

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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VOL. 44, No. 7

17th May 1974

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## THE LINE OF MOTIVE

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, March 1941.

—Eds.]

THE FIRST PRACTICAL TEACHING which Krishna imparts to his devotee and friend Arjuna is that of discharging his duties without an eye either to gaining reward from doing so or to avoiding pain likely to accrue. Renunciation of the fruits of actions in and through their performance is defined as true action as well as true renunciation. This first lesson in practical Occultism is further explained to Arjuna in the fifth chapter named *Sannyasa Yoga* which Mr. Judge recommends for special study by the aspirant who desires to learn the art of knowing himself distinct and separate from the sensing, breathing, moving, speaking, personal man, so that he can say that “the senses and organs move by natural impulse to their appropriate objects.”

In his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* Mr. Judge points out that this right performance of actions, in and through which alone true renunciation is attained, “is in reality the most difficult of tasks.” How, by what method, are we to endeavour to renounce the fruit of actions? It is pointed out:

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.

The reader will do well to peruse pp. 121–125 of the *Notes* from which the above is extracted. We are told that every deed has a soul and a body — the inner feeling and the outer performance. It is necessary for us to remember that an action is not only a thought-current

perfectly expressing itself in a concretization; the latter is an appearance and often misleads the ordinary person. The student looks for the inner motive of any outer deed — at least he ought to; the world does not. "One may donate millions in alms, and yet not thereby benefit his real character in the least." Neither the ordinary donor, nor the ordinary newspaper reader who learns of the donation, thinks of the "real character" of the giver of gifts or of the beneficiary. The motive is the soul of an action and Mr. Judge raises a question pertinent to every enthusiastic aspirant:

And even in the high aim found in aspiration to discipleship under a master, or even to Adeptship, we encounter the same difficulty. This aspiration is commendable above most that we can formulate, but when we coldly ask ourselves soon after that aspiration has been formed, "Why am I thus aspiring; why do I want to be near in sense to the Master?", we are obliged to admit that the impelling motive for acquiring the aspiration was tinged with selfishness.

But now let us turn to what a great Master has written about motives to one who desired to become his regular Chela:

I know your motives are sincere and true, and that a real change, and in the right direction, has come over you, though even to yourself that change is imperceptible. And the Chiefs know it too. But say they — motives are vapours, as attenuated as the atmospheric moisture: and as the latter develops its dynamic energy for man's use only when concentrated and applied as steam or hydraulic power, so the practical value of good motives is best seen when they take the form of deeds.

Now, one of the commonest experiences in the life of every student-aspirant is that blunders, of a serious nature even, are committed though the underlying motive was not bad. Between the motive and the actual deed something goes wrong! Between the plane of motive and that of actual performance of deeds there is the plane of ideation. When we learn to judge our motive in the light of the actual results of our deeds, we are often puzzled, at times horrified, for where we intended good to result, somehow evil precipitated! No earnest student, no honest aspirant, sets out to do something with an evil motive, but faulty deeds result all the same. Why? Because we assume that our motives are always right and righteous. Examination of motives is one factor in avoiding the precipitation of faults and errors. There is another. Not possessing adequate knowledge in working out the force of any good motive,

we go wrong. For example, in the emergency of a street accident, desirous of relieving the pain of an injured limb, we act without any knowledge and do harm where we had meant to do good. Knowledge is the link necessary for both things: (1) for ascertaining the nature of our motives; and (2) for the performance of action in conformity with the right motive. Ideation is the link, the mind, between motive, the Soul, and the deed which forms the body.

The motive of the student who earnestly accepts the teachings of Theosophy is most often hidden from him. It might be said that progress consists in ascertaining the motive, in rejecting what is false in it, in purifying it of the remaining dross mixed in a true motive, and in unfolding the seed of that true motive by giving it the right soil and proper nourishment.

“‘Great Sifter’ is the name of the ‘Heart Doctrine’, O Disciple,” and this sifting process brings on what are called the tests and trials of the aspirant. All life is probationary, says H.P.B.; but not all men look upon it as such; those who do are probationers, to whom Karma is at once a test to pass, an opportunity to embrace, a stepping-stone by which to rise. For the ordinary man the Path of Life does not exist; to him events are fortuitous, accidents and strokes of good luck occur; but to the practitioner of the Esoteric Philosophy there is not an accident in his life, not a misshapen day or a misfortune which is not the outcome of past Karma and at the same time the creator of future Karma; for the Esotericist the Path of Life is the Path of Tests.

For the purpose of studying the nature of motives belonging to the class of human beings who want Theosophy and aspire to walk the Path of Tests, let us try to put forward a classification. From the everyday experience of students and their labours we find that they are actuated and energized by:

- (1) the desire to please a person out of love or respect for him, or for some other reason;
- (2) the ambition to acquire fame and to wield influence and power;
- (3) the aspiration to become a chela of one of the Great Masters;
- (4) the resolve to serve humanity.

