The *Declaration of 'U.L.T.'* does just that: it is not a theory, but a carrying out of the spirit of the Messengers."

"If the Declaration shows itself to be directly in line with the teachings, the teachers, and the original lines laid down, it will make the observant think. Doubtless the Declaration could be amplified, but would not amplification detract from attention to the points made by it? It is direct and it is short, therefore quickly grasped. All can make their own deductions, but with us it is 'a firm position assumed out of regard for the end in view.' Our purpose is to draw attention to the Teachers and the Teaching, not to any others; hence it is conservation, safety, to maintain the impersonality of 'U.L.T.' Its aim, scope and purpose are shown in the Declaration, and besides, attention is called to the great underlying Movement which compels such alterations from time to time; so, as the declared policy is followed out and the Teaching is studied, the practical amplification will come of itself."

"We sympathize with *all* efforts to spread broadcast the teachings of Theosophy pure and simple, without expressing preference for any organization or individual so engaged—recognizing that while methods differ, the Cause of one is the Cause of all. Meantime, we go on with our own line of work which, because of its freedom from any complications of organization, presents a catholic spirit. We are not drawing attention to ourselves as a body, but to the principles that, as a body, we hold. The *Declaration* is a summation of the stand that all Theosophists should take—toward the work and toward each other.... We have not only the duty of promulgating, but of safeguarding as far as possible the spirit of our Declaration."

"'U.L.T.' and its Declaration will be compared by many with the

claims made by the various societies and their exponents. Each of these makes the claim that he or it is alone right. What are our claims?—it will be asked. We make none: we point to the Message, the Messengers, and Their enunciation of the Work—and carry on the latter in accordance; we have no 'revelation' to offer, we only hand on that which was known before. The position is unique and unassailable in that it makes no claim to any other authority than the Message and the Messengers."

"The 'U.L.T.' *Declaration* should turn the attention of every open-minded Theosophist from forms to principles. It provides a real basis for study and work. Its reasonableness should awaken many to get busy on themselves. The door is open to all, but we cannot help those who will neither listen nor think."

"The phrase used by one of the Messengers is significant, and avoids all conflict with organizations, being capable of including all without detriment to any. That phrase is: THE UNITED LODGE OF THEOSOPHISTS. Members of any organization or unattached, old and new students, could belong to it without disturbing their affiliations, for the sole condition necessary would be the acceptance of the principle of *Similarity of aim, purpose, and teaching*. The binding spiritual force of this principle of brotherhood needs no such adventitious aids as Constitution or By-Laws—or Officers to administer them. With *it* as basis for union, no possible cause for differences could arise; no room is found here for leader or authority, for dogma or superstition, and yet—as there are stores of knowledge left for all—the right spirit must bring forth from 'Those who never fail' all necessary assistance. The door seems open for those who *would*, but cannot see a way. Any considerable number, *living, thinking, acting, upon this basis*, must form a spiritual focus, from which all things are possible."

"We have to show the *raison d'etre* of 'U.L.T.' so that others may see it as clearly as we do. We have undertaken a high mission and a heavy task—not because we think ourselves so eminently fit, but because we see the need and there is no one else to do it; and we also know that we will not be left alone in the doing."

---

## MAN—MORTAL AND IMMORTAL

IT does not require great wisdom for anyone to discern that he is chameleon-like, now flaring up in angry red and now settling down in green lethargy. We all know that there is a devilish nature within us, though sometimes human pride so thickly envelops us that we fail to perceive that side of ourselves. But, as a general rule, we need no doctor to tell us that we are part good and part bad, part noble and part ignoble. Theosophy informs us as to where the divine in us came from and how the devilish arose. Theosophy is rightly compared to medical science which tries to heal; but while medical science is not infallible and changes its views from time to time, Soul-science or Theosophy is perfected, and every disease of our every constituent is known and the correct and unvarying prescription is to be found. That is why knowledge of Theosophy is so necessary for our moral and mental well-being. Yes, all of us know that within our blood and brain pulsates good as well as evil.

Study and reflection upon this dual nature brings us the knowledge that there is something in us that is enduring and something that is constantly changing, and enables us to identify the evil with the ever-changing, and the good and noble with the permanent, changeless, ever-abiding within us.

All of us know the changes taking place in our body from birth to death. The body grows during the first stage of life. We begin to know ourselves as "I," as "so-and-so," around the age of seven, and that "I" remains the same entity in spite of the fact that the body grows from two feet to six feet. Some bodies accumulate mounds of flesh, while others waste away; some enrich their blood as they grow, others impoverish it; but the one persistent entity, the "I," survives growth of body and remains unchanged through health and disease.

The next stage is that of school and college education, of contact with life with its pleasures and pains. This stage produces great changes in the lives of all of us. Our mental outlook and moral perception grow, and how many times do we not hear: "Well, I am a changed being," "I am a different person"! But it is not the real "I"

who has changed. Our wisdom has grown, our knowledge has enhanced, our character has undergone a change, our mental outlook is different, our moral perception and expression are not what they were before—but it is the same "I" who has thought and felt, willed and acted, through all these changes.

Our general habit of thought is to identify ourselves with our feelings—that which we instinctively feel is our very self. Our instinct-feelings are dual—love-hate, like-dislike, attraction-repulsion. Our desires and aspirations, our thoughts and ideas, all revolve round our instinct-feelings, and the latter change as years roll by. The likes-dislikes of a child are very different from the love-hates of a grown-up; different objects and objectives attract differing types of men and women. A glutton runs towards food while a philosopher is attracted to books. Careful and cautious analysis of our instinctual feelings produces two very definite results.

(1) A quiet reflection on our likes-dislikes reveals the fact that he who likes or dislikes is distinct and separate from his likes and dislikes. Though the power or force of attraction is the same for all, the object or subject of attraction is different in each case. Again, the person who gets attracted is distinct from all other persons. But, just as the growth of the body does not change the "I am so-and-so" in that body, so also the evolution of feeling-instincts does not change that "I." The self, the spiritual soul, the very "I" or Atman, is changeless and immortal in spite of the many and varied changes of body, of feelings, of thoughts, of ideas.

This intellectual and theoretical process of experimentation should be undertaken by each one of us, because not only do we find out how there is in us an ever-abiding Immortal Entity, the "I," the Inner Ruler and King, but we also learn something else.

(2) As we note our likes and dislikes, our attractions and aversions, we begin to inquire and to evaluate ourselves on the long road of evolution. Theosophy reiterates the injunction of the Delphic Oracle—Man, know thyself. The early step in this direction that each of us should take is an analysis of our instinctual feelings with which our divine self-consciousness becomes identi-

fied, thus begetting *Ahamkara*—the separative tendency of the lower self. Calmly and deliberately separating our real, inner self from our *Ahamkaric*, outer and unreal self, we take the first step towards Immortality.

