

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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HIS OWN BASE

A STUDY IN “LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME”

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THE student-practitioner of Theosophy goes through three well-defined stages, the last necessarily including the other two. First he learns (and teaches) the Philosophy; secondly, he finds this is not enough and he makes efforts to apply that which is learnt; thirdly, he finds himself, *i.e.*, finds his own base of which Mr. Judge speaks: “If they get on their *own* base they will not be shaken off.” (p. 133)

The necessity of this last stage is not generally seen while the joy of studying and teaching, and the personal thrill of endeavouring to practise a different way of life fill the student's thoughts. But sooner or later the winds of despair will rage over him when he finds that even the endeavour to apply his knowledge *is not enough*. He may practise all the Paramitas as far as he is able, but — “Fair virtues waste with time.” The knowledge of Reincarnation and Karma makes his life more logical and therefore easier — but then what? He helps others to alter their outlook on life, but he begins to find that he cannot pass on to them assurance, courage, stability. He hugs his knowledge more closely, becomes emphatic in teaching it, and drives himself to desperate efforts to *keep going*. But he is not at peace; he does not feel secure. Unless he can take the next step he will become one of the failures of which the Theosophical Movement has so many. Failures in a relative sense, of course, but still failures when we consider the urgency of the times in which we live.

How shall he take the next step? Fortunate is the student if someone calls his attention to *Letters That Have Helped Me*. He may have *read* the book many times, but now he must reread it as a

book of instruction. Not only will he find there knowledge of the philosophy and practical examples of its application, but also the very advice he now needs.

During his years of study and application he must have found "one spot he may call his own," *i.e.*, one item in the Teaching that he feels instinctively to be true, and he has been advised to "increase his faith in it." That spot is his starting point. He is assured that:

That spot is enough. . . . It is the little flame of intuition we have allowed to burn, that we have fostered with care. (p. 65)

Now he no longer needs to rush to the books to gain more and more knowledge, nor need he go through the emotional storms consequent on his failures to practise what he has learnt. He need no longer rush out to help others. He begins to adopt a new attitude. He has to "retreat within his own heart and there keep firmly still" (p. 133). A most difficult task! It is fairly easy to flow with the current of Life; there is even a thrill of sorts in combating it, but it is a very different matter to keep one's balance while in the midst of the currents. "That sinking down of your thoughts to the centre is practice," says Mr. Judge (p. 20), and he tells the student:

Arouse, arouse in you the meaning of "Thou art That." Thou art the Self. . . . You have read it before, but now try to realize it more and more each day. (p. 136)

Standing thus on his own base he sees that the great Law of Karma sweeps around him and through him, using him as its instrument for its purposes, and he senses the appalling truth that

we can never as human beings rise above being the instruments through which that which is called Good and Evil comes to pass. (p. 27)

No wonder Mr. Judge wrote that "One must inculcate in oneself a great compassion which will include oneself also" (p. 140) and H.P.B. (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 235) that "One of the fundamental rules of Theosophy is, justice to oneself — viewed as a unit of collective humanity, not as a personal self-justice."

He senses the truth now that "Were no man to hurt his brother Karma-Nemesis would have neither cause to work for, nor weapon to act through" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 643), and he vows never to allow himself to be the instrument of evil, unhappiness and so

row in the world.

Two difficulties arise. First, he does not know what *is* good or evil in all cases; secondly, he has to alter his relationship with his fellow-men. When he first studied Theosophy he spoke of it in and out of season, to all and sundry, but he found that this was not always good. When he started practising Theosophy he criticized all others who were still making the errors he had made only the day before! Managing his own life in terms of his own knowledge, experience and consciousness, he has expected all others to manage their lives in his way — forgetting that even he can only act *up* to his own knowledge, experience and consciousness and hence is not perfect! Now he begins to see that others must be allowed to act up to their *own* knowledge, experience and consciousness unless this interferes with another's liberty. What he had before thought was "helping" others now appears in its true guise — as interference. Says Mr. Judge:

If people will only let each other alone and go about their own business quietly all will be well. . . . In this it is of the highest importance that we should detach our *minds* (as well as our tongues) from the duties and acts of others whenever those are outside of our own. If you can find this fine line of action and inaction you will have made great progress. (pp. 129-130)

Is he therefore to stop helping humanity? Far from it, but the way is harder and brings him no emotional reaction. He must become a centre of light; a picture gallery from which shall be projected on the astral light such scenes, such influences, such thoughts, as may influence many for good. (p. 78)

Still, as a human being, he is the instrument of Karma and he must learn to know what will bring good and what evil.

It is now that he turns to review his attitude to the great Helpers of Humanity. Devotion and aspiration take on a new aspect. He has, of course, realized that devotion and aspiration put him "into a condition in which aid can be given to him" (p. 120), but he has been rather vague as to what line that aid would take. Now he knows. He needs Their help to help the world, and, strangely wonderful, They need his. "Masters need Companions," says *The Ocean of Theosophy*. Many a phrase in the philosophy becomes alive with new meanings. He sees himself as the connecting link between Their

world and this vale of sorrow; he empties his heart of desires, and desires one thing only — to assimilate the Master.

Those who can to any extent assimilate the Master, to that extent they are the representatives of the Master, and have the help of the Lodge in its work. (p. 122)

Life takes a new turn. He hears its burden, not only with patience, equanimity, resignation, as before, but with joy, for, being on the path of return, he faces all the experiences that come to him instead of feeling them chasing him from behind. He sees them for what they are — phantoms he has created, ugly no doubt, but when dispersed they unveil the same One SELF. In wrestling with them he has been wrestling with God. Each phantom helps him to prove his own strength, and only when all are conquered will his “base” have become purified of the personal element, a radiant focus for the forces of Good.

HE who would be an occultist must not separate either himself or anything else from the rest of creation or *non-creation*. For, the moment he distinguishes himself from even a vessel of dishonour, he will not be able to join himself to any vessel of honour. He must think of himself as an infinitesimal something, not even as an individual atom, but as a part of the world-atoms as a whole, or become an illusion, a nobody, and vanish like a breath leaving no trace behind. As illusions, we are separate, distinct bodies, living in masks furnished by Maya. Can we claim one single atom in our body as distinctly our own? Everything, from spirit to the tiniest particle, is part of the whole, at best a link. Break a single link and all passes into annihilation; but this is impossible.

—H.P.B. (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*)

SELF-RELIANCE

[This article appeared in *The Irish Theosophist* for May 1896, under the well-known signature "Æ" (pseudonym of the Irish poet George William Russell), soon after W. Q. Judge's passing on the 21st of March of that year.—Eds.]

PERHAPS it is now while we are in a state of transition, when old leaders have gone out of sight and the new ones have not taken their place in the van, that we ought to consider what we are in ourselves. Some questions we ought to ask ourselves about this movement: where its foundations were laid? what the links are? where is the fountain of force? what are the doors? You answer the first and you say "America," or you say "India." But if that old doctrine of emanations be true it was not on earth but in the heaven world where our minds immortal are linked together. There it was born and well born, and grew downwards into earth, and all our hopes and efforts and achievements here but vaguely reflect what was true and perfect in intent above, a compact of many hearts to save the generations wandering to their doom. Wiser, stronger, mightier than we were those who shielded us in the first years; who went about among us renewing memory, whispering in our hearts the message of the meaning of life, recalling the immemorial endeavour of the spirit for freedom, knowledge, mastery. But it is our movement and not the movement of the Masters only. It is our own work we are carrying on; our own primal will we are trying to give effect to. Well may the kingly sages depart from bodies which were torment and pain to them. They took them on for our sakes, and we may wave them a grateful farewell below and think of the spheres invisible as so much richer by their presence, more to be longed for, more to be attained. I think indeed they are nearer heart and mind there than here. What is real in us can lose no brotherhood with such as they through death. Still flash the lights from soul to soul in ceaseless radiance, in endless begetting of energy, thought and will, in endless return of joy and love and hope. I would rather hear one word of theirs in my heart than a thousand in my ears. I would rather think of my guide and captain as embodied in the flame than in the clay. Although we may gaze on the grave, kindly face living no more, there can be no cessation of the magic influence, the breath of fire, which flowed aforetime from the

soul to us. We feel in our profoundest hearts that he whom they call dead is living, is alive for evermore.

