

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### THEOSOPHY AS A GUIDE IN LIFE

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THIS is a practical age, and every system or theory is challenged to give proofs of what it may accomplish in action. How very little is gained by mere belief is the standing reproach to Churches. Their diversified Creeds have been steadily evolving through the centuries as new problems in theology or science arose, and today the separated sects have an outfit of every possible belief on every possible theme. No small proportion of these themes are in regions remote from practical life, as also from any means of proof. They concern such questions as the number and nature of Divine Beings, the character and bearing of the Divine Will, the fixedness of the future life, the best form of ecclesiastical sacraments, etc.—all of them with little facility of demonstration and with no utility when demonstrated. Moreover, it is quite evident that, whether there be One God or Three, whether He predestinates or not, whether evil-doers are damned eternally or temporarily, whether Baptism is efficacious towards pardon, the various sects have not made this earth more worthy of the Divine care or diminished the evils which religion should cure. As conservators of morals, abaters of sin, regenerators of society, Churches are assuredly a lamentable failure. It is not merely that society remains unregenerated, but that nobody now expects them to regenerate it. A copious provision of minute creeds has clearly done nothing to extirpate evil.

This being so, it is just as certain that the addition of another creed

will not do so. The two classes interested in human progress are the philanthropic and the devout, and both, when any unfamiliar scheme for such progress is submitted to them, are sure to point out that mere beliefs have wholly failed. They say, with entire correctness, that not a new platform or Church is needed, but something with an object and an impulsion hitherto untried. If Theosophy has no better aim than have the sects, if it imparts no motive stronger than do they, if it can show no results more distinct and valuable, it may as well be rejected now as after a futile trial. But, on the other hand, if it holds out a better prospect and a finer spur, if it can prove that these have actually operated where conventional ones have failed, it is entitled to a hearing. The doctrinal question is subordinate, though, of course, an ethical system is more hopeful if upon a rational basis.

Let us see if the unfamiliar system known as "Theosophy," and which has lately received so much attention from the thinking world, possesses any qualities warranting its substitution for the religions around it. They have not reformed mankind; can It?

Now 1st.—*Theosophy abolishes the cause of all the sin, and most of the misery, of life.* That cause is selfishness. Every form of dishonesty, violence, outrage, fraud, even discourtesy, comes from the desire to promote one's own ends, even if the rights of others have to be sacrificed thereby. All aggression upon fellow-men, all attempts to appropriate their comfort, possessions, or plans, all efforts to belittle, outshine, or humiliate them, express the feeling that self-gratification is to be sought before all else. This is equally true of personal vices, as well as of that personal contempt for Divine authority which we may call "impiety." Hence the root of all evil conduct towards God, towards other men, or towards oneself is self-love so strong as to sacrifice everything rather than its own indulgence.

From this indulgence follow two things. First, the pains of envy, disappointment, jealousy, and all the mean and biting passions which attend the ever-present thought of self; and the utter loss of all those finer, gentler joys which are the fruit of beneficence and altruism. Second, the restraining measures which society, for its own protection, is obliged to put upon aggression in its coarser forms—the workhouses, jails, and gibbets from which no land of civilization and churches is free. And if we wish to realize what would be the effect of a universal reign of unselfishness among men, we may picture a land without

courts, prisons and policemen, a society without speculation, chicanery, or deceit, a community whereof every heart was as vacant of envy and guile as it certainly would be of unhappiness and pain. The root of universal sorrow would be eradicated, the stream dried at its source.

Now this is what Theosophy enjoins. Its cardinal doctrine is the absolute equality of human rights and the universal obligation to respect them. If my neighbour's possessions—of feeling, property, happiness, whatnot—are as much to be regarded as are mine, and if I feel that, I shall not invade them. Still more. If I perceive the true fraternity of man, if I am in accord with the law of sympathy it evokes, if I realize that the richest pleasure comes from giving rather than receiving good, I shall not be passively unaggressive, I shall be actively beneficent. In other words, I shall be a true philanthropist. And in being this I shall have gained the highest reach of happiness to self, for “he that loseth his life, the same shall save it.” You say this is a Christian text? Very well; it is also the epitome of Theosophy.

Then 2nd.—*Theosophy sounds ceaselessly the truth that every act of right or wrong shall receive its due reward.* Most religious systems say otherwise. Usually they provide a “vicarious” plan by which punishment is to be dodged and unearned bliss secured. But if awards may be transferred, so may duties, and thus chaos is introduced into the moral order of the universe. Moreover, the palpable injustices of human life, those injustices which grieve the loving heart and sting the bitter one, are unaccounted for. All the inequalities and paradoxes and uncertainties so thick around us are insoluble. *Why* evil flourishes and good withers may not be known. Night settles down on the most important of human questions.

Theosophy illuminates it at once. It insists that moral causes are no less effective than are physical, and that its due effect, in harm or benefit, is infallibly attached to every moral act. There is no escape, no loss, no uncertainty; the law is absolutely unflinching and irresistible. Every penny of debt must be paid, by or to the individual himself. Not by any means necessarily in one life, but somewhere and somehow along the great chain is rigorous justice done; for the effects of causes generated on the moral plane may have to exhaust themselves in physical circumstances.

If unselfishness constitutes the method towards social regeneration,

Karma—for such is the name of this doctrine of justice—must constitute its stimulus. Nothing fails; no good, no evil, can die without its fruit. The result of a deed is as certain as the deed. How can a system be unpractical when it abolishes every bar to the law of causation, and makes practice the key to its whole operation?

Then 3rd.—*Theosophy holds that every man is the framer of his own destiny.* All the theological apparatus of “elections” and “predestinations” and “foreordinations” it breaks indignantly to bits. The semi-material theories of “luck,” and “fate,” and “chance” fare no better. Every other theory which shifts responsibility or paralyses effort is swept away. Theosophy will have none of them. It insists that we can be only that which we have willed to be, that no power above or below will thwart or divert us, that our destiny is in our hands. We may perceive the beauty of that conception of the future which embodies it in a restoration to the Divine fullness through continuous purgation of all that is sensuous and selfish and belittling, and, so perceiving, may struggle on towards that distant goal; or self-besotted, eager only for the transient and the material, we may hug closely our present joys, heedless alike of others and of Karmic law; but, whatever be the ideal, whatever the effort, whatever the result, it is ours alone. No divinity will greet the conqueror as a favourite of Heaven; no Demon will seize the lost in a predestined clutch. What we are we have made ourselves; what we shall be is ours to make.

Here comes in the fact of Reincarnation. No one life is adequate to a man's development. Again and again must he come to earth, to taste its quality, to lay up its experience and its discipline, each career on earth determining the nature of its successor. Two things follow: 1st, our present state discloses what we have accomplished in past lives; 2nd, our present habits decide what the next life shall be. The formative power is lodged in us; our aspiration prompting, our will effecting, the aim desired. Surely it is the perfection of fairness that every man shall be what he wishes to be!

Of all the many schemes for human melioration which history has recorded and humanity tried, is there one so rational, so just, so impartial, so elevating, so motivated, as that presented by Theosophy? Artificial distinctions and conceptions are wholly expunged. Fanciful ambitions have absolutely no place. Mechanical devices are completely absent. The root of all separations and enmities—selfishness—is

exposed and denounced. The inflexibility of moral law is vigorously declaimed. The realization of individual aim is made entirely individual. Thus sweeping away every artifice and annulling every check devised by theologians, opening the path to the highest ideal of religious fervour, insuring that not an item is lost in the long account each man runs up in his many lives, handing over to each the determination and the acquirement of his chosen aim, Theosophy does what no rival system has done or can do—affirms the moral consciousness, vindicates the moral sense, spurs the moral motive. And thus it is both practical and practicable.

Thus too, it becomes a guide in life. Once given the aim before a man and the certainty that every act affects that aim, the question of the expediency of any act is at once determined. Is an act selfish, unfraternal, aggressive? It is then untheosophical. Is it conducive to unselfishness, spirituality, progress? Then Theosophy affirms it. The test is simple and uncomplicated, and, because so, feasible. He who would be guided through the intricacies of life need seek no priest or intercessor, but illuminated with the Divine Spirit ever present in his inner man, stimulated by the vision of ultimate reunion with the Supreme, assured that each effort has its inseparately-joined result, conscious that in himself is the responsibility for its adoption, may go on in harmony, hope, and happiness, free from misgivings as to justice or success, and strong in the faith that he who has conformed to Nature and her laws shall be conformed to the destiny which she predicts for *Man*.