We have learnt that which most people say is impossible of learning—the knowing of ourselves as souls, different from and superior not only to our bodies and senses but also to our feelings and desires, likes and dislikes, loves and hates. The first step can be taken by anyone; nay more, each one *should* take such a step. The difficulty lies in the weakness of most people who will not make the effort. Each one must lift his foot and take his step and walk. So let us analyse and learn that in us is the Immortal Self, and that the stage of evolution of each can be determined by noting the likes and dislikes, the instinctual desires, connected with the senses and the flesh.

The question naturally arises: If the Immortal *Atman* resides in us, why is there this great conflict, this mighty struggle of existence, this flourishing of evil, this manifestation of weakness and meanness and cruelty and crime? Our confusion will diminish and then vanish if we get rid of the wrong view of Spirit and spiritual life. *Atman*, the Self, and its divine and immortal nature need to be understood.

The Self in us is universal, not individual. On the other hand, our mind-consciousness is not able to retain the universal view and vision of *Atman* continuously. Man, *Manushya*, is a mind-being, and the fundamental character of that mind is the ability to differentiate, to analyse, to separate. The mind principle is the individualizing principle. No mind, no self-consciousness, no individuality. When mind-intelligence gains self-consciousness, there comes into being the individual who knows himself as separate. In animals, mind-intelligence has not become self-conscious, and they do not know what "I am I" means. The difference between animal-mind and human-mind lies in this tremendous change. It is not just a difference of degree; human intelligence is a different *kind* of intelligence. Life is present everywhere and shows intelligence in all beings; that consciousness or intelligence

becomes self-consciousness in the human mind; *i.e.*, consciousness loses its universal outlook to such an extent that man forgets the very existence of *Atman*, the Universal Life-Principle within himself. But, in attaining separative individualistic consciousness, it gains the power to realize Universality or *Atman* knowingly. Animal is *Atman*, vegetable is *Atman*, mineral is *Atman*, as man is *Atman*; but in the lower kingdoms Life-Intelligence or *Chaitanya* has not developed the power to know itself. In man alone that power exists.

Therefore, each man has the power to gain Immortality. Man as such is not immortal, any more than animals or minerals or trees are immortal. But man can *become* immortal, while animals and trees cannot. Immortality has to be gained by working hard through several incarnations and by reaching the end of wisdom. The true Yogi is he who has united himself to the Universal Life, the Impersonal Intelligence, *Chaitanya* of the boundless Universe—Cosmic Mind or *Mahat*.

So the Immortal *Atman* in us is universal, and the individual has to catch the Light of that *Atman* and focus it on the mind, thus imparting immortality to the individual mind. These metaphysical truths must be understood and grasped, for then only the ethical and practical application becomes possible. To such application we must now turn our attention.

In each of us there is a mortal, changing nature, represented by our likes-dislikes.

In each of us there is a self-conscious nature—the individual "I," in essence one with the Universal Life, but which has become separative. In its separated aspect it is caught up in the web of the mortal nature of desires and feelings. This is *Ahamkara*.

In each of us there is an Immortal, Universal Nature to which our individual Soul-consciousness or *Buddhi-Manas* is connected; and it is by self-effort that that individual man gains for himself Immortality—by uniting himself deliberately and knowingly to the Universal and the Impersonal that shines within.

So man is mortal and immortal in his constitution; he must learn to retain knowingly and self-consciously his Immortality,

otherwise he will remain in the realm of mortality. It is this metaphysical truth that is expressed in the instruction in the Christian scripture—"take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence."

To gain and retain this conscious Immortality, we have to use our three natures: (1) personal or lower and mortal, (2) individual or self-conscious and capable of Immortality, (3) Universal and Immortal, but strictly Impersonal.

Some people take Immortality, *Moksha*, *Nirvana*, to mean annihilation. In one sense it is annihilation: the lower, personal nature has to be annihilated if we desire Immortality. As we saw, the way of the flesh is corruption through change. The soul who is man, the Thinker, or *Manas*, is overpowered over and over again by the changes produced by the lower or mortal nature. Extinction of *Ahamkara* is one step—the first step—in gaining Immortality. When the "I-am-I" consciousness, the mind-intelligence, loses its *Ahamkaric* propensities, then only is *Manushya* born. What is the psychological distinction between mind and man, between *Manas* and *Manushya*? The human soul is named *Manas*; it is that aspect of the soul which is surcharged with egotism or *Ahamkara*. On the other hand, *Manushya* is that aspect of the human soul which has freed itself from the lower *Ahamkara*, egotism, or, to be technical, egoity, and has retained only the Higher Egohood. *Manas* falls prey to *Kama* and *Ahamkara*; *Manushya* rises triumphant, having thrown away *Kama* and risen above *Ahamkara*, which he uses for his own divine purposes.

So the first step is annihilation or extinction of impure *Ahamkara*, the personal "I", which yields pure *Ahamkara*; and it is that pure *Ahamkara*, the *Buddhi-Manas*, which says, "I am verily the Supreme Brahman." There are four seed-vices. From *kama*, *krodha*, *lobha* and *moha*—lust, anger, greed and attachment—the vast brood of vices is produced. On this cross, the quaternary of evil, the human soul is crucified for many long incarnations.

Theosophy advocates that each human being should control and kill these four seed-vices from which the ugly upas tree grows. By right study and meditation, correct exercise and practice, the annihilation of the lower vices can take place. Through such anni-

hilation, *Manas* becomes *Manushya*, lower mind becomes higher mind; the human soul or *Manas* attached to *Kama* frees itself and unites with *Buddhi*; *Ahamkara* freed from vice retains its "I-ness" to unite itself to virtue; egotism or egoity is transformed into Egohood.

That brings us to the second step in the realization of Immortality. The purified "I," the *Manushya*, must begin to show his universal nature. Theosophy emphasizes that aspirants should not wait for this second step until the lower vices are rooted out. The process of annihilating the lower self and that of uniting with the Universal Self run on parallel lines. As a matter of fact, complete annihilation of the lower cannot take place without the "I" or *Manas* gaining co-operation from the *Atmic* or universal nature of our being. It is necessary therefore to reflect upon the words *Universality* and *Impersonality*. Study of metaphysics and philosophy begins to yield benefit by enlarging our vision and deepening our perception.

This second step requires the deliberate effort of bringing to birth real tolerance—not toleration, but tolerance; not the superior and separative attitude, but the truly brotherly and altruistic viewpoint. Tolerance is that virtue which enables us to see impersonally the place and power of each thing and each being in the Cosmos. A self-centred person cannot show real tolerance; but, once the universal viewpoint is secured, his centre is everywhere; he looks at things not only from his own point of view, but from the true universal point of view. The Perfected Ones who know the Truth are of one mind, one heart, one will and one purpose, because theirs is the point of view of the Universal. Falsehood may agree with falsehood; truth agrees with truth; but falsehood and truth can never agree. So the second step, the gaining of the Universal viewpoint, must be taken, for Immortality is the persistent existence of the Universal viewpoint in the purified mind.

