

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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W. Q. J.

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O hero of the iron age,
Upon thy grave we will not weep,
Nor yet consume away in rage
For thee and thy untimely sleep.
Our hearts a burning silence keep.

O martyr, in these iron days
One fate was sure for soul like thine:
Well you foreknew but went your ways.
The crucifixion is the sign,
The meed of all the kingly line.

We may not mourn — though such a night
Has fallen on our earthy spheres
Bereft of love and truth and light
As never since the dawn of years; —
For tears give birth alone to tears.

One wreath upon thy grave we lay
(The silence of our bitter thought,
Words that would scorch their hearts of clay),
And turn to learn what thou hast taught,
To shape our lives as thine was wrought.

ABOUT 9 a.m. on Saturday, the 21st of last month, our beloved leader
left us. As we go to press no details are to hand. Meantime we cannot
let this issue appear without a few words from one or two who knew
that heart, thought by many to be “something else.”—ED. [*The Irish
Theosophist*]

The claim of William Q. Judge upon us is impersonal and universal, for it is the claim of work, and of work only.

Not the man then, but his work. The Work was his ideal. He valued men and women only by their work and the spirit in which it was done; he held right thought to be the best work of all; he worked with anyone who was wishful or willing to do work in any real sense, whether such persons were enemies or friends.

Slowly, under the moulding touch of time and suffering, his character evolved before the eyes of the community whose estimate is the estimate of twenty years' experience and is not to be shaken. If there be little said about him as an occultist, it is because such men, in such relations, leave no visible, material traces. Of them it may be said, in the language of paradox: They are known to be what they are because they are unknown; they are recognized because they are misunderstood; they are honoured in the inner world because they are dishonoured in the outer world; they have suffered that other men may rejoice; hatred is their portion because they have loved much; sorrow is their lot until that day when the whole world shall rejoice. Such men, in their unrecorded deeds, wear the likeness of the rootless Root, the unevolved Evolver, in the sense that, being themselves obscure, they are the source of greatness in others. Themselves silent, they are the cause of eloquence in others. Theirs are the thoughts which spur others to great deeds. Theirs is the quietness which overcomes everything, just as water, the softest thing, overcomes all hardness. They, and they alone, come into this world of ours with one idea, one ideal, which they carry out along a hundred lines with unwavering purpose, never pausing, never resting, never changing, knowing no alteration of mind, no lesser deity than the One Self, no other service than the service of that Self hidden in humanity. Death itself cannot stay them; the blissful life of the spheres cannot give them pause; they return; they take again the fetters of the body, and for what? For what end? Only for this: that they may work, work, and serve the Self eternal.

J.

It is with no feeling of sadness that I think of this withdrawal. He would not have wished for that. But with a faltering hand I try to express one of many incommunicable thoughts about the hero who has departed. Long before I met him, before even written words of his had been read, his name like an incantation stirred and summoned forth some secret spiritual impulse in my heart. It was no surface tie which

bound us to him. No one ever tried less than he to gain from men that adherence which comes from impressive manner. I hardly thought what he was while he spoke; but on departing I found my heart, wiser than my brain, had given itself away to him; an inner exaltation lasting for months witnessed his power. It was in that memorable convention in London two years ago that I first glimpsed his real greatness. As he sat there quietly, one among many, not speaking a word, I was overcome by a sense of spiritual dilation, of unconquerable will about him, and that one figure with the grey head became all the room to me. Shall I not say the truth I think? Here was a hero out of the remote, antique, giant ages come among us, wearing but on the surface the vesture of our little day. We, too, came out of that past, but in forgetfulness; he with memory and power soon regained. To him and to one other we owe an unspeakable gratitude for faith and hope and knowledge born again. We may say now, using words of his early years: "Even in hell I lift up my eyes to those who are beyond me and do not deny them." Ah, hero, we know you would have stayed with us if it were possible; but fires have been kindled that shall not soon fade, fires that shall be bright when you again return. I feel no sadness, knowing there are no farewells in the True: to whosoever has touched on that real being there is comradeship with all the great and wise of time. That he will again return we need not doubt. His ideals were those which are attained only by the Saviours and Deliverers of nations. When or where he may appear I know not, but I foresee the coming when our need invokes him. Light of the future æons, I hail, I hail to thee!

Æ

"It is a cry of the soul," were the words in which he summed up the meaning and purpose of the theosophical movement when initiating us in 1888. There was nothing of the maudlin sentimentalist about him. Clear, simple and powerful are all his utterances, for the strong light of soul shone through all he did and said. One more has been added to the long list of the world's crucified saviours. It is almost like presumption to essay an appreciation in words of great souls like these. We cannot measure, weigh, or sound their depths. How inadequate, then, any attempt of the kind! We can but point to the work achieved even in these few years and realize dimly that we have entertained angels unawares; that the Great Ones of the earth have been among us and we knew them not.

F.J.D.

A LETTER FROM W. Q. JUDGE

[The following is a copy of a typewritten letter on official T.S. paper, and signed by William Q. Judge. It was printed in *The Theosophical Forum* for July 1935.—EDS.]

THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY, AMERICAN SECTION
GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

Headquarters, 144 Madison Avenue
New York, March 8, 1894.

Dear Friends:

I have your letter of the 5th of March enclosing a draft for \$5 for the Society, which is received with many thanks.

There are a great many ways to prove different things, and some things cannot be proved in the modern way of objective proof or the testimony of mere witnesses. Mathematics, for instance, in their final and important truths cannot be proved at all. They are accepted in so far as the axioms are concerned. The atom of science, for instance, is an accepted belief although it is utterly unprovable in the ordinary way; the proof coming from the necessity of such a thing as an atom. So it is with a great many other things. If one does not believe he has a soul, nobody can prove it, for the soul never was seen and never can be. The doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation are provable, it seems to me, by the facts and necessities of life and the human soul. If we are souls, then Reincarnation is absolutely necessary. Karma is absolutely necessary, or else this world is a vast mass of chance which no one can admit. Hence these doctrines you have to admit as necessities. In the same way all the other doctrines prove themselves through consciousness, through experience, through the necessities of life. As they are perhaps new doctrines to you, it is necessary for you to have patience and wait until your mind has had sufficient length of time to dwell on them and think them over so as to destroy your erroneous ideas, and then you will see more clearly.

I could not tell you of any particular course to develop the inner faculties, and permit me to say that if I knew of such a course I would be very reluctant to tell it because it is full of danger. It is necessary first to understand philosophy, to understand yourself so far as it can be understood on this plane; to discipline one's self; to develop virtue, attention, fortitude; then one is prepared to go further. That spiritual inner faculties exist is easily demonstrated by reason of their existence in individuals in the race, and secondly from their necessity. The best

advice I can give you is to continue studying, but at the same time to add to it actual practice in the way of doing as much work as you can for other people, without at all intimating that you do not do so now. By working for other people we put into practice the inner beliefs which rest upon unity, we develop certain faculties in our nature, we increase our spirituality; for the first and most important step in the cultivation of spiritual faculties is the practice of good thought, good act, and constant endeavour for other people. By following this you will find yourself growing from within more and more, which is what you want, for all light that comes from without is deceptive and when it is gone leaves just what you have yourself. Consequently you should endeavour to increase the light within. You will find many suggestions along the line of your inquiry in a little book called *Letters That Have Helped Me* which I advise you to read. Referring to Patanjali's Aphorisms which you are reading, you must perceive in that all practice is useless which is not co-extensive with altruistic life and that denominated by him as charity, benevolence, and other truths, as well as with discipline and dispassion. I am

Sincerely yours,

WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

OUR PHILOSOPHY of life is one grand whole, every part necessary and fitting into every other part. Every one of its doctrines can and must be carried to its ultimate conclusion. Its ethical application must proceed similarly. If it conflict with old opinions those must be cast off. It can never conflict with true morality. But it will with many views touching our dealings with one another. The spirit of Theosophy must be sought for; a sincere application of its principles to life and act should be made. Thus mechanical Theosophy, which inevitably leads — as in many cases it already has — to a negation of brotherhood, will be impossible, and instead there will be a living, actual Theosophy.

—W. Q. JUDGE

SCIENCE

SOME NEW FIELDS FOR RESEARCH

TODAY, as in the early days of the Movement, there are people who think that Theosophy would have a better chance of attracting the leading thinkers of the age if it could impart knowledge which would permit science to carry its researches into the realms of astral light and *akasha*, which are still *terra incognita* to modern men of learning. Says the modern man: Science has probed the mysteries of the atom. If *The Secret Doctrine* hints at more subtle and therefore more powerful forces (the Keely motor is a good example) why could not the Adepts reveal the secrets of these forces to at least a few of our scientists and so usher in an era of achievement and progress?

On a superficial consideration and to the average intellect, the point seems to be well taken. The greater the advance in knowledge, the more advanced is the civilization. To hold back knowledge is therefore contrary to all accepted ideas of progression. Those who hold back knowledge are doing a disservice to humanity, and the sooner they could be made to think differently, the better it would be for all concerned. Such is the paucity of thinking of the age that it considers the arguments irrefutable. To it, science has proved its case and justified its stand. In so arguing, the intellectual man forgets that he is trying to lay down the law to persons immensely wiser than himself. If these high and exalted beings know all that is known or can be known, then it must follow that when they refuse to divulge knowledge, they have weighty reasons for the reticence. Can we, at our lower levels of understanding, find out the reasons why knowledge of a certain nature must always remain hidden from large masses of men? It is submitted that with a little effort at humility we can come across indications which if pursued will lead us to a deeper understanding of the problem.