He has earned his rest, a deep rest, if indeed such as he cease from labour. As for us, we may go our ways assured that the links are unbroken. What did you think the links were? That you knew someone who knew the Masters? Such a presence and such a Companion would indeed be an aid, a link. But I think wherever there is belief in our transcendent being, in justice, our spiritual unity and destiny, wherever there is brotherhood, there are unseen ties, links, shining cords, influx from and unbroken communication with the divine. So much we have in our own natures, not enough to perfect us in the mysteries, but always enough to light our path, to show us our next step, to give us strength for duty. We should not always look outside for aid, remembering that some time we must be able to stand alone. Let us not deny our own deeper being, our obscured glory. That we accepted these truths, even as intuitions which we were unable intellectually to justify, is proof that there is that within us which has been initiate in the past, which lives in and knows well what in the shadowy world is but a hope. There is part of ourselves whose progress we do not comprehend. There are deeds done in unremembered dream, and a deeper meditation in the further unrecorded silences of slumber. Downward from sphere to sphere the Immortal works its way into the flesh, and the soul has adventures in dream whose resultant wisdom is not lost because memory is lacking here. Yet enough has been said to give us the hint, the clue to trace backwards the streams of force to their fount. We wake in some dawn and there is morning also in our hearts, a love, a fiery vigour, a magnetic sweetness in the blood. Could we track to its source this invigorating power, we might perhaps find that as we fell asleep some olden memory had awakened in the soul, or the Master had called it forth, or it was transformed by the wizard power of Self and went forth to seek the Holy Place. Whether we have here a guide, or whether we have not, one thing is certain, that behind and within the "Father worketh hitherto." A warrior fights for us. Our thoughts tip the arrows of his quiver. He wings them with flame and impels them with the Holy Breath. They will not fail, if we think clear. What matters it if in the mist we do not see where they strike. Still they are of avail. After a time the mists will arise and show a clear field; the shining powers will salute us

as victors.

I have no doubt about our future; no doubt but that we will have a guide and an unbroken succession of guides. But I think their task would be easier, our way be less clouded with dejection and doubt, if we placed our trust in no hierarchy of beings, however august, but in the Law of which they are ministers. Their power, though mighty, ebbs and flows with contracting and expanding nature. They, like us, are but children in the dense infinitudes. Something like this, I think, the Wise Ones would wish each one of us to speak: "O Brotherhood of Light, though I long to be with you, though it sustains me to think you are behind me, though your aid made sure my path, still, if the Law does not permit you to act for me today, I trust in the One whose love a fiery breath never ceases; I fall back on it with exultation; I rely upon it joyfully." Was it not to point to that greater life that the elder brothers sent forth their messengers, to tell us that it is on this we ought to rely, to point us to grander thrones than they are seated on? It is well to be prepared to face any chance with equal mind; to meet the darkness with gay and defiant thought as to salute the Light with reverence and love and joy. But I have it in my heart that we are not deserted. As the cycles wend their upward way the heroic figures of the dawn reappear. Some have passed before us; others in the same spirit and power will follow: for the new day a re-arisen sun and morning stars to herald it. When it comes let it find us, not drowsy after our night in time, but awake, prepared and ready to go forth from the house of sleep, to stretch hands to the light, to live and labour in joy, having the Gods for our guides and friends.

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METAPHYSICS is not yet officially a science, recognized as such. But it is going to be. . . . At Edinburgh, I was able to affirm before 100 physiologists that our five senses are not our only means of knowledge and that a fragment of reality sometimes reaches the intelligence in other ways. . . . Because a fact is rare is no reason to hold that it does not exist.

—CHARLES ROBERT RICHTER

THE THANKFUL HEART

A thankful heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent of all the other virtues.—CICERO

We can be thankful to a friend for a few acres or a little money; and yet for the freedom and command of the whole earth, and for the great benefits of our being, our life, health, and reason, we look upon ourselves as under no obligation.—SENECA

I hate ingratitude more in man
Than lying, vainness, babbling, drunkenness,
Or any taint of vice whose strong corruption
Inhabits our frail blood.

—SHAKESPEARE

GRATITUDE is a virtue most extolled and yet most departed from. In Occultism, its lack is counted not merely as a defect, but as a crime. The Master-Custodians of the Secret Wisdom have declared that ingratitude is not one of Their vices.

Gratitude or devotion — the one cannot be conceived of without the other — is an emotion innate in the heart of each human being. It is a child's first instinctive feeling for its mother and nurse; the first and foremost motor in man's nature. As the child grows — and if it is a normal and sound growth — gratitude to others should become as habitual as the reception of benefits is constant. But although every normal person recognizes it to be a moral requisite, its wider significance and deeper import is often overlooked.

The dictionary defines "gratitude" as "recognition of benefits received"; "appreciation of the kindness of a benefactor and inclination to return it." Recognition and appreciation call for the interplay of heart and mind. Gratitude is not only the memory but the homage of the heart. Why need there be thankfulness upon receiving what we consider to be our "due"? Does not the answer lie in the fact that nothing can come of itself? Life is sustained on the principles of unity and interdependence. Life is, or should be, a constant exchange of benefits. Without widespread co-operation and brotherly assistance from all directions and from many remote places we could hardly live! Are not all those who serve us in one way or another entitled to a recognition and appreciation of "benefits received"?

the possibility of the nebulae in the universal Ether being transformed into heavenly bodies. The comparison, in truth, is rather too coarse. For here we have the passing of one substance into another substance — therefore only a transformation of form. But what is the transformation of Force into substance! What is it? A fallacy? But Force is not a *nothing*. Analysed by our mind apart from substance, it is something different from matter — were it even by its negative properties alone. Our conception of God or — as with the atheists — of Cosmos (their god), can be the only conception devoid of negation; everything else in the world, conceived of or represented to ourselves, must, to be comprehensible, carry into our mind its own negation.

A conception of limitless space finds its negation in measurable objects and formations; a conception of infinite time is negated by the hours and the minutes; life finds its negation in death; and, in order to make even one of the properties of Divine Nature — Good — clearer to our conception, the creation of the Devil (Evil) has been found necessary. Therefore the conception of Substance calls forth in our mind its opposite principle — Force. Without force, without its attributes antagonistic to Substance, the latter itself, with its inertia² and other properties, would become inconceivable.

within an appearance—the molecule being in occult philosophy but a figment of that which is called *maya* or illusion. The atom informs the molecule, as life, spirit, soul, mind, inform Man. Therefore is the atom all these, and Force itself, as Dr. Pirogoff suspected. During the life-cycle, the atom represents, according to the geometrical combinations of its groupings in the molecule, life, force (or energy), mind and will; for each molecule in space, as each cell in the human body, is only a microcosm within (to it) a relative macrocosm. That which Science refers to as Force, conservation of energy, correlation, continuity, etc., etc., is simply the various effects produced by the presence of atoms, which are, in fact, in their collectivity, simply the (spiritual) sparks on the manifested plane, thrown out by the *Anima Mundi*, the Universal Soul or Mind (*Maha-Buddhi*, *Mahat*) from the plane of the Unmanifested. In short, the atom may be described as a compact or crystallized point of divine Energy and Ideation.—[TRANSL.]

² Claude Bernard, one of the greatest physiologists of this age, said that organized matter was *per se* inert—even living matter in that sense, he explains, “has to be considered as lacking spontaneity,” although it can become and manifest its special properties of life under the influence of excitation, for, he adds, “living matter is irritable.” If so, then the materialistic negation of life and mind *outside* and *independent of* matter becomes a fallacy condemned out of its own mouth. For to excite it, there must be an agent outside of matter to do so. And if there is such an agent to irritate or excite matter, then the materialist and physiologist can no longer say that “life is a property of matter or of living organized substance. Dr. Paul Gibier—the latest scientific convert to transcendental psychology—objects to this and says that “if organized, living matter were indeed *inert*, demanding an exterior stimulant to manifest its properties, it would become incompre-

But we can and — in order to obtain a clearer conception — we must transform the negative (*i.e.*, non-material) property of force into a positive one, taking as our starting point its chief attribute — action and motion. In truth, to my conception of limitless space and time is united that of motion; time — is the abstract motion in space, that is to say, force acting in space and transforming itself, by this very action, into substance.³ Can I expect that my conceptions of such abstract subjects should be as clear and as definite as my sensuous perceptions, since we often have moreover only a hazy representation even of the most material things? Shall I, because my conceptions of something are hazy, conclude that this misty image is therefore false and nonsensical? And do we not know of hallucinations, on the other hand, of phantoms I mean, which are as real and as indisputable to the victims of such visions as life itself?

Now when a conception is not very clear, we can help it with comparisons, and it seems to me that I can find no better comparison for my intellectual conception of the origin of life than light. Though the source of light is known to us, yet in fact its distance from us is so great, and its effects upon us and everything with which we are surrounded so varied and so numerous, that in daily life we refer almost without thinking to these properties of light as if they were the properties of bodies. Thus we think and say that such or another colour belongs to this or another body instead of referring it to the solar rays; though, in fact, if a body or an object is coloured at all, it is because its atoms retain, reflect or refract the beams of light. These same beams can reach us and become visible, sometimes whole centuries and millenniums after the source of their light has been extinguished. The oscillations of the luminous ether — something ill-resembling substance, capable of penetrating through substances, impenetrable to every other matter, and imparting to them new properties — seem to me very illustrative of the action of the

hensible how the hepatic cell could continue, as well demonstrated, to secrete sugar long after the liver had been separated from the body." Occultism says that there is no such thing as inert, dead or even inorganic matter. As sponge is the product of water, created, living and dying in the water, whether ocean or lake, after which it changes form but can never die in its particles or elements, so is matter. It is created and informed by life in the Ocean of Life, which LIFE is but another name for Universal Mind or *Anima Mundi*, one of the "four faces of Brahma" on this manifested plane of ours, the visible universe. [TRANSL.]