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THE spread of the knowledge of the laws of Karma and Reincarnation and of a belief in the absolute spiritual unity of all beings will alone prevent this drift [towards materialism]. The cycle must, however, run its course, and until that is ended all beneficial causes will of necessity act slowly and not to the extent they would in a brighter age. As each student *lives* a better life and by his example imprints upon the astral light the picture of a higher aspiration acted in the world, he *thus aids souls of advanced development to descend from other spheres* where the cycles are so dark that they can no longer stay there.

# MUKTI OR SALVATION

## Message of Easter

IT is a universal religious sentiment that this earth is a place of sorrow and suffering from which the soul of man must seek salvation, that the home of the soul is heaven—and heaven means different things to different people. Some believe that they will be happy and at peace for ever after death; others hold the equally absurd and illogical view that because they belong to a particular church or religion they are already saved. No one who does not use his inquiring mind will ever come out of the maze of such superstitions. The Muslim might look to Allah for the joys of paradise, as the Jew might propitiate Jehovah for the heaven to come. The church-going Christian might hold that *he* is safe having been baptised. Let us put away such illogical notions and use our minds to reason about the subject of salvation—salvation from what? Hindu philosophy speaks of different kinds of *Mukti*—in the body during life, without a corpus after its death, and so on.

"Look inward: thou art Buddha," says *The Voice of the Silence*. If there is one constant refrain in the Upanishads, it is that Man is Brahman—"tat tvam asi," thou art That!

It is said that Christ was crucified on a Friday and that he rose from the dead the following Sunday; and people believe, once again in superstition, that he ascended to "heaven." And yet, if we were to look for the central instruction of the Gospels, it is that the Kingdom of God or Heaven is within us; yet people foolishly believe it to be somewhere beyond the sky!

What did Buddha mean when he said that *Nirvana* is not a change of conditions but of condition? He meant the same as what Jesus meant when he taught that the Kingdom of God is within us. *Nirvana*, salvation, *Mukti*, means freedom, spiritual liberty, *i.e.*, salvation from the darkness of ignorance, the anguish of passion, the devil of selfishness, and from the fetters of flesh and matter. Jesus came to the Jews because they had forgotten what was implied by their being the "chosen people"—chosen by Jehovah, as is believed, to inherit the earth! They became so fallen and degraded, came so much under the dominance of their cunning priests, that they began repeating the materialistic ideas, forgetting the spiritual ones. The whole human kingdom is the chosen kingdom of Nature, because man as man, by

the power of Manas, volitional thinking, can choose to inherit the kingdom of earth—that is, of matter.

All religious reformers, all spiritual teachers repeated that truth over and over again; and every time the priest corrupted the teaching of the Prophet. The Kingdom of God is within you, said Jesus, yet Christian missionaries have tried to convert others, Christian tradesmen have foisted themselves upon others, Christian nations have sent their soldiers to conquer others. There is no more of the practice of the real Christianity of Jesus in the world than there is of Buddha's or of Krishna's teachings among their respective followers.

The true meaning of the festival of Easter is all but forgotten. Christendom believes that Christ died on the Cross and by that sacrifice he took upon himself the sins of all his followers and saved them all. Vicariously, Christians have become the “chosen people”! What is the truth underlying all this?

It should be noted that Easter as a festival commemorative of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ was not celebrated in Christendom till a century and a half after his death. The earliest Christians do not seem to have bothered about the Crucifixion and the Resurrection. During this season the Jews were celebrating the festival of the Passover, and they in turn borrowed it from the Egyptians. The Babylonians had a similar festival, as had the Scandinavians in the north. The very word Easter comes from Ostara, the Scandinavian Goddess of Spring. The old Norsemen exchanged coloured eggs on this day, and the Christians borrowed that custom too from the old pre-Christian era. The Goddess Ostara was the symbol of resurrection, new life, and the egg symbolizes hidden life. The other root of the word Easter takes us to Babylonia. The Goddess Ishtar was hatched out of an egg, says the legend, and she represents the power that gives life.

Easter is the Rite of Spring—the festival of true Life, resurrected Life. In the dark winter months, the roots are buried under the snow, the seeds are stored away. Life but pulsates invisibly and unknown, and the farmer waits and watches as the sun moves northwards until it reaches the Aries sign, so that the festival of spring may be celebrated. Easter was the celebration of the spring festival at the vernal equinox, spring which resurrects Life, spring which is the symbol of birth or rebirth, cosmic and human, celestial and terrestrial.

Apply this symbol to the human body: in the womb of the mother

the foetus grows, surrounded by darkness, protected by the pure snow of motherhood. When the time comes, like a chick emerging from the egg, the babe sees the light of common day. Here is the human and the physiological aspect of the egg symbol.

Go one step further and apply the message of the egg symbol not only to the human body but to the human soul. Egg is one kind of life; life born but incomplete, hidden, not manifest. When the egg-shell breaks, life becomes vocal, independent, visible. What is true of the foetus and the human body is also profoundly true of the human soul. The ancient Teachers who made use of astronomical festivals gave the psychological and spiritual keys, so that we mortals might learn the true meaning of life.

The egg is a graphic symbol. In ancient Indian symbolism, Brahmanda, the Universe, is the Egg of Brahma. The spirit, Purusha, or Brahma, places the germ of life in the golden womb, *Hiranyagarbha*, of *Prakriti*, Matter, Nature. Golden, because gold is the symbol of purity, of vitality, of strength—the pure metal.

As earlier mentioned, the Jews were celebrating, though not in a correct fashion, the Spring Rite, calling it the Feast of the Passover. This festival is said to commemorate the escape of the Israelites from Egyptian bondage under the leadership of Moses. The *Exodus* story may have its sceptics, but of one thing Occult students are certain: Moses was an Initiate and he taught the soul-truth of deliverance from thralldom. But in due course the Jews had forgotten the pure teaching of the Passover as the sublime Rite of Sacrifice. At the height of their spiritual strength they were taught the hidden meaning of Sacrifice, but by the time of Jesus that had faded from their memory. The Egg of Life meant for them an ordinary egg; and the sacrifice, the breaking of the egg. Worse, the Initiated Rabbis had taught the spiritual Rite of the Sacrifice of Aries, the Ram, the sign of the Zodiac to which the Sun turned its attention to announce that spring was here on earth, but this had been corrupted and degraded. Ram is a mysterious principle of Life, and not understanding that, the Jews followed the obnoxious practice of sacrificing a newly-born lamb! Compassion is the Law of Nature and never did any Wise One advocate the sacrifice of lamb or goat or any other animal.

Crucifixion—three days on the Cross—represents three cycles of life in death, in darkness—the pregnancy of the Soul. Three months

of movement of the Earth bring the Sun in the sign of Aries—new life—just as nine months' struggle in the darkness of the womb brings to birth a new babe. This is all symbolized by the spring Sun which awakens in all its glory after the death of winter.

After Crucifixion, death, comes Resurrection, Life—but not just the visible sign of Life. The evolution of the body is but a shadow of a greater and truer evolution, that of the Soul. In each one of us the Soul lies dead and dormant for a period or cycle that is symbolized by the three days on the Cross. All of us mortals are going through that period of crucifixion now, and will continue to experience its darkness and agony till we resurrect ourselves.

How shall we resurrect ourselves? That lesson has been imparted in many symbols. Resurrection is the Festival of Sacrifice. Christ sacrificed himself, it is said, for humanity. He died that we might live. Compare this death on the Cross with the old Vedic Rite of Vishwakarman, the Divine Carpenter, who sacrificed Himself to himself. Again in *Bundahish* as in the *Rig Veda*, Deity performs a sacrifice, *Yagna*, just as Ahura Mazda performs *Yazeshnae*. Why is sacrifice at the core of all great religions, however disguised and corrupted today? Because sacrifice is at the foundation of the Universe.