That knowledge is power is a truism, which in our century does not require elaborate proofs before acceptance. Added knowledge, therefore, always implies the release of added power. The scientists will agree thus far with the argument. Whether he is sufficiently equipped morally and mentally to take the argument further to its logical conclusion is a moot question, the answer to which depends on the man's innate honesty and clarity of vision. The question which really demands an answer is: What in all honesty is the motive behind the urge to get increased knowledge and therefore more and more power? The answer to this

must be by the man to his own self and depends upon the acceptance of certain truths which are basic and which pertain to the effects produced by human motives on the realm of force in all its manifold aspects.

Man lives in an ocean of energy. It is within him and also without him, surrounding him on all sides. It therefore follows that the slightest movement of body, mind and soul continuously sends ripples through that ocean and so modifies it. Once that this proposition is accepted, it becomes clear that man but borrows energy from Nature and turns it to his own use, thus giving it the colouring of his motive; and since he cannot retain it (as air in breathing) he sends it back to the ocean charged with a constructive or a destructive potentiality. Therefore, a duty exists (in fact it is essential to his survival) that he turn not the energy which he borrows for a larger or shorter moment against Nature and Nature's purposes. Man is therefore expected to use this energy which he borrows as a sacred trust for the ultimate, the beneficent goodness which can result in no other way than by helping Nature and working on with her. Any other usage is a betrayal of that trust and becomes a pilferage for which sooner or later accounts will have to be settled. This is so not merely on ethical grounds or on mere surmise. Nature is sentient. Intelligence resides in each atom and point in space. It has its own laws and its own policemen and an ideal machinery which weighs motives and which renders good for good and for evil, justice.

It is this proposition — to some a fact in Nature — which the men of science, and those touched by their thinking, refute. Stumbling across this aspect of Nature, which holds the scales of justice even, learned men have shied away from accepting its presence and have therefore attributed Nature's decrees to providence, chance, god, the influence of the stars or the accidental concurrence of events. Men in the mass — and this includes the so-called learned — have yet to discover that ethics are formulated for the governance of man's conduct and are but the formulation of laws which if followed keep the actions of man in harmony with the plan and the pattern according to which Nature works out its own duty for the particular period of evolution. Since Nature does not deviate from its set purpose at any time, it but follows that all contrary efforts must, in time, stand crushed when pitted against Nature's overwhelming force with its unified, irresistible momentum. Any effort at the use of Nature's finer forces, any desire to wrest from Nature its secrets, stands condemned if in the mind of the person using the force or making the experiment there lurks even

the germ of a desire to use the power or the knowledge against the prevailing trend of Nature's onward impulse.

Further, the human intelligence that has discovered that power or tapped that knowledge dare not disclose it to others in whose hands it can become a spoliating force with the taint of evil impressed on it. The knowledge is not man's to take, nor his to give, unless he makes his obeisance to Nature and recognizes its suzerainty. If he violates his trust, he has to make the fullest, the most complete reparation; and no litanies, no prayers by music, no sacrifices on the altar, no shedding of tears can make justice deviate from its course. Man is for all time in the grip of an iron law and becomes answerable to powers and intelligences whose presence and puissance have yet to be recognized by science. It is not as if the scientist has not heard of this intelligence that permeates the Cosmos, or has not found the traces of its workings in the pages of his history. But he shies away from acquiring a knowledge which he instinctively knows would shake the foundations of his citadels. The scientist here parts company with the more serious students of life who are left to carry on the quest further and far beyond the range and ambit of matter in its more concrete forms.

It is apparent that there exist laws of which we get occasional glimpses but which none the less have a large share in the governance of all life. The laws that produce the evolutionary sequence; the laws which govern the movement of galaxies and hold the planets in their orbits; the laws that are seen at work in the formation and dissolution of worlds — all these are yet mere matters of conjecture. Since the doctrine of emanations implies the descent of the ideal force into grosser and grosser planes of density, we can surmise that these same laws must themselves be reflections of laws obtaining in superior spheres. Following the analogy further, the same laws have their reflections on denser planes of matter. Each plane of substance, as each plane of consciousness, has its own laws of life which are absolute for that plane but which have their origins on higher planes. When in his mind and soul man reaches to an estate which permits him to function on a plane different from the one to which he is accustomed, he becomes subject to the laws of that plane during the times that he remains on it. The mind that enters the psychic or the spiritual planes has in the same manner to know and to obey the laws of those planes.

These laws when they are translated or formulated for the guidance of human behaviour become what are known as ethical precepts. The

laws that govern the beginning of emanations find their reflection in the harmonious movements of the starry heavens, and descending to our plane give to us the laws of Brotherhood. Interdependence can be seen in the poise and equilibrium of opposing forces as in the mutual relationship of spirit and matter. Harmony in act and thought is one aspect of it. The law of periodicity is seen in the nights and days of Brahma, the systole and diastole of the heart, as also in the return of moods and the formation of habits. On our mundane plane, the ethical counterparts of the laws of the higher planes of being can be condensed in terms of human conduct into morality, virtue and philanthropy. Where these are absent in earthly undertakings, the higher forces cannot be drawn upon, and the invoking of the good without the necessary qualifications produces only the evil.

The achievements of modern science, when judged by their potentialities for morality, virtue and philanthropy, can hardly qualify for the higher help, the profounder guidance. It is no doubt true that science has in some cases wrested some of the secrets of Nature, but its researches even when crowned with success have been more or less of the nature of a sporadic depredation into forbidden territories, a poaching expedition where even the presence of the man of bad intent constitutes the violation of a law. Our knowledge of electricity and magnetism, our delving into secrets that reside in the atom have had no motivation from a desire to uplift the human race in general. Most of these discoveries have been made to acquire fame or have been induced by the urge for personal gain. Of late, a new impetus is provided by the desire to outstrip another nation, or to invent diabolical engines of war such as the napalm bomb, which is but one sordid and shameful example. These and other equally undesirable motives can be perceived behind most of the achievements of a science that preens itself on its boasted advance in our century of war and bloodshed, mayhem and torture, genocide, fratricide and worse.

As against discoveries of doubtful value and questionable motives, there are areas of research which would indubitably help humanity in the mass and which could be investigated to advantage. For instance, the extraction of nutritious food from inert material, if it could be achieved, would relieve the hunger of millions. By its help the spectre of famine could be made to vanish overnight. The use of solar energy to generate heat in places where extreme cold paralyses all effort, or the use of that same energy to replenish strength and vitalize life are yet other instances where scientific progress could confer untold benefits

on mankind. The discovery of modes of fertilizing land in times of drought; the devising of ways to mitigate the ill-effects of floods and storms; the full, free and unrestricted disclosure of discoveries so as to make them available to men, nations and races throughout the world would be the natural approach of a newly oriented science to any problem. A pool or bank of such information readily available would be a boon to nations and would be the richer in value because of the purity, the philanthropy and the morality of the energizing motive. As against this, we witness today nations diverting their resources in money, knowledge and energy from humanitarian efforts and using the same so as to be the first in the race to land a man on the moon — a project of doubtful value except for belligerent purposes, and certainly not motivated by any higher factor than an absorbing desire to pry — without a defined goal and without going into the dangers of a discovery for which men may not be prepared.

If the motives of eminent scientists of any land appear questionable when seen against a moral background, how can these same scientists make a claim on higher Beings for help in advancing and even accelerating further discoveries? All their intellection, all their diverse and divided motives prohibit it. The absence of philanthropy from their motivation becomes an insuperable barrier and raises an impenetrable mental fog which effectively shuts them off from prying into the deeper mysteries of Nature. But this is not the only obstacle towards progress. The failure of science to build its foundations on the bed-rock of ethics is also due to its ignorance (unpardonable, because self-imposed) of the nature of cosmic energy and the rules which govern its usage. Whereas, in their own domain, kingdoms below the human cannot make their actions selective, man can do just that, and it is only in doing this in the right way that he becomes a co-worker with nature. Man, along with the animal, often uses cosmic energy in a way which results merely in the dissipation and the scattering of force. Most of his daily actions can be seen to be the mere flinging out of brute force without any transmutation of the energy employed into a higher and a potential form of spiritual dynamics. The quality of the force employed in the wanton kicking aside of a bush is totally different from that of the same quantity of force used to kick aside an obstacle on which a man is about to stumble. The scientist who uses up energy to devise a new firearm spoliates Nature's force and stamps the energy used with the sordidness of his motive. On the other hand, another scientist who uses an equal amount of force to devise an instrument to

turn waste lands into crop-bearing fields enriches Nature and converts the force used into higher forms of energy.

It thus becomes the duty of each man, and especially of the scientist, to ensure that his use of cosmic energy leads to a concentration and a storing up of force. Man can do this through the instrumentality of his brain. That organ when acting automatically has the capacity to store up in itself a certain quantity of brute force that is unfruitful of benefit for the individual or humanity. On the other hand, it is also profoundly true that this same human brain can become an exhaustless generator of the most refined quality of cosmic force out of this same low, brute energy of Nature. It is in this context that it can be said that no act or thought, no dictum of science nor yet of philosophy is useful or worth possessing unless it has and will continue to have the capacity to help the human brain to evolve higher forms of energy; and this is possible only where there exists the potentiality of moral results and the possibility of their far-reaching usefulness to large masses of men.

