

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life

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

# सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### W. Q. JUDGE—A TRUE ASCETIC

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A blade of kusa grass wrongly handled cuts the hand; asceticism wrongly practised leads downward, to hell.

—*The Dhammapada* (Verse 311)

IT is natural that students of Theosophy should desire to follow some programme of asceticism. The simple life, the self-controlled life, the life free of all burdens—all present a true idea. Like other true ideas, the meaning and purpose of spiritual life and asceticism are misunderstood and even abused. An attraction becomes a lure, and so we have so many pursuing false asceticism, to their own bodily and mental ruin. “Breaking bone,” “rending flesh and muscle,” “sitting in dark forests, in proud seclusion and apart from men,” “life on roots and plants”—these, and such like practices, do not constitute the simple life; they represent control of a wrong type and do not lead “to the goal of final liberation.” These sayings from *The Voice of the Silence* culminate in an important teaching:

Think not that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered,  
O Victim of thy Shadows, thy duty is accomplished by nature and  
by man.

Asceticism of the body, as a starting point, is futile and dangerous. “The sins of thy gross form” are not as heinous as some other sins. Sins of the body are but effects. True asceticism begins with the finding out of the cause of the sins of the flesh.

There is yet another type of false asceticism—“to hate thy mother and disregard thy son,” “to disavow thy father and call him householder,” and “to cease to love all beings.” Such hateful notions also proceed from the selfish, ignorant mind.

“The true cause of human woe” is rooted in the mental affliction known as the dire heresy of separateness. A philosophical appreciation of this root becomes necessary for the student who aspires to practise the right kind of asceticism. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

It is not molecularly constituted matter—least of all the human body (*sthulasarira*)—that is the grossest of all our “principles,” but verily the *middle* principle, the real animal centre; whereas our body is but its shell, the irresponsible factor and medium through which the beast in us acts all its life. Every intellectual theosophist will understand my real meaning. (I, 260)

*The Voice of the Silence* verse quoted above refers to duties to be “accomplished by nature and by man.” Our own mind-soul progress does require a programme of asceticism which will enable us to perceive the Unity of Nature, the Brotherhood of Man; to enrich Nature and to love our fellow men. The asceticism which mortifies the lusts and selfishness of our desire-mind and which purifies and elevates it for the fulfilment of lofty aspirations is Right Asceticism. This alone the Theosophical or Esoteric Philosophy advocates.

W. Q. Judge was a real ascetic, and out of his profound knowledge and experience he wrote:

The character of the man himself inwardly is the real test. No matter how many times during countless births he has renounced the world, if his inner nature has not renounced, he will be the same man during the entire period, and whenever, in any one of his ascetic lives, the new, the appropriate temptation or circumstance arises, he will fall from his high outward asceticism. (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, pp. 118-19)

Many an aspiring ascetic in our Theosophical Movement has brought back with him the tendency born of wrong asceticism in past lives. Says W. Q. Judge:

It is well known that the ego returning to regeneration is affected by the actions of his previous births, not only circumstantially in the various vicissitudes of a life, but also in the tendency of the nature to any particular sort of religious practice, and this effect operates for a length of time or number of births exactly commensurate with the intensity of the previous practice. And naturally in the case of one who deliberately renounced all in the world, devoting himself to asceticism for many years, the effect would be felt for many lives and long after other temporary impressions had worn off. (*Ibid.*, p. 120)

In his usual lucid manner Mr. Judge further explains:

The polluting effect of an act is not in the nature of the mere thing done, nor is the purifying result due to what work we may do, but on either hand the sin or the merit is found in the inner feeling that accompanies the act. (*Ibid.*, p. 121)

Right performance of duties is essential for the practice of asceticism. The renouncing of the results of such performance, meritorious or otherwise, is equally necessary. This implies the development of Resignation—not carelessness, or the indifference, so called, of the many *fakirs* and *vairagis* of today, but a detachment of the mind and a disentanglement of the heart which eschew calculations of gain and loss. We have to learn to avoid “the ascetic rocks and the sensual whirlpools.” The Great Buddha’s programme is called the Middle Way.

The ingredients of asceticism are solitude, mortification, contemplation. These have correct and incorrect aspects and are to be found in right as in wrong asceticism. These beget right types of devotion and compassion, or sentimentalism and mush which pass for devotion and love.

W. Q. Judge’s life reveals what right asceticism is. He performed his duty by every duty, as an individual, as a patriot, as a cosmopolitan. He was always concentrated in resignation in home life, in business life, in Theosophical life. He studied and exemplified the true spirit of resignation.

On the day of the Spring Equinox, the 21st of March, 1896, William Quan Judge cast off his body dedicated to the service of humanity. Let us contemplate the record of his labour of love. How did he accomplish it? By Right Asceticism. In one place Mr. Judge states that he took a Vow, long, long ago, to immolate himself in the service of mankind. It is the same Ancient Vow which, in the following beautiful words, is attributed to Kwan-Yin, the Goddess of Mercy:

Never will I seek nor receive private individual salvation. Never will I enter into final peace alone; but forever and everywhere will I live and strive for the redemption of every creature throughout the world.

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## THE PROMISE OF SPRING

AMONG many people there are festivals coinciding with the Spring Equinox in Nature. Hindu mythology gives clues to the intimate relation that subsists between the macrocosm and the microcosm. The invisible part of the universe and the invisible aspect of man are shown to be as closely knit as is man's body with the earth that he stands on, the air that he breathes and the distant stars that he beholds. Again, between the invisible and the visible of both the cosmoses there is intimacy; and so the seasonal changes which show themselves in outward beauty are described as reflections and shadows of the psychical processes—the unfelt throbs within the crust of the earth and the currents that circulate within the atmosphere that surrounds it.

The spring to which people look forward in winter symbolizes in their minds not mere change, but a change with a very definite promise. The vision of a blessed state is conjured up—"they lived in peace and prosperity ever after." Hope springs ever in human consciousness, and the atmosphere of beauty and triumph which the spring expresses is most conducive to the birth of high hopes. But our hopes are vague and we do not know what that promise of spring really means. It requires a poet to focus such hopes in definiteness and a sage to show the steps that lead to their realization. Strange as it may appear at first sight, the austere Shiva, Patron-Saint of Yogis and Sannyasis, is made in Hindu mythology to play more than one important part related to the season of spring. The Great Ascetic, plunged in meditation, reduced to ashes Kama-Deva, the God of Love, when the latter tried to awaken love in him. It is said that when spring was working its magic in trees and among bees and birds, and all humans were under its spell, the only being who remained uninfluenced was Shiva, who continued his meditation unmoved. Then Kama-Deva tried to impress Mahadeva to wake to love—and met with his own death. From the Third Eye of Shiva darted forth fire which reduced Kama-Deva to ashes. The immortal Kalidasa who created his *Kumarasambhava* out of this old myth has also written some lines which intimate the magic of spiritual change in the spring. In his *Ritusamhara*, in which he sings of the six seasons and which has been called "a Lover's Calendar," he deals with spring not first but last—a point of debate among writers on poetics. Dr. A. Berriedale Keith, however, strikes the correct note when he comments:

But spring brings to them and to all nature new life and joy; we

see now why the poet begins with summer; it enables him to end with the season in which young love, in harmony with the birth of a new year, is made perfect.

Not only that, Kalidasa also seems to remember the spiritual counterpart of the season which affects the ascetic as the beauty of spring affects the human lover and the aesthete. Spring tests the resolutions of the ascetic who keeps his emotions under control as it stirs the love slumbering in inexperienced youth.

In the interior life of the individual psychical seasons produce their influence. In one who is integrating himself, a new Love is born from which the duality of human emotion is eliminated; then from the muddy pool of passion the lotus of compassion rises heavenward; finally Divine Love focused within oneself is poured out in benediction for all.

In varying degrees the transmutation of human love into divine compassion is taking place; that benign work of silent Nature is marred by man's indulgence and spoiled by his folly. Hedonism degrades love to lust; rigid asceticism murders love and the ascetic is obsessed by the ghost left behind. The seminal principle in Nature as in man acts as the channel for the Soul's manifestation, providing for it a form. When man co-operates with Nature in activating that principle the result is rhythm, harmony, beauty; Nature, frustrated by man through blind ignorance or deliberate sin, ever tries to restore the broken order. A continuous struggle is going on between restoring Nature and marring man and because of that we see the spirit of change at work. Nature labours to create humanity after a divine pattern; man, a prey to his own selfishness, regards the power of nurture as superior to Nature, which he endeavours to mould, and the result—every time he finds Nature stronger than himself. However often he overcomes his own error, the result of his own jejune efforts at improving Nature, he never succeeds in conquering her. Nature is conquered by obeisance to her laws—never otherwise.