*Atman*, the innermost Self, is Immortal, Universal, Impersonal. *Manas*, the self-conscious intelligence, the true mind, has the power to reflect that Immortal, Universal and Impersonal *Atman*. By purifying the mind, by freeing it from the colouring of

*Ahamkara*, we take our first step. By developing true tolerance, *i.e.*, by looking at things from the Universal point of view, we gain Universality, Impersonality, Immortality. Study and meditation on cosmic metaphysics and cosmic ethics are the means to that end. These are the steps that each can take. We have to begin where we are. We cannot be good without knowledge, much less can we become immortal or come to know the Immortal Ones. So let us study our *Ahamkaric* self, our *Manasic* self, and our *Atmic* self—the Self of all selves. Let us secure the necessary basis of thought that the Theosophical philosophy provides. We are divine beings, but we need to realize that Divinity within and pour it forth without. We are Immortal Spirits, but we have to become Immortal Humans.

---

THE question always is, "How shall we stand the pressure?" Patience and fortitude are necessary under every condition. The ripening of one's Karma presents the opportunity to gain these qualities, and it is well that we should learn the lesson. The principal effect of Karma is mental and psychical. Family Karma is not our own, and will come about sooner or later. The same with difficult financial conditions, or any other hard circumstances; they will come to all. So we should strive for calmness, patience, and fortitude, and also have full confidence that the tide is bound to turn, even at the fifty-ninth minute of the eleventh hour. "If the candidate has faith, patience and confidence, verily he will not have to wait too long." There is one thing that should be remembered in the midst of all difficulties; it is this—"When the lesson is learned the necessity ceases."

—ROBERT CROSBIE

# MEDITATION

## I

[This three-part article by Henry Bedinger Mitchell was printed in pamphlet form in 1906 by the Quarterly Book Department, New York. We reprint here the first part. The second and third parts will appear in our subsequent issues.—EDS.]

THE subject of meditation is of primary importance to every genuine student of occultism. It is inculcated as a religious practice in all systems of religious teaching, and is found playing a principal part in the life of every saint. In lay fields, as well, it seems an invaluable concomitant of creative genius. It is spoken of as more than the door to the inner life—even as the inner life itself. Therefore, it is quite indispensable to all who seek to know this life directly rather than by hearsay.

Despite the incessant allusions to meditation in religious treatises it is difficult to refer to any one clear and adequate explanation of its rationale. In Theosophical literature *Light on the Path*, *Voice of the Silence*, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Patanjali's Yoga Aphorisms*, and *Letters That Have Helped Me*, all touch upon this topic and treat some of its different aspects. In explicitly Christian literature a host of references might be given, of which Fénelon's *Letters*, and Thomas à Kempis's *Imitation of Christ* may serve as examples. But in each alone the treatment is fragmentary, and when the different aspects are compared they at first appear paradoxical if not contradictory, and the whole subject is left in a mist of obscurity or vague confusion.

Part of this difficulty is due to the indiscriminate manner in which the terms concentration, contemplation and meditation are used by different writers. But a larger part has its origin in the nature of the subject itself. Meditation is only partly a mental process, and that in its preliminary stages. In its later stages it quite transcends the mental plane, and so refuses to be completely describable in mental terms, save as a series of apparently contradictory statements.

An illustration may make this clearer. Consider the terms

unselfishness, love and honour. We know quite well what they mean, for we are acquainted with the things themselves, yet they defy adequate verbal definition, for words are of the mind and these things transcend the mind. If there is any doubt of this, try to settle in words whether a mother's sacrifice for her child is selfish or unselfish. Verbally, these two words stand for contradictory properties, yet here, because we know the thing itself, we are quite content to say it is both selfish and unselfish. So it is with all those states of consciousness which lie beyond our ordinary mentality. They are describable in words only as paradoxes. To understand their meaning we must continually go behind the words to the things themselves. With this by way of introduction let us turn to our proper subject.

Meditation has been defined as that state which ensues from the centring of our consciousness in the soul rather than in the mind or the emotions. The first step toward meditation is concentration, and until considerable power of concentration is acquired true meditation is impossible.

It is, doubtless, true that each of us can concentrate his mind in some one or other direction fairly easily and completely. Indeed, if we could not, we realize how ineffective our daily work would be. But few of us have much general power of concentration available at the dictates of the will in any direction. To convince yourself of this it is only necessary to lay this paper down and endeavour to concentrate your thoughts for, say, three minutes upon any topic not associated with your ordinary hopes and fears and duties. Try it, for example, on the "idea of duty" and note how many other thoughts crowd into your mind in that brief period. Under the influence of hope or fear or desire, or even of daily custom, the mind is held fairly steady and one-pointed. But under the influence of our will it is not. We have not yet become the masters of our own minds, nor can we hold them attentive, focused and fixed for any lengthy period. Our attention is continually distracted and our mental states modified both by the discursive tendency of the mind itself and by the influence of our emotions. Therefore, we see, first, why it is said that the mind is dominated by desire, and second, why

Patanjali defines concentration as "the hindering of the modifications of the thinking principle."

The effort to increase the power of concentration by consistent and systematic training is the first step in practical occultism. This training may be acquired by anyone who so desires and will give to it the requisite attention through the incidents and duties of daily life. It consists, on the one hand, in concentrating every faculty upon each task and duty as it presents itself, and that whether the duty of the moment is hoeing corn or listening to a concert; and on the other, of never permitting the mind to act undirected in idle dreams or anxieties. Always set it a topic. Three things will result which are really one. First, we shall gain enormously in the control of our minds by the will and in the power of concentration; second, we shall do far better work and be far more effective; third, there will drop away from us a great burden of useless fear and anxiety. This training is not easy at first but it has very rich rewards.

There is another stage of concentration which may be called contemplation, though this name is used by many writers for something far higher. Having learned to concentrate our minds on a single line or sequence of thought, we now attempt to hold them upon a single aspect or idea. Let us say, as before, upon the *idea* of duty. We are not to think "Our duties teach us much," "I wonder what duties I have left undone," etc., but simply contemplate the bare abstract notion of duty. Patanjali tells us that one of the aids to this form of concentration is "mutterings." In a certain way this contemplation is not unlike the continued even repetition of the name of the idea, which "muttering" Patanjali puts forth as an adventitious aid. Every notion or idea has innumerable aspects, and its correlations and correspondences run into all manner of directions. It is something to be able to follow one of these lines—without jumping to other things altogether—but is more difficult to hold the mind immovably fixed in contemplation of the central concept. We begin by attempting this practice at stated times, and gradually we are able to perform it with greater ease and for longer periods without undue strain. As we master it, we find that in this state all the ordinary mental processes are quieted and held in

abeyance, as is the activity of the senses. That which remains active is the bare faculty of *awareness*, if one may use a rather technical term. We are aware of the idea or thing we are contemplating, and we are aware of it very keenly—of its unity and essence. We are contemplating, as it were, *all* its properties at their root, so that we find a little of this contemplation of the essence of a thing extraordinarily clarifying to our understanding of its diverse characteristics and ramifications.