A still further area of research hitherto ignored by science has to be presented for its study. It is known and recognized that Nature consciously prefers that matter should be indestructible under organic rather than inorganic forms and is therefore constantly at work towards the evolution of conscious life out of inert material. How does Nature achieve this and under the operation of what laws? Science has yet to move in this direction, and for that purpose has to delve deep into the teachings which deal with the scattering and concretization of cosmic energy in its metaphysical aspects. It is only when at least some progress will have been achieved on these lines that there will dawn upon science the realization that there exist worlds of semi-intelligent forces that are at work in hidden corners of Nature and that their presence and power have to be understood if progress is to proceed on right lines.

If these high aims are to be attained, the scientist must be supported in his ethico-philanthropical endeavour by the thinking of his times. For this, high standards of thought and morals have to be regenerated as a national rather than an individual force. The field of effort is therefore vast and those who are in the vanguard of the attempt will have their hands full to educate the intelligentsia to accept the new vision and the sublimer objectives of science.

REINCARNATION: MAN THE CREATOR OF HIMSELF

II

IS THERE a definite answer to the question, What is man?— other than that given by religion or science? There is. The ancients had it, the greatest philosophers had it, and it has been reiterated in a form suitable to our generation by Madame Blavatsky under the name of Theosophy. That answer is that man is more than body and spirit; he is a soul, an entity which is itself an aspect of spirit, and has a form other than the body we see. The word “spiritual” is, of course, one that has so many meanings that the best we can do in this context is to remember that it is that which is beyond and finer than any matter we know. The ancients who saw the oneness of the universe said that matter was crystallized spirit, and we can leave it at that for the moment. The soul is the permanent part of man; body and character are temporary and changing. To be aware of anything we must use a body or instrument of that same state of matter, and so the ancients taught that man is a compound being, aware of himself in vehicles of matter, and striving to be aware of himself in spirit.

What happens at death? At the death of the physical body the rest of us, we are told, dwells unconsciously in a finer body for a time, a very short time; and then, in a finer body still, we dream over again the life we have just lived from the point of view of the happy times, the aspirations, the love for others we have felt. We do not know we are dead. This dream life, however, lasts for many years, but in time we wake up and the soul takes on another life in another body. The new body is of like matter with the past bodies, the character is the same as before. This idea can be grasped more easily if we think of sleep and dreams. We wake after a few hours of sleep; after death we awake after many years of inward thought. As in sleep we are not cognizant of others except in the shadow world of dreams, so after death we are unconscious of any other thing except our thoughts. The connecting link between all the lives lived on earth is that which is called the soul or the individuality in contradistinction to the personality (derived from *persona*, the mask).

The question may be asked, where did the soul come from, and the answer is that it is derived from the One Spirit, or God, and is limited for the time being by a containing wall or subtle form of matter.

It is not yet perfect, has not yet become fully aware of itself as God or Spirit. To become so aware, it needs to make for itself bodies of matter through which it can learn all about every aspect of life, that is, learn to express itself in all aspects of life. At every death it gathers up all that has been garnered during that life, and when the period in the heaven world is ended, the memories of the past life are absorbed into those of other lives that had preceded it. Then the soul sends forth another ray or reflection of itself which becomes clothed in matter of lower degrees until a physical body is formed and a child is born. The linking up of soul and body takes place slowly, and it is not until the child has reached about the seventh year that this happens. Then he begins to learn to use the power of choice consciously, to know good from bad, right from wrong, and starts on his career in life. The lessons learnt in former lives affect the new life in terms of conscience, character, faculties, etc., as also environment and opportunities.

Through life after life the soul tries to break through the limiting walls of matter which separate it from the whole, and this is achieved by effort and will. No effort in motive or action, whether right or wrong, is ever wasted. Our character is what we ourselves have made, our capacities are those we have worked to develop in the past.

Each babe is born on earth with a twofold heredity, with good capacities and qualities, and bad tendencies and lack of capacity. His parents but give him the kind of body which will bring out these qualities. We do not remember the efforts made in past lives which have produced both the good and bad qualities we have in the present. We complain that because we do not remember therefore we suffer unjustly. We should remind ourselves that we do not remember also how we attained the good capacities and conditions. These we accept as our right!

Reincarnation gives us a vista of an almost unimaginable extent, both as to the distance behind us and the distance before us. The final goal is union or assimilation with the ALL. This assimilation can absorb us in bliss or can make of us a channel through which that which we have acquired can flow to others for their help and benefit. Trying to grasp the idea of the vastness of the universe, the numerous solar systems and stars and planets which exist in space, and seeing all responding to the constant urge of the Law of Progression, will enable us to become more familiar with the purpose of life and our relationship to it. Man is a part of the mighty sweep of life which we see reflected in the ebb and flow of the tide, the seasons, the cyclic appear-

ance of sun spots, the movement of the earth round the sun and on its own axis, etc. Everything everywhere moves in accordance with Nature's rhythm. The difference between the human being and other aspects of Nature is that man alone has the power of self-conscious choice as to his actions — whether he will work with the Law or against it. In *Isis Unveiled* (I. 144) Madame Blavatsky stated:

Man, the most perfect of organized beings on earth, in whom matter and spirit — *i.e., will* — are the most developed and powerful, is alone allowed to give a conscious impulse to that principle which emanates from him.

Hence man is responsible for his choices. He is free to choose but not free to determine the result of his choice, for that comes under universal law.

Turning now to the human kingdom, we find that besides spirit, the source of all, and matter, crystallized spirit, there is the evolution of intellect or mind. Through the lower kingdoms, there is progression from the cohesion that holds the minerals into a mass, to sensation in the vegetable world, to instinct in the animal, reaching almost to intelligence. Then the body of man comes on the scene, the ancient theory here being quite different from our present scientific one. In the body of the human being begins the evolution of conscious mind. It is from this point that, instead of re-embodiment, reincarnation takes place, for the soul sends a part of itself to be the mind in each new body, and to gather experience while helping the evolution of the personality and developing in the body those organs through which in time it will be able to know and use all the powers of the Spirit. At the end of each life the soul gathers up the experiences of the just-ending life and assimilates their essence in the heaven world or *devachan*. When it has assimilated them, it holds them in its memory, where resides the remembrance of every life lived. Then it sends down a ray of itself which comprises the essence of all that has been gathered, and a new body is born around that ray.

As we cannot remember the past, we say that it never took place! Madame Blavatsky wrote that "sincere skepticism as to the immortality of man's soul is a malady; a malformation of the physical brain, and has existed in every age" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 115). "As there are infants born with a caul upon their heads," she added, "so there are men who are incapable to their last hour of ridding themselves of that kind of caul evidently enveloping their organs of spirituality."

To try to grasp the truth of reincarnation it is necessary, therefore, to use a method of approach other than mere denial or blind faith. It is necessary to take up some basic ideas and reflect over them.

In *Transactions* (p. 58) we read:

Q.—Apparently, then . . . there is latent within every man a power which can give him true knowledge, a power of perception of truth, which enables him to deal first hand with universals if he will be strictly logical and face the facts. Thus we can proceed from universals to particulars by this innate spiritual force which is in every man.

A.—Quite so: this power is inherent in all, but paralysed by our methods of education, and especially by the Aristotelian and Baconian methods. Hypothesis now reigns triumphant.

Proceeding from universals to particulars, it is obvious that we must sense the idea of immortality through continuity, and look for that which is continuous in us, *i.e.*, Spirit, "whose attributes are consciousness, memory, mind, LOVE" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 114). How shall we understand these attributes so that we can see them in ourselves?

What do we mean by consciousness? A simple meaning of the word is awareness, and there are degrees of awareness. The animal is conscious; man is self-conscious, conscious of himself as a being separate from other beings, and can therefore say, "I am I"; the spiritual being is conscious of and in the whole of manifestation and beyond; for him "the Universe grows I," it is said.

Memory is the power or faculty whereby we can remember or recall anything that has been learnt or experienced.

Mind is consciousness or awareness, the power to reach to infinity, to imagine or build by imagination, to think, to plan, to aspire.

Love is that fundamental desire for universal good, for union with all beings, and a willingness to sacrifice oneself for others. It is the kind of feeling which enabled Gascoigne, when looking at the midnight sky, to say in his poem "Night Thoughts":

I raise my spellbound head and face to face with what
I cannot name I worship and adore.

And it enabled Shelley to sing:

All things by a law divine
In one another's being mingle—
Why not I with thine?

These four attributes can only be expressed through forms of matter. Though today we are not able to measure emotions and thoughts but only see or measure their effects, yet their expression is in matter. We recognize these things because they use the brain as their instrument. But behind the physical brain is the framework of finer matter on which is photographed everything that we think or feel or do. The acceptance, even as an hypothesis, of this finer state of matter will explain memory, thought transference, ESP, psychometry, apparitions, and so many otherwise unexplainable things. The substance which is the basis of matter as we know it is known as astral matter, and there everything is recorded for all time. Memory, said Madame Blavatsky, "is the power to read in the Astral Light." The facts remembered are then recorded by the brain and we think it is the brain itself that has held them.