Many students familiar with the teachings of our philosophy jump to the conclusion that their motive is in good standing: “I am here to serve,” says each; but the history of Occultism and the history of our own Theosophical Movement, since 1875, clearly show that only a very few start with the pure and unalloyed golden resolve to serve humanity.

The three earlier stages are looked upon as not quite right, which is not wholly correct. We have to learn to look upon them as stages in soul-life; they form a series of progressive awakenings. A person educated by modern ways in modern traditions likes to feel and to assert that he is a lover and a helper of his fellow-men. This is good; but such a feeling has within it the power to glamour and students have to learn to see through it.

How many did not come to Theosophy because of H.P.B.'s magnetic personality? They felt the force and the power within and around her and they said, "Here is a person worth loving and worth following." Newcomers do not always possess the capacity to test Knowledge, to perceive the constancy and the consistency of Theosophy; but their inner feeling, an expression of the inherent idea of Original Devotion, moves them, and the personal element does play an important part in the lives of such people; and all of us have to learn to see its beneficent as also its weak aspects. In the U.L.T. we reiterate and emphasize that it is absolutely necessary for the student to test the truth of Theosophy, as a philosophy, as a body of Knowledge, and thus gain the conviction that we have to proceed from the Teachings to the Teachers. In examining our motives for acting in one way or another, we have to eliminate the personal element of pleasing So-and-so; and to put in its place the Teachers who can be pleased when we act in conformity with Their Teachings as recorded in the writings of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. Unless the student who came to Theosophy attracted by a personality endeavours to learn the place and value of the Impersonal Philosophy in his life, his progress will be hindered. Those persons who came to Theosophy attracted by no less a personage than H.P.B. fell away because they did not study the philosophy but hoped that the Messenger would perform the miracle for them, as if she had not already performed one — of recording the philosophy for all who wanted to follow her, so that, learning it, they might preach and promulgate it. "Follow the path I show, the Masters that are behind — and do not follow me or my PATH." They wanted to follow her and failure was the result.

Consider now the second class of people whose motive is the ambition to acquire fame and to wield influence and power. There are probationers in whose line of life meditation is the longing for fame; this ambition is not very clear to them and is obscured by aspirations and wishes, just as there are those who do not actually know that they re-

main in Theosophy for the sake of a person who represents to them Theosophy. The ambition to shine, to play the little guru, may be latent in an Associate when he begins to breathe the atmosphere of Theosophy; but it bursts out in no long time. If he would but use it as a stepping-stone to the next stage, and not fall prey to its very insidious dangers by lingering in the ambition, he would not fall. The correct incentive for a person charged with this ambition is to memorize by heart the idea that no one has a right to stand between any human Soul and the Message as recorded. It does not matter what people think of "us" as long as they come and get Theosophy straight. Each pupil-teacher must learn the art of standing behind the Messenger so that all *can* perceive the nature of that great being if they only will, and not in front so that others have but little chance to feel the presence of the Messenger in the Message.

Then there is the aspiration to Chelaship. Having heard about the Path and the Masters it is most natural that aspirants yearn to learn the method by which they could come near to Them. Of this motive Mr. Judge has written as quoted above. It is the noblest of the motives which opens the Path of the One True Motive — the service of humanity. What Manas is to the Buddhi, that this aspiration to become a disciple of the Blessed Ones is to the great resolve to serve the race to which we belong.

The resolve to serve humanity is the force which brings a man the opportunity to enter the Path of Chelaship. It was written by a Holy One:

It is just because they preach too much "the Brothers" and too little if at all *Brotherhood* that they fail. How many times had we to repeat, that he who joins the Society with the sole object of coming in contact with us and if not of acquiring at least of assuring himself of the reality of such powers and of our objective existence — was pursuing a mirage? I say again then. It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets. He alone, such a man — will never misuse his powers, as there will be no fear that he should turn them to selfish ends. A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our *chela* — he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour.

Now, many student-aspirants waste much time by assuming without adequate examination that they are in the Theosophical Movement to

serve humanity. This assumption, if not properly analysed, will develop into conceit; therefore it is wise for each to ascertain to what extent the ambition to acquire fame and wield power, or the desire to please friends and "leaders," is working in a subtle way in his consciousness.

Mr. Judge closes his *Notes* on the fifth chapter with these words:

We must apply ourselves to the work of helping humanity — to the extent of our ability. No more than this is demanded.

Two important implications: do we work to the extent of our ability? and, if no more is demanded, are we judicious in confining ourselves to what we *can* do? To do less than duty is wrong: to try to do more than duty has its dangers. Our field of Duty expands as soul-powers unfold. Contentment is of the Soul who has done neither less nor more than his best, and contentment is the Key Virtue, for through it comes calmness within, patience with the outside world, as well as dynamic energy — *Virya* — to serve humanity.