Theosophy says that in the human kingdom there are two stages of life-growth. The human soul evolves through *Dharma*, attention to lawful duty; and by *Yagna*, performance of acts of sacrifice. *Dharma* and *Yagna* are the ways of soul-progress. Through the Rite of Spring, or Resurrection, humanity is taught the lesson of Sacrifice-*Yagna*. "Give up thy life, if thou would'st live." "Die on the Cross of Matter if you would know the Life of the Spirit." In many different ways the truth is taught. The hidden life of Nature sacrifices itself in the colours of earth and sky, in the fragrance of the flowers, in the taste of fruits; and all that wonderful sacrifice begins with the Rite of Spring. The mysterious life of our body fashions itself in sacrifice in the antenatal life, sacrifice in which every mother plays so important a part. The hidden and mysterious life of the soul really comes to birth in and by and through sacrifice. We must learn to sacrifice—not by breaking eggs, not by killing lambs, but by breaking the hard shell of pride and prejudice, of anger and greed, which imprisons the human soul; by killing the animal in us, the newly-born vice, as it follows on the heels of old vices. That is the sacrifice advocated by all the Great Ones—

the killing of our personal nature so that our divine nature may shine forth.

Sacrifice begets sacrifice. Because Jesus was crucified, he was able to resurrect himself. Who sent him to the Cross? Not the Jews, not Pilate, not even Judas, but his own Will. "My time has come," he said. In the evolution of each soul, the stage of willing sacrifice arrives, although in the long past many unwilling sacrifices have been made. The Higher sacrifices for the sake of the lower, but the lower must learn to sacrifice itself in purity and resolve. Why should we expect Jesus or anybody else to sacrifice for us, if we are not willing to give our strength and energy in sacrifice for others?

So let us turn to the lesson of Sacrifice. The whole Universe is sustained by Sacrifice. Every kingdom sacrifices for every other kingdom. The Inner Soul in us will give the outer personal man the touch of Divine Resurrected Life if that outer personal man will begin to sacrifice himself for something great and noble. When we observe Nature, when we obtain her hidden knowledge, we are not depressed at the ruthlessness of Nature, for Nature is *not* ruthless, not "red in tooth and claw." It is Compassion incarnate. We need to see the Laws of *Dharma* and *Yagna* as they work in Nature. Nature is dutiful and her whole movement is one Grand Sacrifice. If we apply that to ourselves, we will learn to sacrifice the senses so that the Mind may be born in us; to sacrifice the Mind so that the Heart may be born in us; to sacrifice the Heart so that the Soul may be born in us; to sacrifice the Soul so that the Spirit may be born in us; to sacrifice the Spirit so that the Universal Supreme Spirit, *Paramatma*, may be born in us. Sacrifice begets sacrifice; this is the ancient law.

Let us look at the different kinds of sacrifices. The expression of sacrifice is one way in which soul-evolution can be measured.

(a) There is the sacrifice of personal enjoyment, sacrifice made out of love for one's near and dear ones, with which man begins. People sacrifice for those they love, in order to feel the power of their loving sacrifice. There is no motive of duty, but mere personal attachment—*raga* in Sanskrit.

(b) Next comes to birth the sense of duty—*Dharma*—and with it some appreciation of causality and destiny, that is, of Karma; and so to *raga*-attachment the other member of the pair is added—*dvesha*-dislike. People begin to sacrifice not only for those they love, but also

for persons, objects, aims which they may not exactly love, but which they feel are good and should be sacrificed for, out of considerations of duty. It is at this stage that mortification is practised. There are more persons, objects and causes coming under this second type of sacrifice than under the first. While in the earlier instance our personal self is to the fore and we sacrifice out of selfish attachment or affection for our circumscribed circle of kith and kin, in the second a sense of duty by which that personal self is mortified shows itself and a less personal position is taken. But this second type of sacrifice too is in a restricted circle, and looks forward to receiving results or fruits. Communal charities, national benefactions which bring recognition and fame, belong to this second class of sacrifice.

(c) When the expected results of sacrifice do not materialize, confusion and inquiry result. When a person has donated a large sum, yet does not get the recognition he had hoped for, he wonders in his own heart why this should be so. When a social worker sacrifices time, money and energy in the hope of achieving a good result which is not forthcoming, he asks himself why this has happened. It is at this stage that the person finds out that sacrifice without knowledge is not *real* sacrifice. He learns, though slowly, that it is better to feed the mind than to feed the body; better to clothe the soul than to clothe the mind; better to sacrifice for the nation than for the community which is part of that nation; better to help man build his own bodily temple and become his own priest than to build temples, mosques, churches and synagogues of brick and mortar. Just as mortification guides the second kind of sacrifice as we have seen above, so knowledge energizes this third type.

(d) This search through knowledge brings us to spiritual sacrifice. We see that sacrifice is not only doing something to someone with what we possess, not only the giving of wealth or even of knowledge, but an act of life. All acts should be sacrifices, teaches the *Gita*, and it means that whatever we do must be done with a life-ideation, with heart-energy. To throw a coin to a beggar is outer sacrifice; the motive, the thought, the energy behind the coin makes it real or unreal, complete or incomplete sacrifice. "Sacrifice life with life." The Great Life sacrifices for the little life; the Great Masters for this little world. To practise that high kind of true Sacrifice, all duties and deeds of life must be looked upon as acts of sacrifice. Here giving and

receiving become one, the sinner and the saint commingle, the sacrificer has become the Sacrifice itself. In this lies the true meaning of the Sacrifice of the Christos, the Universal Self, of Vishwakarma, the Divine Carpenter, the *Yagna* or Sacrifice of Maheshwara Himself.

We can come to this stage by learning the art of seeing the divine or soul-aspect of all that we do, all those we contact. Let us learn to discern the spiritual message of all we do: We are eating? It is nourishing the Gods, who nourish us. We are bathing? It is cleansing hell of its sins, which the Gods undertake. We are reading? It is dispelling the darkness of ignorance, as the Masters do. We are giving help? It is the gift that Nature and the Lords of Nature bestow, like rain and sunshine and gentle breezes; and let us feel grateful for the opportunity. We are receiving help? Let us be like the flowers, humble and happy to receive warmth and light; like the busy bee intent on its own labour; like the sacred cow who transmutes fodder into milk. If the recipient of the charity fails to transform what he gets into the milk of human kindness, he has received in vain. So let us live in sacrifice, thinking of the Great Sacrifice, *Adhiyagna*, he who incarnates that thousands may learn, he who dies that thousands may live. So let us begin to sacrifice rightly.

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EACH thought stirs to action some form of life; according to the nature of the thought is the nature of the life stirred and guided, the permanence of the thought-action depending upon the energy put into it.

Every little assertion of "personal ideas" is a hindrance.

We learn to know our ability by using it to the limit.

Advice can be given, but knowledge is acquired.

All our vacillations, fears and despondencies arise from a personal attitude.

There is but one way to progress—to cultivate the *feeling* that produces the work.

Impersonality isn't a diplomacy which masks ambition.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## TALES FROM THE UPANISHADS

[In the year 1891, Mr. Judge began the work of the Oriental Department. Its purpose, as announced in *The Path* for February 1891, was "to carry out more effectually than ever before the second object of the Society—the investigation of Aryan and other religions, sciences, and literature. It is purposed to procure articles or translations relating to eastern religions, philosophies, literature, folklore, social customs and observances from competent Hindus, Parsees, and other Asiatic members and persons." One of the scholars from India engaged for this purpose was Prof. Manilal N. Dvivedi. The following was contributed by him to *Oriental Department Paper No. 13*, dated June 1893.—EDS.]

IT is well known that the *Upanishads* form the most important compendium of the metaphysics of Vedic religion. The doctrine of one essence taught therein is the key to many a Vedic sukta and Puranic katha, and reveals the true nature of the whole of Aryan religion, nay even of the so-called heathenism of the Hindus. Apart from the very important nature of the whole teaching, it is interesting to note in what homely and popularly simple manner these sublime truths are taught by the ancient sages. I have selected a few tales from the *Upanishads* with a view to enable the general reader to obtain an idea of the principal truths taught in those sacred relics of antiquity. The tale selected for this paper is from the *Chandogya Upanishad* of the *Samaveda*. It relates to the studentship of Indra, the lord of the Gods, and Virochana, the chief of the Asuras—demons—under Prajapati whom they take for their guru. The following is a free translation of the text.