This state has also been described as "the merging of all the senses into one sense." Such a statement sounds rather more formidable than it is, for a like result follows every very strong concentration of attention. For example, when deep in a book we probably all have been suddenly aware that someone had entered the room. Our whole attention had been concentrated in our reading; the senses, save for the almost automatic action of the eye, had sunk into abeyance (retired into the central power of awareness of which they are differentiations). We cannot tell whether we *heard* someone enter, or *saw* them, or *felt* a current of air, or how our attention was called to this presence, but suddenly we are *aware* of it. This illustrates the negative aspect of the merging of the senses into the one sense of awareness. It is, however, only the negative aspect, or, perhaps, more properly, the negative correspondence.

The positive aspect of awareness is the sense of unity or of *being*. We actually become the thing we are contemplating, and thus know it as it knows itself. This may be explained and illustrated in many ways. When we concentrate and focus all our mind and senses upon a certain object, our mind, as a plastic material, takes the form characteristic of the object of contemplation, or, in terms of vibration, vibrates in unison with its object. This unity of form or identity of vibration attracts similar force. We see something like this in the force felt around the statue or photograph of a forceful man. The similarity of form has attracted similarity of force. On this principle also the ancient Egyptians placed statues of the dead in their tombs that their force might thereby be conserved. But all this will become clearer as we make

its application to meditation, and indeed it is chiefly in this last connection that contemplation becomes a useful practice.

Having learned from our daily lives some power of concentration together with control and one-pointedness of mind, we can now turn to meditation itself. The effort to meditate is the effort to centre the consciousness in the soul. It is made by concentrating upon the soul. In the daily thought of the ordinary man the soul is a good deal of an abstraction. This he expresses when he says "I *have* a soul." He does not say "I *am* the soul." Indeed, he would hardly be justified in this latter statement, for to him the "I" is the centre of the consciousness, and this he has not yet placed in the soul. He might be, as are most of us, quite willing to grant that all life, his own as well as that of all nature, only existed as expression of soul. But that, he will tell you, is more theoretical than practical. Yet it is precisely to experience this fact as a practical conscious reality that is his task in the preliminaries of meditation.

In the effort to concentrate upon the soul we thus meet our first vagueness of direction. What are we to concentrate upon? Surely not upon some glorified image of our everyday selves separate and apart from other souls. But rather upon the highest abstract ideal that each of us possesses. The form in which this presents itself differs with the individual. To one it may be the law of love, to another the law of justice, to another an inexpressible being or vision of majesty and power. The form matters little. What does matter is that it is his highest conception, his ideal, the nearest approach to the oversoul or to God of which he can conceive. It is upon this he is to concentrate his mind and attention with that one-pointedness which we have described as contemplation.

As he holds this ideal in his mind—and, since it is his ideal, also in his heart—the process we have already outlined takes place. The numerous voices of the mind and senses die down and become still. He is no longer conscious of anything other than this object of his contemplation. The senses are drawn in, automatically and unconsciously, and become merged into the single perceptive power of awareness or intuition. The consciousness of the mind, as we have known it, active and concerned with change, undergoes a subtle

transformation. In its place the consciousness of the heart awakes.

We may be able to make this transformation clearer by considering a very noticeable characteristic of our ordinary mental processes. This characteristic is that of duality and multiplicity. The mind always relates one thing to another, compares and correlates. It is thus by nature many-pointed, and even the correction of its discursive tendency does not alter this fundamental characteristic. On the other hand, the effect of love, or desire, or any act which we associate with the heart is to concentrate the attention and consciousness quite singly and one-pointedly upon the object loved. Stop a minute and call to memory some friend. We have before us some mental picture which we are regarding as we would any physical object. Now *think* about your friend. You will find yourself instantly making comparisons of some sort, either between him and others or between some of his characteristics or occupations. This process of relation will quickly lead to consideration of quite other topics if the mind be untrained in concentration. But even where trained, we see it continually as a rational act. Now, return again to the mental image of your friend. Keeping your attention fixed upon him, yield yourself to the feeling of friendship or *love* you have for him. You will find that in this no element of comparison is present, your whole attention is held fixed, not upon his personal characteristics, but upon the man himself. Indeed, if your love be strong you will quite lose thought even of yourself, feeling only a sense of his presence, which grows keener and more absorbing with your love. After you have withdrawn your attention, you will feel that you have been curiously at one with him, but at the time even this sense of unity is lost in the sense of his presence, for you have lost the thought of yourself.

Thus it is that when the mind is stilled in contemplation the heart can become dynamic and bring us into unison with the object we are contemplating, provided that we actually desire it, and have for it a real, not a sentimental, love. It is this dynamic action of the heart which is next operative in meditation. The mind, though fixed in direction, has become entirely quiescent. In this condition it has

been likened to a placid lake—no longer itself flowing or dynamic but capable of reflecting the still glory of the stars and their mighty movements.

The consciousness is now held by the desire of the heart. This desire is a real and living force. It draws toward us, and us toward the ideal to which it is directed. Gradually we begin to feel the reality of its presence. At first this presence is reflected in the mind, held fixed in contemplation, in that form in which we at the outset phrased or pictured it. But just so far as it is a real and genuine ideal it pertains to the formless soul, and this is the reason that to us it is an ideal, and this is why we have loved it. Therefore, our desire penetrates beyond the form or phrase. Little by little this mental picture grows more attenuated and sinks from sight. There fall upon us a great stillness and silence, formless and wordless, but full of power. When we have entered this stillness we have begun to meditate, for in it is wrapped the soul of each as is the soul of all the world.

Of the consciousness that then ensues I cannot write. It has been described by the prophets and seers, the saints and poets and great artists of the race, in every age. The words and imagery of these are infinitely various, as are the aspects of the soul of man. But in each is the same *feel*, the same subtle rhythm, the same light. So that anyone who has known the illumination will recognize its description, as well in the *Upanishads* as in Wordsworth's verse, in the Hebrew prophets and in the lives of the Christian Saints. Soon we find the silence is not silence but full of a mighty song. Like the deep notes of an organ which we feel before we can hear, so we feel this song before we hear it. It is the song of life, the rhythm of the law, the breath of God. And through our contemplation and our love we become at one with this—one with all that is—part of the great law, part of the moral order.