Let one who desires happiness be controlled and take refuge in perfect content; content is verily the root of happiness, the opposite is the root of sorrow. (*Manusmriti*, IV. 12)

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WE would not have our Guardians grow up among representations, of moral deformity, as in some foul pasture where, day after day, feeding on every poisonous weed they would, little by little, gather insensibly a mass of corruption in their very souls. Rather we must seek out those craftsmen whose instinct guides them to whatsoever is lovely and gracious; so that our young men, dwelling in a wholesome climate, may drink in good from every quarter, whence, like a breeze bearing health from happy regions, some influence from noble works constantly falls upon eye and ear from childhood upward, and imperceptibly draws them into sympathy and harmony with the beauty of reason, whose impress they take.

—PLATO

## ENDS AND MEANS

Like threads of silver seen through crystal beads,  
Let love through good deeds show.

—*The Light of Asia*

WHATEVER his station in life, each man cherishes a goal round which his life revolves. It may be that he is not aware of his having chosen an objective, but it is there. Unconsciously, but nonetheless surely, it exerts its pull upon his faculties and drives them in a larger or a tighter orbit round itself. Most often, it is some form of ambition that rules the man, and so powerful is its hold upon him that all else but the one dominant end is brushed aside and often enough is not even noticed. The more intense the desire to achieve, the more concentrated becomes the effort. The starving man loses sight of all else but the gratification of his appetite. So does the devoted man who braves all and everything in order to attain to wisdom, and so too does the evil man who goes wrong and deliberately chooses the darker side of existence.

The average man is a bundle of desires — some of them conflicting — and even these are wont to change with time, circumstance, the stage of growth from adolescence to old age and the maturity or decadence of his thoughts. The man of manifold desires divides his energies, giving to each a larger or a smaller portion of his vitality. His desires thus lack the backing of an undivided concentration and can only colour his life with insipid hues. Under such circumstances, the man finds himself divided, with a mental state bordering on continued distraction. It is this state where man oscillates between one desire and another that makes him unstable and therefore incapable of lifting himself from out of the particular stratum of thought into which he has fallen. Being in such condition, he is not capable of developing that kind of energy that will make him receptive of the knowledge that pertains to planes above the one where desires prevail. Shut off from the stream of divine knowledge, he remains ignorant of the great forces and energies that would otherwise have been his, and his incarnation may close on a note of frustration for the indwelling soul. Man has still to learn that his lower desires can be stilled only by a force which is superior to them. This force resides and has to be searched for within the secret recesses of his soul and spirit.

For the majority, the culmination, the coveted end of any effort, is the act of possessing, the glory of having achieved, the attaining in

fullest measure of a sense of reflection or the losing of all interest once that the goal is attained. In each such case, the end of any effort is the securing of something for oneself as a being distinct and separate from others. However, the act of attainment is seldom the close of all ambition. Satisfied in one direction, it springs up in another. The desire-motivated energy now turns towards the protecting of the fruits of effort against the claims, longings and depredations of others. Wading through dubious or even corrupt practices towards his seat of power, the man seeks to retain his hold on it by the use of the very forces that raised him. He thus perpetuates a string of falsehoods, iniquities and deceits and even stoops to torture and death. He does this because the forces that he used to raise himself to power are the forces that are familiar to him, and he relies on them to see him through all difficulties. The ends which the bad among men covet are several and the means to attain these are as varied as the tortuous ingenuity of man can invent.

Since man is a compound marvellously mixed of the animal and the angel, he finds that he is a strange mixture of the bad and the good. Ignoble aims rub shoulders in him with noble aspirations and he finds that if at one time he has the potentialities of a Dr. Jekyll, at another time he lapses into the evil ways of a Mr. Hyde. This oscillation between good and evil tears a man apart unless he grasps his individuality firmly and by the force of his awakened spiritual perceptions he crosses the threshold and enters his place of peace. It is a tragedy of life that man, because he is so near to the forms of matter, gravitates towards them, not realizing that too great an alliance with perishable things is bound to result in evil.

The deliberate choosing of a goal for the entire lifetime is no light exercise. The man must know and be cognizant of all choices that are open to him lest in his ignorance he omit that choice which alone can make him more than man. But long before he can exercise his power to choose, he has to make his perceptions far fareer than before from killing action. Unless he is willing to play at blindman's buff and yield himself to the vagaries of chance, he has to train himself to see things and events as they get revealed under the benign light of spirit. It thus happens that the search for a goal becomes an end in itself and may in some cases require the devoted pursuit of a lifetime of effort. That search requires the stifling of the voices of erstwhile desires and the letting go of ambitions that may still appear desirable. The past karma of wrong choices may retard progress, but it is inevitable that what one has sown, one must also reap. These stages have to be gone through

as the first hesitant steps towards living. They are important lest later, when pursuing the true goal, the latent force of an unrequited desire may raise its head and precipitate a fight at the very moment when the soul needs calmness for its efflorescence.