### INDRA AND VIROCHANA

That Atman which is beyond decay and death, free from sorrow, not open to hunger and thirst, of unflinching thought and desire, should be known, should be realized. That man has access to all the worlds, and has all his desires fulfilled, who having known this Atman fully realizes it. So said Prajapati. This reached the ears of the gods and the demons, who pondered, each according to his own order, on the power that gains access to all the worlds and fulfils all desires, and resolved that such an opportunity should on no account be missed. Accordingly Indra from among the gods, and Virochana from among

the Asuras went to Prajapati. Jealous of each other, they approached the guru with holy grass in their hands and lived with him as Brahmacharins. Prajapati asked them after the lapse of thirty-two years what was the object of their residence with him. They said, "We have heard that your Lordship knows 'that Atman which is beyond decay and death, free from sorrow, not open to hunger and thirst, of unflinching thought and desire, which when looked for and known up to full realization, gives access to all the worlds, and places within reach the fulfilment of all desires,' and we want to know this Atman; hence our residence in this place." Prajapati replied, "The Purusha in the eye is Atman," and added, "it is the immortal, the fearless, it is Brahman." Hereupon the pupils asked, "Oh Lord! which is that Purusha—is it not that which is seen in a looking-glass, or in water?", to which the teacher replied, "Verily it is the same, it is found everywhere"; but he took care to add, "If after looking into a cup full of water you should not find Atman, return and ask me again."

They accordingly looked into a cup full of water, and being asked by the guru what they saw, replied, "Oh Lord! we see the whole of this our Atman (self, *i.e.*, the body), a full reflection of it up to the very hair on our head, and the nails on our fingers." The teacher asked them to remove the hair and the nails, put on fresh clothes and ornaments, and look again into the cup. When they looked again into the water, after shaving and after change of dress and ornaments, Prajapati asked them what they saw. They replied, "Oh Lord! we see ourselves (Atman) as they are, all shaved, decorated and dressed as we are." The guru remarked, "This is Atman, this is the immortal, the fearless, this is Brahman." The pupils hearing this went away in great joy. After their departure Prajapati observed, "Whoever of these two thus returning to their homes, without having properly known and realized Atman, takes his wrong impression to be the real Upanishad (*i.e.*, Brahman, Atman), be he god or demon, will simply destroy himself and all who put faith in his teaching."

The Asura, Virochana, went entirely satisfied to his people, and taught them the Upanishad he had learnt. He declared, "It is only one's self (the body) that deserves all worship; it should be carefully served; he who worships and serves the body gains access to all the worlds, this as well as the next (the mastery whereof being obtained, it goes without saying that all desires are easily fulfilled)." Hence

even to this day it is usual to call him an Asura who does not put faith in anything beyond *direct* perception, who observes no religion. This, alas! is the Upanishad of the Asuras. They attend simply to this dead<sup>1</sup> carcass, feeding it with sweet viands, and bedecking it with fine clothes and ornaments, believing all the while that only thus access is obtained to the next world.

But the god Indra, before returning to the gods, saw a difficulty, and said to himself, "This Atman (meaning the reflection seen in the water, *viz.*, the body) appears well dressed, well adorned, well refined, upon the body's being well dressed, adorned, or refined. But even so must it appear blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot, upon the body's becoming blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot; and should moreover perish with the body. I for one see no fruit from the realization of such Atman." Whereupon he came back, with the holy grass in his hand, to Prajapati who, seeing him, asked why he having gone away in all satisfaction in company with Virochana, returned to that place. Indira replied, "This Atman appears well dressed, well adorned, well refined. But even so it must appear blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot, upon the body's becoming blind, one-eyed, or without hand or foot; and should moreover perish with the body. I for one see no fruit from the realization of such Atman." The teacher remarked, "Verily what you say is but too true, oh Indra! I shall explain it to you yet further; wait here for another thirty-two years." Indra lived with his master for the period prescribed, at the end whereof Prajapati said, "The subject of all that is seen in dream is Atman; it is immortal, the fearless, it is Brahman."

Indra went away satisfied with this answer, but again encountered a difficulty before reaching home. He observed, "True it is that Atman remains unaffected by the blindness or one-eyedness of the body, it is not touched by any of its accidents, nor does it perish with it, but it appears to suffer like the body, to pale under sorrow, to despair under difficulty, and even to weep on occasion. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." Whereupon he went back to Prajapati with the holy grass in his hand. The sage, on seeing him, asked why

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<sup>1</sup> Dead in the sense of "dead matter"; for Atman being nothing but the body, all matter and no thought, is from the *Upanishad* point of view a dead carcass as understood by the Asuras. The phrase adequately brings out the impossibility of thought or feeling in mere matter without thought (Atman).

he had returned after having gone away in satisfaction. Indra replied, "True it is that this Atman remains unaffected by the blindness or one-eyedness of the body, it is not touched by any of its accidents, nor does it perish with it; but it appears to suffer like the body, to pale under sorrow, to despair under difficulty, and even to weep on occasion. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." The master said to his pupil, "What thou sayest is but too true; I shall explain to thee again; stay here another thirty-two years." At the expiration of the prescribed period, Prajapati said to Indra, "That which being in deep sleep, immersed in its native bliss, sees no dream, is Atman; it is the immortal, the fearless, it is Brahman."

Indra went away fully satisfied, but even before he reached the gods a doubt again cropped up in his mind: "The Atman in deep sleep is not conscious of its existence, and knows not 'this is myself,' nor does it know the things of the universe. It can, therefore, be none other than pure extinction or annihilation. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." Whereupon he traced his way back to his guru, with the holy grass in his hand, and being asked why after going away in full satisfaction he came again, replied, "The Atman in deep sleep is not conscious of its existence, and knows not 'this is myself,' nor does it know the things of the universe. It can, therefore, be none other than pure extinction or annihilation. I see no fruit of the realization of such Atman." The master remarked, "What thou sayest, Indra, is very true, I shall explain to thee the truth over again, for it (Atman) is none other than described to thee before. Stay with me only for another five years and I shall make the matter plain to thee." He stayed another five years and completed a hundred, often referred to as the period spent by Indra in Brahmacharya under Prajapati.

The master said at last to his pupil, "O Indra! this body is mortal, always subject to death; it is only the abode, so to speak, of the bodiless Atman (which thus circumstanced is called Jiva), which being thus with body partakes of pleasure and pain, for pleasure and pain do not leave one with body, it being the bodiless alone that is ever free from them. The air, ether, lightning, clouds, all bodiless in themselves, appear (as with body<sup>2</sup>) in the sky, and rebecome themselves—the highest light. In the same manner this All-Bliss

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<sup>2</sup> *i.e.*, the body of manifestation.

manifesting itself as the body (called then Jiva) merges in the highest light, and rebecomes itself. This indeed is the greatest Purusha. It appears to take on itself a variety of forms, sometimes engrossed in enjoyments of the senses, sometimes all playfulness and joy, sometimes indulging itself in the company of women, or in the pleasure of horses, carriages, etc., or in the affection of friends and relatives—never remembering, or identifying itself with the body, its tenement governed by Prana, joined to it after the manner of a horse to a vehicle. The Purusha in the eye is the Akasa found therein, it is only its way out to the objective. That is Atman which is implied in the ego of the experience 'I smell,' it being the very being of the sense of smell. It is that which is conscious of the experience 'I speak,' being in itself the very essence of speech. It is that which is conscious of the experience 'I hear,' being the very thing that hears. And lastly it is that which is conscious of the subjective experience 'I think,' being the very being of the mind. The mind is its divine eye whereby it calls into being the various objects of experience and plays with them. As the gods in heaven devote themselves to their Atman, they have all the worlds within their control, and all their desires are always fulfilled. He therefore who knows Atman and realizes it in himself everywhere gains access to all the worlds, and has all his desires fulfilled." This is what said Prajapati, indeed Prajapati, to his pupil.