In every nation there are men and women who want to change outer conditions, and there are those, fewer in number, who endeavour to transmute their own attitude and disposition. Most of them fail because they do not possess the knowledge necessary for that purpose. That knowledge pertains to the spiritual stratum of the universe, wherein wisdom is compassion and justice is mercy and sacrifice is duty. Learned Pandits of the world seek after Wisdom, try to establish Justice, preach the Path of Duty—without taking into account the emotional counterparts of these. Religious-hearted men of the world preach and try to practise

compassion and mercy and sacrifice without recognizing the value of their mental counterparts. A learned head and a hard heart are as evil a combination as a sentimental heart which tries to do or to be good without a knowledge of what is good to do.

The present disintegrated state of the educated person is the direct result of materialistic philosophy, the child of modern science, which values senses and sense-data most highly, and of the crude theology which separates human life on earth from the heavenly life of the saved and the hellish life of the damned. "God's in His Heaven—all's right with the world!" does not make for a right philosophy but only strengthens the division between the sacred and the secular. Modern knowledge regards emotions as born of the flesh, Soul as the product of the sensorium. Ancient knowledge looks upon the Soul, the Divine Thinker, as the builder of the tabernacle—the primary cause and not the product of the body. Also, it regards the basic human desire, the Will-to-Live, called *Tanha* or *Trishna*, as a reflection from Divine Desire; this *Tanha*, however, through contact with the elemental yet sentient psychic forces known as Nature Spirits, becomes separative and competitive in expression, whereas Divine Desire is wholly altruistic—Compassion Absolute. Thus, lust, wrath, greed and their like are not the progeny of the body of flesh. Their father is this *Tanha* and their mother the Nature Spirits—salamanders, sylphs, undines, gnomes, which are not self-conscious intelligences but may be accurately described as the forces of subtle nature. These human desires play an important part in the creating of the body, in its preservation and in its death. Wrong asceticism controls the senses only; the right type of asceticism purifies the desire-nature; and in right asceticism the human Soul, the Thinker, is the controller of the wandering mind as well as the purifier of the manifold desires.

The Spirit of Change engendered by the Soul assisted by Nature will continue to work till the day when man will have unfolded his divinity. Then Man, the great Purusha, having become the Lord and master of Nature, the fecund Prakriti, will enjoy Spring.

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And right action is freedom  
From past and future also.

—T. S. ELIOT

## OBEISANCE TO THE SPIRIT IN THE BODY

The more thou dost become at one with it, thy being melted in its BEING, the more thy Soul unites with that which IS, the more thou wilt become COMPASSION ABSOLUTE.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

—*I. John, IV, 20*

Having obtained this finite, joyless world, worship me. Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me.

—*Bhagavad-Gita, IX, 33-34*

SINCE Ishwara resides in each human heart, the first act of devotion to him is the search of him. The realizing of the fullness and the immanence of him in all contacts and under all circumstances comes later. Once this omnipresence is accepted, obeisance to Ishwara, the Spirit in the body, cannot be partial or divided. It has to be complete. It is in this context primarily that Brotherhood becomes a vital factor in human behaviour. The turning away from another; the coveting of another's possessions; the putting of obstacles in another's path are but a denial of the presence of Ishwara in particular persons and on special occasions. These patterns of human behaviour are nothing less than the turning away from the light in order to satisfy urges which can be succumbed to only in gloom or total darkness. It therefore follows that even during the preliminary stages the devotee is making his choices of the goal to which he either consciously or unconsciously aspires. If he considers the religion of his fathers to be the only true one and himself to be one of God's chosen few, then the *Gupta Vidya* is not for him. By the very act of separating himself and his co-religionists from the rest of humanity, he tries to erect a partition in the Universal. In spite of tall claims of being close to Ishwara, such a person has not seen him and does not know him.

The earth is full of people who have created small brotherhoods, leaving out vast majorities. They may be good people, they may even be charitable and kind, but they cannot be servants to Ishwara for the simple reason that their obeisance is not to the Universal. These people have to be left to the joy of their

creeds. Their separatist tendencies will sooner than later turn into psychic energy and expend themselves in harmful effects on the physical plane. Charity restricted to communities or aid given to some to the exclusion of others has always failed because it infringes and violates a fundamental law in Life. It is thus by his own small choices of a day that the individual takes the higher or the lower road.

The separation of the chaff from the corn is being hourly accomplished by Nature unobtrusively and unseen by human eyes. Out of the teeming millions of the world, but few there are who elect for a Universal Brotherhood *in actu*. These few can enter in earnest upon the quest of Ishwara, provided they are prepared to let go of all that is personal and selfish. Once this ideal of Universal Brotherhood is accepted, even though it be by the intellect alone, in time that ideal penetrates one's being and becomes a part of his conscience.

Then may it be safe for him to study further in the Secret Science. Before this first stage is reached, even the preliminary knowledge does not somehow become available; and even though that knowledge is extant in the world in printed words upon a page, a veil of secrecy effectively shrouds it from those who are not ready for it. Nature does this in its mercy, for were this knowledge to be reviled or misused, the consequences would be disastrous on the reviler and on him who made the reviling possible. When the spiritual is misused to serve earthly ends an act of desecration takes place, and the power for good which resides in the spiritual knowledge is lost as soon as it encounters the stench of earthly desires. Does the aspirant remember that beautiful passage in *The Voice of Silence* which says:

Heaven's dew-drop glittering in the morn's first sunbeam within  
the bosom of the lotus, when dropped on earth becomes a piece  
of clay; behold, the pearl is now a speck of mire.

The Karma of him who turns the dew into mire is indeed a heavy one.

The transformation of the ordinary person into a seeker after truth is a long and arduous process; but once he decides to seek the Truth even though the heavens fall, one more chapter from the Book of Life becomes available for his study. It is now that he comes within the grip of an iron law. In the measure that he tries to apply the new norms of behaviour, he finds that the opposition to him increases. The higher he aspires, the more he feels the resistance. His past habits, which through memories have found a lodgement in his bodily organs, stage a revolt against the

new austere régime. These now threaten, now cajole him to return to the past patterns of living. The outer world drowns him in scoru, calls him names, mimics his actions and heaps ridicule on him. Even from his co-students he may face criticism, injustice, aloofness. It may be his ordeal to be stripped of all honour, to be pauperized and be flung to the wolves. Has he the power to stand the strain and to fight the fever out of his being? These are moments and years of stress when all the accumulated vile-ness is being burnt out of the system. The aspirant who feels the heat of this burning and endures it despite the severe scorchings, succeeds. For, it is when he is surrounded by such adverse circumstances that the Will gets developed—the pure Will that harms no one, yet is adamant enough to plough through adversity and reach the goal.

In the din and confusion of the ordeal when his endurance is being sorely tried, the aspirant may lose sight of the fact that in each such circumstance is wrapped up the one important question which he, alone and unaided, has to answer: Does he take his stand by the impersonal as against the personal, the eternal as against the perishable? Those who are going through this phase of learning know how anguish and despair, fear and torture, dog their footsteps through life. But, however bitter the struggle, however long-drawn the fight, there is always the promise of success if the correct attitude is maintained. No weapon fashioned in the armoury of the personal man is of the least use to fight and subdue the personality, which is the aggressor. The personal can be tamed into submission only by something which is higher. Therefore is it that the lower self has to be restrained by the divine. In no other way is it capable of being mastered. For this purpose, the Divine has to be known and invoked. Says *Light on the Path*:

Look for the warrior and let him fight in thee.

Take his orders for battle and obey them.

Obey him not as though he were a general, but as though he were thyself, and his spoken words were the utterance of thy secret desires. . . . Look for him, else in the fever and hurry of the fight thou mayest pass him; and he will not know thee unless thou knowest him. . . . He is thyself, yet thou art but finite and liable to error. He is eternal and is sure. He is eternal truth.

To the disciple Arjuna, the Guru Krishna is even more explicit:

Make pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, the same to thee and then prepare for battle, for thus and thus alone

shalt thou in action still be free from sin.