To understand, we have to look at the ancient teachings reiterated by modern Theosophy as to what man's personality is, and the most important step is to learn that the physical body is apparent to our senses because physical matter is congregated on an invisible, to us at the present time, frame of finer matter, electric and magnetic in character. The physical particles are constantly changing, but this finer form is more permanent.

Theosophy also teaches the existence of a universal diffused and highly ethereal medium, which has been called the "Astral Light" and "Akasa." It is the repository of all past, present, and future events, and in it are recorded the effects of spiritual causes, and of all acts and thoughts from the direction of either spirit or matter. . . . It has the power of retaining all images. . . . It is the universal register. . . . a vehicle for the operation of the laws of Karma. (*An Epitome of Theosophy*, pp. 18, 19, 22)

Birth is the formation of the body of matter, physical matter, round the astral form, and death is the separation of the physical from the astral form. In all normal cases, this astral body becomes at death the vehicle of the lower characteristics of the man that was, until it disintegrates. As the astral body is new in each incarnation, there is no memory of the old personality. But there is an exception to the rule, "where the child retains the old astral body and hence memory of the old personality and acquaintance with old knowledge and dexterity." (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, Semicentennial edition, p. 250)

It is the recognition of this astral counterpart which will give us the basis for understanding why we do not remember our previous incar-

nations, and also why some children do seem to remember their immediate past life.

We learn, according to Theosophy, that if a child dies before gaining enough experience for the soul to assimilate in the heaven world, or if one's life is violently cut off by some accident, the astral form takes on another incarnation immediately, or quite soon after death. The impressions of the past life are therefore already in the new body of matter and can easily be transmitted to the new brain. These impressions are generally soon overwhelmed by the new ones.

When one "remembers" one's past life, a different explanation is also possible. The astral body has been dispersed with the late physical body, and therefore as both the present astral body and brain are newly formed, there are no memories there of the details of the past life. A man may seem to remember, but there are many other explanations for this. He may be reading in the Astral Light of events long past, and linking himself up with them, or he may meet people or scenes which he had unconsciously seen before in this life and forgotten — but the ramifications here are many.

The important memory of all past lives lies in our capacities, faculties, character, environment and opportunities. How else can we account for the differences in the lives of people?

The next important question is: How does reincarnation work? With it has always been associated Karma, the law of cause and effect, the law of retribution, the law of moral adjustment. Karma is the great Law of progress towards perfection which rules throughout the universe. It is the "undeviating and unerring tendency in the Universe to restore equilibrium, and it operates incessantly." Man, the actor, must put right what he has done to disturb the even working of the whole, and in that adjustment he suffers. Through the suffering and experience gained he learns the workings of law and can develop capacities for further good. Once man understands that as the actor he is responsible for the action and for its results, he will begin to learn the law of responsibility and therefore of freedom. If we made ourselves what we are, then we are making ourselves now what we will be tomorrow. As *The Light of Asia* makes the Buddha say:

The Books say well, my Brothers! each man's life
 The outcome of his former living is;
 The bygone wrongs bring forth sorrows and woes,
 The bygone right breeds bliss.

If our future is what we are making now, we need to have some idea of what that future is to be. First, let us dwell on this statement in *The Secret Doctrine* (II. 446), for it gives us a concept very different from the religious one of eternal heaven or hell:

Humanity is the child of cyclic Destiny, and not one of its Units can escape its unconscious mission, or get rid of the burden of its co-operative work with nature.

We have the examples of those who have finished their pathway through life, the Buddhas and Christs of the race. The way to that achievement is to accept the "burden of . . . co-operative work with nature." Or, as *The Voice of the Silence* puts it: "To live to benefit mankind is the first step."

It is only the knowledge of the constant re-births of one and the same individuality throughout the life-cycle . . . it is only this doctrine, we say, that can explain to us the mysterious problem of Good and Evil, and reconcile man to the terrible and *apparent* injustice of life. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 303)

. . . for logic, consistency, profound philosophy, divine mercy and equity, this doctrine of Reincarnation has not its equal on earth. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 152)

THE LAW is Karma, reincarnation is only an incident. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21: "Overcoming Karma"*)

I THINK immortality is the passing of a soul through many lives or experiences; and such as are truly lived, used, and learned, help on to the next, each growing richer, happier and higher, carrying with it only the real memories of what has gone before. . . . I seem to remember former states and feel that in them I have learned some of the lessons that have never since been mine here and in my next step I hope to leave behind many of the trials I have struggled to bear here and begin to find lightened as I go on. This accounts for the genius and great virtue some show here. They have done well in many phases of this great school and bring into our class the virtue or the gifts that make them great or good. We don't remember the lesser things. They slip away as childish trifles, and we carry on only the real experiences.

—LOUISA MAY ALCOTT

THE LESSON OF THE KARMIC LOOM

IN A FINE HOUSE, in a fair city far away, a young man sat weaving from sunrise to sunset. This might seem a strange preoccupation for one who, to all appearance, was wealthy and must have had abundant resources and interests at his disposal, but it was a peculiarity in his ancient family, handed down from father to son. Each in turn felt this compulsion to weaving, and each in turn had the same ambition — to produce a more beautiful and perfect design than his predecessor.

The young man — let us call him Karta, which means “the doer” — had no very clear idea as yet of the design he wanted to create, but he believed that it would come to him. “And when it does,” he thought, “and when I have completed it, I know it will be the crowning achievement of my family. Granted, I owe much to those who went before me, for they have given me certain ideas. But the ultimate pattern, when once I evolve it, will be all my own.”

Now, Karta had two servants on whom he depended for assistance, one fair and one dark, and lucky it was that they differed so, for Karta had never troubled to give a name to either. The head of the house had always had two such servants. That, also, was a family tradition. And so far as Karta was aware, they had never been addressed otherwise than as “you.” So he kept up the custom by saying to the one “*You* will do this,” and “*You*,” to the other one, “will do that.”

What they had to do was to bring him in materials and ideas for his weaving. They went all about the city looking for these and on their return would spread them out in front of him in his work-room, the fair one saying, “See, my lord, I have found something that you always like greatly,” and the dark one, “See, my lord, nothing is here that you dislike,” and Karta would take what they offered and try to incorporate it in his pattern, but, strange to say, the result was never good.

“It looks a mere jumble,” Karta would sigh. “Somehow, the pattern never seems to appear.” And this was the more peculiar since all that the servants brought him was in accordance with his own likes and dislikes. But the result was certainly chaotic. There was a vexatious lack of order and harmony, so much so that Karta began to lose heart and to talk of giving up his weaving altogether. “I will destroy the web,” he said sometimes, “though if I do, it will mean that I have wasted all these years.”

He was sitting one day with idle hands, in deep despondency, when a venerable man who had known him from his birth and who, accordingly, took much interest in him, was ushered into the workroom. To him Karta unburdened himself, reiterating his intention of abandoning his task, "since, as you see," he concluded bitterly, "a lifetime's weaving has produced no pattern."

"A short lifetime," the old man said gently. "Come, Karta, my friend, have patience. Allow me to advise you, for I think I can help you. All may yet go well."

"How so?" asked Karta gloomily.

"By no longer relying upon your two servants. It is foolish to let the choice of materials for your life-work rest with Attachment and Aversion."

"Are those their names?" said Karta dully. "I never thought them worth knowing. Which is which? Not that it matters. I shall need neither of them if I stop weaving."

"But you cannot stop," the old man said sternly. "It is your Karma, the Karma of your race. What you *can* stop — and must — is your weak dependence upon Attachment and Aversion. It is the former who brings you what supposedly you like, the latter who does *not* bring much good serviceable and even necessary material through assuming that it would not be pleasing to you. They act haphazardly, with no concerted purpose. Is it to be wondered at that your work shows no emerging pattern?"

"I suppose not," said Karta dolefully, "now that you put it so. I never thought of this before. But, honoured sir, I cannot weave without assistance. Who would gather my materials if I dismissed Attachment and Aversion?"

"Foolish boy, have you forgotten Will, that good servant whom you keep idle? He lives neglected, I understand, in a mean dwelling, sad at heart because of your indifference. His father served yours, and he and you are exactly of an age. Recall him and make use of him. He will choose the materials you need with forethought and wisdom."

"To be sure," said Karta, hanging his head guiltily, "I had forgotten about Will. Those others were always in the forefront, so pushing — and withal so inefficient. Yes, I could do worse than employ Will. I must think it over. It requires a little time. But I thank you heartily, my dear sagacious old friend, for such helpful advice."

To cut a long story short, Karta soon made up his mind. He was too sensible a young man to do otherwise. He dismissed Attachment and Aversion. Thereafter, Will accomplished all his business for him, and the materials Will brought were carefully chosen and harmonious, so that Karta's weaving soon began to reveal a pattern, and a very lovely one at that, for it showed the wondrous cycle of development whereby a seed becomes a fruit and a fruit in turn brings forth a seed again, so that life is evermore renewed from the great Source of Being. It took Karta all his days to do it. But such was his Karma and he fulfilled it faithfully.

I HAVE SHOWN you this evening autographic records of the history of stress and strain in the living and non-living. How similar are the writings! So similar indeed that you cannot tell one apart from the other. We have watched the responsive pulse wax and wane in the one as in the other. We have seen response sinking under fatigue, becoming exalted under stimulants, and being killed by poisons, in the non-living as in the living. Amongst such phenomena, how can we draw a line of demarcation, and say, here the physical ends, and there the physiological begins? Such absolute barriers do not exist.