We sink back from this consciousness into that of our daily lives. But we are never afterward quite the same. The cares and anxieties, the hopes and fears and ambitions of the outer world return to us, but they return with a curious colouring of unreality. We have experienced, even if only for a moment, a life in which

they played no part, and they can never again have quite the same dominion over us, nor can they any longer wholly satisfy us. This is symbolized in the first of the Temptations of the Wilderness, where Jesus replies: "It is written, man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

(*To be continued*)

---

In every age there have been Sages who had mastered the absolute and yet could teach but relative truths. For none yet, born of mortal woman in *our* race, has, or could have given out, the whole and the final truth to another man, for every one of us has to find that (to him) final knowledge *in* himself. As no two minds can be absolutely alike, each has to receive the supreme illumination *through* itself, according to its capacity, and from no *human* light. The greatest adept living can reveal of the Universal Truth only so much as the mind he is impressing it upon can assimilate, and no more. *Tot homines, quot sententiae*—is an immortal truism. The sun is one, but its beams are numberless; and the effects produced are beneficent or maleficent, according to the nature and constitution of the objects they shine upon. Polarity is universal, but the polariser lies in our own consciousness. In proportion as our consciousness is elevated towards absolute truth, so do we men assimilate it more or less absolutely. But man's consciousness again, is only the sunflower of the earth. Longing for the warm ray, the plant can only turn to the sun, and move round and round in following the course of the unreachable luminary: its roots keep it fast to the soil, and half its life is passed in the shadow.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## A GUIDE TO THE THEOSOPHICAL WAY OF LIFE

IN *The Key to Theosophy*, H. P. Blavatsky states that "a true Theosophist must put in practice the loftiest moral ideal, must strive to realize his unity with the whole of humanity, and work ceaselessly for others." This gives us very clear guidelines as to what we must do, but does not tell us precisely how we should go about it. This is left very much to the individual and his or her circumstances and capabilities. This is the beauty of Theosophy; it does not impose hard and fast rules upon its students and allows freedom of thought and practice, albeit within a definite framework. Fortunately that framework is in no way constricting, indeed it is in many ways liberating.

In this modern world, the concept of a "lofty moral ideal" might seem somewhat out of fashion. The idea of personal freedom is stressed widely across the globe, and this implies that the individual should be allowed to do what he or she thinks is right, without any constraints. Freedom of thought and expression is held in high esteem. But how does this fit in with the promotion of the "loftiest moral ideal" that is recommended to the true Theosophist? Can a person be allowed total freedom and still live by high moral standards?

The whole question can be resolved by an examination of the workings of the human mind and its focus of attention. The battleground is in the mind and nowhere else. To return to *The Key to Theosophy*, we are given a view of the septenary nature of man in tabulated form (Section VI, p. 90, Indian ed.), and "Manas" has this explanatory note:

The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether Manas gravitates more downward to Kama rupa, the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to *Buddhi*, the Spiritual *Ego*. In the latter case, the higher consciousness of the individual Spiritual aspirations of *mind* (Manas), assimilating *Buddhi*, are absorbed by it and form the *Ego*, which goes into Devachanic bliss.

So it is obvious that in a general sense the gravitation of the mind depends very much upon its orientation resulting from education and the conditioning influences of society. Nowadays these are very much geared towards material progress, and so the "natural" inclination of the mind is towards selfishness. "Freedom" then in this sense means abandoning all kinds of restraints and allowing the overpowering influence of the modern world to drag the mind downward to Kama. It is a certainty that unless we exercise the Spiritual Will and consciously resist the pull of materiality we shall be drowned in the vast ocean of carnality and lose sight of our True Self. Therefore modern society has no idea what is really meant by "freedom," and what it considers as freedom is in fact the opposite. It is giving oneself over to the lower passions and emotions that is widely regarded as "free expression," and this leads to countless psychological problems and the physical ailments that eventually proceed from these. The only answer to all these problems is a gradual centring of the consciousness on the Spiritual Self and a refusal to be dominated by the pull of the senses which try to beguile us and lead us away from true awareness.

To realize our unity with the whole of humanity is not as simple as it might at first appear. In fact one of the main objects of Theosophy is to educate us in this fact of our non-separateness from all other living things. There is one consciousness throughout the Universe that expresses itself in many forms of increasing complexity, and it is the refining of these forms that we call evolution. This refinement is as a result of "natural impulse" in the elemental, mineral, plant and animal kingdoms, but when the human state is reached and self-consciousness developed, we have it in our power to refine our own vehicles by the self-induced and self-devised methods mentioned in *The Secret Doctrine*.

In the same way that all people share the same basic physical features, but no two persons are exactly the same, so it is with all the other human principles. Everyone has a mind, but no two minds are exactly the same. It is only when we reach the level of the *Atman* or Spirit that we find a common ground and, as said earlier, it is by gearing the whole of our lives towards a realization of the Higher

Self that we can ever hope to succeed in our quest to understand true Theosophy. We may read until our brains grow weary, but if we do not long for the Self within, we shall only feed the memory and increase the "mind-forged manacles" that keep us bound to earth. The battle is always in the mind and we are striving to nullify the conceptualizations of the lower self that find expression in the written and spoken word. The Truth lies beyond any formulations and is as real and close to us as our own breathing. This is the secret of Unity.

Working ceaselessly for others is the crux of the whole Theosophical life, but it is easy for this ideal to become stereotyped. We are so accustomed to read about self-sacrifice and to give lip-service to it that it is in danger of becoming boring to us. It is often a case of "familiarity breeds contempt." We read about the altruistic life in the same way as we read about countless other things that require only the exercise of the memory. Indeed many of us approach Theosophy in the same way. The problem is how to make it practical—a living force in our lives; how to take it from the realm of the metaphysical and make it the sole aim of our efforts. This is effected by making our lives spiritually orientated and accepting nothing less than a total attunement to the Spirit within. Only this can save us and give us the wisdom to know exactly what to do as regards the helping of humanity. Material improvements may be useful, but ultimately they achieve nothing. Unless men and women are educated spiritually and made aware of their divine origins, they will never permanently escape the hold of the personal self.

We cannot "put new wine into old bottles," for this creates many problems. Modern politics attempts to change the world through legislation and coercion. This is a blatant insult to the beauty and strength of the human Spirit. It is the "blind leading the blind," and leading them towards a deep crevasse. The only concern is with man's new "god"—money. Once again Jesus is ignored when he states that we cannot serve "God and Mammon." In a similar way people in general prefer the doctrine of "an eye for an eye" to the wise words of Jesus who advises us to love our

enemies and bless those who curse us! To those who are willing to look a little deeper than the surface, it is encouraging to discover that at least some *are* trying to live the life, and as long as they do so, all is not lost, no matter how dark things might seem at the moment.

To these sincere students of true Theosophy the helping of Humanity is paramount in their lives. They are finding ways to put Theosophical teachings into practice, intelligently, for the good of all. They are trying to realize the Oneness of all things and the fact that separateness is an illusion. Their lives are devoted to understanding the real meaning of "Kama" as "the first conscious, *all embracing desire* for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE, as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE." (*The Theosophical Glossary: "Kamadeva"*)

The desire of true aspirants is to realize this active, potent force rather than spend their lives in the mere study and contemplation of concepts and ideas. They realize that such a living power can be harnessed and used for the general good, as countless teachers throughout the world have done in the past, and as many are doing now. If they can use their knowledge "to sweeter make the Ocean's bitter waves—that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men," then they will feel that their lives at least have been worthwhile and that they are striving to follow in the footsteps of those who form the Guardian Wall that protects Humanity from still worse evils than the ones that surround us at the moment. We are never alone and we should be aware that the real Teacher is the Higher Self, and It will never desert us, no matter how difficult life becomes. Let us draw strength from that realization!

---

NOTHING that actually occurs is of the smallest importance.