Once that the Great Journey towards Ishwara is decided upon, the preparations for it have to be undertaken with diligence. The equipment which the Soul will need is completely different from that which it was wont to gather when chained to a sense-ridden mind. Much of the possessions which men treasure on earth have now to be left behind or jettisoned on the way. On the other hand, no pilgrim can expect to complete his journey to the other shore without the special equipment that the journey requires. Long before the journey is undertaken, the devotee must have left behind that sensitiveness which has the tendency to burst into emotion. The equanimity which comes of dispassion has to be maintained in peril, as in safety, amid the frenzy of mass hysteria as amid the awe-inspiring silence of an absolute stillness. But even this establishment of an inner equilibrium and the finding of a place of refuge for the Soul is not enough. To each aspirant, the progress thus far achieved is indeed great; but it does not promise indemnity against failure. The strength gathered through past sufferings is merely an index that the preliminary steps have been taken and that the devotee may enter upon his pilgrimage towards that bourne where the Soul can touch the higher Wisdom.

But caution cannot be abandoned. The knowledge which is power and produces peace is inaccessible to the individual until he proves that he can be trusted to keep that knowledge safe from degradation. Further, no neophyte, however eager, can be entrusted with the Secret Science until there has sprung within him the desire to use "its pure fresh waters...to sweeter make the Ocean's bitter waves—that mighty sea of sorrow formed of the tears of men." The disciple who undertakes the journey secretly hoping for fame or success in appearing as a teacher and apostle before the world, fails even before the task is attempted, and his hidden hypocrisy poisons his soul and the souls of those whom he touches. He is secretly worshipping himself, and his idolatrous practice must bring its own result. How then can he be taken to have touched Ishwara?

From the time that the Soul begins to hunger for the eternal knowledge, the aspirant's efforts are known and he receives encouragement when he expects it the least. He seems to chance upon a book or a pamphlet that fires him. He meets people who think as he thinks and who sympathize with his yearnings. By the very force of his awakened inspirations he gravitates towards others who share his inmost hopes and are eager to join the quest.

Unconsciously to himself, he is being borne into a new strata of human consciousness. For a time, he feels the strangeness of the atmosphere while the urge to go back to the shady side of his familiar fields does not utterly desert him till years of discipline have purged it out of his system. He is in that critical state when he is too unaccustomed to the new to realize that he is pulling himself out of the circle of influence of family and friends, of coteries and cabals. He is being introduced as a member into a new and now a real family—the family of the humble pupils. Among them he has to pursue his quest for Ishwara, helped or hindered by their successes and failures. Among them he has to find his bearings and his own particular avenues of service.

In surroundings such as these, the ancient institution of the Guru is revived and the pupil is required to transfer to his immediate Guru the awe and the reverence which belong to the highest and which have now to flow in continuous and unimpeded streams from the disciple to the Teacher. One more chapter of the knowledge which is Ishwara's is opened; one more willing sacrificer is ready to the Master's hand.

The eyes that shall perceive Ishwara, the mind that shall cognize Ishwara, are not the earthly eyes and the earthly mind. To take but an illustration: The myriads of lives that throng a drop of water would never have been perceptible to earthly eyes except with the discovery of the lenses and especially of their complex arrangements which make a microscope possible. The human faculties of instinct and intelligence are powerless to sense Ishwara. For this, one has to develop the faculty of intuition. But to arrive at intuition, one has to pass through fiery ordeals. One does not adorn oneself by moulding lumps of gold ore into necklaces. The adornment requires that the lustre of gold be visible. Therefore, the ore has to be heat-treated to separate the gold. To achieve this, we have furnaces where under heat the separation of the gold takes place. An analogous process has to be endured by the individual to remove the baser elements from the pure metal of his Soul. A heat by friction is generated within him by the rubbing of his aspirations against his lower inclinations. The more vigorous the friction, the greater the heat. This ordeal by fire is encountered at every stage of the journey towards Ishwara. It has to be regarded as something that the Soul has desired and that is necessary for its progress. That which is burnt out is the dross of the personal and the non-eternal. The discomfort and the pain are intense and sometimes so overpowering that the gaze of the pilgrim wavers and shifts from its goal. Arjuna

on the battlefield felt it so acutely that he wanted to give up the fight to return and subjugate himself to the suzerainty of those very brothers whose pernicious power he had wished to destroy. *Light on the Path* describes this state in a more telling manner:

...in the early state in which man is entering upon the silence he loses knowledge of his friends, of his lovers, of all who have been near and dear to him; and also loses sight of his teachers and of those who have preceded him on his way. I explain this because scarce one passes through without bitter complaint. Could but the mind grasp beforehand that the silence must be complete, surely this complaint need not arise as a hindrance on the path. Your teacher or your predecessor may hold your hand in his, and give you the utmost sympathy the human heart is capable of. But when the silence and the darkness comes, you lose all knowledge of him; you are alone and he cannot help you, not because his power is gone, but because you have invoked your great enemy...it is left to the individual to make the great effort; to refuse to be terrified by his greater nature, to refuse to be drawn back by his lesser or more material self.

During this fever-ravaged period, the aspirant may lose his hold on sacrifice and renunciation, and removing his gaze from the impersonal, focus it solely on his pain. The personal in him has triumphed with the weapons of pain which is essentially a personal emotion. The channel of communication with the Guru is blocked and the individual falls back on expedients which will relieve him of his pain but which, on the other hand, revive his personality which otherwise would have died of starvation and neglect. Many a promising aspirant thus turns his back to the light and abandons his journey towards Ishwara. He may find his ease and even affluence, but the sense of betrayal will never utterly leave him, and in the midst of his laughter will mock him into moods of depression and despair.

Those who have dared to dream bold dreams even through this ordeal by fire, pass on. Yet are they vulnerable still. A sense of pride at the great feat achieved, a shrinking away from fellow disciples who fought and failed, may yet precipitate a downfall. Exultation at great achievements and the shunning of the fallen are indications that the snake of self is alive and has the ability to bite his poison into the system of the victorious disciple and paralyse his functions. With the dawning of victory, another chapter has begun in hope and may end in success only if the craving for the impersonal is so vast that the personal sinks beyond vision. This distant goal can be envisaged and sought after

even at the early stages of the journey. Even though for years the actions of the person may remain tinged with personality, his ideation and the bent of his thoughts may in great and greater measure seek for the impersonal even in the discharge of the small plain duties of life. Karma and service assume a different import even as the pilgrim progresses. The personal in Karma and the personal in service have now to be crowded out by the impersonal. Bulwer-Lytton in his *Zanoni* uttered a truism when he said: "The mirror of the soul cannot reflect both earth and heaven; the one vanishes from its surface as the other is glassed upon the deep."

Each day's plans, each moment's thoughts, have now to be turned to the Universal alone. In the Universal, pain and pleasure vanish as do friends and enemies. In each form of life there exists the Universal, and exists pre-eminently so as Ishwara in each human being. In all forms, under all conditions, the homage to Ishwara is offered in the love of Ishwara, the reverence of Ishwara, the faith that is Ishwara. The twice-born are fit to be merged into and partake of Ishwara's omniscience at the culmination of the journey. This merging may come at the end of centuries of striving during which the soul takes one quick birth after another; but the roots of the Universal self-consciousness have grown in the human soil, and no delay in time can loosen their hold. "Many are the grains of incense destined for one and the same altar; one falls sooner into the fire, the other later—the difference of time is nothing," remarked a great man when he was refused admission and supreme initiation into the mysteries.

The Dew is on the lotus!—Rise, Great Sun!  
And lift my leaf and mix me with the wave.

---

I am sure that man is naturally inclined to respond to the misfortunes of others. I believe that this is something we are born with, an inherent feature, along with our instincts and what is known as the human soul. Yet if this inclination is neglected it can easily wither away.

—DANIIL GRANIN

## INDIVIDUAL EFFORT

MANY thoughtful people are of the view that a crisis in national or world affairs is not just economic or political, but fundamentally a moral one. Students of Theosophy agree with this diagnosis, but where they may differ from some persons outside their ranks is in the intensity of their conviction that the necessary reorientation is a matter of individual effort. Organizations to improve humanity morally, conferences on the subject, and the like, are useful only in so far as they inspire men and women, one by one, to seek a new way of thinking, to endeavour to become spirit-minded instead of matter-minded.