The average man pursues life as though he were a thing apart from other men and from the teeming life that surrounds him. He makes of himself a pivot round which his world of make-believe revolves. He will no doubt have virtue and charity; but these are his to display and crow over on appropriate occasions. They are his exclusively and are not to be shared nor mixed and mingled with the virtues and charities of even those others who have undertaken the same great pilgrimage as himself. But apart from such persons who think only of themselves, there are others — and they are not few either — who view life differently. They know intuitively that all souls have emerged as sparks from the same great fire and must return to and be absorbed by it, some sooner, others later. If this is the destiny of the spark that indwells the man, then he cannot but be a unit in a vast Host that was led out of its homogenous existence to go forth and achieve. The complete plan for the manifestation of a universe remains in the safe custody of him who heads the Host of emanations; while the plan for any man of his numerous incarnations remains with the Higher Self and is perceptible by him who desires perception. The aspirations, the longings and the ambitions — if one can call immortal leanings by that name — of a man who sees life in such perspective are vastly different from those of the common run of men. His vision is different, his aim and purpose become different; and the power which can lift him out of the morass of misery producing desires is also different.

Many a great mind has formulated the fundamental truth that outside of true Religion there is no solace for man. It is Religion alone which indicates that there is a plan consciously formed and as consciously being executed that bridges life and death and spreads its ramifications over trillions of years. It is in accordance with that plan that the march towards ultimate progression and perfection is undertaken. This great knowledge about evolution and the essence of things is no religion as the world knows "religion." It is not of the variety that depends on bell, book and candle; nor is it that which is being sold by self-styled Swamis and heads of sects that are mushrooming at present and are doing a flourishing business in both the East and the West. There is today, as there has been in existence for millions of

years, a Wisdom which is ancient and which has come down to us unaltered. Men have called it the "Wisdom-Religion." Modern Theosophy is an exposition of such portions of it as can be grasped by the average human of the century which is now drawing fast towards its close. The student of life requires time to take the fundamental propositions of this Wisdom-Religion to heart. The Secret Doctrine enters his life unobtrusively and, strange as it may seem, the import of one page after another gets revealed only as he advances along the Path. No explanations from outside can reveal to him the "secret" within the "Doctrine." The key to understand the inner, hidden meaning, has to be fashioned and forged by himself — unaided. In this task, the ethics of performance assume their full and total importance. Any misguided aim (all personal longings are that), any misshapen means raise a cloud of doubt and ambiguity which envelops the mind and the doctrine of the ancient wisdom continues to remain secret. To make the man ready for the receiving of Wisdom, ethics have to be invoked to translate metaphysics into action — into a living, throbbing, vitalizing force for good. It is one part of the ultimate aim of any man that he make the great universal ideas a living power in his life.

Without the study of the genesis of worlds, Gods, Powers and Man, the student will not be able to grasp the true import of that much used and often misunderstood term "Universal Brotherhood." If he cannot see himself as an integral part of the vast whole, then must his philosophy of life and the manner in which he sees himself vis-à-vis other men lead him into erroneous ideologies (as regards ends) and dangerous conclusions (as regards the means). The fanatics of any religion have an imposing array of weapons in their armoury ranging from persuasion, pressure and casuistry to subjugation, torture and death. Inquisitions and burnings on the stake were common means to a benighted clergy for achieving their ends. Their spirit of intolerance has not disappeared and is traceable even in this century, now in politics, now in science, and may yet revisit large sections of humanity. The sectarian and the bigot try to portion out the Absolute and put up barriers to the Infinite. What sordidness such aims can hold is seen mostly in the retrospect. What degeneration can befall men is seen also in the retrospect by examining the means he uses to achieve those ends.

Once that the goal of life is visualized and formulated, the means for the attaining of that end have to be sorted out. The intrinsic value or worthlessness of any means lies in its moral and ethical content.

There are and there will probably always be Robin Hoods of religion — they who go on robbing their Peters to pay their Pauls. Regardless of their motives, their actions bear the tinge and colour of robbery. The ill-gotten gains get saturated by the hurt feelings of the person robbed and will sooner or later produce weeds where roses were expected to bloom. Money has this peculiarity that it seldom carries the message of life to the masses. If it had that power, the Christs and Buddhas of the race would have revelled in riches. The life of poverty (without the stigma of insolvency) is a way of life and becomes a means to reach the goal. Poverty is a legitimate means to achieve humility of spirit and becomes a gesture by which the man acknowledges his kinship with large masses of men.

The real and perhaps the only means to reach the great goal are within the man himself. His own individualized incarnation was according to a plan and had a distinct purpose which took in its sweep not only the man himself but his family, nation and race. This plan remains in the custody of the Inner Ruler — the true Krishna who guides the chariot of life now here, now there, so as to place the disciple in the midst of such circumstances as are needed for his experience.

No plan that stems from out the spaceless Soul can base itself on any principles save those of Brotherhood, Altruism and Sacrifice. Not one of these but reflects the other two. These are the “means” to open the gates to fulfilment. In the final analysis, these three are both “ends” and “means”; the goal, the resting place, the asylum and the friend of him of the mystic and the fast-moving Soul.

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AN HOUR of meditation is better than sixty years of acts of worship.

—PROPHETIC TRADITION: HADITH

## THE HISTORY OF A PLANET

[This article by H. P. Blavatsky appeared originally in *Lucifer* for September 1887.—EDS.]