Do not these records tell us of some property of matter common and persistent? Do they not show us that the responsive processes, seen in life, have been foreshadowed in non-life — that the physiological is related to the physico-chemical — that there is no abrupt break, but a uniform and continuous march of law? . . .

It was when I came upon the mute witness of these self-made records, and perceived in them one phase of a pervading unity that bears within it all things — the mote that quivers in ripples of light, the teeming life upon our earth, and the radiant suns that shine above us — it was then that I understood for the first time a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks of the Ganges centuries ago —

“They who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth — unto none else, unto none else!”

— Peroration of Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose's lecture before the Royal Society, London, May 10, 1901

THE WORK THAT BECOMES WORSHIP

WORK connotes the use that we make of energy in order to achieve specific ends. The performance of works becomes pleasurable or irksome, tiring or exhilarating, according as the energy is supported by or denuded of enthusiasm. To the student in his class-room, the study of Milton may be boring. To the *littérateur*, it may become a mode of relaxation and even of æsthetic enjoyment. Science may be able to measure the quantity of energy expended in doing a particular work. But science has no formula to assess the value of the very act of engaging in any work; and yet, it is this value which is of paramount importance to the man. For instance, work may be undertaken to achieve personal objectives or to bring beneficence to other lives. But, long before the first step is taken towards action, the work of planning the course of that action was going on silently and often subconsciously in the vast laboratory of the man's make-up. It is this inner working which is already producing action and reaction on the inner planes of being which should engage our attention. For, whatever aspect the work may assume, it has already caused a stirring or ripple in the mental, moral and psychic planes of life. However trivial the act (and this may be in thought only), these planes of life record its repercussions and are either enriched or impoverished by the impact. Since it is in these actions in embryo that lies the secret of the value of the work to be done, it is here that the greatest vigilance is to be exercised.

It is vital to the student of Theosophy that he understand that work can no longer be judged by ordinary standards nor assessed at its face value. A new dimension in knowledge is opened which must first be studied and then put to daily and hourly use.

Take, for instance, the case of the student who is fired by the philosophy and whose tendencies, inherited from prior lives, lead him to a recognition that he is a child of Light. Because of this awakening, he may decide to dedicate his life to the service of the cause of Theosophy. He probably leaves a remunerative job. He takes a much reduced allowance or none. He forgoes holidays to which he was previously accustomed. His hours of work now join the night to his day. And he glories in all this. These are conditions which normally would deter any ordinary man, but which strangely enough whet his zeal for more strenuous service. For months, and sometimes for years, he surrounds himself with a halo of righteous endeavour. He is content. Dur-

ing these hours of honest endeavour, the student has generated good Karma pleasing to his Ishwara. The forces which he has used, he has in the act of usage transformed into higher moral and psychic energies. This is all to the good. But it is not nearly enough. The next stage may find him bankrupt still. It is for preparing oneself for this arduous stage that the first exists as a preparatory plane of effort.

During the initial years of honest striving, the student rarely pauses to consider the real motive which induced his activity. Yet, it is this motive which alone colours his effort, and unbeknown injects either a drop of elixir or of poison into his cup of life. It is these thin attenuated things called motives which have to be studied first in oneself and then in others. For instance, what was the urge that drove the student to actions to which he was hitherto unaccustomed? Was it the desire to win acclaim or to seek personal satisfaction? Was it the novelty of the thing which appealed or was he running away from impossible situations of his own past creation? Then, further, were his choices the result of a swinging of the pendulum away from the ignoble and the sordid towards goodness and virtue, with the possibility that the very force of the sway might swing it back to its previous unavoury position? Each such circumstance that builds motive is sure to have its own peculiar reaction in the future, and will have impressed its own particular colouring upon the lives that throng the gross as well as the subtle planes, and which though unseen and impalpable are being affected by the thoughts, feelings and works of men.

So now the student passes on, under the impulse of Nature, to the next stage. He now finds the labour hard, the orders irksome. His superiors and even his companions in work tend to become tiresome. He sees in them faults and limitations where previously all seemed good and desirable. If he is cogitative enough, he will have discovered that he is now trying to compare the end-results of his efforts with the image which he had created of the ideal, and finds them wanting. A chink has developed in his armour and through it are now trooping in the worst of enemies — doubt and dejection. He is no longer insulated against attacks from within or without. He still carries on the work, but it is now mechanistic. The higher force now seldom presides over his endeavours, and in consequence the taste of dust and ashes creeps into his mouth.

That this difficult stage must itself be an effect of a precedent cause is evident. But the student is more likely to search for it in his dubious past rather than in the hours of his sacrificial work; and it is here

that he is likely to miss out the lesson which is now being presented for his education. He has to find out what it was that he had missed when the path was rosy, the lack of which has now suddenly spread a carpet of thorns at his feet. He may shy away from this search and prolong his agony for years. If such a condition is not overcome in time, the student may lose his enthusiasm and the urge for noble actions may suddenly desert him. But the hours of gloom do not necessarily sound the knell of shattered hopes. They may on the contrary be likened to the dark hours that precede the dawn. What lessons have these hours to teach the disciple?

The answer which comes readily to the mind is that self-complacency had been allowed to creep in. With little or no great opposition encountered in the first flush of enthusiastic participation, the student had not prepared himself for the coming battle. Though this answer does give a correct solution, it does not take into account the more serious lapse. It is on a correction of this major fault that depends the future life of a disciple among co-disciples. To understand the rationale of the remedial measures, it is necessary to first grasp the philosophical basis for the adoption of such measures. For this, each one has to ask: Who is the disciple within me? And then the next question: Who is HE whose disciple I have constituted myself?

If Theosophy has taught us aught, it is the sevenfold constitution of man. Rightly interpreted, it should give us startling revelations about ourselves. The classification reveals that each lower principle serves the purpose of transmission of the wishes of the higher on to the lower plane with which that lower principle is consubstantial. Our own experience will have taught us that the lower principle has the tendency to rebel against control or guidance, and, like a wild horse, has to be broken in and tamed to obey the slightest touch of rein or spur. Even the unlearned recognize that the mind must subjugate and control desires, and the latter in turn must be so purified as to be able to curb physical appetites. The mother, albeit unconsciously, teaches the child to do this, and the same training is normally heightened in the class-room and the academy.

But the mind itself is no high principle at our stage of evolution. More often than not, it leaves its high duty and joins hands in the pranks and aberrations of unrestrained desires. Since the mind itself is a vacillating, unsteady instrument in most cases, it becomes necessary to enter upon a rigid course of discipline. It is here that the difficulty lies. The student's consciousness is mostly centred in the mind, so that

to reach to the next higher principle he has to send his aspirations soaring upwards along a so-to-say disused and unaccustomed path. This next high principle has to be invoked to enter a tabernacle which has to be cleaned of all impurity. The worker who started his effort in philanthropy should have understood that as there are seven principles in man and seven planes on which his consciousness functions, so philanthropy itself must have seven aspects, and further that it can replenish or rather regenerate its power for good only when the man can touch it in its higher aspects corresponding to Manas or the fifth principle. The philanthropy which is permeated by desires and emotional urges is like fireworks which are things of beauty but which sooner or later must extinguish themselves and leave the night blacker for their absence. The ordinary worker has a certain quantity of this type of philanthropy generated in him through his enthusiastic contact with the philosophy. The electric force has passed into him and is stored there as in condensers. For his work, the student starts expending this priceless hoard, and so gradually his stock of that force diminishes to the point of denudation. This is one explanation of the fact of sincere workers becoming lethargic and finally becoming what may be called the drones of Theosophy. To avert this catastrophe, the disciple has all the wherewithal ready to his hand.

Even in ordinary physical-plane objects, recharging or replenishing is done (except in the case of pouring) through a conduit or a link which connects the store of power (or the generator as the case may be) to the receptacle which is to receive and in turn store or consume that power. If the linking arrangement is disconnected or corroded or clogged, the flow from the one to the other stops or barely trickles through. Pursuing the same analogy, we have to test out the cable or the conduit channel which links the mind to the higher Ego. This pathway is there and is never totally obliterated except in the case of the thoroughly depraved. It may have remained unused by the mind for such lengths of time as to be almost forgotten; it may have become overgrown with weeds; it may have dwindled into a hardly discernible track, but *it is there*. It can be cleaned of all debris, and the constant tread of the pilgrim-disciple can make of it a highway by persistent usage. To reach to the conduit, the only means available to the mind is aspiration. The mind has to kindle the leaping, darting flame of a purified desire and send it soaring to the highest that it can think of. Here again aid is to be taken from the philosophy. The mind is an emanation, a fragment of itself which the Soul has projected into a body for the gaining

of experience. Having sent out a portion of itself to draw together the five senses and the mind, it remains aloof yet constantly near; unperceived, yet clearly perceptible to senses above the five now in manifestation. It can be felt and searched for even amid the storms of incarnated existence.

Once that the mind knows how to shake off mortal attachments and the chains which fetter it to earthly desires, it can cross over the threshold and in uttermost felicity repose in the embrace of its parent. Just as a son who young in years goes to a university far from home, and after a long absence returns in joy and abounding love to his earthly parents, so too does the mind turning its face homewards find its ecstatic rapture in the proximity and close union with its real parent. That moment past, the mind returns to its habitat of flesh, but how richer, how spiritually regenerated is the coming back! The promise which the philosophy gave is no more mere words upon a printed page. The promise stands requited. The link is established even for the fraction of a moment and the man carries the power of that contact with him. The storehouse and the eternal seed have become approachable and their force is available for the work among mortals.