Now this spirit-minded attitude is not in any sense "other-worldliness." Theosophy does not teach us to turn our backs on ordinary life and despise it. Quite the contrary. We are taught to love the world, but are warned that unless we learn to see the things of the world and the flesh, and even those of the devil, with the eyes of the spirit, we shall not last long enough to achieve our human destiny.

It is a very urgent matter, this reorientation. Not that we should expect quick results. True knowledge is not rapidly or easily acquired. The urgency lies in making a beginning. "He that is not with me is against me," said Jesus, which from the Theosophical point of view may be interpreted to mean that if we do not make a positive effort in the direction of spiritualizing our attitude, we shall slip backwards, washed away from our goal by the currents that oppose progress towards our final destination. There is no such thing as standing still. Either the ancient precept to "seek the kingdom of heaven" and to seek it *first* must be taken seriously, or our true life forces will ebb away, imperceptibly at first but surely, and we shall lose all chance of making a lasting contribution to our race by becoming immortal.

"When the real man merges himself with the latter [the spirit], he becomes an immortal entity," says H.P.B. The answer to the obvious question, "What if he does not succeed?" is implied in the statement itself. If he does not attach himself to the "plank of salvation," as H.P.B. calls the Atma in each of us, or in so far as he does not do so, he belongs to the useless portion of mankind, and as such aggravates world problems instead of helping on their solution.

What practical direction does our philosophy give those of us who make up our minds to set about this task of reorientation? The problem is twofold: First, how can we convince ourselves of

the presence of the "heavenly father" within us? And, secondly, how can we learn to tap the wisdom and power inherent in our spiritual self and destined for our use, if only we can take possession of it?

As to the first question, the answer is simple, though the path it indicates is slow and arduous. We are told that the way to realize a truth is to dwell upon it. Acquiring possessions always involves hard work and this applies to spiritual as well as to earthly goods. He who would make a truth his own must, after realizing it mentally, weave it into the fabric of his being by constant thought upon it. Fortunately, there is much said upon the subject of the inner god in our books, so that the student can refresh himself constantly by reading and rereading passages in which the truth to be realized is set forth.

As to the second question—how can we approach the Divine within us and take our birthright of inspiration? Of the many passages that might be quoted we will select three as being particularly helpful. H.P.B. cites a statement of Plato's which gives a clue:

Remain silent in the presence of the *divine ones*, till they remove the clouds from thy eyes and enable thee to see by the light which issues from themselves, not what appears as good to thee, but what is intrinsically good.

From another source comes the same message in different words:

All creatures in the world have each a superior above. "This superior, whose pleasure it is *to emanate into them*, cannot impart efflux until they have adored."—*i.e.*, meditated as during yoga.

Mr. Judge says the same thing in simple, matter-of-fact terms in his preface to the *Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali*:

...when a firm position is assumed with the end in view of reaching union with Spirit through concentration, [Ishwara] comes to the aid of the lower self and raises it gradually to higher planes.

What the way is, the teachers clearly indicate. Remains, however, the difficult task of treading it firmly and to the end.

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To teach is to learn twice.

—Joubert

# PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF OCCULTISM

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, September 1884.]

## FORBIDDEN FRUIT

### THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL

And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked.—*Genesis*, iii, 7

THE knowledge upon which the different religious systems of the world are based is undoubtedly fundamentally true; but our modern religious teachers have obtained that knowledge neither by induction nor by deduction, and what they know rests mainly upon information, tradition and hearsay, mixed up with a great deal of their own conceptions, which are frequently erroneous. Such information, being not connected with any personal experience, can give no real knowledge. Not only are the sources from which that information has been received in many cases unknown or obscure, but the original teachings, no matter how true they may have been, are generally misunderstood and misinterpreted by a succession of promulgators.

This misunderstanding has been aided to a great extent by the allegorical and symbolical manner in which the original doctrines have been transmitted from one generation to another, so that in the course of time much of their true meaning was entirely lost and only the fables remained. Most of these fables seem to be purposely made absurd and unreasonable, so as to be protected against any acceptation in their literal sense; yet, nevertheless, the bigoted and ignorant frequently profess to believe them, and if literally believed in, without any explanation, they certainly form what has been properly called *vicious literature*. We copy the following from the *American Truthseeker*:

There is a flood of humanity ever sweeping toward idiocy and insanity. Every day we read of the youth who has started westward after Indian scalps, and the man who has ended his life with the rope or dagger. Every paper that we pick up has in it an account of some insane wretch who has either murdered some of his family or committed suicide. Vicious literature is corrupting the human race. We are becoming mentally diseased by reading the fancies of others and believing them to be facts.

The boy who reads the tales of the West until he thinks they are

real, and is inspired to be a desperado, is unfortunate; but the one that reads and believes a more ancient novel, which relates incredible incidents of war and bloodshed, not only of this world, but of other worlds in other spheres, is surely in a more deplorable condition. His imagination is always picturing celestial cities with diamond-paved streets and gates of pearl, inhabited by fairies which are half human and half bird. And in his dreams the poor maniac holds converse with these beaked and feathered vagrants of the skies, which exist only in his own fancy.

This novel, which gives accounts of battles between characters called angels, gods and devils, does more harm than all others together. It is taught to us from the cradle to the grave. No sooner has the child learned to talk than the parents begin teaching it to believe these fairy tales, and to ask favours of the boss fairy or god, and even to advise him how his affairs should be conducted.

The hero of this novel was very fond of meat. He did not eat it as we do; but while his slaves roasted the carcasses of rams and bullocks, he reached his head out over the edge of a cloud and let his divine nostrils feast on the ascending fumes.

Incredible as it may appear, the majority of people in so-called civilized countries believe this vile superstition to be actually true. And countries that are not called civilized believe traditions which are equally absurd. Vicious literature has its baneful influence on the whole world.

But we are living in an age when after the night of superstition during the Middle Ages, reason has again resumed its sway. Free thought and free speech are less dangerous than formerly, and we therefore see men like Bradlaugh and Robert Ingersoll giving voice to the public sentiment which begins to regard those fables as dangerous superstitions; and the Western world seems to start up as if awakening from a dream that was disturbed by a hideous nightmare, and to find out that it has been led by the nose by the priests.

But, if all these theological fables are nothing else but stupid tales, at the absurdity of which a child would laugh, how could they dominate for so many centuries over the minds of the people? Is it not because great truths, not understood but intuitively perceived, were hidden behind those masks, and would it not be better to understand and explain them than, in attempting to destroy superstition, to destroy with it the accumulated wisdom of the ages? True knowledge is not dangerous as it is necessarily connected with wisdom, but knowledge obtained by information or intellectual reasoning only, without higher im-

pulses to govern the application of such knowledge, is the forbidden fruit, which it is dangerous to possess. If we are permitted to speak in allegorical language, we may say that *God* wrote the Bible and the *Devil* published it, that is to say, that while there is a great deal of truth in the ancient *Kabala*, out of which the main part of the Bible has been formed, its publication and consequent profanation and misinterpretation has led to great destruction of life and has for centuries been a curse to humanity.

Like the *Kabala*, other ancient religious works have been framed in a more or less symbolical language, to hide their true meaning from the eyes of the profane. Nearly all of them represent in some form or other the transition of Man from a state of original purity to a condition of degradation and his subsequent rise and salvation.

The *Kabala* represents this history of the "fall" under the allegory of original man and woman in *paradise*—meaning a *state of purity*—eating a *fruit* from a forbidden tree—representing *knowledge*—having been instigated to do so by the *devil*—symbolizing *unholy desire*. This story, if taken in its literal sense, is extremely absurd, but if we examine its hidden meaning, we shall find that it covers a great occult truth.

Many of the occult symbols are liable to be interpreted in a twofold manner. One interpretation, in a wider sense, which refers to collective man, and another lying individually nearer and representing the possible experience of the individual. In its wider sense the *fall of man* represents the descent of spirit into matter, man's evolution, and his becoming in the course of the same provided with *clothes of skin*—that means a *physical body*, to protect him against the injurious influences of his surroundings.

In a more restricted sense the fable refers to each individual man and to the dangers which he incurs by developing intellectuality at the expense of spirituality, and thereby obtaining knowledge without sufficient wisdom for its application, to prevent any misuse. A high degree of intellectual development is not necessarily accompanied by a corresponding morality, and without the latter that knowledge *which gives power* may and would be a still greater curse than superstition and ignorance. To what depths of moral degradation intellectuality without spirituality may lead, we see at the present time vividly illustrated in the unnecessary and brutal cruelty with which vivisections are conducted, and in most cases simply for the gratification of *idle curiosity*. To prove this, we have only space to insert the following

few lines from an extract of testimony taken before a Royal Commission to investigate the practice of vivisection, which testimony only throws a faint light upon what is practised in thousands of places in the West.