³ Occult philosophy explains the primeval origin of the manifested universe precisely in this way.—[TRANSL.]

life-principle.

December 26th, 1879

Self-confabulation is very attractive to me. However I may be convinced that I shall never be able to explain my cosmic concepts to myself completely and fully, yet the very attempt of trying to do so has a certain charm to my mind.

Yes; I represent to myself the brain as a glass prism, with the property of decomposing and breaking up rays of light. If I did not dread being laughed at for my fancies, I would call the brain a prism of the Universal Mind;⁴ and if my comparison is just, then it is a function of the brain to receive and pass through itself the vibrations or actions of this universal Force. But, once that I place myself on the standpoint of a materialist empiricist, I see an impassable chasm between my illustration and the view to which sceptical empiricism is unavoidably brought from the first start. Setting aside the truism that *comparaison n'est pas raison*, is there, I ask, as an empiricist, the smallest sense in the expressions I use, such as the oscillations of Force, a cosmic mind without any cosmic brain, energy without substance, a life-principle outside of any organism? What is all this, from the standpoint of an empiricist, but an ideological series of empty words?

I grant it all. To reconcile pure empiricism with the existence of force outside matter, of thought without brain, of a life-principle apart from organized bodies — is unthinkable. It is a *contradictio in adjecto*. And those empiricists who, stopping at facts, do not venture beyond the direct speculations derived from these facts, are quite right in my opinion. I was as they are myself, and am even still so; but no sooner do we pass outside the magic circle, no sooner do we attempt to solve the mysterious *x*, than the deductions of empiricism prove not a whit more sensible than any ideological theory. Nor ought we to forget that what we call *sense* is neither a firm nor an unconditionally correct standard of truth. Though the laws of thought have been and will at all times be the same, and two and two will ever make four, yet the same subjects do not appear to all invariably sensible or senseless. That which a hundred years ago was regarded as evident and undeniable to all, may appear as

⁴ Which would be perfectly correct.—[TRANSL.]

nonsensical to those who live at the end of the nineteenth century. It is not only owing to the accumulation of scientific knowledge in our minds that the meaning of things changes, but the change may be likewise often due to a psychic epidemic, and other external conditions — including fashion. As to fashion, it appears invariably as an epidemic. Speaking in general, our good sense, and along with it our world-conception, is subject to a law of periodicity, a law which plays a very important part in our own as well as in the universal life. 'The old and the forgotten appear again at certain periods, though of course under a new form; new and accumulated experiences call forth into the world things buried in oblivion, imparting to them freshness and new forces. That "that only is new which is well forgotten" is an aphorism of a sceptic which has a great deal of truth in it. The periodical and for long centuries time-honoured dominion of the various clashing doctrines in science and religion, among many nations, shows us forcibly how far we can trust our reason and sense. Modern empiricism is also a doctrine in its way, though its followers do not like to be viewed as doctrinaires. And no doctrine, though it should, like empiricism, claim only that which is strictly based on fact, can avoid being one-sided. Otherwise, it would not have dominion over all others, it would not follow strictly one and ever the same direction, regarding it as infallible; but would admit the merits of other doctrines and recognize the dignity of their convictions based on something higher and outside merely sensuous facts. We call that which contradicts our convictions — absurd. Decidedly so; *our convictions, not our knowledge*, for convictions influence people more strongly than any knowledge.⁵

December 28th, 1879

If our reason, then, depends on our modern convictions, and these in their turn are only temporary, and, owing to their strength and obstinacy, not always co-ordinate with our knowledge, then no dominant doctrine (or religion), no school of thought, ought to look down upon any other doctrine or school, however the teachings of the latter may contradict those of the former. Nor does it befit an impartial mind, sure of itself, beyond credulity and the danger of

⁵ *Preconception and prejudice* would render the idea better, perhaps, than "conviction." But Dr. Pirogoff judged people by what he saw on the Continent and in Russia and was fortunately not acquainted with the national *cant* of Great Britain.— [TRANSL.]

It is customary among some people to say grace at meals; but most of us rarely feel gratitude for the many other blessings of life. In his essay "Grace Before Meat" Charles Lamb wrote with characteristic humour:

It is not . . . easy to be understood, why the blessing of food — the act of eating — should have had a particular expression of thanksgiving annexed to it, distinct from that implied and silent gratitude with which we are expected to enter upon the enjoyment of the many other various gifts and good things of existence.

I own that I am disposed to say grace upon twenty other occasions in the course of the day besides my dinner. I want a form for setting out upon a pleasant walk, for a moonlight ramble, for a friendly meeting, or a solved problem. Why have we none for books, those spiritual repasts — a grace before Milton — a grace before Shakespeare — a devotional exercise — proper to be said before reading the "Faerie Queen"?

Gratitude should find expression in three directions: towards those above us, towards those below us, and towards our equals.

Above us are our Elder Brothers, those Great and Peaceful Ones, those Super-Men infinitely superior to us in wisdom, peace and power, who ever strive to alleviate the sum of human misery. They 'live regenerating the world like the coming of spring.' Having themselves crossed the ocean of embodied existence, They help us deluded mortals, out of boundless pity and compassion that seeks no return, to cross it. Is not silent gratitude the least thing we can do for Them? What better expression of gratefulness can there be towards a Buddha, a Christ, a Krishna — to name but a few of those who have come out in the public world and whose life and teachings have uplifted the level of consciousness of millions upon millions all through the ages — than energizing ourselves to live up to Their message and passing on to those who know still less than we do the Gift of Knowledge? What can be a better "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace" than our effort to live & benefit mankind?

Then below us are our younger brothers, beings in need of help and support — not only human beings, but all the kingdoms below the human from whom we receive benefits and whom we ought to help in return by becoming co-workers with Nature. The life-giving

sun and the beneficent rain, the productive earth and the invigorating air, are all gifts which Nature like a true Mother bestows on us. Bountiful Nature has much more to give, which is ours for the taking. If we had but eyes to see and ears to hear we would find "tongues in trees, books in the running brooks, sermons in stones and good in everything." Fruits and vegetables give sustenance to the body; flowers and trees bring joy and beauty into life with colour and perfume and shade. The animal kingdom too has its usefulness to man. Surely sincere gratitude is due for everything used and enjoyed! So the *Gita* enjoins that there be mutual nourishing between man and the "gods" who minister to his needs, stating: "He who enjoyeth what hath been given unto him by them, and offereth not a portion unto them, is even as a thief." Instead of helping Nature and working on with her, man in his ingratitude exploits and robs her and breaks her laws. Have we any cause for complaint when Nature rebels and earthquakes, floods, famines, droughts, diseases and the like visit the people of the earth?

Among our equals, our brothers of the human family, many, many serve us in the manifold walks of life and are entitled to all the help and guidance we can give them. The countless human agencies involved in providing for us the necessities and comforts of life, all those who have helped us grow in body and mind, the generations of men who have gone before us and have left us a legacy of knowledge and skills of various kinds and whose accumulated experience we are availing ourselves of today — all these should evoke our gratitude, gratitude for being able to give as well as to receive.

But the weed of ingratitude, the outcome of the seeds of envy, egotism, pride and covetousness, takes root in many a human heart and instead of striving to repay our fellow brothers for the benefits received from them, far too often we try to grab as many of the good things of life as we can for ourselves, depriving others of their rightful due. If all human hearts were grateful hearts would we have competition and rivalry, strifes and bloodshed, in the family of man? Would people be plundered and exploited on all sides often by appeal to their nobler traits, not only in the sphere of commerce and industry, but also in the name of religion or of science of patriotism and what not?

Let us reflect on the fact that we can claim nothing as "ou

own." There is not a thing we use or enjoy but is a gift. Our bodies are gifts; our minds too are gifts. Life itself is a gift. He who receives gifts and offers nothing in return has aptly been called "creation's blot, creation's blank." Life often brings us seeming misfortune or affliction, but let us be thankful even for this, for it offers us opportunity for building stamina and strengthening virtue, and serves to brighten all our future days. To have a heart replete with thankfulness is to be both good and happy; for such an one life is ever a contest of smiles.

Sweet is the breath of vernal showers,
The bee's collected treasures sweet,
Sweet music's melting fall, but sweeter yet
The still small voice of gratitude.

I DEDICATE today this Institute as not merely a laboratory but a temple... In the pursuit of my investigations I was unconsciously led into the border region of physics and physiology. To my amazement, I found boundary lines vanishing, and points of contact emerging, between the realms of the living and the non-living. Inorganic matter was perceived as anything but inert; it was a thrill under the action of multitudinous forces... In time the leading scientific societies of the world accepted my theories and results, and recognized the importance of the Indian contribution to science. Can anything small or circumscribed ever satisfy the mind of India? By a continuous living tradition and a vital power of rejuvenescence, this land has readjusted itself through unnumbered transformations. Indians have always arisen who, discarding the immediate and absorbing prize of the hour, have sought for the realization of the highest ideals in life—not through passive renunciation but through active struggle.