[NOTE.—Any explanation is hardly necessary to lay bare the important moral of this simple tale. It sets forth in very vivid colours the Upanishad (creed) of the materialist of today in the person of Virochana bound to the physical as the only plane of knowledge and truth. The opposite view is happily represented in the attitude of Indra, the disciple submitting himself to reason (Buddhi) and willing to be guided by it. It may be seen in what reverence the guru is held even by such potentates as Indra, the god of gods, and Virochana, the proud lord of the Asuras. The period of probation extending over a hundred years in the case of Indra, the true disciple who at last gets the truth, is worthy of the attentive consideration of western candidates for the truth, the whole truth of Theosophy. The light cannot reflect itself in a mirror soiled with terrestrial mud, the removal whereof must necessarily be the work of time, patience, and intelligent perseverance.

The teacher at first points out the Purusha in the eye as Atman, thought, meaning thereby the cognizer of and through whom the eye is the eye, and is able to perceive things and receive impressions. The pupils, through not understanding the real truth, understood it only after the persuasion of their

proud intelligence, and did not, out of sheer vanity, say plainly that they had failed to grasp the real meaning. This mistake has been repeated even by the better pupil more than once; and in our age of individualism and selfish pride how many daily recur to the same and debar themselves from the path of eternal wisdom! The Master out of kindness suggested that the pupils should look into a cup full of water, and return to him if they failed to find Atman therein. The self-sufficient lord of gods and the proud chief of demons tried the experiment and appeared to be satisfied at the sight of their own reflection in the water. The guru thereupon tried another innocent stratagem and asked them to change their dress and ornaments, and remove the hair on their heads and the nails on their fingers, and look again into the water. This ought to have been sufficient, for it was thus plainly indicated that Atman, the truth, is always as unalterably one as the body which remains the same though appearing to take on different forms under different conditions, and moreover that the Atman cannot be the reflection of the body which waxes and wanes with additions to and subtractions from the body. But the ignorance of the pupils would not allow them an insight into the real meaning of the experiment. They therefore went away in full satisfaction, taking the body to be the soul they were in quest of. The Asura got confirmed in his belief and taught that the body was the thing that was all in all, and everything that conduced to the ease and comfort of that combination of material elements was the surest way to the satisfaction of all desires and to the supreme happiness of absolution even here. But the god proved more intelligent and wise. And this explains also what makes a god a god, and an Asura an Asura. He looked within himself and saw that the reflection of the body could not be the real essence which has been declared by the guru to be immortal and beyond decay, death, or change. He returns and enters another term of studentship which brings him more knowledge. In all that the guru tells him every time he returns, the substance is none other than the truth conveyed to him even at the first moment; and the teacher is not open to the charge of having held back the truth, for it is laid down: "Hold the torch before him only who can bear its light." Atman is that something through which the eye and all the external senses—*i.e.*, the phenomena of waking experience; and the mind—*i.e.*, the panorama of dreams, imagination, fancies; and lastly the blank experience of sleep; are all rendered possible. In other words: It is that something which is implied in the very existence of experience; for nothing can exist prior to thought. And Atman is that which is not any one of the three conditions and is yet ever all and everything.]

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## A LESSON FROM HISTORY

THE objects of this Magazine, as always stated inside its front cover, are the same Three Objects to further which the original Theosophical Society was founded by H.P.B. in 1875. It cannot be supposed that H.P.B. was unaware of the gigantic task she set herself in trying to establish a Society that would have as its primary purpose the formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. Nor was she unaware of the factors that had caused the failure of former attempts in that direction. This is evident from her books. Many have been the efforts, down the centuries, to form enduring associations having the same prime object as H.P.B. set out to achieve: to unite firmly a body of men and women of all nations in brotherly love, bent on pure, altruistic work. This has been the dream of many high-souled philanthropists, but all have failed to bring about lasting results in this direction; and humanity is still waiting for the fulfilment of this most holy and important mission. Why?

Selfishness, in one or another form, has been the instigator of most human actions. Yet the ideal persists, though its successive incarnations have withered and died.

H.P.B. intended the Second and Third Objects of the Theosophical Movement to supply the ways and means by which, if pursued, the First Object might be realized. These two Objects have their real basis in her understanding of the cause of failure to achieve the ideal of Brotherhood. As long as people find grounds for disagreement, friction and antagonism in what they believe and practise in the name of religion, as long as their ideas of knowledge or of science are confined to physical and sensuous existence, just so long will attempts at brotherhood degenerate into a sordid search for material well-being, for mere physical and intellectual development.

From the comparative study of religions and philosophies a ground for union and harmony of thought will be discovered. Faith and knowledge can then become allies; and, instead of religion and science taking mutually opposed courses, allowing an impassable gulf to separate the ideal and the practical, the pursuit of these Objects will make them supplement and complement each other.

The Theosophical Society was founded to destroy dogmatism, whether in the sphere of religion or of science or any other. This is one

of the meanings of its First Object. U.L.T. students and Associates must avoid dogmatism, in Theosophy as much as in anything else. For, to dogmatize and to insist on our conception and understanding of the Teachings is to sow the seeds of trouble. Principles are to be presented as stated in Theosophy, but each student remains free to study and prove the universal principles for himself, by his own efforts at application, with the aid of the Second and Third Objects.

When it was perceived by the Fellows of the Society that the Objects were not merely formal and academic; that serious study of Theosophy produced unlooked-for results in themselves compelling them to choose between their predilections, personal preferences and habits on the one hand and their professed principles on the other, many left the Society; others lapsed into the hypocrisy that professes to follow one course of action while actually adopting another.

The active and earnest Theosophists have always formed a small minority of even that fragment of humanity which professes belief in Theosophy. But it is worthwhile for students to note that every storm that ever raged within or around the Society was caused by neglect of the First Object and its practical application: brotherly loyalty and devotion. Every recovery from storms and strifes, however temporary, was ever caused by a return of the fundamental basis of the First Object.

Had H.P.B.'s example and precepts been made the rule of action by those carrying the responsibility of the work of the Movement, the Society would have withstood all attacks from within and from without, and deserved the continued help and protection of Those who stood and stand behind the Theosophical Movement. The present generation of students of Theosophy would do well to heed the lesson that history teaches.

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THE world is not prepared yet to understand the philosophy of Occult Science; let them first assure themselves that there are beings in an invisible world, whether "Spirits" of the dead or elementals; and that there are hidden powers in man which are capable of making a *god* of him on earth.

—H.P.B.

## THE PATH OF THE MODERN MYSTIC

It is but with armed hand, and ready to either conquer or perish that the modern mystic can hope to achieve his object.

THE above words of a Master of Wisdom have to be looked into seriously. Like many other terms connected with the spiritual path, the word "mystic" is used indiscriminately by diverse individuals and organizations. It is applied to the trance medium who delivers banal messages purporting to come from one's "dear departed," just as much as it is to great philosophers like Plato and Plotinus. If we read and inwardly digest the words of the truly great minds of past ages we can see that their ideas of mysticism are a great deal more profound than those of modern society in general. It may seem rather daunting to think that we have to adopt the attitude alluded to in the quotation at the head of this article, nevertheless it is essential to understand the seriousness of the task undertaken.

It would be a mistake, though, to regard the Path to understanding as all "doom and gloom." This would also be misleading and would surely discourage 99 per cent of all aspirants at the outset. If we examine the experiences of mystics of all cultures and periods of time, we will see that the fruition of their meditations is a heightened awareness that brings with it a feeling of great joy and bliss. An awakening to the fact that the Spirit in man is eternal and indestructible and is at one with all other souls throughout the world, can bring nothing but the ecstacy described by all mystics. However, the problem starts when an attempt is made to translate this experience into ordinary language. Christian mystics may talk about a personal encounter with "Jesus," while the Moslem may mention Mohammed and various divine beings. It is only the practitioner who has been initiated into the deeper mysteries of existence who is able to appreciate fully the process that he is a part of.