NO STAR, among the countless myriads that twinkle over the sidereal fields of the night sky, shines so dazzlingly as the planet Venus — not even Sirius-Sothis, the dog-star, beloved by Isis. Venus is the queen among our planets, the crown jewel of our solar system. She is the inspirer of the poet, the guardian and companion of the lonely shepherd, the lovely morning and the evening star. For,

“Stars teach as well as shine,”

although their secrets are still untold and unrevealed to the majority of men, including astronomers. They are “a beauty and a mystery,” verily. But “where there is a mystery, it is generally supposed that there must also be evil,” says Byron. Evil, therefore, was detected by evilly-disposed human fancy, even in those bright luminous eyes peeping at our wicked world through the veil of ether. Thus there came to exist slandered stars and planets as well as slandered men and women. Too often are the reputation and fortune of one man or party sacrificed for the benefit of another man or party. As on Earth below, so in the heavens above, and Venus, the sister planet of our Earth,<sup>1</sup> was sacrificed to the ambition of our little globe to show the latter the “chosen” planet of the Lord. She became the scapegoat, the *Azazel* of the starry dome, for the sins of the Earth, or rather for those of a certain class in the human family — the clergy — who slandered the bright orb, in order to prove what their ambition suggested to them as the best means to reach power, and exercise it unswervingly over the superstitious and ignorant masses.

This took place during the middle ages. And now the sin lies back at the door of Christians and their scientific inspirers, though the error was successfully raised to the lofty position of a religious dogma, as many other fictions and inventions have been.

Indeed, the whole sidereal world, planets and their regents — the ancient gods of poetical paganism — the sun, the moon, the elements,

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<sup>1</sup> “Venus is a second Earth,” says Renaud, in *Terre et Ciel* (p. 74), “so much so that were there any communication possible between the two planets, their inhabitants might take their respective earths for the two hemispheres of the same world. . . . They seem on the sky, like two sisters. Similar in conformation, these two worlds are also similar in the character assigned to them in the Universe.”

and the entire host of incalculable worlds — those at least which happened to be known to the Church Fathers — shared in the same fate. They have all been slandered, all bedevilled by the insatiable desire of proving one little system of theology — built on and constructed out of old pagan materials — the only right and holy one, and all those which preceded or followed it utterly wrong. Sun and stars, the very air itself, we are asked to believe, became pure and “redeemed” from original sin and the Satanic element of heathenism, only after the year 1 A.D. Scholastic and scholiasts, the spirit of whom “spurned laborious investigation and slow induction,” had shown, to the satisfaction of infallible Church, the whole Kosmos in the power of Satan — a poor compliment to God — before the year of the Nativity; and Christians had to believe or be condemned. Never have subtle sophistry and casuistry shown themselves so plainly in their true light, however, as in the questions of the ex-Satanism and later redemption of various heavenly bodies. Poor beautiful Venus got worsted in that war of so-called divine proofs to a greater degree than any of her sidereal colleagues. While the history of the other six planets, and their gradual transformation from Greco-Aryan gods into Semitic devils, and finally into “divine attributes of the *seven eyes* of the Lord,” is known but to the educated, that of Venus-Lucifer has become a household story among even the most illiterate in Roman Catholic countries.

This story shall now be told for the benefit of those who may have neglected their astral mythology.

Venus, characterized by Pythagoras as the *sol alter*, a second Sun, on account of her magnificent radiance — equalled by none other — was the first to draw the attention of ancient Theogonists. Before it began to be called Venus, it was known in *pre-Hesiodic* theogony as Eosphoros (or Phosphoros) and Hesperos, the children of the dawn and twilight. In Hesiod, moreover, the planet is decomposed into two divine beings, two brothers — Eosphoros (the *Lucifer* of the Latins) the morning, and Hesperos, the evening star. They are the children of Astraios and Eos, the starry heaven and the dawn, as also of Kephalos and Eos (*Theog*: 381, *Hyginus: Poeticon Astronomicum*, II, 42). Preller, quoted by Decharme, shows Phaeton identical with Phosphoros or Lucifer (*Griechische Mythologie*, I, 365). And on the authority of Hesiod he also makes Phaeton the son of the latter two divinities — Kephalos and Eos.

Now Phaeton or Phosphoros, the “luminous morning orb,” is carried

away in his early youth by Aphrodite (Venus) who makes of him the night guardian of her sanctuary (*Theog.*, 987–991). He is the “beautiful morning star” (*Vide St. John’s Revelation*, xxii. 16) loved for its radiant light by the Goddess of the Dawn, Aurora, who, while gradually eclipsing the light of her beloved, thus seeming to carry off the star, makes it reappear on the evening horizon where it watches the gates of heaven. In early morning, Phosphoros “issuing from the waters of the Ocean, raises in heaven his sacred head to announce the approach of divine light.” (*Iliad*, xxiii. 226; *Odyssey*, xiii. 93; Virgil, *Aeneid*, viii. 589; *Mythologie de la Grèce Antiqu*e, p. 247.) He holds a torch in his hand and flies through space as he precedes the car of Aurora. In the evening he becomes Hesperos, “the most splendid of the stars that shine on the celestial vault” (*Iliad*, xxii. 317). He is the father of the Hesperides, the guardians of the golden apples together with the Dragon; the beautiful genius of the flowing golden curls, sung and glorified in all the ancient *epithalami* (the bridal songs of the early Christians as of the pagan Greeks); he, who at the fall of the night, leads the nuptial *cortège* and delivers the bride into the arms of the bridegroom. (*Carmen Nuptiale*. See *Mythologie de la Grèce Antiqu*e, Decharme.)