2. Testimony of David Ferrier, M.D. (vivisector), Professor of King's College, before the Royal Commission:

"*Question*: What is your practice as to anaesthetics? *Answer*: Except for teaching purposes, or convenience, I never give them.

"*Q.* Do you mean to say that you have no regard at all for the sufferings of animals? *A.* No regard at all! I think that a man who performs an experiment has no time for thinking what the animal will feel and suffer.

"*Q.* Do you believe it the general practice on the continent to disregard altogether the feelings of animals? *A.* I do.

"*Q.* Do you believe that the feeling is different in England? *A.* I do not think it is; not among physiologists."

4. *The Medical Times and Gazette* flippantly mentions an experiment on a living dog, which consisted in forcing half a pint of boiling water into the stomach, "in order to show that the animal tissue could be disorganized; and that the animal, after giving evidence of great suffering, vomited blood and died!"

5. Mr. Jesse B. Mills testified before the Royal Commission as follows:

"I am a veterinary surgeon in the Royal Artillery at Woolwich.

"*Question*. You went through college at Edinburgh? *Answer*. I did.

"*Q.* Were experiments made there on the occasion to which you refer, to discover any *new* facts? *A.* No; simply to demonstrate things that were perfectly well known to every student almost; and to gratify idle curiosity."

But such cruelty is not exhibited towards animals only; we see whole generations of men poisoned by the inoculation of filth, partly from a motive of greed, partly to uphold a mistaken scientific theory. The recent improvements of firearms may have helped modern civilization to spread, but they have not increased spirituality, and the humanitarian spirit exhibited during modern wars, represented in the person of Florence Nightingale, is not due to the ingenuity of intellect alone. The invention of the fulminates of mercury, of gunpowder and nitroglycerine has caused much suffering to a large part of humanity. Not that the substances applied or the forces which are liberated are intrinsically evil, but their misunderstanding or misapplication leads to evil results.

If all men were intelligent enough to understand the laws which govern them, and wise enough to employ them for good purposes only, no evil results would follow.

If we proceed a step further and imagine intellectual but wicked and selfish people possessed not only of the power to employ explosives, poisonous drugs and medicines to injure others, but able to send their own invisible poisonous influences to a distance, to leave at will the prison-house of the physical body and go out in their *astral forms* to kill or injure others, the most disastrous results would follow. Such forbidden knowledge has been and is sometimes possessed by people with criminal tendencies, a fact which is universally known in the East, and upon the possibility and actuality of such knowledge the witch persecutions of the Middle Ages were based. That such witch trials were not always based upon hallucination and idle tales has been demonstrated on many occasions, and we are personally acquainted with a woman, who can throw a dog into convulsions, kill a small bird, and make a man sick by the simple effort of her will.

Not only to others, but also to the possessor of forbidden knowledge, may the result of such knowledge be detrimental. The first use that the average man would make of such knowledge would be to produce "wonders," which would not only unsettle the reason of others but also his own. Even the modern discoveries in science have sometimes had such effects. And here we may add that if the Adepts in spite of the general clamour for the exhibition of occult phenomena do not produce them for the purpose of gratifying curiosity or to convince sceptics, the above may give a clue to the explanation. It has been complained of, that those phenomena are often produced under circumstances which leave open the question of fraud, and it is this possibility of fraud which may sometimes protect the investigator from lunacy.

Let us see what Baron Dupotet says in regard to the forbidden fruit:

What is this tree of knowledge and this forbidden fruit? Is it perhaps that mysterious force, which is the object of our study? If we examine the sacred books, we find that they contain the knowledge of good and of evil. Man himself as well as his posterity is punished for overstepping certain limits, beyond which he is allured by a pernicious light. There is a great mystery. Man wants to obtain knowledge, which renders him equal to God.

We have seen that man is continually surrounded by unseen influences and that the *astral plane* is swarming with entities and forces, which are acting upon him for good or for evil, according

to his good or evil inclinations, dispositions and attractions. At the present state of evolution man has a reason to guide him and a physical body, which is admirably adapted to modify the influences from the astral plane and to shelter him against the "*monsters of the deep.*"

Man's physical body is composed of elements similar to those of his material surroundings, and his astral form corresponds to, and attracts the principles of, the astral plane. If the physical body is in good health, it acts as an armour, and moreover man has the power by a judicious exercise of his will to make himself positive, or in other words to so concentrate the *odic* aura by which he is surrounded, as to render his armour impenetrable, but if by bad health, by a careless expenditure of vitality, or by the practice of mediumship, he renders himself negative, or, in other words if he disperses through space the *odic* emanations belonging to his sphere, his physical armour will become weakened and unable to protect him; he becomes the helpless victim of elementaries and elemental forces, his mental faculties will lose their balance and sooner or later he will, like the symbolical *Adam and Eve*, know that he is naked and exposed to influences which he cannot repel, an idiot or a criminal, on his way to the lunatic asylum or to suicide. The former has been the deplorable fate of the celebrated medium Chs. Forster and the latter the end of P. B. Randolph, and many others have followed or preceded in their path. Such is the result for which those ignorantly crave who wish to obtain knowledge without morality, intellectual acquisitions without spirituality, and who carelessly meddle with forces which they do not understand. To supply the ignorant or weak with powers of destruction would be like providing children with gunpowder and matches for play, and those who enter the temple of knowledge without due preparation pay dearly for their temerity. Our modern science is at present stretching out her hand for the forbidden fruit, and its attainment without the necessary sanction will bring on the destruction of our race.

The above considerations bring us back again to our starting point, where we said that intellectual development and spiritual enlightenment must go hand in hand, that abnormal growth in one direction is prejudicial to real progress. The development of the true Adept means therefore the development of all that is true and good in man by study and high aspiration, and the whole of the "practical instructions" necessary to know may be condensed into the few words spoken to the writer of this at the beginning of his career as a student of occult science by a high

Adept, saying: "*Live up to your highest ideal of true manhood.*"

There are two gigantic powers of the mind: the *Will* and the *Imagination*. In the brute creation and in those nearest approaching to it, *Imagination* governs the *Will*. In the higher developed classes *Will* controls the *Imagination*. The ability to apply *Will* and *Imagination* so as to produce useful and harmonious results is called *Wisdom*, but wisdom cannot be imparted by words, it must be acquired by experience, and frequently the acquisition of such experience involves a large amount of personal suffering, which amount may be reduced by receiving and following out proper instructions.

Man is a product of circumstances. His *Will* cannot be said to be *free* as long as it is ruled by the imagination and the state of his imagination depends on his inclination and knowledge. Man can therefore not be considered a fully responsible being as long as his knowledge is deficient; this responsibility grows with his knowledge. When in the course of evolution his knowledge shall become more extended, he will then be better able to choose between good and evil, and if at the same time his imagination is pure, then will he become truly powerful and the "forbidden fruit" will become a divine gift. Man will then no longer need a physical body to protect him, because he will protect himself by his power. The *Devil* in the form of a serpent, symbolizing the *Astral light* with its inhabitants (the region of desire), will have its head crushed by the heel of the woman, allegorizing *Divine Wisdom* (the female principle, the spiritual soul), *death* will be conquered, good-will shall prevail throughout our planetary chain leading to a period of rest, in *Nirvana*, after which "the morning stars will again sing together for joy," to welcome a new day of creation.

(To be continued)

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THERE are two freedoms—the false, where a man is free to do what he likes; the true, where a man is free to do what he ought.

—CHARLES KINGSLEY

## THE CHAIN OF INFLUENCE

A long chain of influence extends from the highest spiritual guide who may belong to any man, down through vast numbers of spiritual chiefs, ending at last even in the mere teacher of our youth. . . .