*The Voice of the Silence*, as H.P.B. states in the Preface, is suited to the needs of "the few real mystics in the Theosophical Society" and gives all the information required by the practitioner to tread the Path to genuine spiritual awareness. Many warnings are given, but generally the book paints an optimistic and encouraging picture and offers a feast of guidelines in the language of poetry and imagery for those who feel the need to develop the ability to help their fellow-men and

to awaken those higher intuitions that will guide them in difficult times. In fact all the great spiritual writings of the world are designed to appeal to our intuitions and it is important to be able to “read between the lines” to find out what the words are actually pointing to. It is, in Zen terminology, like the “finger pointing at the moon.” It is the moon that we want, not the finger that shows the way. H.P.B. and the Masters may seem to have written a lot, but the gist of their message is: “The illumination *must come from within.*” Theosophical teachings bring into sharp focus the rather blurred interpretations that most religions give to the experiences that we describe as “mystical.” They also help us to develop an understanding, gradually and logically, so that we do not end up like all those mystics throughout the ages who were unable to control their “visions” and therefore found it difficult to live any kind of balanced life. The wonderful thing about Theosophy is that it provides food for all states of mind. There are exhaustless treasures for the intellectual as well as rich veins of thought for the mystically minded. It is truly “all things to all people.” If only we were capable of appreciating Theosophy at its true worth, there would be no room for misunderstanding or differences of opinion, because personal views would count for nothing in the final analysis.

In this context it is important to realize the inestimable value of Robert Bowen’s notes of teachings given by H.P.B., in the course of conversations with her, on how to approach Theosophy (reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, August 1961). She emphasizes the need to constantly keep the idea of the Oneness of all things in the background of our minds during our studies, otherwise the latter will lose their value. She also stresses the fact that “TRUTH lies beyond any ideas we can formulate and express.” Come to the *The Secret Doctrine*, she says, “without any hope of getting the final Truth of existence from it, or with any idea other than seeing how far it may lead TOWARDS the Truth.”

It is obvious, even from these few brief extracts, that her writings were never meant to be hard and fast teachings that we are to take literally. Many people have made this mistake and therefore missed their chance to really understand what Theosophy is all about. It is a cosy thought to imagine that because we have wrestled with a few intellectual terms and teachings and developed some kind of

conceptions, we have therefore become experts on Theosophy. But H.P.B. states in the notes just mentioned:

As time goes on these conceptions will form into mental pictures. This is a time to be on guard and refuse to be deluded with the idea that the new-found and wonderful picture must represent reality. It does not. As one works on, one finds the once admired picture growing dull and unsatisfying, and finally fading out or being thrown away. This is another danger point, because for the moment one is left in a void without any conception to support one, and one may be tempted to revive the cast-off picture for want of a better to cling to. The true student will, however, work on unconcerned, and presently further formless gleams come, which again in time give rise to a larger and more beautiful picture than the last. But the learner will now know that no picture will ever represent the TRUTH. This last splendid picture will grow dull and fade like the others. And so the process goes on, until at last the mind and its pictures are transcended and the learner enters and dwells in the World of No-FORM, but of which all forms are narrowed reflections.

This is the way of the real mystic and is the path trodden by all the genuine students of spiritual verities in every great tradition and civilization. Keeping this in mind helps us to steer clear of the delusions brought about by too great an attachment to the intellectual side of Theosophy. If one reads *The Friendly Philosopher* by Robert Crosbie, one will discover many clues as to the right attitude, as he was able to blend the intellectual and the transcendent, and the harmony that ensues comes across, to a certain extent, in his writings.

The idea of mysticism holds a great fascination for many people. We can think of all the mystics belonging to the various civilizations and periods of time; our minds are cast back to the halcyon days of India, China, South America, Greece, Rome and other countries with their tales of wonderful individuals with great powers. Their deeds fill us with inspiration and we have to ask ourselves why this is so. The answer may be that these spiritual heroes made manifest in their actions the teachings of all the great traditions, and this is what we like to see, nay, what we *want* to see. These beings are living proof that Divine Wisdom can be made manifest as a living force for good. We can also reason that if such a state was attainable in the past, then

it should be possible to live that way now; so we need to be aware that what inspired those beings of old is the very same Theosophy that has been restated today in the teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters. Of course we are referring to all the *true mystics* who were guided by their divine natures and not those who were under the auspices of some sectarian God or “supernatural” entity.

It is important to remember that all the great “heroic” tales of ancient times refer to the trials of the candidates for Initiation, and their battles with this monster or that symbolize the soul-struggles that the aspirant has to go through. Bearing this in our consciousness, it is easier to understand the state of mind needed to proceed on our journey and to relate that to the opening sentence of this article. The battleground is the mind and it is there that the drama is enacted. Although our studies may require us to wrestle with a variety of difficult concepts, it is how we put these into practice that is of prime importance. The Theosophical Movement was never meant to be a school for those who wish to exercise their intellectual faculties alone.

All the great spiritual traditions give clear directions to the would-be mystic. H.P.B. synthesized these admirably in the following quotation from *Lucifer* for October 1887 (reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 7*):

When desire is for the purely abstract—when it has lost all trace or tinge of “self ”—then it has become pure.

The first step towards this purity is to kill out the desire for the things of matter, since these *can* only be enjoyed by the separated personality.

The second is to cease from desiring for oneself even such abstractions as power, knowledge, love, happiness, or fame; for they are but selfishness after all.

Life itself teaches these lessons; for all such objects of desire are found Dead-Sea fruit in the moment of attainment. This much we learn from experience. Intuitive perception seizes on the *positive* truth that satisfaction is attainable only in the infinite; the will makes that conviction an actual fact of consciousness, till at last desire is centred on the Eternal.

This gives us the basis for all our studies and meditations. We have to be aware that the answers that seekers for Truth are looking for do not lie in the world of form but in the Eternal. In one sense it

can also be said that in the teachings of H.P.B. and the Masters, as well as those of other great spiritual leaders, it is not the actual words that mean anything, but what they point to, as mentioned earlier in this article. An intellectually-minded person could spend years studying *The Secret Doctrine* and construct complex theories concerning "life, death and the universe" without improving his own life, or the lives of those around him. Such an individual may think himself a great scholar, but he has not yet grasped the essence of the teachings.

In reality, though, it is each one of us individually who has to make Theosophy "a living spiritual force for good" in his or her life. The alchemical process must take place in the heart of the aspirant and nowhere else. We need to draw our sustenance from the Divine Self, and to do this we have to become fully aware of its reality. If we rest content with following what is stated in books, there will always remain a barrier between us and the object of our quest. H.P.B. never meant the Theosophical Society to be a meeting-place for the intellectually gifted of the world. It was meant to set the firm foundations for a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity regardless of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour. This has been emphasized countless times in Theosophical literature over the years, but "familiarity breeds contempt" and we are so accustomed to reading the words that we often gloss over them without meditating on their import, or resolving to make them part of our very being. We can get so lost in technicalities and clever interpretations of the ideas of others that we lose sight of what Theosophy truly is. It is concerned not so much with metaphysical verities as with "living the life," and H.P.B. expected no less from her students. The Masters have asked us to TRY, and this means making the effort to live the life and realize the Truth by direct perception. This is not at all easy and so the advice given in the opening quotation of this article needs to be applied all the more.

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ALMOST all our suffering is caused by not having the power of detachment.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## LOOKING INWARD

The sweet pulp of the orange is *inside* the skin, Sahib.

—MAHATMA M.

THOUGH it is often repeated to us that we are entangled in the net of the illusions and delusions of life, we fail to use this knowledge in our everyday living. All over the world today men and women are living in fear because they look only at the dark side of things and fail to take note of the tiny sparks of constructive thinking and action that are also present. Since thought builds images and gives vitality to them, the evil is strengthened by thinking about it; and, because no thought is given to them, the tiny sparks of good die down untended. It is one of the missions of the Theosophical Movement to give life to these sparks of spirituality that burn dimly here and there; and students of Theosophy should consider it their duty to seek out and fan into bright flame whatever sparks of good they find in themselves and in others, whether known to them (fellow students and friends) or not. Yet we fail to do this and instead put undue emphasis on the disagreeable qualities of others, taking their good points for granted. Thus we get enmeshed in and overwhelmed by the evil in the world.

Let us therefore seek for the pulp under the skin, under the roughest, hardest exterior of our fellow men. If we consider only the hard exterior, its very hardness repels us, but if we remove the rind of the orange and reach for the pulp, we can extract a life-giving juice. Even the rind has its uses, for, with the aid of water (the water of compassion) and of sugar (the sweetening properties of the virtues), a healthy drink can be made. So, too, from the crotchety, rugged surface shown by so many in their personalities we can extract the healthy essence of the virtues attained and the knowledge gained.