—OSCAR WILDE

## THE THREE STAGES

DEVOTION, Gratitude, Sacrifice go together and make a triad; but there is a difference between the three and they mark stages in evolution.

What is devotion? It is a feeling, often instinctual in the human being, and does not in many cases rely on thought. Mother-love in the human is almost as instinctual as in the animal. In humans, instinct does not function as unhindered as in the animals, for men and women can think, though they do not always think aright. What they have lost in instinct they have to gain by knowledge. Along this line we can see why even mother-love is selfish unless *every* child appears as precious to a mother as her own.

What is gratitude? Gratitude, according to the dictionary meaning, is recognition of benefits received. It, therefore, has its seat in the mind. It is a "return" for benefits received, and this implies a conscious awareness. It is distinct from devotion in that it can be felt and even expressed without the receiver of the benefit reaching the point of being devoted to the giver. Recognition and return have very often little to do with feeling. But gratitude has to become a heart quality as well as a thought quality. Hence we are told that "gratitude does more good to the man who feels it, than to him for whom it is felt" (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 242). A further step leads to devotion. Without this, gratitude sometimes turns to aversion, for the sense of being under an obligation to another might breed lack of self-respect and lead to dislike towards the person from whom we have received the benefit. Therefore, "Neither a borrower nor a lender be: for loan oft loses both itself and friend, and borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry."

It is when we come to sacrifice that the solution is found, for we are reaching practical intuition, which is knowledge and understanding *in action*. Words do not convey true love; they are spoken and forgotten. Feelings change with time. Gratitude fades when the memory of the benefit fades. To keep feeling and thought alive, they need to be turned into action. The devotion of the mother for her offspring has to be fed by sacrifice. The mother has to make a

conscious sacrifice of her comfort for her child. Why? Is she not, or ought she not to be, grateful to Karma for the "gift" of the child? Should she not be grateful to have the opportunity to help the child, to further another soul on its way? Does she not realize that the child *is a part of herself*? Does she realize that she has lost a part of herself as an isolated unit in order to become part of the memory of Nature, in another?

We do not sufficiently think that immortality is the memory of Nature. What is Devachan but memory? What makes us self-conscious beings but the capacity to remember yesterday and to look ahead to tomorrow? To give of oneself in devotion, gratitude, sacrifice, is to ensure immortality for this very reason. The poor, lonely souls, who live their own lives, unloved and unloving, wrapped in their misery or in their self-conceit, so that those near them are glad to forget them when not in their presence—those are the ones who leave no mark behind them; Nature has no memory of them when they die.

There is one aspect of the memory of Nature which is terrible, that of hatred, for if thought can keep alive the good and the lovely, so can it the evil and the hateful. Love and hate are the two immortal feelings, we are told. But hatred is in itself black and has to be wiped out from the memory of Nature.

We have it within our power to fill the Memory of Nature with devotion, gratitude, sacrifice, losing our wishes and selfishness and isolation in the universality of the great final Memory of Nature which is Harmony, Equilibrium, Bliss.

---

OUR normal waking consciousness, rational consciousness as we call it, is but one special type of consciousness, whilst all about it, parted from it by the filmiest of screens, there lie potential forms of consciousness entirely different.

—WILLIAM JAMES

## EVALUATING OUR CIRCUMSTANCES

A PROPER evaluation of our circumstances, our assets and our liabilities, our possibilities and our limitations, our possessions and our responsibilities under Karma, is incumbent on us as serious students of Theosophy. It is an aspect of self-examination that should not be overlooked, but our attitude in undertaking it is important for others as well as for ourselves.

It is very easy to mistake assets for liabilities and *vice versa* in evaluating our circumstances other than material poverty or wealth, to equate prosperity and freedom from difficulties with success and happiness, and to associate challenging situations and difficult surroundings with misfortune. And yet H.P.B. tells us that the Occultists "recognize in every pain and suffering but the necessary pangs of incessant procreation: a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility," and she adds:

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death? (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 475)

Is it surprising, then, that the aspirant is warned on the first page of *Light on the Path* to "kill out desire of comfort"? How can divine love and charity for those who suffer and those who mourn and for the Great Orphan, Humanity, find room in our hearts as long as personal desires are strong and all our tears are only for ourselves?

When we sustain a material loss or have a painful accident, we are full of self-pity. Though we may counsel others to bear such Karmic precipitations with equanimity, only when a greater sorrow comes, like the loss of a loved one, do we realize how petty was the occasion for that former sadness. And if we recognize, as students of Theosophy should be able to do, that the separation from the one we love is only apparent and is not felt as a sorrow by the departed

one, who has his dear ones ever present in his thought in *Devachan*, then only can we realize that even our heartfelt grief was for ourselves, for our own loneliness and sense of loss, and is therefore selfish.

Sorrow and pain are often hard to bear, but for many of us it is easier to rise above these to a measure of peace and equanimity than to stand ease, comfort and prosperity without pluming ourselves on them or coming to depend on creature comforts in a measure unbecoming to ourselves as Souls.

A more serious effect of ease and plenty—one happily by no means universal—is to make a person indifferent to others' woes. The negative definition of a Theosophist is there to warn us:

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no theosophist. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*, p. 12)

*The Voice of the Silence* enjoins positively:

Let thy Soul lend its ear to every cry of pain like as the lotus bares its heart to drink the morning sun.

Let not the fierce Sun dry one tear of pain before thyself hast wiped it from the sufferer's eye.

How often is the tear of pain so much as noticed by the complacent and self-centred one?

We need to ponder also on this other verse from the same priceless little book:

Ere thou canst settle in Dhyana-Marga and call it thine, thy Soul has to become as the ripe mango fruit: as soft and sweet as its bright golden pulp for others' woes, as hard as that fruit's stone for thine own throes and sorrows, O Conqueror of Weal and Woe.

To how many does not the conquest of woe prove easier than the

conquering of weal, with its insidious temptations to self-centredness? For such, *The Voice of the Silence* has a challenge shattering complacency and shaking awake the conscience lulled to somnolence by comfort:

Compassion speaks and saith: "Can there be bliss when all that lives must suffer? Shalt thou be saved and hear the whole world cry?"

Those words were uttered to the Bodhisattva, who has fought the good fight and conquered and has the prize within his reach, but who renounces the Nirvana he has earned to stay with mankind and watch over and protect it, "unthanked and unperceived by men."

Even for ourselves there is a higher prosperity than that of material wealth which lays, moreover, on those who enjoy it, an obligation even more serious than that upon the person of means. Should we not, as "fortune's favoured soldiers," enjoying the inestimable privilege and inspiration of acquaintance with the teachings of genuine Theosophy, feel it our responsibility to share these and the help they give, to the extent of our ability and strength, with those who know them not? All around us people are groping in darkness, and the light is so near!