So far, there seems to be no possible *rapprochement*, no analogy to be discovered between this poetical personification of a star, a purely astronomical myth, and the *Satanism* of Christian theology. True, the close connection between the planet as Hesperos, the evening star, and the Greek Garden of Eden with its Dragon and the golden apples may, with a certain stretch of imagination, suggest some painful comparisons with the third chapter of *Genesis*. But this is insufficient to justify the building of a theological wall of defence against paganism made up of slander and misrepresentations.

But of all the Greek *euhemerizations*, Lucifer-Eosphoros is, perhaps, the most complicated. The planet has become with the Latins, Venus, or Aphrodite-*Anadyomene*, the foam-born Goddess, the “Divine Mother,” and one with the Phoenician Astarte, or the Jewish Astaroth. They were all called “The Morning Star,” and the Virgins of the Sea, or *Mar* (whence Mary), the great Deep, titles now given by the Roman Church to their Virgin Mary. They were all connected with the moon and the crescent, with the Dragon and the planet Venus, as the mother of Christ has been made connected with all these attributes. If the Phoenician mariners carried, fixed on the prow of their ships, the image of the goddess Astarte (or Aphrodite, Venus Erycina) and looked upon the

evening and the morning star as *their* guiding star, "the eye of their Goddess mother," so do the Roman Catholic sailors the same to this day. They fix a Madonna on the prows of their vessels, and the blessed Virgin Mary is called the "Virgin of the Sea." The accepted patroness of Christian sailors, their star, "*Stella Del Mar*," etc., she stands on the crescent moon. Like the old pagan Goddesses, she is the "Queen of Heaven," and the "Morning Star" just as they were.

Whether this can explain anything, is left to the reader's sagacity. Meanwhile, Lucifer-Venus has nought to do with darkness, and everything with light. When called *Lucifer*, it is the "light bringer," the first radiant beam which destroys the lethal darkness of night. When named Venus, the planet-star becomes the symbol of dawn, the chaste Aurora. Professor Max Müller rightly conjectures that Aphrodite, born of the sea, is a personification of the Dawn of Day, and the most lovely of all the sights in Nature ("Science of Language"), for, before her naturalization by the Greeks, Aphrodite was Nature personified, the life and light of the Pagan world, as proven in the beautiful invocation to Venus by Lucretius, quoted by Decharme. She is *divine* Nature in her entirety, *Aditi-Prakriti*, before she becomes Lakshmi. She is that Nature before whose majestic and fair face, "the winds fly away, the quieted sky pours torrents of light, and the sea-waves smile" (Lucretius). When referred to as the Syrian goddess Astarte, the Astaroth of Hieropolis, the radiant planet was personified as a majestic woman, holding in one outstretched hand a torch, in the other, a crooked staff in the form of a cross. (*Vide* Lucian's *De Dea Syria*, and Cicero's *De Natura Deorum*, III. c. 23). Finally, the planet is represented astronomically, as a globe *poised above the cross*—a symbol no devil would like to associate with—while the planet Earth is a globe with a cross *over it*.

But then, these crosses are not the symbols of Christianity, but the Egyptian *crux ansata*, the attribute of Isis (who is Venus, and Aphrodite, Nature, also) or the planet; the fact that the Earth has the *crux ansata* reversed, having a great occult significance upon which there is no necessity of entering at present.

Now what says the Church and how does it explain the "dreadful association"? The Church believes in the devil, of course, and could not afford to lose him. "*The Devil is the chief pillar of the Church*," confesses unblushingly an advocate<sup>2</sup> of the *Ecclesia Militans*. "All the

<sup>2</sup> Thus saith Des Mousseaux, *Mœurs et pratiques des demons*, p. X — and he is corroborated in this by Cardinal de Ventura. The Devil, he says, "is one of the great personages

Alexandrian Gnostics speak to us of the fall of the Aeons and their Pleroma, and all attribute that fall *to the desire to know*," writes another volunteer in the same army, slandering the Gnostics as usual and identifying *the desire to know* of occultism, magic, with Satanism.<sup>3</sup> And then, forthwith, he quotes from Schlegel's *Philosophie de l'Historie* to show that the seven rector (planets) of Pymander, "commissioned by God to contain the phenomenal world in their seven circles, lost in love with their own beauty,<sup>4</sup> came to admire themselves with such intensity that owing to this proud self-adulation they finally *fell*."