More than this: effort is the life-force for accomplishing all actions. Without it, nothing is done. Enthusiasm is the basis of every action. Though what is achieved by the enthusiasm may not meet with our expectations if the enthusiasm is misdirected, yet something has been done. It is well to remember the old proverb: Practice makes perfect. Only the one who does nothing and complains of others' work reaps no benefit. It is so easy to criticize the work of others, but so very, very difficult to do that work ourselves!

The Law of Karma will bring us the due results of our efforts, and

the best effort is to make our own life and our contribution to the Cause of Human Brotherhood as perfect as possible. We can do this by becoming a centre of stability among our fellow workers, learning from all, helping all, but remaining unruffled by all; and also by striving not to be a rough and rugged orange peel ourselves!

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MEN achieve tranquillity through moderation in pleasure and through the symmetry of life. Want and superfluity are apt to upset them and to cause great perturbation in the soul. The souls that are rent by violent conflicts are neither stable nor tranquil. One should therefore set his mind upon the things that are within his power, and be content with his opportunities, nor let his memory dwell very long on the envied and admired of men, nor idly sit and dream of them. Rather, he should contemplate the lives of those who suffer hardship, and vividly bring to mind their sufferings, so that your own present situation may appear to you important and to be envied, and so that it may no longer be your portion to suffer torture in your soul by your longing for more. For he who admires those who have, and whom other men deem blest of fortune, and who spends all his time idly dreaming of them, will be forced to be always contriving some new device because of his insatiable desire, until he ends by doing some desperate deed forbidden by the laws. And therefore one ought not to desire other men's blessings, and one ought not to envy those who have more, but rather, comparing his life with that of those who fare worse, and laying to heart their sufferings, deem himself blest of fortune in that he lives and fares so much better than they. Holding fast to this saying you will pass your life in greater tranquillity and will avert not a few of the plagues of life—envy and jealousy and bitterness of mind.

—DEMOCRITUS

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

1994 is being observed by U.N. agencies, governments and a wide range of citizens' groups around the world as the International Year of the Family—IYF. The theme of the year is "Family: resources and responsibility in a changing world."

The focus will be on "building the smallest democracy at the heart of society." The family is the basic unit of society, and while activities during the year will be undertaken at the local, national, regional and international levels, the primary emphasis will be on the local and national levels.

The emblem for the year pictures a heart sheltered by a roof, linked by another heart. It symbolizes the "life and love in a home where one finds warmth, caring, security, togetherness, tolerance and acceptance."

The family is the generator and the repository of the forces which alone can carry out the moral and social progress of the world. As stated in the first discourse of the *Gita*, when family ideals get corrupted, corruption overwhelms the whole race. From the degradation of the institution of the home results chaos at other levels, which can ultimately lead to the fall of the state and even of a whole civilization. The family unit is the first primary unit where democracy can be practised—the rule of the people, for the people, by the people. The bond of love, the ties of blood, afford opportunities for the realization of democracy which are absent in the larger unit of the civic organization, or of the political state. The experiences gained with the help of affection, love, reverence for elders, and so forth, enable people to participate in building larger democracies in which families themselves are like cells of the body. True democracy begins in the home.

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As part of the centennial celebrations of the first World's Parliament of Religions, 1993 was declared "A Year of Interreligious Understanding and Co-operation." Though the year has ended, it is hoped that the interfaith dialogue that has been opened up will continue during 1994 and succeeding years. *World Goodwill Newsletter* (1993, No. 4) looks at various aspects of interfaith encounter and the

development of the interfaith movement. The Newsletter also includes extracts from a talk on "One World, One Spirit—The Challenge of the Global Interfaith Encounter," by Professor Ursula King, Head of the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at the University of Bristol. Speaking at a conference in London she said among other things:

Mostly we find the word "global" used in the context of international finance, economics, science or ecology. But people now speak about the process of "globalization," a word which was first used in 1961. This process has been defined as one whereby the world becomes a single place in consciousness. There are people all around the world in different countries who have this sense of one world, this sense of a common origin and destiny of the human family, of belonging together. And when you look at different religions you can see that this vision of wholeness and unity is actually enshrined at the heart of religions. But this unity hasn't actually been realized concretely in political and social structures and in the way people have organized life on the planet.

According to one source there are over five thousand religions in the world. You can't study them all. You can't know about them all. So what are we going to do with this? Can we somehow come together? Can we develop the new humanism—the wisdom that is so much needed today?...

The challenge is to reflect on your own perception, position and attitudes—to be open, to widen your horizon and to welcome "otherness." Try and understand other people or meet them on some common ground, try to discover the differences....

I think one of the important questions which comes out of the interfaith encounter is, what does it mean today, at the threshold of the twenty-first century, to be fully human? What does it mean to be a full human being with all the rights and responsibilities that this implies? Have we actually discovered the greatness of being human? Some privileged people may have. But the masses have not discovered that yet. And that kind of transformation is what we need.

I feel the greatest challenge of interfaith encounter comes from the question of how we understand spirituality. Many people, when they say, "Where is the truth? What is the truth?", have a very possessive way of understanding truth. They think it is something you can define....But I look at the truth as something that has to be lived and realized, something that is linked to the greatest reality of

all which is so comprehensive and complete that we can only ever reflect aspects of it. The truth is linked to light, to enlightenment, to fulfilment. No one human being, or no one human group, can claim that they possess it all and there is none elsewhere....

We need an ecology not only of the environment but also of the mind, in order to develop and transform ourselves and the world with us. I feel there is tremendous challenge coming from all sides in the interfaith encounter. And there are tremendous possibilities in those questions: How to change ourselves? How to develop one spirit for one world?

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As far back as 1888, H.P.B. stated that the theory of natural selection is only *partially* true (*S.D.*, II, 734) and that its author, Darwin, had perhaps never contemplated "such widely stretched conclusions" as were attributed to him by some of his ardent disciples. (II, 654)

Some scientists today are saying precisely the same thing, that Darwinism contains at best half truths and not the whole truth. The essence of Darwin's theory is that living organisms undergo random variations, and over time better adapted variants gain an edge over less adapted competitors; with the twin processes of random variation and natural selection, the enormous variety and complexity of life on earth has arisen, over billions of years. That there is variation is a proven fact. That there will be selection favouring the better adapted is also a logical conclusion. But is that enough to explain the process of evolution on earth?

It was once assumed by scientists that evolution proceeded in a straight line, from the least progressed to the most progressed; that given time the emergence of organisms with bigger and bigger brains was inevitable. Most biologists are still reluctant to concede any suggestion of a guiding hand, even in the guise of a law of nature. Instead, each evolutionary step is for them pure accident, "chance caught on the wing" to use Jacques Monod's phrase.

However, as in physics and chemistry, so in biology, currently gaining ground is the theory of self-organization in which a system, at the edge of chaos, suddenly and spontaneously leaps to a stage of higher organizational complexity with surprising efficiency. Distinguished American biophysicist Stuart Kauffman's recent

controversial book challenging earlier theories has reopened the entire evolutionary debate. Paul Davies reports in *The Guardian* (U.K.):

Kauffman has attacked orthodox biologists for ignoring the innate tendencies of complex systems to exhibit order spontaneously. He believes that the inbuilt organizing power of biosystems provides nature with the "raw materials" on which selection can act.

Natural selection, he says, merely moulds an already existing biological order. There are thus two forces for change rather than one, with self-organization the more powerful, and sometimes proceeding despite selection...

There is good evidence that the universe began in a state of complicated sequences of self-organizing processes to produce the richness, diversity and complexity we see today. Biological evolution looks like just one more example of a lawlike progressive trend that pervades the cosmos. None of this is to say that Darwinism is wrong, only that it is incomplete....

Contingency undoubtedly plays a large part in the details of evolution. But the general trend from simple to complex, from microbes to mind, seems to be built into the laws of nature in a basic way.