—DR. JAGDISH CHANDRA BOSE, at the opening
of the Institute that bears his name

PROBLEMS OF LIFE

FROM "THE DIARY OF AN OLD PHYSICIAN"

BY N. I. PIROGOFF*

V

ON THE INDUCTIVE METHODS AND FANCY

[Reprinted from *Lucifer*, April and May 1891.—EDS.]

December 25th, 1879

CHRISTMAS DAY. Have not touched this diary for a whole week, but tried instead, during my morning walks, to put in order and make my conceptions about the beginnings of life intelligible to myself.

I must make clear in my own mind how far I am a materialist. I like the name no more than did the Duke of Hesse, who could not bear to have his professor, Liebig, regarded as a materialist. "*Sein Vater war Materialist, nicht er,*" said the Duke to Liebig's accusers.

But what's in a name? The most important is to make one's conceptions of the Universe clear to oneself. Provided I do not lie to my own conscience in analysing and describing my thoughts, what does it matter whether I stand as a materialist or a fool in the sight of others?

I have not been true to my promise; I have read over what I had written a few days ago. And having done so, I find that I have included in my conceptions of the infinite, to which I relate space, time, force and life, the idea of substance also. I sincerely confess that substance seems to me as infinite as are space, time, force and life. It appears to me, that is to say, it does not seem impossible to my imagination to conceive that substance may get transformed into force, and force into substance. Force must be formless, but matter also in its ultimate boundaries can hardly be imagined as having form. The life-principle, too, being something quite as limitless and formless as Force, in my conception, must have the properties of Force and be transformed into material atoms,¹ just as we admit

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

¹ Our philosophy teaches us that atoms are *not* matter; but that the smallest molecule composed of milliards of indivisible and imponderable atoms—*is* substance. Nevertheless the atom is not a mathematical point or a fiction; but verily an immutable Entity, a real

being influenced or carried away, to fear ridicule, receiving nicknames, or of being charged with retrogression, irrationality or even with absurdity. He who has lived and learned some things during a long life, may remember with what contempt the Hegelians and "Nature-philosophers" used to treat, in the twenties and thirties of the present century, the modest and (in those days) humbled empiricists; and now, the latter pay the ex-sages with the same coin. Beyond doubt it would be far safer and more hopeful to stop at the positive, and leaving aside everything that is inexplicable, accept for one's axiom that there are things in the world which are not subject to, nor concerned with, our sciences. But such a view, no sooner as it subjected to a rigid policy and enforced upon its followers, than it becomes practically a doctrine like any other. And doctrinarianism, as I have just said, is ever one-sided and narrow-minded. Is it possible to demand of every mind, that it should pledge itself not to touch this or that subject for thought; that it should stop just where it is commanded to stop by another mind? It is quite true, as positivism, I believe, maintains, that a certain logical sequence in the direction of thought and world-contemplation, answering to the degree of knowledge acquired in human life, is observed in the progress of Humanity. But such a sequence does not destroy the possibility of periodical returns of that or another of the intellectual tendencies that have preceded; as it is not given to our mind to come to a final conviction concerning the immutable truth of any mental tendency or direction. Our temporary convictions, though always stronger than our knowledge, are still less firmly rooted than are our sciences acquired by experiment and observation alone. Therefore, however positive the tendency of modern thought, it becomes impossible to reject a leaning toward the returns of an *ante-positive* tendency contrary to positivism, were it even in only another form. And here am I, who without disputing the merits of positive knowledge, or its fitness and adaptability to many of our high intellects, nevertheless regard it as unfit for my own mind, since, to become a positivist in knowledge, I would have to break entirely my whole nature.

However strongly reflection and observation may be trying to convince me that I cannot step out beyond the magic circle traced round me, that I am incapable of solving a single one of the problems that interest me — I cannot conquer my aspirations and re-

nounce occupying myself with problems that I consider the greatest questions of my life. With all that I am not a *doctrinaire*. To attempt to reduce to sense and order the creations of my fancy in the work of the solution of these problems does not mean for me to refuse to deal with empiricism (in its higher philosophical sense),⁶ or to despise it, to regard its methods as already worked out by science and observation, as false, of little importance, and to refuse it due credit. Not at all; I am one who so far back as in the twenties, when hardly from the University bench, having sensed the tendencies of the age, proceeded, in consequence, with great fervency to give myself up with my colleagues to the inductive methods of science, or empiricism as it was called, notwithstanding that we were still surrounded with the *débris* of natural and Hegelian philosophies. After faithfully serving this (in those days quite new) method of my (medical) science for over fifty years, I ended by perceiving that for a man of my turn of mind it was impossible to keep all the questions that interested me within the same method; in other words — to become a positivist in knowledge. Hence, I said to myself, “Stop! not a step farther.”

Thus it happens that I allow my fancy, helped by whatever scientific knowledge I may possess, to prove — to myself again, of course — that the *raison d'être* of everything subject to the senses, observation and experiment is hidden behind the scenery of the empirical stage, and is, therefore, subject to my “fancy” alone and its reasoning powers, and that too, within the most narrow limits. Not being born an out and out positivist, I cannot repress in myself the desire of looking behind the back scenery; this, not only out of mere curiosity, but with the (very utilitarian) object of limiting the too impudent pretensions of experiment and “observation” to self-authority and interference in the solution of questions relating to that hidden *raison d'être*.

And now, I will begin with that at which I stopped, and which will at the first blush have appeared absurd.

December 29th, 1879

“*In's Innere der Natur dringt kein geschaffener Geist.*” This is

⁶ In Russia the word is not connected with charlatanry and quackery but is an accepted term in Science in the sense given it by Sir W. Hamilton, *i.e.*, “in philosophical language the term empirical means simply what belongs to, or is the product of experience and observation” *plus Science*.—[TRANSL.]

a grand, profoundly deep thought of the eminent naturalist. Indeed, however deep experiment and observation may penetrate into the organism, into the depths of nature, entrance is forbidden to them. Scientific progress makes experiment and observation more refined, intensifies the senses of the experimenter, helps him to substitute one sense for another in the best way possible, as for instance the replacing of sight by touch; it reveals also the mechanism and chemism of the organic store. But that which governs the latter; that which directs the forces at work toward the conservation and support of being in a certain, already pre-ordained (typical) form, *en gros et en detail*, in all the organic mass, in every genus, organ, and tissue — that is not subject to research and remains inexplicable. Nevertheless, ignore that principle or force — call it what you like — we cannot, however much we would like to do so. Our thought and fancy cannot help aspiring to connect in one way or another the manifestations of that Universal Principle with our own "I." We think only because we find thought in everything that surrounds us. Without the participation of thought and fancy no experiment could take place, and every observation and fact would prove senseless. Our thought and fancy, as the causes which lead to experiment and observation, are incapable, owing to the peculiarities of their nature, of limiting and contenting themselves with these two means of science. Our mind, having made use of experiment and observation, that is to say, having directed and forced our senses to act in a certain way, afterwards begins to examine its facts from every aspect, connects the impressions collected by our senses and gives them a new direction, and does this invariably with the participation of fancy.

December 30th, 1879

I am seeking to prove to myself that the intellectual process in me, now that I am trying to put in order and explain my view of the Universe, acts, in truth, on the same lines as it did when I could hear of nothing save scientific demonstration, when I based my reasoning on nothing but facts. It seems to me that the extremely marked difference made between *à priori* and *à posteriori* judgments, or between the deductive and the inductive methods, is purely doctrinarian and correct at best, only in extreme cases approaching folly. In reality both the *à priorist* and the empiricist⁷

⁷ Once more we remind the reader that Dr. Pirogoff uses the term "empiricism" only as a synonym of the inductive method, or research based on experiment and observation. — [TRANSL.]

take for the starting-point of their reasoning, fact — *factum*, something which for both also is incontestable because acquired from the first through senses and experiment. The only difference lies in this: the *àpriorist* gives ultimately another meaning to his facts and experiments, and, in the acquisition of his knowledge (unthinkable without experiment) does not limit himself to the impressions he gets from his external senses. With him the conclusions his mind arrives at, and the fancies outflowing therefrom, play a more important part than the direct sensuous perceptions. But no more does the so-called rational empiricism, among the followers of which I include also myself, content itself with the collection of impressions derived from the senses. While inventing various means of observation and experiment, checking one experiment by another, a rational empiricist inevitably opens the door to fancy, and his syllogisms and arguments can rarely, if ever, keep to the direct, independent connection with the sensuous perceptions he derives directly from his experiments and observations. There will be always a gap found between the syllogistic conclusion and the sensuous fact of perception; but, to fill up that gap as far as possible, we have no other means except an accumulation or repetition of kindred facts; and this process exposes us to errors, which are often more pernicious than the flights of our fancy, because they deceive us with their apparent accuracy.