The earnest Irish Theosophist "AE" (George William Russell) wrote in his inspiring pamphlet, *The Hero in Man*:

Once the soul has attained to any possession like love, or persistent will, or faith, or a power of thought, it comes into spiritual contact with others who are struggling for these very powers. The attainment of any of these means that the soul is able to absorb and radiate some of the diviner elements of being. The soul may or may not be aware of the position it is placed in or its new duties, but yet that Living Light, having found a way into the being of any one person, does not rest there, but sends its rays and extends its influence on and on to illumine the darkness of another nature. So it comes that there are ties which bind us to people other than those whom we meet in our everyday life. I think they are most real ties, most important to understand, for if we let our lamp go out, some far away who had reached out in the dark and felt a steady will, a persistent hope,

a compassionate love, may reach out once again in an hour of need, and finding no support may give way and fold the hands in despair. Often we allow gloom to overcome us and so hinder the bright rays in their passage; but would we do it so often if we thought that perhaps a sadness which besets us, we do not know why, was caused by someone drawing nigh to us for comfort, whom our lethargy might make feel still more his helplessness, while our courage, our faith, might cause "our light to shine in some other heart which as yet has no light of its own"?

In the same pamphlet he cited what he described as "that most noble of all meditations ordained by the Buddha":

He lets his mind pervade one quarter of the world with thoughts of Love, and so the second, and so the third, and so the fourth. And thus the whole wide world, above, below, around, and everywhere, does he continue to pervade with heart of Love far-reaching, grown great and beyond measure.

What Jasper Niemand wrote in comment on Mr. Judge's Letter VII in *Letters That Have Helped Me* bears directly on this question of the responsibility of each of us for the control of thought. In it she wrote:

The mind energizes and impels us to fresh action. The impulse lies within, in germ, and may be ripened by interior or exterior suggestion. Can we, then, be too careful to guard the ground of the mind, to keep close watch over our thoughts? These thoughts are dynamic. Each one as it leaves the mind has a *vis viva* of its own, proportionate to the intensity with which it was propelled. As the force or work done, of a moving body, is proportionate to the square of its velocity, so we may say that the force of thoughts is to be measured by the square or quadrupled power of their spirituality, so greatly do these finer forces increase by activity. The spiritual force, being impersonal, fluidic, not bound to any constricting centre, acts with unimaginable swiftness. A thought, on its departure from the mind, is said to associate itself with an elemental; it is attracted wherever there is a similar vibration, or, let us say, a suitable soil, just as the winged thistle-seed floats off and sows itself in this spot and not in that, in the soil of its natural selection. Thus

the man of virtue, by admitting a material or sensual thought into his mind, even though he expel it, sends it forth to swell the evil impulses of the man of vice from whom he imagines himself separated by a wide gulf, and to whom he may have just given a fresh impulse to sin. Many men are like sponges, porous and bibulous, ready to suck up every element of the order preferred by their nature. We all have more or less of this quality: we attract what we love, and we may derive a greater strength from the vitality of thoughts infused from without than from those self-reproduced within us at a time when our nervous vitality is exhausted. It is a solemn thought, this, of our responsibility for the impulse of another. We live in one another, and our widely different deeds have often a common source. The occultist cannot go far upon his way without realizing to what great extent he is "his brother's keeper." Our affinities are ourselves, in whatever ground they may live and ripen.

Shall we not do well to take to heart the words addressed by Madame Blavatsky to the 1891 Convention of the American Theosophists, just over three weeks before her death?

In your hands, brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century; and great as is the trust, so great is also the responsibility.

---

THE real point of issue is *the divine nature in man*. The real basis of work is to impress this on the minds of those who come. In Theosophy we have this basis. A right philosophy is desperately needed by the world. Without this, strength and special faculties are useless because they are misapplied. Theosophy is not merely words. It is Life, and this includes all things in life and all the planes of living. To have Brotherhood among the many, it is first necessary to realize brotherhood among the few, and the basis of brotherhood is the divinity inherent in all men.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Is the resurrection of Jesus fact or fiction? The "Risen Christ" is the centre of the Christian faith, yet has remained a mystery through the centuries and is now the subject of a fierce debate among scholars. Kenneth L. Woodward writes in *Newsweek* (April 8, 1996):

Now as before, Jesus lives in controversy....Most Christians still believe in the Risen Jesus. But there is a range of opinion on what the Resurrection means....Even the most orthodox Scripture scholars recognize that the brief, almost enigmatic accounts of Jesus' resurrection and its aftermath are fraught with special problems for the historian. For one thing, there were no witnesses to the Resurrection....For another, the post-resurrection stories contain a variety of factual discrepancies about the main characters, places, times and the messages attributed to the Risen Jesus....

On one point scholars are unanimous: resurrection does not mean the resuscitation of a corpse. It is not as if "the soul of Jesus left his body and then returned to it like someone going out of the house at night and coming back in the morning," says Father Gerald O'Collins, a specialist on the Resurrection at the Jesuits' Gregorian University in Rome....

After 150 years of scholarly search, there are signs that the quest for the "historical" Jesus has reached a dead end. There has been no new data on the person of Jesus since the Gospels were written. And though scholars continue to piece together information from archaeology and other disciplines, these are valuable chiefly for fashioning a better understanding of Christian origins and how the Gospels were composed....Unfortunately, apart from what is found in Scripture, there is little that one can say about the identity of Jesus. Like Socrates, Jesus is inscribed in the words of those who wrote about him. And all of them proclaimed his Resurrection from the dead.

It goes without saying that the resurrection of a really dead body is an impossibility in Nature, and therefore the Risen Christ must have another interpretation than the dead-letter one. In the

Egyptian Mysteries was enacted the same rite of Death for the neophyte (or the suffering *Chrestos* on his trial), and of his spiritual Resurrection (or new birth by Regeneration)—for this was a universally adopted rite.

Christ is to be sought neither in the wilderness nor "in the inner chambers," nor in the sanctuary of any temple or church built by man; for Christ—the true esoteric SAVIOUR—*is no man*, but the DIVINE PRINCIPLE in every human being. He who strives to resurrect the Spirit *crucified in him by his own terrestrial passions*, and buried deep in the "sepulchre" of his sinful flesh; he who has the strength to roll back *the stone of matter* from the door of his own *inner* sanctuary, he *has the risen Christ in him*.

We may learn from the Gospel *according to Luke*, that the "worthy" were those who had been initiated into the mysteries of the Gnosis, and who were "accounted worthy" to attain that "resurrection from the dead" *in this life*... "those who knew that they could die no more, being equal to the angels as sons of God and sons of the Resurrection." In other words, they were the great adepts *of whatever religion*; and the words apply to all those who, without being initiates, strive and succeed, through personal efforts to *live the life* and to attain the naturally ensuing spiritual illumination in blending their personality—the "Son"—with the "Father," their individual divine Spirit, *the God within* them. This "resurrection" can never be monopolized by the Christians, but is the spiritual birth-right of every human being endowed with soul and spirit, whatever his religion may be. Such individual is a *Christ-man*. On the other hand, those who choose to ignore the Christ (principle) within themselves, must die *unregenerate heathens*—baptism, sacraments, lip-prayers, and belief in dogmas notwithstanding. (H.P.B. in "The Esoteric Character of the Gospels")

---

Previous knowledge of music and geometry was obligatory in the school of Pythagoras. Music, the Pythagoreans believed, was nothing less than number made audible. A modern-day Pythagorean, Edward Rothstein, in his book *Emblems of Mind: The Inner*

*Life of Music and Mathematics*, sets out to reveal the "profound correspondences" between these two enterprises.