It now becomes the duty of the disciple to seek his guidance, knowledge and strength from this source, exclusive of any other. He can no longer place his reliance on earthly knowledge or on the moral codes of his social environment. He is now a servant of his Self, but he is not expected to be servile. He is the ambassador of an exalted authority accredited to a particular earthly domain. His poise, his grace and behaviour must be in keeping with his high office. He has, however, to understand that the trust which is reposed in him can be discharged only if his connection with his Lord is permanent and the Presence easy of access at all times. Since the line of communication shrinks or clogs up with even the slightest approach of impurity, the worker has to seclude himself from all taints. He can do this effectively by utilizing all moments of leisure in keeping the passage clean and free of obstructions. Road maintenance along this particular highway is an all-time job.

Once that the worker has found his moorings in the True, it becomes his task to bring the beneficence of the higher force to permeate his work. It is now his duty to bring his neighbour on to the right path, to gather around himself a nucleus of souls dedicated to the same lofty ideals — and lo! he has turned his work into worship.

STUDIES IN "LIGHT ON THE PATH"

V

Love thyself last. The Vastnesses above thee
Are filled with Spirit-Forces; strong and pure
And fervently these faithful friends shall love thee:
Keep thou thy watch o'er others and endure.

THESE WORDS help the understanding of the closing pages of *Light on the Path*. The disciple has heard the song of life, has stored in his memory fragments of that "Epic Song," and has learned the lesson it teaches, *viz.*, that he is a part of the harmony and must obey its laws. He has learned also that the constantly changing and moving life which surrounds him is formed by the hearts of men. As his own heart opens itself more and more to the light of truth, he will hear further fragments of the song.

Compassion, which is "eternal Harmony" as well as the "law of Love eternal," begins to awaken in him. He has become more and more attuned to the "great mind and heart of all mankind," and is thus able to "thrill in response to every sigh and thought of all that lives and breathes"; for he has loosened the bonds of the personality which formerly bound him to this world. He is by degrees able to read "the larger word of life," and this includes the visible as well as the invisible worlds. When he begins to feel within himself that hunger for spiritual aspiration, when, filled with compassion, he yearns to read his "larger word of life," then does he "inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold" for him, as also "inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold." A disciple can only begin to inquire and penetrate within the invisible world safely when he has fulfilled all the conditions, *i.e.*, has developed the inner senses, and has "conquered the desires of the outer senses." Only then will Nature open wide before him "the portals of her secret chambers," lay bare before his gaze "the treasures hidden in the very depths of her pure virgin bosom. Unsullied by the hand of matter she shows her treasures only to the eye of Spirit—the eye which never closes, the eye for which there is no veil in all her kingdoms."

Too many today want to exploit Nature, not realizing, and in many cases not caring, that Nature is much more than just the visible world which they feel has been created especially for their own use — to spoil, steal from, or otherwise exploit in any way they desire. H.P.B. has not

only shown that there is an invisible side of Nature, that there is rhythm and harmony in the universe, but, further, that

every organized thing in this world, visible as well as invisible, has an element appropriate to itself. The fish lives and breathes in the water; the plant consumes carbonic acid, which for animals and men produces death; some beings are fitted for rarefied strata of air, others exist only in the densest. Life to some is dependent on sunlight, to others, upon darkness; and so the wise economy of nature adapts to each existing condition some living form. These analogies warrant the conclusion that, not only is there no unoccupied portion of universal nature, but also that for each thing that has life, special conditions are furnished, and, being furnished, they are necessary.

The Masters also state that they "recognize but one law in the Universe, the law of harmony, of perfect equilibrium."

Through ignorance all evils spring; equally true is it that from knowledge will come the cessation of misery, sorrow and evil. This is why a disciple needs knowledge before he can learn the secrets of Nature. One of the first lessons to be learned is that he is indissolubly linked with the whole of Nature, that he is the Microcosmos, an exact replica of the Macrocosmos. His Eternal Self is the Supreme Spirit of the universe, and every power of that Supreme is possessed by him. This will lead him to the knowledge that "Nature has linked all parts of her Empire together by subtle threads of magnetic sympathy, and there is a mutual correlation even between a star and a man." Further, that all the constituents which make up the disciple's personality are derived from the spiritual forces acting in matter; this is why he has to kill out the desires of the lower, seek out and find within himself a centre of harmony, thus paving the way for contact with his inner guide and instructor.

His second important lesson is that he can derive help from all Nature's powers and forces. Sages or *Rishis*, Gods or *Devas*, Nature Spirits or *Devatas* are ready to help. Because of the instruction and help he has received from within he is able to command and control the Nature Spirits or Elementals, instead of being controlled by them as happens with the unenlightened and ignorant who rush into this invisible world unprepared. This is the reason why the disciple has to become master of himself and his lower nature before he attempts the Path. This also explains why it is an iron rule that the disciple acquires powers through his own work; no gifts or privileges will come to him.

There are the powers of all nature before you; *take what you can*," the Mahatma once wrote. However, *The Voice of the Silence* points out: "If one would follow in the steps of holy Tathagata, those gifts and powers are not for Self."

What are the secrets the four great elements — earth, air, water and fire — hold for the disciple? It is from these, or rather from the Gods or *Devas* which preside over them, that the disciple learns that some of these very elements are the builders of his own sevenfold being. As he learns more and more of the secrets of this invisible world, he will develop within himself a love of Nature.

Love of Nature which springs from the appreciation of the grand unity of all in Nature, the result of the action of the Law of Interdependence, provides the safety for the would-be magician and adept. To learn to use all forms of life, without any injury to them, much more without their total destruction, is to learn the method which the Masters adopt. Vast Nature is the Concert Hall, the Lodge of Masters the perfect Recorder of all her notes, scales and melodies. . . . Again, vast Nature is a Museum, of which every specimen and species is studied and the beneficent or maleficent properties thereof are tabulated and used for the instruction of Their Chelas.

The disciple learns that the army on his side is made up of pure Intelligences, of Sages, Gods and Elementals, and it is with these that he must align himself. Thus he will strengthen and help the light side of Nature — for Nature has her dark side as well as her light side. If a disciple is not completely pure, he may well awaken the dark side, which in turn makes his own fight all the harder; for he is strengthening that dark side every time he fails. So long as he holds to his discipline, he has the whole of Nature to help him wage the war against darkness and evil. The Sun, the Moon, the Stars; air, fire, water, earth; the plants, the animals and men — all become his educators. As he transmutes his lower nature, he brightens up the sub-human universe and becomes more and more a channel of the super-human Intelligences and of the Most High.

Thus the disciple, in transmuting his personality, learns his first lesson — not only that he is in reality a miniature copy of the Universe, not only that all the powers and forces of Nature are within him, but that he is one with the indivisible Universe.

In becoming a friend and helper of Nature, he learns the truth of the statement of one of the Masters, that he must "follow and *scrupulously*

copy Nature in her works," and ultimately reach the stage where he will become a co-worker with Nature.

None of this can be accomplished in one short life; as *Light on the Path* says, it is a "work of ages; therefore expect not to obtain its reward until ages of experience have been accumulated." Here, however, there also lies a danger, for, like everything else, if the knowledge acquired is betrayed, or misused, or neglected, it is possible even now to fall from the high estate one has attained, because the knowledge which the disciple now has at his command is a trust vested in him by "the most high." It is possible for great ones "to fall back, even from the threshold, unable to sustain the weight of their responsibility, unable to pass on." That is why at the very outset the disciple is told to kill out in himself his selfish desires, to strangle his sins and make them dumb for ever, because if this is not done, then they will drag him down and he will have to start the climb anew.

Let one not forget that the Buddha had to face, at the very threshold of Buddhahood, the ten chief sins, "Mara's mighty ones" — "the fiends who war with Wisdom and the Light" and who battled to keep the Truth from Buddha. But he heeded them not, chased them away, killed them beyond reanimation, and was able to emerge from the fight "radiant, rejoicing, strong."

The disciple is far away from this stage, it is true, but this is the goal. The last of the rules given in *Light on the Path* for the enlightenment of the disciple expresses the final struggle thus:

Hold fast to that which has neither substance nor existence.

Listen only to the voice which is soundless.

Look only on that which is invisible alike to the inner and the outer sense.

Thus the path begins in silence and secrecy and ends in the hearing and chanting of the soundless Sound — the Voice of the Silence.

Thus is a man born — a pilgrim returns back "from the other shore."

Light on the Path, "a treatise written for the personal use of those who are ignorant of the Eastern Wisdom, and who desire to enter within its influence," ends with the words:

"Peace be with you."

ANSWER TO AN INQUIRY ABOUT ADEPTS

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, Vol. V, p. 97, for December 1883.—Eds.]

ARE THERE any Jain Rishis among the Himalayan Brothers? Is the *Yoga Marga* of the Jains and the Buddhists the same? This much is certain that Jainism and Buddhism go side by side to a certain extent. In what chief points then do they differ so as to give rise to two distinct religions?