On the whole, even that analysis of our cerebration which we have chosen to guide us, seems to me too childish. We regard sensations, attention (*perceptio*), memory, association of ideas, the faculty of expressing sensations by syllabled sounds, judgment and fancy as faculties acting separately and quite independently from each other. This, of course, is necessary for the comprehension of the mental process. But I regard the completely independent action of these functions as quite impossible in our normal state. True enough, one function may be more developed than the others, and therefore become to us more apparent than the rest, but it is still unthinkable without sensation. Ideation experienced without perception and memory would be but an ephemeral and resultless excitation; and without fancy or imagination, the most exact mathematical mode of thought is impossible. It is quite true that in favour of the separatism and localization of our psychical faculties we have the undeniable fact that, in the complete absence of one of such faculties, all the

rest continue to act. The very faculty of sensation, located by some physiologists in the optic lobes of the brain, is subdivided and localized into several other categories; thus the optic must have a separate place from the auditory sensation in the brain, and it is probable that the various sensations, furnished to us by our exterior senses, are centred in various portions of the head. But that which senses in us, the sensing principle, is something indivisible, integral and hardly ever changing during the course of life. It cannot be localized in this or that portion of the brain; nor is it quite correct to view the brain as its only seat.⁸ Of course when centring our attention on some object, when examining it through a telescope or under a microscope, it may seem to us that we only *look*, that we are, so to say, wholly transformed into sight. But when we dive deeper into this process of concentrated vision, then, to begin with, we find that to fix our attention on something means, in reality, to fix it on ourselves; *i.e.*, to direct the sensing Principle called "I" on the impressions conveyed by one or the other organ of sense. That it means to look with that *Ego* of ours into our eye, to hear with it through our ear; and, while assimilating these impressions, to take cognizance and judge of them at the same time, to represent them to ourselves in that or in another shape, to compare them with previous sensations received before by the same senses; all this imperatively demands that our *I* should be incessantly and simultaneously stimulating our various mental faculties to action.

Though during our sensuous perceptions, as, for instance, between hearing and seeing, it is possible to determine short intervals of time that divide these perceptions, if, like the astronomers, we listen and look at the same time; yet it is more than doubtful that we should ever find the means of seizing and determining the intervals that separate the sensation conveyed by the organ of sight, from that process which is simultaneously accomplished by our *I* and which

⁸ Mesmeric and hypnotic experiments have proven beyond doubt that sensation may become independent of the particular sense that is supposed to generate and convey it in a normal state. Whether science will ever be able to prove or not that thought, consciousness, etc., in short, the *sensus internus* has its seat in the brain, it is already demonstrated and beyond any doubt that under certain conditions our consciousness and even the whole batch of our senses can act through other organs, *e.g.*, the stomach, the soles of the feet, etc. The "sensing principle" in us is *an entity* capable of acting outside as inside its material body; and it is certainly independent of any organ in particular, in its actions, although during its incarnation it manifests itself through its physical organs.—[TRANSL.]

(process) is now termed by us unconscious cerebration — a term, in my opinion, considerably absurd, though it does refer to a special psychical process. It would be far better, I believe, to leave it nameless than to give it such a meaningless name.

It is precisely this would-be “unconscious” cerebration that follows all our sensuous feelings and emotions at the moment of their manifestation, which is the most characteristic property of the indivisibility and the homogeneity of our *I*. However much isolated and localized may be our senses of sight, hearing and touch, our memory, imagination, the faculties of speech, thought and will — our *I* is both something separate from them, and the container, at the same time, of all these faculties and feelings. Our *I* plays as on a piano, on the keys of those organs to the functions of which scientific empiricism attributes sight, hearing, memory, speech, etc., etc., and while expressing by its play these functions, it participates in them itself, as an indivisible, integral entity, connecting them and manifesting through them its own being.

(To be continued)

IF we ask, for instance, whether the position of the electron remains the same, we must say “no”; if we ask whether the electron is at rest, we must say “no”; if we ask whether it is in motion, we must say “no.”

—J. ROBERT OPPENHEIMER

It moves, it moves not,
It is far, and it is near,
It is within all this,
And it is outside of all this.

—*The Upanishads*

PRESENT AFFAIRS

“I have used the present affairs.”

—*Letters That Have Helped Me*

IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES —

FEW OR NONE, it is hoped, who take up a copy of this magazine, are unacquainted with the writings of Mr. W. Q. Judge, that great colleague of H.P.B. in her work for the Theosophical Movement. Borrowing some words of his own, we may liken these writings to “places of pilgrimage,” for they are indeed “centres of spiritual force from which radiate elevating influences,” which can be of infinite benefit to us in this troubled twentieth century. (*Echoes from the Orient*, p. 31)

We may think of spiritual force as operating only on a mystic level, but what makes Mr. Judge an invaluable teacher is his gift for bringing it to bear on the lesser matters, or what we consider to be lesser matters, of daily life. There, unfortunately, we are all too apt to leave it out of account, jogging along on the mundane level and viewing our circumstances with unperceptive eyes.

Mr. Judge deals with this straightaway. “The circumstances we are in *are* the best for us,” he says firmly, “if we will only so regard them. Try to do this and thus get the best out of them, and escape them in another life.” (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, American Ed., p. 168). *Why* these circumstances are the best is implicit. A former incarnation has brought us to them, and if used aright they will lead us onward to our next. For “the Ego, being guided and controlled by law, by justice, by the necessities of upward evolution . . . is sure to choose the earthly habitation that is most likely, out of all possible of selection, to give a Karma for the real advantage *in the end*.” (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 8)

So, if the present article were to finish here, we would already have a fully acceptable explanation both of our present state and of the need to make the best possible use of the opportunities it offers. Should we be dissatisfied with it, then, says Mr. Judge, “what is to learn is to be content, or, rather, resigned to ourselves and our limitations, even while striving to get above them.” (*Letters*, Am. Ed., p. 162)

In pointing this out, however, he does not ignore the likelihood

of its being difficult. He even aligns himself, as he often does, with the student he is writing to. "I am never, nor you, satisfied with ourselves, but we must be resigned to the limitations of our character as they appear to us." To another he gives the reminder, "Every situation ought to be used as a means"; and to a third, "It is your own mind you should watch, and not the circumstances in which you are placed." (*Letters*, Am. Ed., pp. 162, 39, 176)

Acceptance thus plays its part, a primary part, in our present circumstances, not, of course, to induce complacency, but, as it were, to provide a foothold while we brace ourselves to go forward. "We must begin where we are," says Mr. Judge. "We must examine our present possessions and grow to know our present powers and mental machinery. This done, we may proceed to see ourselves in the way that shall bring about the best result."

These words are typical of one who is never an unpractical visionary, typical too this quiet encouragement: "It is in and through the incidents of daily life, in work well done, in duties thoroughly performed, that we today can most readily make progress in the higher life — slow progress, it may be, but at any rate sure. These are stepping stones to better things." (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 30)

Now let us ask ourselves a few questions. Are we satisfied with our present way of life? With the kind of person we are? With the events that have befallen us? This is far from being unwholesome introspection. "True progress," says Mr. Judge, "is always dependent upon purity of motive and conquest of known or ascertainable defects" (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 70). If we can lay claim to these, self-analysis will not harm us, rather the reverse. Mr. Judge, in fact, points out to a correspondent: "Experience we *must* have, and if we accept it at our own hands we are wise" (*Letters*, Indian Ed., p. 26). Indeed he rates it so highly as to state, in another context, "Man's evolution after coming on the human stage is for the getting of experience" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 5*, p. 3). In such ways do we acquire self-knowledge, and let none equate self-knowledge with unwholesome brooding on our faults and foibles. Rather does understanding of our nature, of our attributes and weaknesses, enable us to judge to some extent how far our present birth provides the right circumstances for the true, the inner Self.

Does our scope seem limited as regards those same circumstances and the opportunities they offer or (as it may seem to us) withhold

Even so did Mr. Judge's when left alone in New York while H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott were in India. He spoke therefore from experience when in later years he wrote to a correspondent: "We have a duty to see that we do all we can *in our own place*" (*Letters*, Indian Ed., p. 14). Those last four words cover not only our immediate scene of action but also, if we care to take it so, our present incarnation, for which reason they are well worth bearing in mind.

Mr. Judge's object was always to *encourage*, and to point out the basic value of any situation, no matter how unpromising it might appear to the person involved in it. Here is his bracing reminder to some troubled one — troubled, apparently, by lack of scope and opportunity: "Wherever you are, you are a centre of force, and it is our own fault if you are useless anywhere."

Yes, circumstances, whate'er they be, are the working medium provided for that earthly life which is but a phase in the long saga that unwinds for us with every earthly birth. Some may remember a little of what has gone before; if so, they have a basis, a guiding line which they would do well to cherish and study. For others all seems new and perhaps unpleasing, and we can only hope that in their course they may light upon the guidance provided for this age by H.P.B. and W.Q.J.

None would deny that life, for many, can seem perplexing, unfair, and difficult. It would be less so if it could be accepted as purposeful, to which end the teachings of Theosophy are directed. We are, all of us, "the instruments through which that called Good and Evil come to pass"; and since the culmination of the vast process can be achieved only stage by stage, "I pray you," says Mr. Judge, our wise Guide, "to remove from your mind any distaste for present circumstances." (*Letters*, Indian Ed., pp. 27 and 41)

THE SHADOW belongs to the light as the evil belongs to the good,
and *vice versa*.