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE same Self shines in all, but not in all does it shine forth equally. Herein is seen a gradation which is not only one of degree but also the essential quality of consciousness. In any manifestation, therefore, exists the *Guru Parampara* tracing itself from the Highest Being of spirituality complete through all intermediate links to the Teacher on the lowest rung of evolution—a chain whose links are formed by distinctive shades of the degree as well as of the quality of consciousness. Thus for always there must exist, side by side, the pupil and the Teacher, the neophyte and the Hierophant. The relationship between these precludes all sense of “equality” of either status or stature. The one remains the obedient pupil, the other the gracious teacher. Ofttimes the pupil forgets his Teacher’s eminence and then he suffers invariably in that he does not receive the full bounty of his benefactor’s gift. Arjuna had to confess to the selfsame delusion. Says he:

Having been ignorant of thy majesty, I took thee for a friend, and have called thee “O Krishna, O son of Yadu, O friend,” and blinded by my affection and presumption, I have at times treated thee without respect in sport, in recreation, in repose, in thy chair, and at thy meals, in private and in public; all this I beseech thee, O inconceivable Being, to forgive.

Victor Hugo intuitively grasped this differentiation and expressed it in his own inimitable way:

Some minds, otherwise bright, have objected to leadership: “We are as unwilling to submit to a leadership or dynasty of thought as any other.” This, however, is to misunderstand and to be frightened by a word, when the thought is reassuring. The very law which requires that mankind should have no owners, requires that it should have guides. To be enlightened is the reverse of being subjected. The march forward requires a directing hand. To rebel against the pilot scarcely advances the ship; one does not see what would have been gained by throwing Columbus overboard. The words “This way” never humiliated the man who was seeking the road. At night I accept the authority of the torches.

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## YAGNA—TAPAS—DANA

Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise.

—*The Bhagavad-Gita*, XVIII, 5

THE deeds referred to seem to be a special group of actions, over and above the obligation which rests upon us all, at all times, to do the necessary actions which constitute our particular duty “to race and kin, to friend and foe.” They are in the nature of self-initiated actions, which, if performed in the right spirit and with due humility and offered on the altar of the Self, can bring us nearer to our goal of self-forgetting service of mankind.

What are the deeds of sacrifice, of mortification and of charity that should not be abandoned? Each category obviously could be dealt with at great length, but let us here consider briefly each of the three groups of purificatory actions, bearing in mind Krishna’s warning in the following verse, which applies to them all—that “even those works are to be performed after having renounced all selfish interest in them and in their fruits.”

### *Yagna—Sacrifice*

Krishna had put forward earlier in His discourse with Arjuna, His devotee and His friend, a different concept of sacrifice from that prevailing among the orthodox followers of prescribed rites and ceremonies. He said that He accepted and enjoyed the offerings of the humble soul who in his worship with a pure heart offered a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water unto Him. The emphasis, of course, is to be laid upon the purity of heart.

The offering of the greatest monetary value given with the motive of courting favour or of winning praise is rendered worthless as far as concerns spiritual benefit to the donor, whereas purity of heart and of intention invests the humblest offering with a value that to the worldly-minded would seem altogether disproportionate. Thus it is not primarily the size of the gifts that determines their real value to either the recipient or the donor. That is to be measured primarily by the heart quality that prompts them, which none but the donor himself can know. “There is,” as a verse in *Proverbs* (xiii, 7) puts it, “that maketh himself rich yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches.”

It is implied in the Third Chapter of the *Gita* that sacrificial

action plays its part in helping the “wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving.” Sacrifice indeed is the law of life. Madame Blavatsky included in the first issue of her magazine *Lucifer* an unsigned filler that conveys this lesson, with its wider implications for each member of the human family:

Life is built up by the sacrifice of the individual to the whole. Each cell in the living body must sacrifice itself to the perfection of the whole: when it is otherwise, disease and death enforce the lesson. (I, 7)

The negative definition of a Theosophist, ascribed by H.P.B. to Those who laid down as the first object of the original Theosophical Society the forming of the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood, bears directly upon readiness to sacrifice for others. It appears in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*, p. 12:

HE WHO DOES NOT PRACTISE ALTRUISM; HE WHO IS NOT PREPARED TO SHARE HIS LAST MORSEL WITH A WEAKER OR POORER THAN HIMSELF; HE WHO NEGLECTS TO HELP HIS BROTHER MAN, OF WHATEVER RACE, NATION, OR CREED, WHENEVER AND WHEREVER HE MEETS SUFFERING, AND WHO TURNS A DEAF EAR TO THE CRY OF HUMAN MISERY... IS NO THEOSOPHIST.

### *Tapas—Mortification*

The word “*tapas*” is translated in *The Theosophical Glossary* as “abstraction, meditation,” and “to perform *tapas*” as “to sit for contemplation,” wherefore, it is added, “ascetics are often called *Tapasas*.” But, since true contemplation is impossible without subdual of the lower passions, the word “mortification,” by which Mr. Judge translates *tapas* in his rendition of the *Gita*, is very apposite in the context of purificatory actions. Krishna, however, describes the false ascetic who, while remaining inert, “restraining the senses and organs, yet ponders with his heart upon objects of sense,” as “a false pietist of bewildered soul.”

Austerities do have to be performed, but with the proper selfless motive and in due moderation. And they must not be performed vaingloriously or for show. The Christian teacher had something very pertinent to say on this in the Sermon on the Mount:

... when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast....

But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret. . . . (*Matt.*, VI, 16-18)

Self-restraint and mortification are both named in the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Gita* among the marks of him whose virtues are of a godlike character. Students sometimes do not reflect when tempted to overindulgence of the appetite, for instance, how foolish it is to attempt to rein in and curb the desires with one hand while, wielding the whip of indulgence with the other, they urge on to greater speed the steeds that they are trying to control. "Do not believe," *The Voice of the Silence* warns, "that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated." It is proverbial that a chain is no stronger than its weakest link, and how expect the will to be firm in a crisis if its dictates have been consistently overborne by those of desire of any type? That gluttony is not the least serious of indulgences is indicated in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, on p. 113 of which gluttons find themselves in exceedingly undesirable company, after death.

Austerities of the right type and performed with the right selfless motive should aid the Inner Ego to get a better purchase on his vehicle of the personality and to focus his light through it, lending his grace to every action. A helpful practice, for example, is the observance of periodic silence of the senses and desires as well as of the tongue, to enable the voice of Nature or of our own higher nature to be heard. Lao Tzu says that "by the practice of Inner Life stillness we can continually conquer all things."

### *Dana—Charity*

If *Yagna* calls for action of the Will and *Tapas*, besides control of the senses, the passions and the desires, involves mental or heart resignation, *Dana*, which in its highest aspect is Compassion leading to the Great Renunciation, is a Buddhist expression. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians (XIII, 3-8) St. Paul makes it plain that charity is far other than the mere giving of gifts, which does not always involve the spontaneous outflow of that quality. The charity which he says "never faileth," "suffereth long, and is kind. . . . envieth not. . . . vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up. . . . thinketh no evil. . . . beareth all things. . . . hopeth all things, endureth all things."

To feel this innermost conviction of universal brotherhood, this unity with all, is to express it spontaneously, wherever there is need one can relieve, pain one can assuage, ignorance one can enlighten. Then is one fired indeed to try to fit himself, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others. For,

as Madame Blavatsky has written, "We believe in relieving the starvation of the soul, as much if not more than the emptiness of the stomach." (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 242)

"The divine give, they demand that you also shall give before you can be of their kin" (*Light on the Path*, p. 66). The practice of this true *Dana* was beautifully described by the Buddha in these words from the *Majjhima Nikaya* (i, 194), translated by F. L. Woodward:

When men speak evil of ye, thus must ye train yourselves: "Our heart shall be unwavering, no evil word will we send forth, but compassionate of others' welfare will we abide, of kindly heart without resentment: and that man who thus speaks will we suffuse with thoughts accompanied by love, and so abide: and, making that our standpoint, we will suffuse the whole world with loving thoughts, far-reaching, wide-spreading, boundless, free from hate, free from ill-will, and so abide." Thus, brethren, must ye train yourselves.

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THE higher form of goodness is like water;  
 For water has the skill of profiting all creatures  
 Without striving with them.  
 It puts itself in the lowly place which everybody hates.  
 So near the Tao is it.  
 The goodness of houses consists in their being on the ground:  
 The goodness of men's minds consists in their being profound:  
 The goodness of companionship consists in human-heartedness:  
 The goodness of speech consists in its being reliable:  
 The goodness of government consists in bringing good order:  
 The goodness of any business consists in its being efficiently done:  
 The goodness of any movement consists in its being timely.  
 Only in all this there must be no striving,  
 For thus only can nothing go wrong.

—LAO TZU

## ON FINDING FAULT

FINDING no fault is regarded by Theosophists as a great virtue, but, asks the man of the world, don't we have to find fault in order to start improving things?