While the Darwinian hypothesis is being challenged, the *true* doctrine of evolution will remain an enigma, as *The Secret Doctrine* says, "until metaphysical as well as physical inquiries are much more advanced" (I, 600). The occult doctrine teaches a cyclic, never varying law in nature, acting on a uniform plan that prevails through the whole manvantaric period. Everything in the manifested world comes under the sway of this law. All has emerged from the same neutral centre of Life and all will re-merge into it at the close of the cycle. (II, 261)

No Occultist can accept the unreasonable proposition that all the now existing forms, "from the structureless Amoeba to man," are the direct lineal descendants of organisms which lived millions and millions of years before the birth of man, in the pre-Silurian epochs, in the sea or land-mud. The Occultists believe in an *inherent law of progressive development*...checked and modified, however, by the *Law of Retardation*, which imposes a restriction on the advance of all species when a Higher Type makes its appearance. (II, 259-60)

Natural Selection, in the writer's humble opinion, "Selection as

*a Power,*” is in reality a pure myth; especially when resorted to as an explanation of the origin of species. It is merely a representative term expressive of the manner in which “useful variations” are stereotyped when produced. Of itself, “it” *can produce nothing*, and only operates on the rough material presented to “it.” The real question at issue is: what CAUSE—combined with other secondary causes—produces the “variations” in the organisms themselves. Many of these secondary causes are purely physical, climatic, dietary, etc., etc. Very well. But beyond the secondary aspects of organic evolution, a deeper principle has to be sought for. The materialist’s “spontaneous variations,” and “*accidental divergencies*” are self-contradictory terms in a universe of “Matter, Force and NECESSITY.” Mere variability of type, apart from the supervisory presence of a quasi-intelligent impulse, is powerless to account for the stupendous complexities and marvels of the human body for instance. (II, 648)

The truth is that the differentiating “causes” known to modern science only come into operation after the *physicalization of the primeval animal root-types out of the astral*. Darwinism only meets Evolution at its midway point—that is to say when astral evolution has given place to the play of the ordinary physical forces with which our present senses acquaint us. But even here the Darwinian Theory, even with the “expansions” recently attempted, is inadequate to meet the facts of the case. The underlying physiological variation in species—one to which all other laws are subordinate and secondary—is a sub-conscious intelligence pervading matter, ultimately traceable to a REFLECTION of the Divine and Dhyan-Chohanian wisdom. (II, 648-49)

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The modern science of psychology focuses only on body and mind and ignores the spirit. Some Indian psychologists, however, are now taking a holistic look at the human being and questioning western psychology’s presumptions about the psyche and its rigid classification of mental disorders.

One such is Dr. Mahesh Parikh. Combining the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* with some of the principles of conventional psychotherapy, he has arrived at a new set of concepts and given a whole new dimension to existing ones. While traditional psychological

jargon includes terms such as oedipal complexes, repressed memories and phallic symbols, Dr. Parikh talks of Soul, *Karma*, *Artha*, *Swadharma*. Or take the concept of the ego. While in classical psychological terms ego refers to a person's perception of social reality, for Dr. Parikh ego is "a servant of the soul"—meaning the "spiritual side of human nature." He is critical of psychology's studious disregard of this higher nature of man, the part that aspires towards the sublime. Sigmund Freud and his modern followers, on the other hand, see human reactions purely in a limited body-mind framework.

Mahesh Parikh's is not the sole voice of discord. An article by Farah Baria in *The Sunday Observer*, January 16, refers to the tottering of old theories under the scrutiny of sceptics:

As modern psychotherapy surges forward to offer nearly four hundred bewildering approaches to treating mental disorders, the old frontiers recede, providing new glimpses of that unexplored, subterranean storehouse of suppressed memories and unfulfilled desires: the human subconscious. New questions are raising their heads. Was Freud right? If not, which model of psychotherapy—most of which liberally dip their fingers into the Freudian finger bowl—is? And more importantly, can essentially western models of treatment be successfully transplanted to the Oriental mindscape?

As early as three decades ago, Dr. N. S. Vahia came to the conclusion that conventional therapy was not applicable to Indians, and found the need for a more indigenous model.... Today, his son, Vihang Vahia, is treating nearly 150 cases of generalized anxiety disorder—a state of persistent and uncomfortable anxiety arising from no particular cause—with meditation techniques prescribed in Patanjali's *Yoga Sutras*. Experience is proving that the results are definitely as effective as conventional drug therapy in reducing the symptoms of panic and anxiety....

Says psychiatrist Vimala Veeraraghavan: "Psychotherapy practised in the Indian setting must recognize the roles played by *dharma*, *maya* and *karma* on the formation of the Indian personality.... It is for the psychotherapist to delve deep into the treasures of Indian psychological insights and reinterpret them in the cultural context."

For Dr. Parikh, the process took well over a decade, beginning with a vague contempt for what lay between the covers of psychiatric textbooks. "I soon realized that psychiatry, which deals primarily

with prescribing drugs to alleviate symptoms of mental disorder, was necessarily limited." It reduced the complexity of human behaviour to a puppet at the mercy of body biochemistry. Psychotherapeutic models, although they did take into account the maze of environmental and personality influences on behaviour, were equally unsatisfactory.... "I tell my clients to look within, to examine the faulty outlook that causes them so much pain." In other words, carp not at the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune; concentrate instead on fortifying your inner self to accept life's sundry challenges.

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One of the signs of the times is the increasing speed of our lives. Most people, if asked, "Do you feel you have enough time in your daily lives?" complain of time-pausity. This, says Stephan Rechtschaffen, M.D., cofounder and director of the Omega Institute for Holistic Studies, U.S.A., is indicative of "an epidemic of anxiety and pressure in our society" (*Psychology Today*, November/December 1993). His experience has taught him, he says, that learning how to successfully "shift" time can be one of the keys to achieving both health and happiness as we continue to age.

A curious thing happens as the pace of our lives grows faster and faster—our definition of a "moment" grows shorter and shorter, moving our awareness of time into ever-tinier increments. By cramming each moment so full of events, we leave ourselves no time to actually experience them in any meaningful way. As a result, the future arrives that much quicker, and it begins to predominate. The "now" becomes a prelude to the "next."...

As well as not living in the present, the vast majority of us spend our time not being present *in* our lives. Slowly, our perception of the world and our existence in it are being curtailed. We are so focussed on what's ahead that we just can't come alive in the here and now. Instead of shortening each moment of time, instead of breaking them down into progressively smaller units, we need to learn how to expand them, how to open ourselves more comfortably to our senses and bring our attention into the present without having our mind race back and forth with other distracting thoughts.

The pace of our lives has created a chasm between our emotions and our thoughts, which operate at different speeds.

Thoughts, which are processed electrically, communicate faster than our hormonal and chemical emotions. The demands of the modern world have required us to function more quickly, so we use what I call "mind time" to mentally engage to our fullest in order to juggle upcoming events. There is no time to deal with or process our slower feelings—utilizing what I call "emotional time"—so we repress them or stuff them down....

There is too much stress caused by the frantic pace at which most of us exist. The result is a disconnection from the world around us and our sense of being alive in it. People report feeling trapped, powerless to effect any meaningful change, coping as best as they can yet knowing they don't feel the way they would like to feel.

The key is to step back from the edge, learn to get involved in the *process* rather than constantly longing for the end result. This does not mean giving up our goal-oriented lives—simply modifying them, finding a balance between our productive and our emotional selves. This enables us to live as whole beings, fully alive.

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OUR work, our final goal, is clear. Many members feel daily that they get inspiration, help, knowledge, from their discussions and meditations on the laws laid down. They admit that the complete knowledge of all of Theosophy is difficult to obtain, but material science stands just there, too, in respect to the visible universe. In Brooklyn and New York are private, inner groups of Theosophists who occupy themselves with constant inquiring and analysis into and of Theosophical teaching, meanwhile trying to practise its rules; but they are not engaged in raising shades nor in trying to get out of their bodies, nor in seeking for psychic development. That, they think, is likely to lead to error if pursued for itself. It comes in time, in its proper place, if each one strives to convert his lower nature into higher. These sorts of groups also exist in other cities, and from my correspondence coming from every part of this country, I know that some devoted Theosophists are able to say that they have gained more real knowledge and more mental stability from Theosophy than they ever did from anything else.

— W. Q. JUDGE

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