—C. G. JUNG

WORLDS VISIBLE AND INVISIBLE

A STUDY IN COMMUNICATIONS

THEOSOPHISTS are not alone in their belief in the existence of other worlds interpenetrating our own, and in the possibility and probability of communication between our world and these other ones. Fundamentally, the same beliefs have always been a deeply-rooted conviction among both civilized and aboriginal peoples.

All religions are grounded on this belief both in theory and in practice. Necromancy and black magic as well as beneficent Occult arts and sciences are founded upon it. The common belief in the survival of the dead, as well as all doctrines of pre-existence, are manifestations of the same faith, for if Souls exist prior to their physical birth they must have their habitat in time and space, while the same is true of those who die. These "other worlds," then, do not and cannot exist *outside* of space and time, even though metaphysical to us. They must be substantial, in at least the same sense that force and intelligence are substantial, and we know that both these can and do affect matter as known to us and are equally affected by it; in other words, matter, force and intelligence interpenetrate and interact. But the existence of different states and forms of matter, of force, of intelligence, proves that these terms are not, with us, fundamental. They are composites, and hence one state or form of matter can and does exist *within* other and coarser states and forms; and so with the finer forms and states of force and mind.

Our modern sciences are beginning to admit that Nature is animate, in whole and in every part; and those sciences themselves have been built up because of the interactions mentioned. This, in itself, is a species of intercommunication. It is inherently more reasonable to postulate Nature living than Nature dead. Scientists can no longer consider Nature as essentially one-sided, with all the intelligence on their side, but must seriously undertake to deal with the Mind in nature and all her manifestations. This is pure Occultism.

From these broad general considerations it becomes evident that both from the standpoint of pure theory and from that of available testimony, belief in intercommunication is exceedingly well fortified whatever may be thought of any particular communication claim.

to be from ex-human, sub-human, or preter-human sources.

It is no valid objection to the theory that all such communications come to us through human beings as their mouthpiece. The objection is answered by simply asking: How else could they come and be intelligible to us so long as we ourselves are unable to open up such communications directly for ourselves?

Another objection, raised rather against the doctrine as a practice than as a theory, is that it has ruined so many of its votaries, and has been the source of incalculable evils inflicted by human beings on each other. Admitting this objection, it is easily vanquished. Death and disease also inflict untold evils on the race: are birth and human life therefore inadvisable? The same as to all that we call good in the progress of humanity: every great religion, invention or discovery has given rise to an infinity of evils. Shall we therefore throw away our birthright to experience, to experiment, to learn, and to know what is that world in which we live and of which we are a part? The rises as well as the destructions of civilizations have been concurrent with and in large part, at least, due to the virtues inculcated, as well as the excesses stimulated, by revelations professedly coming from Beings of another order than those of the Kingdoms of Nature partially known to us.

What does plainly appear from all history is that this subject should be approached, if at all, with the extreme of precaution and preparation. We know that these are well-advised even in the affairs of this world. How much more, then, must they be essential prerequisite conditions for one who proposes to himself to experiment with worlds and beings totally unknown to him? If these other worlds do in fact interpenetrate space and time along with ourselves, if intercommunication is possible, it must follow that all these worlds possess laws, principles, forces and substances in common, as well as those characteristics peculiar to each, and which distinguish the one from the others. Surely, then, the right preparation must consist in finding out what these common media are, before plunging headlong into the Unknown.

Most men are satisfied with mere belief in "other worldliness," as they are satisfied with mere belief in the things of this world concerning which other men have knowledge, not opinions. Initial curiosity gratified, cursory doubts set at rest, a formula of faith adopted, the average man goes on his way, intent on his purely

mundane preoccupations and little affected by his belief in invisible entities. Some upsetting shock may arouse him, but in such case his usually overpowering tendency is simply to seek this possible aid in regaining his worldly equilibrium.

But there are other men — many of them, in point of number if not of percentage — who find that, once their attention is turned to this subject, they cannot stop, cannot return to their former attitude of mind. Some inner affinity lures them on, whether in right or wrong direction.

In right or wrong direction — for the investigator soon sees inescapably that there are two poles to this subject, two currents of action set up by these communications — as indeed must be the case since action of any kind is possible only by opposing means, and the mere theory of evolution implies its opposite, retardation or retrogression. But it is to be strictly noted that these two distinctions of right and wrong direction apply only to the observer, not to the actual practitioner of Occultism. The more one studies what has been classically designated “the varieties of religious experience,” the more one finds that each one who embarks on the path of Occultism is irrevocably convinced that he is “right.” The wizard is just as certain that his path is the only true one as is the wonder-working saint, the medium as the Yogi, the “Brother of the Shadow” as the Mahatma. Once fully embarked on the sea of Occultism, one or other of these subtle currents quickly carries the devotee out of sight of all the familiar charts and landmarks of human life and conduct. He becomes, in no metaphorical sense, “the law unto himself.”

His first step taken, the proof that it is a first step is at once apparent, for there is then no difficulty in sifting out the genuine from the pseudo-practitioners of Occultism, the merely book-learned from those who speak out of first-hand experience, whatever the nature of their messages. He has already found out for himself that only the dabbler, the tyro, the charlatan, and the faker can start with—

“one foot on sea and one on shore,
to one thing constant never.”

One could easily spend a lifetime poring over books dealing with Magic in its various aspects, and at the end be no wiser practically than when he began — less so, in fact, for books do not write their

selves. Most of them are written at second hand. Occultism, if one is to be an Occultist, must be studied as well as experienced at first hand. So the first step taken confers an enormous advantage, but at the same time discloses an enormous difficulty.

Must one go blindly, as one goes blindly into the darkness before birth and at death, or can the nature of the different paths be ascertained in advance with sufficient certainty to justify one in entering or in refusing to enter? For it is already evident that the fully committed Occultist cannot change from one path to the other — any more than one can leap from life into death, and rescind his choice. In fact, in sober fact, actual entrance into Occultism appears, from all that has been disclosed in regard to it, to be just that — a life-or-death matter. A life *and* death matter, rather, seeing that the various practitioners do live on in the human world, though dead to those considerations which govern human life for most men.

But to see all this is, in reality, to have taken the second step in Occultism, albeit without, of course, knowing it until the step has been taken. Seeing that he has to choose for himself; seeing that he has to choose without reservations; seeing in short that he, also, must accept the consequences of “becoming the law unto himself” — seeing all this, the investigator cannot fail to seize the overwhelming inference that there must be as many levels of life and action on “the other side” as there are in the familiar world. What he has learned already will tell him unmistakably that in that other world, however, there are no mixed natures, no compromises; that “over there” each entrant instantly, by force of some kind of a law of gravity in himself, finds his own appropriate level; that henceforth that level, whatever it is, becomes for him *reality*.

There are said to be three paths in Occultism, concerning each of which there exists an abundant literature, theoretical and practical, as well as a fourth path of which much is written and nothing whatever known in the world experimentally. To those at all interested in the subject of Intercommunications, or practical Occultism, some commentary on these various paths may be useful.

(To be continued)

SEEKING THE HIGHER EGO

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

WE READ continually in the Upanishads, the New Testament, the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the Chinese Scriptures and elsewhere, that the light is to be sought and found within ourselves. (1) What do they all mean? (2) How is this light found? (3) How may it be supposed to manifest itself when found?

Of so profound a subject only a mere outline can be given. Let us take the first of these questions. Physical man bases all his activities upon sense-perception, and upon what is then, to him, the legitimate gratification of all sensation. Under these conditions he finds himself involved in the most deadly strife with all other creatures; all are bent upon attaining the same end; the desire does not decrease with attainment, but immediately seeks other and wider ground, and the field, practically, is limited. Thus the strife may become more subtle, but not less fierce. It is just at this point that reason comes in. What is reason? It is the activity on the lowest plane of the true Ego, the man within. It is the first guide of physical, animal man. At first, it holds but slight control; man acts often blindly, the creature of the sensations and impulses of the moment, making but little effort against the influence of these. Afterwards, as reason secures its sway, man begins to act with calculation and foresight; but all this has only made him a more deadly foe to the rest of living things. He organizes and controls but to slay or betray; there is no difference to him between friend and foe, beyond what may serve his interests. Treachery is his great characteristic and he only keeps faith when it suits him. With the growth of reason the "virtues" appear; they are the result of enlightened self-interest; without them there can be no society or friendship.

At this stage also another factor appears: it is conscience. What is conscience? It is that mysterious faculty which silently points the road always by what we know; it never instructs, it draws up and arranges our knowledge of "right" and of "wrong," limited as it is; and is always on the side of what then appears "right." Hence it is given to us as the highest faculty of the mind. It presides over reason; for all reasoning is merely data for it. It is all we know of the Higher Ego.