Perversity having thus found its way amongst the angels, the most beautiful creature of God "revolted against its Maker." That creature is in theological fancy Venus-Lucifer, or rather the informing Spirit or Regent of that planet. This teaching is based on the following speculation. The three principal heroes of the great sidereal catastrophe mentioned in *Revelation* are, according to the testimony of the Church fathers — "the Verbum, Lucifer his usurper and the grand Archangel who conquered him," and whose "palaces" (the "houses," astrology calls them) are in the Sun, Venus-Lucifer and Mercury. This is quite evident, since the position of these orbs in the Solar system corresponds in their hierarchical order to that of the "heroes" in Chapter xii of *Revelation*, "their names and destinies(?) being closely connected in the theological (exoteric) system with these three great metaphysical names." (De Mirville's *Mémoire* to the Academy of France, on the rapping Spirits and the Demons.)

The outcome of this was, that theological legend made of Venus-Lucifer the sphere and domain of the fallen Archangel, or Satan before his apostasy. Called upon to reconcile this statement with that other fact, that the metaphor of "the morning star" is applied to both Jesus and his Virgin mother, and that the planet Venus-Lucifer is included, moreover, among the "stars" of the seven planetary spirits worshipped by the Roman Catholics<sup>5</sup> under new names, the defenders of the Latin dogmas and beliefs answer as follows:

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*whose life is closely allied to that of the Church; and without him . . . the fall of man could not have taken place. If it were not for him (the Devil), the Saviour, the Redeemer, the Crucified would be but the most ridiculous of supernumeraries and the Cross an insult to good sense." And if so, then we should feel thankful to the poor Devil.*

<sup>3</sup> De Mirville. "No Devil, no Christ," he exclaims.

<sup>4</sup> This is only another version of Narcissus, the Greek victim of his own fair looks.

<sup>5</sup> The famous temple dedicated to the Seven Angels at Rome, and built by Michael-Angelo in 1561, is still there, now called the "Church of St. Mary of the Angels." In the old Roman Missals printed in 1563—one or two of which may still be seen in Palazzo

Lucifer, the jealous neighbour of the Sun (Christ) said to himself in his great pride: "I will rise as high as he!" He was thwarted in his design by Mercury, though the brightness of the latter (who is St. Michael) was as much lost in the blazing fires of the great Solar orb as his own was, and though, like Lucifer, Mercury is only the assessor, and the guard of honour to the Sun. (*Ibid.*)

Guards of "dishonour" now rather, if the teachings of *theological* Christianity were true. But here comes in the cloven foot of the Jesuit. The ardent defender of Roman Catholic Demonolatry and of the worship of the seven planetary spirits, at the same time, pretends great wonder at the coincidences between old Pagan and Christian legends, between the fable about Mercury and Venus, and the *historical truths* told of St. Michael — the "angel of the face," — the terrestrial double, or *ferouer* of Christ. He points them out saying: "Like Mercury, the archangel Michael is the *friend* of the Sun, his Mitra, perhaps, for Michael is a *psychopompic* genius, one who leads the separated souls to their appointed abodes, and like Mitra, he is the *well-known adversary of the demons.*" This is demonstrated by the book of the *Nabatheans* recently discovered (by Chwolson), in which the Zoroastrian Mitra is called the "*grand enemy of the planet Venus.*"<sup>6</sup> (*Ibid.*, p. 160)

There is something in this. A candid confession, for once, of perfect identity of celestial personages and of *borrowing* from every pagan source. It is curious, if unblushing. While in the oldest Mazdean allegories, Mitra conquers the planet Venus, in Christian tradition Michael defeats Lucifer, and both receive, as war spoils, the planet of the vanquished deity.

"Mitra," says Dollinger, "possessed, in days of old, the star of Mercury, placed between the sun and the moon, but he was given the planet of the conquered, and ever since his victory he is identified with Venus." (*Paganisme et Judaisme*, Vol. II, p. 109)

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Barberini—one may find the religious service (*officio*) of the seven angels, and their *old* and occult names. That the "angels" are the pagan Rectors, under different names—the Jewish having replaced the Greek and Latin names—of the seven planets is proven by what Pope Pius V said in his Bull to the Spanish Clergy, permitting and encouraging the worship of the said seven spirits of the stars. "One cannot exalt too much these *seven rectors* of the world, *figured by the seven planets*, as it is consoling to our century to witness by the grace of God the cult of these *seven ardent lights*, and of these *seven stars* reassuming all its lustre in the Christian republic." (*Les Sept Esprits et l'Histoire de leur Cutte*; De Mirville's second memoir addressed to the Academy, Vol. II, p. 358.)

<sup>6</sup> Herodotus showing the identity of Mitra and Venus, the sentence in the *Nabathean Agriculture* is evidently misunderstood.

In the Christian tradition [adds the learned Marquis], St. Michael is *apportioned in Heaven the throne and the palace of the foe he has vanquished*. Moreover, like Mercury, during the palmy days of paganism, which made sacred to this *demon-god* all the promontories of the earth, *the Archangel is the patron of the same in our religion*.