Faultfinding implies two things—first, a captious frame of mind, and, secondly, *speaking* of the faults of others—persons or circumstances. These two must be distinguished. Everything that can be said about the former applies to the latter, but in the actual *speaking* there is an additional element which calls for special attention.

Mental, unspoken criticism is very common. We object to the way people do things, to the way they look, to their point of view, and we often think that this criticism may be made the starting point and is a necessary stage in building a better world. As a matter of fact, if we analyse the situation we shall find that reform does not as a rule result from such criticism and that nothing eventuates but renewed criticism. We are most of us not wise enough to pass a true judgement and recognize what is really undesirable in a person or in circumstances. We merely annoy ourselves and others by continual carping based on what displeases us personally. And of what use is that? It simply irritates us and, if we keep it up long enough, instead of "reforming" the object of our displeasure, it changes us into its likeness. One comes in time to resemble that upon which one thinks. Only the truly wise can without irritation, rancour or personal prejudice become real iconoclasts and break away that which hampers regeneration. The rest of us only increase such impediments as are there already. Therefore are we warned: Judge not!

In addition to passing mental judgements, we *speak* of the faults of others, adding further complications. Speech is an awakener of forces. The repetition, aloud, of sacred formulas is recommended, because this arouses the slumbering spiritual potentialities in and around us. W. Q. Judge says that power follows the spoken assertion of the existence of Masters, and the brave declaration of principles is important as a means of bringing ourselves under the more direct influence of the Great Ones. On the other hand, we are warned against speaking in clear and definite terms about undesirable experiences lest we reactivate the forces connected with them.

Hence, speaking of the faults of others encourages the very elements in their characters that we would like to see eliminated. We thus strengthen the evil we deplore, and this is the case not

only with persons but also with circumstances and world conditions. People who are always complaining that the country is going to the dogs, recounting the horrors of strifes and struggles and pointing out how degenerate the times are, do not help matters. They only make a painful bruise more sensitive and retard recuperation. Better far to apply the other aspect of the law and strengthen "the glory and the grace that mix with evils here" by searching for new beginnings in the right direction and for idealists among men. These we should support and talk about. Then our words will indeed contribute to all-round improvement of persons and of conditions.

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It is much better to reprove than to be angry secretly: and he that confesseth his fault shall be preserved from hurt.

How good is it, when thou art reproved, to show repentance! For so shalt thou escape wilful sin.

There is one that keepeth silence, and is found wise: and another by much babbling becometh hateful.

A wise man will hold his tongue till he see opportunity: but a babbler and a fool will regard no time.

There is a gift that shall not profit thee; and there is a gift whose recompense is double.

There is an abasement because of glory; and there is that lifteth up his head from a low estate.

There is that buyeth much for a little, and repayeth it sevenfold.

The fool saith, I have no friends, I have no thanks for all my good deeds, and they that eat my bread speak evil of me.

How oft, and of how many shall he be laughed to scorn! for he knoweth not aright what it is to have; and it is all one unto him as if he had it not.

To slip upon a pavement is better than to slip with the tongue: so the fall of the wicked shall come speedily.

A lie is a foul blot in a man, yet it is continually in the mouth of the untaught.

Wisdom that is hid, and treasure that is hoarded up, what profit is in them both?

Necessary patience in seeking the Lord is better than he that leadeth his life without a guide.

—JESUS, SON OF SIRACH (c. 200 B.C.)

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Scientists can only be satisfied with empirical facts; and as far as reincarnation is concerned, current scientific research is mainly confined to painstakingly accumulating, clarifying and classifying evidence of claimed memories of previous births. One leading authority on the subject is Dr. Ian Stevenson, Carlson Professor of Psychiatry and director of the division of personality studies at the University of Virginia, U.S.A.

Since the late sixties, Dr. Stevenson has documented cases in India, Africa, the Near and Far East, Britain, the United States and elsewhere, in which children have astonished their parents and others with precise details about the people they claim to have been in their prior life. Some of these children have recognized former homes and neighbourhoods as well as still-living friends and relatives. They have recalled events in their purported previous lives, including their often violent deaths. Sometimes their birthmarks resemble scars that correspond to wounds that led, they claim, to their deaths. Dr. Stevenson says that in the evaluation of these hundreds of instances studied by him, "reincarnation becomes a very serious contender as the most plausible explanation of the empirical facts."

In an interview published in the January *Omni*, Dr. Stevenson speaks about his work:

I had become dissatisfied, you see, with the methods that had been developed in psychiatry for helping people. Orthodox theory conceives human personality as the product of a person's genetic material inherited from his ancestors through his parents, and the modifying influences of his prenatal and postnatal environment. But I found that some cases cannot be satisfactorily explained by genetics, environmental influences, or a combination of these. . . . It's easy to see environmental influences, say, with such composers as Bach, Mozart, and Beethoven, all of whose fathers were fine musicians. But what about George Frederick Handel? His family had no discernible interest in music; his father even sternly discouraged it. Or take the cases of Elizabeth Fry, the prison reformer, and Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing. Both had to fight for their chosen callings from childhood onward. One can find endless examples that are difficult to explain given our current theories. But if one accepts the possibility of reincarnation, one can entertain the idea that these children are demonstrating strong likes, dislikes, skills, and even genius that are the logical results of previous experiences. I have found some children with

skills that seem to be carried over from a previous life. . . .

What would predispose someone to remember a previous life? Violent death is a factor in our cases. In more than seven hundred cases in six different cultures, sixty-one percent remembered having died violently. But are these cases actually representative? Those involving accidents, murders, and suicides are bound to get more attention than others in which the child remembers a quiet life. Children also tend to remember the final years of a previous life. . . .

In my experience, nearly all so-called previous personalities evoked through hypnotism are entirely imaginary and a result of the patient's eagerness to obey the hypnotist's suggestion. It is no secret that we are all highly suggestible under hypnosis. This kind of investigation can actually be dangerous. Some people have been terribly frightened by their supposed memories, and in other cases the previous personality evoked has refused to go away for a long time. . . .

Some persons have said it is unfair to be reborn unless you can remember details of a previous life and profitably remember your mistakes. They forget that forgetting is essential to successful living in the present. If every time we walked, we were to remember how we stumbled, we would fall again. I've also had people envy children who remember previous lives, as if these children had special wisdom. In fact, it makes more sense to look upon them as suffering from an abnormality, almost a defect. The memories they have are often more of a handicap than a blessing; and they nearly all become happier as they grow older and forget their previous lives. To paraphrase Jesus Christ, sufficient unto one life is the evil thereof.

In almost all of the documented cases quick rebirth has taken place, but Dr. Stevenson admits that "it's possible the interval between death and rebirth is much longer than the cases we've studied so far." Students of Theosophy know that on an *average* a period of many centuries would have to elapse before reincarnation could take place; but selfish materialists, those who have died very young, as also individuals whose lives have been violently cut off by some accident are exceptions to the general rule and quick rebirth is possible in such cases. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 303; *The Key to Theosophy*, p. 168, Indian ed.)

Dr. Stevenson also admits that all the cases he has investigated so far have shortcomings; that they "permit but do not compel belief" in reincarnation. In some of the cases at least there are other possible explanations than reincarnation. The Astral Light, the storehouse of all the earth's memories, says Theosophy, con-

tains a consistent record of the life of a dead person, and a natural sensitive reading the record of another's life in that Astral Light might identify himself or herself imaginatively with it. Scientific investigators in this field concentrate so much on "proof" and on data and details concerning individual cases that they tend to overlook the broad implications of the doctrine of rebirth. The Theosophical view is that reincarnation is not susceptible of proof merely by phenomenal means. The case for reincarnation rests more on its capacity to provide a rational explanation of life and its mysteries, based on the ascertainable laws of nature. To deny reincarnation is to deny order and justice in the universe, to deny that life has any purpose. W. Q. Judge calls it "a doctrine the most noble of all, and with its companion one of Karma . . . it alone gives the basis for ethics."