This then is the light to be sought, and we are brought to our

second question — How? The conditions of its activity are silence and seclusion, and also the highest ratiocination of which the mind is capable, centred on the most exalted subjects upon which light is sought. Concentration and perseverance are necessary, and the constant habit of self-criticism, and courage to fulfil the judgments of this silent president. It will not pass higher judgments until those already given are fulfilled. It never revokes, and it never forgets, although the mind through which it is reflected may. This concentration and abstraction cannot take place whilst there is great activity of the sense life; hence simplicity of life, and absence of pleasure. Seeking on the outer plane, and also indifference to pain, have always been pointed out as necessary. Then the mind gaining proficiency in this, and becoming more and more accustomed to lay bare quickly all it knows, for judgment to be declared, and evincing ever-growing willingness to obey and see, finds itself at length one with that monitor; it draws no distinction between them. As at sunset on a tranquil sea, the golden light above cannot be separated from that below; and when it vanishes, it takes all its glory with it.

And now for the third question: How may it be supposed to manifest itself when found? The reply is obvious; the mind instantly, like a lightning flash, distinguishes between what, to it, is "right" and "wrong," "good" and "evil." The Light is flashed upon every proposition *instantly*. The man with small understanding becomes wise; the intellectual man becomes a giant of judgment. They both become unflinching and invincible, each according to his capacity. Moreover, where the mind is greatly withdrawn from the pursuits of the world, and brought diligently to bear upon all those many subjects with which it, as it were, paves for itself "the path of rectitude," throwing aside all those cobblestones which do not suit its purpose, although they may appear ornamental, the progress to enlightenment is extremely rapid; for that upon which the mind is entirely bent is soon acquired. "He necessarily becomes that on which his mind is fixed. This is the eternal mystery." (*Anugita*)

But for most men the letting go of the innumerable threads which bind to the changing and perishable, is so hard a task that the fixing of the mind, so relieved, upon the permanent and immutable, progresses slowly indeed.

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

It was more than coincidence that an international conference sat down in Bombay, this February to explore the growing convergence of science and spirituality. It was the seventh annual assembly of the International Transpersonal Association (ITA) — “transpersonal” being a word coined by Western psychiatrists to cover the process of “transcending personality.” The participants included leading scientists, psychologists, sociologists, mystics and other scholars of the world, their basic objective being to reveal through ancient wisdom and the great mystic traditions of the world, and through the latest findings in physics, consciousness studies, experimental psychotherapy, anthropology, parapsychology, etc., the fundamental unity underlying all of humanity and the material world. This belief in the inherent unity of all in nature, man included, is age-old. But now there is a systematic attempt to bring about the convergence of supposedly isolated and separate disciplines and to redefine our concepts of human nature and the nature of reality.

Founded in the United States of America, the I.T.A. is a scientific organization that seeks to bring together spirituality and science, mind and body, the unseen and the seen. The idea originated more than a decade ago as reaction to traditionally defined psychology, and as a response to Jung. Jung propagated that the individual is capable of transcending the personal self, or ego, into different planes of consciousness, mystical in nature — an area Western thought did not recognize, but which is fundamental to all Oriental spirituality.

The next reaction came as a result of pure scientific inquiry. Quantum physics came into being, revolutionizing all thought. It interpreted all matter as pure energy. “Energy, God, the world force . . . from man, the individual consciousness, all matter in the universe . . .”

Some of the representative groups in the ITA membership include: (1) psychiatrists and psychologists interested in consciousness research, mystical states and other experiences of non-ordinary realities; (2) physicians who are trying to overcome the mechanistic and overspecialized approaches of medicine and to develop a holistic understanding of human beings, including the psychological, interpersonal, social and spiritual dimensions; (3) transpersonally oriented anthropologists studying development of paranormal abilities and

phenomena, aboriginal religions, mythologies, etc.; (4) educators interested in the application of the principles and techniques of transpersonal psychology to education; (5) theologians, religious teachers and priests, particularly those interested in first-hand experiences of religious and mystical realities; (6) sociologists, economists, ecologists, politicians, philosophers and members of other groups trying to develop conceptual systems and practical approaches that would help to overcome the antagonism between individuals and groups separated by sexual, racial, cultural, social, and political differences or economic interests; (7) scientists exploring the philosophical implications of modern physics, the nature of reality, the relationship between consciousness and matter, and the convergence between physics, consciousness research and mysticism; (8) musicians, painters, sculptors, poets and other artists who are interested in conveying through various media the nature of transpersonal philosophy or transpersonal experiences; (9) individuals who have paranormal abilities, or have had episodes of unusual states of consciousness.

Dr. Stanislav Grof, President of the ITA, briefly reviewed in his introductory lecture the recent developments in Western science that made the seventh ITA conference possible:

Western science, dominated during the last three centuries by mechanistic and materialistic philosophy, has created a model of the universe that resembles a gigantic and totally deterministic supermachine. It describes the world as an infinitely complex assembly of solid and discrete material particles and objects interacting in three-dimensional space and in linear time according to eternal and immutable laws....

Mechanistic science is in an irreconcilable conflict with religion and spirituality, which it interprets in terms of a lack of intellectual maturity, primitive superstition, or even psychopathology. It has also created an abysmal gap between the pragmatic West and spiritual East. The spiritual philosophies of the Oriental cultures, such as India, Tibet, China and Japan, have developed over millennia of their history a world-view which is in sharp contrast with that of mechanistic science. Although they differ in details, they all seem to agree on a number of fundamental assumptions; this essential core can best be referred to as the perennial philosophy, in Aldous Huxley's sense. In sharp contrast with mechanistic materialism, this approach ex-

plains matter from consciousness and part from the whole. Its model of the universe involves a multiple hierarchy of levels of reality, some of which are manifest, others cannot be detected in the ordinary state of consciousness. In this view, the cosmos is a dynamic unified field, in which all boundaries are arbitrary and negotiable. A human being and consciousness is ultimately commensurate with the entire cosmos. This statement is not based on speculation; it can be validated experientially....

The initial successes of mechanistic science are now being over-shadowed by its serious drawbacks. These have entered our lives in the form of various physical and chemical hazards of industrial products and by-products, pollution of air and water, weapons of mass extermination, and a dangerous economic and political chaos of global proportions. It is becoming increasingly clear that the old philosophy and the strategies of mechanistic science have brought us into a deep crisis on an individual, social and global scale and are chronically failing to offer satisfactory solutions of the problems they have created. It seems that we have reached a stage where the solutions tend to produce more problems than they solve....

In addition, the foundations of mechanistic science have also been shattered from within; this first happened in physics, the bastion of Cartesian-Newtonian thinking, and more recently in a variety of other disciplines. As Fritjof Capra has so clearly demonstrated in his *Tao of Physics*, the developments in quantum-relativistic physics have seriously challenged and transcended every single postulate of the Cartesian-Newtonian paradigm. The universe is now seen as a unified web of events and relations, rather than an infinitely complicated mechanical clockwork; thinking in terms of substance has been replaced by an emphasis on process. Matter and energy are seen as interchangeable and a four-dimensional space-time continuum is an acceptable alternative to the Newtonian three-dimensional space and unidirectional time. Linear causality is not seen as a mandatory connecting principle in nature and "objective processes" cannot be separated from the consciousness of the observer. In subatomic analysis of matter, all substance has disappeared and what remains is abstract order and pattern. There are strong indications that consciousness might be an equal partner or even a primary attribute of existence rather than an insignificant epiphenomenon of matter.

Similar conclusions are emerging from other disciplines. The

developments in cybernetics, theory of information, and systems theory have also resulted in deep changes in scientific thinking. . . . In the new model of the universe, mind and possibly consciousness appear to be intrinsic and immanent principles permeating all levels of existence. . . .

There also exists increasing evidence that the model of human beings as biological machines created by mechanistic science only partially describes human nature. Data from many independent sources indicate an urgent need for a drastic paradigm shift. They suggest that under certain circumstances, humans can also function as unlimited fields of consciousness, transcending matter, time, space and linear causality. . . .

The materialistic and mechanistic orientation of Western science is incompatible with a spiritual approach to existence. In the past, it was taken for granted that science had discredited religion and the gap between spirituality and rationality appeared to be absolute and unbridgeable. One of the most exciting aspects of the new developments in modern science is the astonishing and ever increasing convergence with ancient and Oriental spiritual systems and philosophies. . . . It seems that a far-reaching synthesis between ancient wisdom and modern science and between Eastern thought and Western pragmatism is not only possible but imminent.

We have quoted at length because, if the mission of Theosophy is to "affect and leaven the whole mind of this century," as H.P.B. declared it was, then it is of paramount importance for students of Theosophy to know whither the race-mind is tending, by keeping abreast of developments in the world of thought. Only then can they make an effective contribution in the present and future work of the Theosophical Movement. The leaven of Theosophy has been working through the years, transforming the Manas and Buddhi of the race; but much still remains to be accomplished. What has been achieved so far is, however, a portent of more momentous breakthroughs to come.

Sir Fred Hoyle is one of Britain's leading scientists to challenge traditional beliefs about man's origin and evolution. According to a Reuter dispatch from London printed in *The Daily* (Bombay) for January 19, the latest theory advanced by him is that intelligent

beings in another part of the universe might have had a hand in originating life on earth millions of years ago.