How is the practice of *Hatha Yoga* dangerous? Is it not the most certain way of taming the mind? I think some persons are suited to *Raja Yoga*, but there are others who cannot subdue their mind so as to keep it fixed on one object for a time. Have such any other means of learning *Yoga Vidya* except *Hatha Yoga*?

Somewhere in the third volume of *The Theosophist* there is a footnote to the effect that the spirit liberated in *Samadhi* can go only as far as the lowest *Deva-loka*. This does not agree with what is given in the Hindu Shastras, where the assertion is that the spirit thus liberated has no check and can go anywhere it chooses. How is that?

Can Yogis of a lower grade than the Himalayan Brothers change their body at will, *i.e.*, leave their own body lifeless and enter one dead so as to make it alive? Is *Koot Humi* a title and not a part of the name of our revered Brother?

Are there any Mahatmas in India equal in rank (of adeptship) to the Himalayan Brothers? If there are, where do they chiefly live? Are there any such in Rajputana? If any, in what part of the country and by what names are they known to the world?

Have these any communication with the Brothers?

JAGANNATH

JEYPORE,

19th October 1883.

ANSWER.—It is very painful to observe that even our professed friends and sympathizers should be so inattentive in reading *The Theosophist* and other publications of our esteemed members. An ordinarily earnest student of theosophic literature is aware of the oft-repeated fact that the esoteric truth underlying all religions is the same. The different ritualisms and formalities of various religions resemble the different costumes a man wears to suit himself to the surrounding atmospheric conditions and those of the country he temporarily occupies. A keen observer pierces through the mask, and recognizing the hidden individuality cares but little for the external form. In all ages the

masses of all religions have but clung blindly to the shell, while the philosopher penetrating to the innermost kernel has met, on the principle of Mutual Toleration and Mutual Intellectual Sympathy, his co-worker in the search after truth, whatever may be his caste, creed or colour, externally. This Brotherhood of true Philosophers or Adepts, caring but little for exoteric religions, have united themselves into a compact body to lay this Truth before the followers of religions, of which they are the respective representatives. And it was with this view that the Theosophical Society adopted as its first object the formation of the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity. Like the travellers following different paths but meeting at the same mountain summit, the mystics of all times and all religions, going deep into a study of the faith of their forefathers, have met at the same altar of Truth — Esoteric Philosophy. The readers of Col. Olcott's lectures will remember his constant remarks that the Theosophical Society does not ask anyone to leave his religion but to find out all of Truth that may be in that religion and to try to live up to that Truth. It is therefore difficult to see what is meant by the enquiry whether there are Jain Mahatmas. If esoteric Hindus, esoteric Buddhists, and in fact the mystics of all religions have arrived at the same Truth through a deep study of their respective religions, and have consequently been admitted into the ranks of the Himalayan Brotherhood of Adepts, is our correspondent aware of any particular reason why the Jains should alone be excluded? Having said that the Esoteric Doctrine is the same, in whatever religion it may be found, it is needless to enter here into the external differences between Buddhism and Jainism, for Esoteric Theosophy has nothing to do with exotericism, except in so far as to study the symbols to find out the meaning underlying them.

The dangers of *Hatha Yoga* will be quite apparent to one who knows what mediumship is. Its practices only induce some physiological changes and tend to develop into mediumship. It does not help in any way psychic development. This will be apparent from the fact that *Hatha Yogis* can produce only that particular phenomenon for which they undergo, by special preparation, a gymnastic training. And it must be so in the case of physical powers. Only psychical powers are permanent and can be carried from birth to birth. The *Hatha Yogi* dies with no acquisition to help him in his next rebirth except a strong and sincere desire for advancement. His gymnastic performances end with the death of his body. The control over the mind must be obtained by strong will, a dogged determination, and high moral and spiritual aspirations.

It cannot be obtained by stopping the breath or in-and-outletting a quantity of water, curds, or milk.

Our correspondent seems to confound *Samadhi* with the higher perceptions of a *Raja Yogi*. When he studies carefully the difference between *Hatha* and *Raja Yoga*, he will find the teachings in "Fragments" are in entire consonance with those of the Aryan Adepts. No MAHATMA or even a High Chela will pose himself before the public. At the same time there is not one true aspirant with a firm will that has not found out the custodians of the Aryan treasure. It is therefore improper to enquire where the ADEPTS live, since, as in ancient times, the Chela has to find out his Guru by self-evolution and self-exertion.

As to the other questions, most of them are not a fit subject to treat upon in the columns of our journal. Whether "a title or part of his name," the name of our revered Master Koot-Humi has been sufficiently desecrated in the pages of spiritualistic papers, and even in this magazine owing to the indiscretion of his most ardent followers, to permit of any more discussion of that topic than can be strictly helped.

B.S.D.

(A Chela)

HIGHER THINGS can be perceived only by a sense pertaining to those higher things. And whoever therefore wants to see the real MAHATMA, must use his *intellectual* sight. He must so elevate his *Manas* that its perception will be clear and all mists created by *Maya* must be dispelled. His vision will then be bright and he will see the MAHATMAS wherever he may be, for, being merged into the sixth and the seventh principles which are ubiquitous and omnipresent, the MAHATMAS may be said to be everywhere. But, at the same time, just as we may be standing on a mountain top and have within our sight the whole plain, and yet not be cognizant of any particular tree or spot, because from that elevated position all below is nearly identical, and as our attention may be drawn to something which may be dissimilar to its surroundings — so in the same manner, although the whole of humanity is within the mental vision of the MAHATMAS, they cannot be expected to take special note of every human being, unless that being by his special acts draws their particular attention to himself.

—*The Theosophist*, July 1884

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Though all religions enjoin prayer in one form or another, modern man finds it increasingly difficult to pray. In *Newsweek* for December 30, 1968, Religion editor Kenneth L. Woodward writes about this "spiritual block," and how leading churchmen and theologians in the U.S. and other countries meet the "challenge of contemporary prayer."

According to Yale theologian Jaroslav Pelikan, at a time "when everyone is busy solving the problems of the world, prayer must seem to be, at the least, a luxury item." Students have become "artful dodgers of a disciplined prayer life," and use social action and "a scrupulously academic approach to the study of religion as a substitute to evade the problem of a totally religious prayer," says Walter Wagner, director of the Boston Theological Institute. *Newsweek* comments:

Private prayer languishes, partly because modern man feels little need of God's help and — except in grave crises — secretly questions whether he should even ask. Prayer makes children of us all, and no responsible adult wants to appear childish. "Religion and prayer have moved to an area of the subconscious," complains Roman Catholic Bishop Fulton J. Sheen of Rochester, N.Y. "We're repressing religion where we used to repress sex."...

Today... prayer suffers from lack of contact with real life. Part of the problem is language....

"I can't get on my knees and say, 'Dear God,'" admits Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, associate professor of religion at the University of Pittsburgh. "I don't believe God is a 'thou' whom I can speak to personally. I can believe in union with the divine, like a wave rejoining the ocean, but I can't see addressing a deity."

In Rubenstein's McLuhanesque analysis, a God who can be addressed presupposes a personal being who listens and talks back. Such a God, he believes, is the creation of a religion that depends on words — on the Bible, preaching and prayer. "But the essence of religious worship," the rabbi argues, "is sacrifice, not prayer."...

At bottom, though, prayer somehow survives the word games theologians play, and finds a home, as it always has, in silent contemplation. Indeed, many observers see signs that more mystical forms of prayer are being revived. "Mystical prayer went underground after the Reformation," says philosopher Dewart.

"But many people are rediscovering it as the normal mode of prayer."

In part, this rediscovery is a reaction against the secular lifestyle of the modern Christian West. "The disease of affluence is not only an obesity of body," observes Quaker philosopher Douglas Steere, "but also obesity of soul. Students are appalled at the self-absorption of the West in its own never-ending spiral of production and accumulation of wealth." The Archbishop of Canterbury agrees. "We haven't emphasized enough the role of contemplation in the Christian life," complains Dr. Michael Ramsey, "so people are finding it in non-Christian movements."

From the Theosophical viewpoint, just as there is a true and a false conception of God or Deity, so also is there a true and a false conception of prayer. Prayer offered to some god somewhere will not help. But there is a prayer to be performed in reference to our desires, another in reference to our conscience, and a third in reference to our Soul. Repentance and penance are prayers for freeing ourselves from the Satan of desires. Self-examination is prayer for the right execution of the injunctions given by conscience. Contemplation is prayer for aspiring to touch the Soul, the God within, and to hear its "still, small voice." All three practices are now corrupted and degraded, and we must try to restore the correct method of the threefold prayer in our own individual lives. As more men and women understand and apply the truth about prayer, not only they individually, but also their community and country, will feel the uplift of their wisdom. As in other matters, so in this, real reform will come as individual after individual gives up the false and adopts the true method of prayer.

For students of Theosophy, it is interesting to note the pushing back of the age of life on earth that has been going on in our time. Geologists now believe that the microscopic, one-celled algae-like forms, unearthed recently in a river valley in South Africa, are the oldest fossils on earth. On the basis of this discovery, the age of life on earth is being thrust back millions of years to as much as 3.5 billion years. The earth itself is said by geologists to be five billion years old (*Science Digest*, December 1968). We learn that —

The South African forms that are causing all the excitement are so small that a million of them could fit in a thimble. . . . The

rocks in which they are embedded are probably the oldest exposed beds of rock on earth. Known as the Onverwacht Series, they make up part of the Swaziland System, a Precambrian formation that is well-exposed in the Barberton-Badplaace region of the eastern Transvaal. . . .