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Theosophy has always maintained that our senses are correlated and merge into one another, and science is now veering round to the same view. For some people, a sound is more than a sound; it is also a visual image, even a taste. One such person described a single high-pitched tone as "fireworks tinged with a pink hue [that had] an ugly taste—rather like that of a briny pickle." (*Psychology Today*, December 1987)

Such vivid interplay of the senses may be rare, but there are many who associate colours with sounds, or music. In a series of studies, researchers Robert A. Cutietta and Kelly J. Haggerty played different musical passages to more than 1,200 people ranging from the very young to the elderly. After each passage, the listeners were asked what colour the music evoked. The researchers found surprising agreement in their responses. For instance, to a large percentage of the listeners, a march tune was red or orange, a lively dance tune was green or yellow, and so on. The researchers suggest that people tend to associate certain colours with certain types of music because of the inherent way they process sensory information and respond emotionally to music.

Music or sound has long been experimented upon in connection with light or colour in many scientific fields: astronomy, physics, medicine, etc. Scientists are recognizing that the two cannot be separated. Occult Science has always taught this. Fohat, the power of Spirit in action, the one Force, reveals itself as sound, light, electricity, magnetism, radiation, etc.—all these are its garments, all are vibrations. Motion begets motions, Sound begets tones,

Light begets colours, and all are correlated, united, interchangeable—the One in the many, the many in the One.

In answer to the question, “Is it true that on the astral plane every sound always produces a colour?” H.P.B. once said:

Yes; but these are invisible because not yet correlated by the human brain so as to become visible on the earth plane. Read Galton, who gives experiments with colours and sounds as seen by psychics and sensitives, showing that many sensitive people always see a colour for every sound. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 160)

It stands to reason that in a universe governed by law there is no place for chance or accident, or for coincidence in the sense of concurrence of events or circumstances without any causal connection. Yet strange happenings have intrigued people for ages and of late there have been several attempts to find patterns and causes in coincidentally paired events.

An article by Richard Blodgett in the *January Reader's Digest* (Indian ed.) gives some striking instances and outlines the various theories being put forward to explain apparent coincidences:

To the mathematician, some coincidences aren't mysterious at all and can be explained by the laws of statistical probability. . . . Scientists have applied the laws of probability to situations that are most unusual. For example, *Life* magazine once reported that all 15 people scheduled to attend a rehearsal of a church choir in Beatrice, Nebraska, were late for practice on March 1, 1950, and each had a different reason: a car wouldn't start, a radio programme wasn't over, ironing wasn't finished, a conversation dragged on. It was fortunate that none arrived on schedule at 7.15 p.m.—the church was destroyed by an explosion at 7.25. The choir members wondered whether their mutual delays were an act of God. In his book *Lady Luck*, mathematician Warren Weaver estimated that there was a one-in-a-million chance that all 15 would be late the same evening.

Some coincidences hinge on so many peculiar variables that the chances of their occurring seem impossible to calculate. . . . Carl Jung claimed in a 1952 essay that coincidences occur much more frequently than probability theories would predict, and that many must therefore be the work of an unknown force seeking to impose universal order. He coined a word, *synchronicity*, to describe the phenomenon of seemingly unrelated events occurring in some

unexpected association with each other. . . .

In the search for a new principle to explain coincidences, some eminent physicists have also offered speculations that go beyond probability theory. As early as 1935, it was shown that two subatomic particles, having interacted once, can respond to each other's subsequent motions thousands of years later and light-years apart. . . .

After investigating the phenomenon for several decades, physicist David Bohm suggests that particles and people alike may influence each other, because everything in the universe is connected to everything else—past, present and future—in what he calls “the implicate order.” Particles are not really separated, but connected in a way that is invisible to ordinary concepts of reality. In the human domain, he suggests, his theory leaves room for extrasensory perception effects—that “different people who are somehow attuned to each other might develop common notions at the same time.”

In an Editorial Note in *The Theosophist* for June 1881, the following explanation was given:

. . .there exist manifestations of the psychic force in man's daily life, which is generally disregarded or erroneously looked upon as a result of simple chance or coincidence, for the only reason that we are unable to forthwith assign for it a logical and comprehensive cause though the manifestations undoubtedly bear the impress of a scientific character, evidently belonging, as they do, to that class of psycho-physiological phenomena which even men of great scientific attainments and such specialists as Dr. Carpenter are now busying themselves with. . . .Were every person to pay close attention—in an experimental and scientific spirit, of course—to his daily actions and watch his thoughts, conversation and resultant acts, and carefully analyse these, omitting no details, trifling as they might appear to him, then would he find for most of these actions and thoughts coinciding *reasons* based upon mutual psychic influence between the embodied intelligences.

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Our age has been called the transition age and mankind today, writes Karan Singh in his article, “From Nationalism to Globalism” (*The Times of India*, January 11), “is now transiting into what might be called a global society.” The nation-state has become one of the major hurdles to human unity, he maintains, and in many spheres of life “a rapid process of globalization is in progress with results that can hardly be imagined.”

There has been a major paradigm shift in recent years. Barriers of race and religion, colour and creed, nationality and ideology, once considered to be so strong as to be virtually unsurmountable, are now seen as transitory manifestations in the long perspective of human evolution on planet earth. Nationalism itself, which for many centuries has been the motive force behind political events throughout the world, is now beginning to lose its authority. Certainly it continues to play a major role in human consciousness, but, with the speeding up of the process of globalization, it will inevitably shed much of its authority, much as ancient tribal loyalties were subsumed and absorbed into the nation-state. The ancient concept expressed by the Vedic seers, of mankind being a family and, even beyond that, of the essential unity of all manifestation, is becoming increasingly apparent as the human race pursues its long and tortuous history on this planet. . . .

Indian philosophy has always looked upon the entire earth as a spiritual entity—the mother that has nurtured consciousness up from the slime of the primeval ocean for billions of years. The question arises as to whether this universal element in our nationalism is a weakness or in fact a strength. In our own lifetimes we have seen what havoc nationalism gone berserk can wreak upon humanity. . . .

It surely is within the capacity of the Indian civilization—the most ancient and multifaceted continuing culture in the world—to blaze a new trail. What is in fact urgently needed is a new intellectual and spiritual renaissance through which we can recapture the essence of our ancient teachings and take them to the nuclear world in which we find ourselves. . . . Are we prepared boldly to come to grips with the problems that confront us? Are we prepared to imbibe the true teachings of the Vedanta whereby all human beings are looked upon as embodying the divine spark, and thus linked to each other by inalienable spiritual bonds? Are we capable of making the transition from limited religious and national loyalties, to a broader commitment to the divinity inherent in all humanity? It is on the answer to these questions that the future, not only of India but of the entire human race, will depend.

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Dr. S. Ambirajan's two-part article (*The Heritage*, December 1987 and January 1988) takes a frank look at the state of crisis in our environment. The author discusses our philosophy of life and our ideas about ourselves which have resulted in the current

crisis, threatening our very existence, and suggests the possible way out of the situation:

The old Indian world-view did not give undue importance to man as possessor of the Earth for his exclusive use. It saw all things animate and inanimate as part of a divine scheme with no exclusive position for human beings. Hence such beliefs as one should not despoil a green tree, or traditions vesting rivers with divinity, all promote a healthy social behaviour. . . .

Even in the West, despite its placing man in the centre of the World, the pre-Enlightenment view was to contain his natural urges to enjoy material things. . . . Today the seventeenth-century philosophy dominates the world in as much as whether in East or West, North or South, the aim is to utilize everything on the earth for Man's needs, desires and pleasures.

Man alone among living species kills for reasons other than biological. He continues to exterminate more and more species not only for food, but also for hide, fur, feathers, trophies, talismans, rituals, aphrodisiacs, research experiments and the sheer pleasure of killing. Similarly he despoils plant life systematically, for growing other plants, for firewood, laying roads, buildings, furniture, paper, and of course just to see that others don't use it. . . .

The more man is able to utilize science, technology and management, the more is the extraordinary increase in the availability of goods and services and the capacity of the earth to sustain a very large number of individuals. However, as economists would be the first to admit, this is not a costless process. The immediate question is: What are we paying in return for this massive increase in productivity? The answer is without doubt: "Environmental degradation." . . .

What is essential is to change the direction towards a sensible and achievable objective. Once a small beginning is made, one could hope for the establishment of a sane society. . . . In the ultimate analysis, society cannot depend upon anyone, even if it is an all-powerful democratically elected government. As Lord Acton once said: "The great question is to discover, not what governments prescribe, for no prescription is valid against the conscience of mankind."

And our duty as serious students of society, science and technology is to stir that conscience.

The dangers of pollution and other environmental problems are far more serious than we realize. The only possible way out is a growing public awareness of the impasse.

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(Sd.) Gopal G. Thakur  
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# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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