Speaking before an audience of scientists at London's Royal Institution, Sir Fred, a former professor of astronomy and experimental philosophy at Cambridge University, said that the chemical structures of life were too complicated to have arisen through a series of accidents, as evolutionists believed. "Bio-materials, with their amazing measure of order, must be the outcome of intelligent design," he said. This design, in his opinion, may have been the work of a life from the universe's remote past which, "doomed by a crisis in its own environment, wanted to preserve life in another shape."

Sir Fred is a proponent of the modern-day science of cosmology — taking the study of the universe beyond the simple observation of the stars to consider the philosophical implications of man's increasing knowledge of space. According to the report in *The Daily*:

He has spent years researching the influence of outer space on earth with Professor Chandra Wickramasingh of Cardiff University. They first shocked the scientific world with a book entitled *Diseases from Space*, expounding a theory that the earth is bombarded with micro-organisms from space which cause such things as outbreaks of influenza and the common cold. The sequel, *Evolution from Space*, said these micro-organisms may supply some of the so-called missing links in the evolutionary process.

Last century, Charles Darwin argued that present life forms on earth evolved by a long series of accidents from living organisms believed to have existed in primeval mud as long ago as 3000 million years. But the professors say life is too complex to have evolved from the mud to its present state in that time.

They point to gaps in the fossil evidence which is used to support the theory of evolution and say these may indicate periods of very rapid change. Such change, they add, may have been provoked by viruses and other influences carried by the micro-organisms from space which jolted the evolutionary process forward and perhaps, changed its direction.

These theories had stirred up a storm in the usually calm waters of cosmology before Sir Fred began to talk about intelligent beings across the universe.

Students of Theosophy needs must view with interest the trend of recent scientific thinking on the subject of the origin of life on earth. Theosophy reiterates the view of Occult Science that "there

never was 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 thus disposes of the so-called Azoic age of science, the age in which there is supposed to have been no trace of life. Life always was, is and ever shall be; it did not originate, but is the origin of all. It is, therefore, life which caused the earth to come into existence.

As *The Secret Doctrine* maintains, life could not produce an inorganic atom, whether simple or complex, nor could life arise from inorganic molecules. Every physical point or atom is but the phenomenal expression of the noumenal, metaphysical point. According to Occult Science, there are

three distinct Hosts, which, counted from the highest planes, are, firstly, "gods," or conscious, spiritual *Egos*; the intelligent architects, who work after the plan in the *Divine Mind*. Then come the Elementals, or *Monads*, who form collectively and unconsciously the grand Universal Mirrors of everything connected with their respective realms. Lastly, the atoms, or material molecules, which are informed in their turn by their *apperceptive* monads, just as every cell in a human body is so informed. (I. 632)

Thus the evolution of the earth is the result not merely of physical laws and processes, but of the work of "gods" and Monads.

Since long has the controversy been raging as to whether life must come from living matter or whether it can come from non-living matter, and attempts have been made to create living matter from chemicals. "If spontaneous generation has changed its methods now," wrote H.P.B., "owing perhaps to accumulated material on hand, so as to almost escape detection, it was in full swing in the genesis of terrestrial life." (*S.D.*, II. 151)

Success with the test-tube baby technique has confronted medical ethics with a basic problem of morality concerning the sanctity of human life. The development of this procedure of *in vitro* fertilization (IVF), as it is called, has raised the spectre of genetic engineering. Since the birth of the first such baby in Britain three and a half

years ago, it has become increasingly obvious that fertilizing human eggs in the laboratory is not simply a clinical technique for relieving infertility. First, the doctors involved gave their women patients fertility drugs to increase the number of eggs available, and therefore to raise the chances of a successful laboratory fertilization. Then Australian researchers began to freeze "spare" embryos, which meant that some could be saved to be implanted in women who had not given the egg in the first place. Scientists now argue that IVF also offers enormous potential for research — for studying the human embryo, normally a hidden, mysterious thing. This raises important ethical issues, for an embryo is a living entity, and many doctors are agreed that human life begins not at birth but at the moment of conception. (See "In the Light of Theosophy" for February 1982.)

The British Medical Association is worried that medical technology is running ahead of morality in this field. The Chairman of its Central Ethical Committee, Dr. Michael Thomas, has called for a moratorium on all test-tube baby work "until we think through our attitude to this fresh problem. I want us to make sure that we know what we're letting ourselves in for" (*New Scientist*, February 4). Experimenting on human embryos, he implies, is ethically wrong because it amounts to experimenting upon human life. Dr. Thomas rejects the suggestion that infertility is a serious problem: "You don't die from it." He believes that, in seeking a "test-tube baby," a woman is causing a totally new ethical issue for doctors. Besides the danger of babies so born suffering from abnormalities, there is another moral issue: "Very quickly risk to the individual can come to be justified by benefit to the state."

However, there is a deep division between views such as those expressed by Dr. Thomas and those of other doctors and scientists who try to alleviate infertility through *in vitro* fertilization; but on one issue they agree — and that is the need for widespread public debate among scientists, and between scientists and the public.

The Guardian Weekly (February 7) quotes Mr. Justice Kirby, chairman of the Australian Law Reform Commission, who is justifiably concerned over *in vitro* fertilization and the failure of moral codes to keep pace with scientific advance:

My hope is that it won't be the epitaph of our generation that people will say: here was a community which developed the most amazing, dazzling fields of science and yet proved

themselves so indifferent, or incompetent, that they didn't address the serious social and ethical consequences of what they were up to.

Mr. Kirby is especially troubled by the fact that Australian scientists have successfully developed a technique for freezing spare embryos indefinitely. In Britain, the pioneers of the technique, Mr. Patrick Steptoe and Dr. Robert Edwards, have revealed that they too are ready to start freezing spare eggs and embryos.

The comment in *The Guardian* calls for the laying down of rules for embryology:

An embryo is, after all, the potential for life. Other issues present themselves. In due course, might a parent be able to choose the sex of a child, or other physical characteristics? If potentially fatal disabilities can be screened out in this way, where will be the permitted degree of imperfection? If embryos can successfully be stored and thawed, should they always be implanted in the original mother? To whom do they belong? These issues must be clarified soon by the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, and by the BMA, if a technique that extends medical options does not backfire.

From the occult viewpoint, there are other considerations. What are the forces at work in the formation of the foetus? This, says H.P.B., is one of the chief difficulties of the science of embryology which has never been properly answered; nor will it ever be solved "until the day when scientists condescend to accept the Occult theories" (*S.D.*, I. 223). It is the inner soul of the physical cell that is "the key that must open one day the gates of the *terra incognita* of the Biologist, now called the dark mystery of Embryology." "Complete the physical plasm," H.P.B. adds, "the 'Germinal Cell' of man with all its material potentialities, with the 'spiritual plasm,' so to say, or the fluid that contains the five lower principles of the six-principled Dhyān — and you have the secret, if you are spiritual enough to understand it." (*S.D.*, I. 219, 224)

According to the U.N. Narcotics Control Agency, drug addiction is on the rise all over the world, with the younger generation increasingly turning to stronger drugs. (*The Times of India*, January 10). In its report for 1981 published in Vienna in January this

year, the agency called for a massive public opinion drive to combat drug abuse, noting that concern for the "young" victims no longer meant only adolescents but also children. This is certainly disturbing.

The report states that addiction is on the rise for all drugs: opium and heroin, cocaine, cannabis and amphetamines and other synthetic drugs. To make things worse, a flood on the heroin market is expected as there has been a bumper poppy harvest last autumn.

The report contradicts the theory that cannabis is a "soft" drug warning against an increased risk of cancer, psychotic disturbances and reproductive disorders.

The problem is indeed grave. Drug addiction is not the malady of any race, section or class, but is universal, socially contagious and apt to lead to crime. In the tough and long fight needed to destroy illegal dope traffic international co-operation is a must.

H.P.B. condemned the drug habit in no uncertain terms, as worse even than alcohol for man's psychic condition and his moral and spiritual growth. "Wine and spirit drinking," she says in *The Key to Theosophy*, "is only less destructive to the development of the inner powers, than the habitual use of hashish, opium, and smiliar drugs."

A six-year-old child prodigy, Sanjeev Omprakash Sharma of Lakhanpur in Etawa district of U.P., has stunned hundreds of people who have heard him recite the *Bhagavad-Gita* with correct Sanskrit pronunciation. Not only this, but since the past one year he has been explaining the significance as well as word-to-word meaning of every *shloka*. Besides the *Gita*, he can recite *Vishnu-sahasranama* and *Geetai*, a commentary in Marathi by Acharya Vinoba Bhave (*The Times of India*, February 3)

The boy's father, Omprakash Sharma, a teacher in English in school at Lakhanpur, told newsmen that Sanjeev, the youngest of five children, has hardly had any formal education so far, but can read books in Sanskrit, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati and English.

Juvenile prodigies remain an unanswerable enigma to those who reject the explanation that reincarnation offers, but a little thought and study are required to understand this.