Jim Holt's article, "What Is Music? Math, with Feeling" (*Span*, January 1996), comments upon these "two aspects of the same Platonic pursuit of truth and beauty." What we mainly hear in music is feeling, he writes:

How music manages to *sound* the way emotions *feel*—is a conundrum that has withstood a couple of centuries of fevered theorizing.... Music does model the tensions and resolutions of our emotional life, Rothstein concedes, although the methods by which it does so are "puzzling." The abstract structures of mathematics do not bear a similar affective freight; as Rothstein notes, no one has ever encountered an "angry" theorem or a "sad" proof. Yet these structures possess a reciprocal power, and one that to a scientist is just as mysterious: They appear to govern the essential workings of the cosmos. God, it seems, is a mathematician.

So the symmetry is nearly complete. Music brings to light hidden patterns in our inner, sentient lives, while mathematics does the same for the outer, physical world. Each, in building ever grander and more coherent unities out of abstract details, aims at formal beauty. Each, by encompassing awesome infinities, evokes the sublime. These correspondences make for a pretty enough vision, but Rothstein goes further. He gives the whole thing a Platonic gilding. Breathing new life into the slightly hackneyed allegory of the cave, he presents music and mathematics as paradigms of the mind's ascent from the shadowy world of appearances to the luminous one of intellectual essences. Both are "emblems of mind," he submits, borrowing the figure from Wordsworth; they serve as "a model for our coming to *know* at all."

Of all numbers, it is the number seven, or the heptagon, that Pythagoras considered to be the perfect number, and on which he composed his doctrine of Harmony and Music of the Spheres. "Being under the rule of seven sacred planets, the doctrine of the Spheres shows, from Lemuria to Pythagoras, the seven great

powers of terrestrial and sublunary nature, as well as the seven great Forces of the Universe, proceeding and evolving in seven tones, which are the seven notes of the musical scale." (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 602)

Pythagoras esteemed the Deity (the Logos) to be the *centre of unity* and "Source of Harmony." We say this Deity was the *Logos*, not the MONAD that dwelleth in Solitude and Silence, because Pythagoras taught that UNITY being indivisible is *no number*. And this is also why it was required of the candidate, who applied for admittance into his school, that he should have already studied as a preliminary step, the Sciences of Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry and *Music*, held as the four divisions of Mathematics. Again, this explains why the Pythagoreans asserted that the doctrine of Numbers—the chief of all in Esotericism—had been revealed to man by the celestial deities; that the world had been called forth out of Chaos by Sound or Harmony, and constructed according to the principles of musical proportion; that the seven planets which rule the destiny of mortals have a harmonious motion "and intervals corresponding to musical diastemes, rendering various sounds, so perfectly consonant, that they produce the sweetest melody, which is inaudible to us, only by reason of the greatness of the sound, which our ears are incapable of receiving." (*Censorinus.*) (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 433)

---

Since hoary antiquity, the tree has been known to possess a special significance as an archetypal symbol. Tree worship was once a universal custom, and in some traditions it is practised to this day, although its true meaning is now all but lost. In these days when nature conservation has become an environmental necessity, interest in the tree and what it stands for has once again revived.

In *WWF India Quarterly* (October-December 1995), published by the World Wide Fund for Nature-India, Santosh Babu writes under the title "The Tao of a Tree":

How many of us see the complexities and totality of nature

or trees in divided or fragmented forms! A morphologist talks about the classification of trees; cytology tells us about cell structure; genetics, about genes. Divide and learn has been the practice in the field of modern science, like divide and rule has been in modern politics. But, consider a tree. Almost all the materials and energy needed to make it grow are in continuous exchange with the surrounding environment. Earth, air, water and sunlight are in constant interplay in sustaining its existence. Nutrients from a dead bird lying by its roots will begin their journey through the tree next summer; the leaves shed in the autumn will help nourish the earth next spring....

Trees have played an integral role in the psyche of human beings; in their day-to-day life, their myths, beliefs, rituals, modes of worship, and in their medical practices....The various uses of trees and their importance were known to the people centuries ago when our relationship with nature was more organic. They could never detach trees or nature from their lives.

Our understanding of trees acquires more dimensions than just the terms xylem, phloem and photosynthesis. It is in these ways that we will be able to consider trees as a part of our lives; as an integral part of the ecosystem. John See, author of the book *Thinking like a Mountain*, says, "I am that part of the rainforest protecting myself. I am that part of the rainforest recently emerged into thinking." What a relief then! Thousands of years of imagined separation are over and we begin to recall our true nature. Let us now come out from this imagined separation and consider this ecosystem as one unit.

The important role played by trees in our ecosystem is beyond question. But every kingdom of Nature, and every form in every Kingdom, has not only its outward and ordinary meaning but also an occult one, and the tree is a graphic instance of this. The Law of Correspondence and Analogy is a help in comprehending the higher abstraction behind concrete images. "Tree of Life" and "Tree of Knowledge" are common expressions even today. A great deal of information is given in *The Secret Doctrine* about the tree symbol, which has "never been so degraded by antiquity as it is now, in this our age of the breaking of idols, not for truth's sake, but

to glorify the more gross matter." (I, 405)

The note on the "Trees of Life" in *The Theosophical Glossary* epitomizes the rich symbolism of trees with these words: "A large volume might be written upon these sacred trees of antiquity, the reverence for some of which has survived to this day, without exhausting the subject."

---

Evidence continues to pile up against pesticides, so commonly used in farms as well as in households. An extensive study now finds that many popular pesticides appear capable of reducing the body's ability to fight infection. Pesticides "could be a hidden killer," especially in developing countries "where infections are a leading cause of death," says Robert Repetto, vice-president of the Washington, D.C.-based World Resources Institute (WRI) and a coauthor of the new report. (*Science News*, March 9, 1996)

Repetto and his colleagues surveyed a broad range of scientific studies on the immunotoxicity of widely used pesticides, such as DDT, malathion and aldicarb. The studies tested pesticide-induced changes in both animal and human immunity. WRI-commissioned scientists in the former Soviet Union found that water, soil, and many of the local crops in areas where pesticides had been used carried residues exceeding "acceptable standards." Children living in such areas experienced elevated rates of acute respiratory diseases (including pneumonia), skin disease, ear infections, tuberculosis, and dental caries. Adults also suffered from unusually high rates of infection.

Other reports, too, have linked pesticides to immune-system problems. Former U.S. Food and Drug Commissioner, Donald Kennedy, says, "I don't think the extent of this problem had been realized before—by anybody."

No less disturbing are other detrimental effects of upsetting the balance of nature. This seems to be more and more noticeable and has induced those who have the general benefit in view to seek other methods of dealing with "pests."

---