Dr. Albert E. J. Engel of the University of California, one of the scientists who studied the fossils, thinks that they were deposited in an ancient body of water that could have been as small as a puddle or as big as a sea.

He terms the discovery "exciting and disappointing," exciting because it has extended the age of life, and disappointing because in all probability no older fossils will ever be found. The origins of unicellular life on earth were buried in older rocks now obliterated, he points out.

Occultism disposes of the so-called Azoic age of science, and teaches that never was there a time when the earth was without life upon it.

Wherever there is an atom of matter, a particle or a molecule, even in its most gaseous condition, there is life in it, however latent and unconscious. . . . (*S.D.*, I. 258)

Occultism teaches, further, that

the fossils found in strata, to which an antiquity . . . of many hundreds of millions of years must be ascribed, belong in reality to forms of the preceding Round, which, while living, were far more ethereal than physical, as *we know the physical*. That we perceive and disinter them as tangible forms, is due to the process of materialization or crystallization referred to, which took place subsequently, at the beginning of the Fourth Round, and reached its maximum after the appearance of man, proceeding parallel with his physical evolution. This alone illustrates the fact that the degree of materiality of the Earth changes *pari passu* with that of its inhabitants. And thus man now finds, as tangible fossils, what were once the (to his present senses) ethereal forms of the lower kingdoms. (*S.D.*, II. 68 fn.)

Till recently, dreams were looked upon as something best forgotten or ignored; but now it is being recognized that dreams give an excellent view of the workings of the "submerged" or "subconscious" portion of the mind, where memories are stored.

An article in *The Sunday Standard* of January 12, 1969, "Your

Dreams . . . Important or Nonsense?" gives well-authenticated instances of how some men have had their problems solved in dreams — among them Louis Agassiz, the eminent naturalist, Elias Howe, the inventor of the sewing-machine, and René Descartes, the French mathematician and philosopher. There are many cases on record of scientists, inventors, philosophers and others who, after making several unsuccessful attempts to solve their problems with their conscious mind, often working to the point of frustration and despair, have had the needed inspiration either in a dream or in a relaxed period, frequently following a period of intense activity and concentration.

The well-known French mathematician, Henri Fehr, made a study of the working habits of his colleagues. Of the 69 mathematicians who replied to his queries, 51 said that they either had solved problems in dreams or believed it was possible. Only 18 scoffed at the idea. This, says the writer of the *Sunday Standard* article,

is an amazing response when you consider the precision needed in solving mathematical problems. But the subconscious mind can be trained. It is a responsive instrument, much like an incredibly complex electronic brain. What it produces depends largely upon what is fed into it and what is demanded of it.

One thing is certain, dreams involving mathematical solutions rarely occur to poets. But many poets have been inspired by their nocturnal visions. Goethe, Blake, Cowper, Coleridge, Poe, all found material in dreams. . . .

The subconscious mind tends to carry on with the activities that have concerned you during the day. . . . It often reduces thoughts to bizarre symbols as it did when it changed Elias Howe's sewing machine needles into the spears of savages. Often there appears to be something childlike about the messages from the subconscious, and often they are presented mischievously. But this may be due largely to individual differences. . . .

These individual differences are made even greater by personal obsessions and prejudices, and so make interpretation by others extremely difficult. Whenever anyone else, even a highly trained psychoanalyst, tries to interpret your dreams, he brings to the task his own fixations and biases. So the burden falls on you. Whenever you have a vivid dream, think back over the problems and frustrations of the past several weeks. Among the symbols and pictorial antics of that dream, is there possibly an answer you might in no other way obtain?

How your subconscious mind will behave when you are asleep

depends primarily upon who you are and what concerns you most. But the evidence now in existence indicates that your subconscious mind can become a most useful servant — even in dreams!

What, in fact, is this subconscious mind? In *The Ocean of Theosophy*, Mr. Judge speaks of the “acts and doings of the inner man,” which are “the unconscious actions of the subconscious mind.” These words, “conscious” and “subconscious,” he adds, “are of course used relatively, the unconsciousness being that of the brain only.” In his *Epitome of Theosophy* (p. 13), he describes the subconscious mind in these words:

The Sages say that . . . Purusha is the basis of all manifested objects. Without it nothing could exist or cohere. It interpenetrates everything everywhere. It is the reality of which, or upon which, those things called real by us are mere images. As Purusha reaches to and embraces all beings, they are all connected together; and in or on the plane where that Purusha is, there is a perfect consciousness of every act, thought, object, and circumstance, whether supposed to occur there, or on this plane, or any other. For below the spirit and above the intellect is a plane of consciousness in which experiences are noted, commonly called man’s “spiritual nature”; this is frequently said to be as susceptible of culture as his body or his intellect.

This upper plane is the real register of all sensations and experiences, although there are other registering planes. It is sometimes called the “subconscious mind.” Theosophy, however, holds that it is a misuse of terms to say that the spiritual nature can be cultivated. The real object to be kept in view is to so open up or make porous the lower nature that the spiritual nature may shine through it and become the guide and ruler.

Unesco Chronicle for November 1968 prints, under the title “Sport Is an Ethic,” the message sent by René Maheu, the Director-General of Unesco, to the International Conference on Sport and Education held in Mexico in October 1968, in co-operation with Unesco. The purpose of the conference was to study the place of sport, physical exercise and open-air activities in the lives of most human beings; in other words, to determine the value of these activities and to suggest ways of educating and convincing the public at large and obtaining their participation.

René Maheu deplures, in his message, the indifference shown to sport by educationists and civic leaders, "many of whom persist in dividing man into two distinct parts: the body, which they all too often neglect, and the mind — as if the two were not inextricably linked in the entity of the human person." He goes on to add:

It is therefore Unesco's duty to combat the prejudice and indifference which still prevail in this field, and to create better understanding of the formative function and ethical value of regular and voluntary physical exercise. It cannot be repeated too often that full development of the individual depends on mastery of the body, and that competitive sport can be the best school for excelling oneself, which is the very essence of man....

Attempts to reform sport, or rather the use made of it, are more important even than its expansion. As the Declaration on Sport has so rightly proclaimed, and as Unesco is striving to emphasize in its programme, sport is an ethic. It is, above all, this ethic which must be recognized, respected and promoted. Sport is a schooling in will power, loyalty, and clear thinking; it teaches man courage and fraternity, self-control and fellowship, so very necessary in our times. However, the interest — one might almost say the infatuation — generated by sport, should not confuse its principal virtues, which are educational and cultural, with its superficial aspects, however spectacular, nor with its vices and dangers, or rather those of its abusive exploitation, such as commercialization and chauvinism. And the virtues too must be discovered, and if necessary invented, within the framework of contemporary social and economic realities.

There is no gainsaying that a healthy body needs exercise. Mental morbidity, psychic sluggishness and bodily lethargy often result from neglect of exercise. From ancient times, it has been fully recognized that a sound and pure mind requires a sound and pure body. For the modern "educated" and "civilized" man, Dr. Alexis Carrel has something important to say in his *Man, the Unknown*:

As is well known, a muscular group develops by appropriate drill. If we wish to strengthen not only the muscles, but also the apparatuses responsible for their nutrition and the organs which enable the body to sustain a prolonged effort, exercises more varied than classical sports are indispensable. These exercises are the same as were practised daily in a more primitive life. Specialized athletics, as taught in schools and universities, do not give real endurance. The efforts requiring the help of muscles,

vessels, heart, lungs, brain, spinal cord and mind — that is, of the entire organism — are necessary in the construction of the individual.

In another place he comments:

In sum, the intermittent exercises of modern man, such as golf and tennis, are not equivalent to the continuous muscular activity required by the existence of our ancestors. Today, physical effort only takes place at certain moments and on certain days. The customary state of the organic systems, of blood vessels, of sweat and endocrine glands, is that of repose.

Sagacious as Dr. Alexis Carrel is, his suggestions will not altogether suit the student of Theosophy. The student-practitioner has to practise Divine Discipline and to maintain a proper balance between body and mind-soul. The body is the vehicle of the embodied Self. Desires linger in the body; what effects the desires have on the body and what the body has on the desires — the balance between soul and body very greatly depends on this. Bodily exercises, therefore, have to be planned by the student, taking into account the desires, the thoughts and the will. "Thy Soul cannot be hurt but through thy erring body," says *The Voice of the Silence*. The Divine Discipline is founded upon the principle of the Golden Mean, and so we must exercise the body gently and not roughly, keeping especially in mind the brain and the cerebro-spinal system.

Those who know that life has a higher purpose than physical survival, needs must view with apprehension certain objectionable trends medical science is taking. Among them must be mentioned the experiments with transfusion of the blood of dead persons into live ones. The Mexican doctor, Dr. José Angel Perz Vazquez of Matamoros, who is trying to develop a technique for such transfusions, said, however, in an interview published in *Novedades* (January 20), that a great risk of the system was that the dead donor could have been suffering from a disease which might be passed on to the recipient.

Blood transfusion itself is fraught with risks — and these not merely physical. Giving the blood of a dead person to one living has still greater dangers, and Theosophy opposes it for the same reasons as it opposes the transplantation of organs from the dead to the living. (See "In the Light of Theosophy" for February 1968.)

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