This means, if it does mean anything, that *now*, at any rate, Lucifer-Venus is a *sacred* planet, and no synonym of Satan, since St. Michael has become his legal heir.

The above remarks conclude with this cool reflection:

It is evident that paganism has *utilized beforehand* and most marvellously, all the features and characteristics of the *prince of the face of the Lord* (Michael) in applying them to that *Mercury*, to the Egyptian *Hermes-Anubis*, and the *Hermes-Christos* of the Gnostics. Each of these was represented as the first among the divine councillors, and the god nearest to the sun, *quis ut Deus*.

Which title, with all its attributes, became that of Michael. The good fathers, the Master Masons of the temple of *Church* Christianity, knew indeed how to utilize pagan material for their new dogmas.

The fact is, that it is sufficient to examine certain Egyptian *cartouches*, pointed out by Rosellini (*Egypte*, Vol. I, p. 289), to find Mercury (the double of Sirius in our solar system) as Sothis, preceded by the words "*sole*" and "*solis custode, sostegno, dei dominanti . . . il forte, grande dei vigilant*," "watchman of the sun, sustainer of dominions, and the strongest of all the vigilants." All these titles and attributes are now those of the Archangel Michael, who has inherited them from the *demons* of paganism.

Moreover, travellers in Rome may testify to the wonderful presence in the statue of Mitra, at the Vatican, of the best known Christian symbols. Mystics boast of it. They find

— in his lion's head, and the eagle's wings, those of the courageous Seraph, the master of space (Michael); in his caduceus, the spear, in the two serpents coiled round the body, the struggle of the good and bad principles, and especially in the two keys which the said Mitra holds, like St. Peter, the keys with which this Seraphpatron of the latter opens and shuts the gates of Heaven, *astra cludid et recludit*. (*Mem.*, p. 162)

To sum up, the aforesaid shows that the theological romance of Lucifer was built upon the various myths and allegories of the pagan

world, and that it is no *revealed* dogma, but simply one invented to uphold superstition. Mercury being one of the Sun's *assessors*, or the *cynocephali* of the Egyptians and *the watch-dogs of the Sun*, literally, the other was *Eosphoros*, the most brilliant of the planets, "*qui mane oriebaris*," the early rising, or the Greek ὀρθρινός. It was identical with the *Amon-ra*, the light-bearer of Egypt, and called by all nations "the *second born* of light" (the first being Mercury), the beginning of his (the Sun's) ways of wisdom, the Archangel Michael being also referred to as the *principium viarum Domini*.

Thus a purely astronomical personification, built upon an occult meaning which no one has hitherto seemed to unriddle outside the Eastern wisdom, has now become a dogma, part and parcel of Christian revelation. A clumsy transference of characters is unequal to the task of making thinking people accept in one and the same trinitarian group, the "Word" or Jesus, God and Michael (with the Virgin occasionally to complete it) on the one hand, and Mitra, Satan and Apollo-Abaddon on the other; the whole at the whim and pleasure of Roman Catholic Scholiasts. If Mercury and Venus (Lucifer) are (astronomically in their revolution around the Sun) the symbols of God the Father, the Son, and of their Vicar, Michael, the "Dragon-Conqueror," in Christian legend, why should they when called Apollo-*Abaddon*, the "King of the Abyss," Lucifer, Satan, or Venus — become forthwith devils and demons? If we are told that the "conqueror," or "Mercury-Sun," or again St. Michael of the *Revelation*, was given the spoils of the conquered angel, namely, his planet, why should opprobrium be any longer attached to a constellation so purified? Lucifer is now the "Angel of the Face of the Lord,"<sup>7</sup> because "that face is mirrored in it." We think rather, because the Sun is reflecting his beams in Mercury seven times more than it does on our Earth, and twice more in Lucifer-Venus: the Christian symbol proving again its astronomical origin. But whether from the astronomical, mystical or symbological aspect, Lucifer is as good as any other planet. To advance as a proof of its demoniacal character, and identity with Satan, the configuration of Venus, which gives to the crescent of this planet the appearance of a cut-off horn, is rank nonsense. But to connect this with the horns of "The Mystic Dragon" in *Revela-*

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<sup>7</sup> "Both in Biblical and pagan theologies," says de Mirville, "the Sun has its god, its defender, and its sacrilegious usurper, in other words, its Ormuzd, its planet Mercury (Mitra), and its Lucifer-Venus (or Ahriman), taken away from its ancient master, and now given to its conqueror" (p 164). Therefore Lucifer-Venus is quite *holy* now.

tion — “one of which was broken”<sup>8</sup> — as the two French Demonologists, the Marquis de Mirville and the Chevalier des Mousseaux, the champions of the Church militant, would have their readers believe in the second half of our present century — is simply an insult to the public.

Besides which, the Devil had no horns before the fourth century of the Christian era. It is a purely Patristic invention arising from their desire to connect the god Pan, and the pagan Fauns and Satyrs, with their Satanic legend. The demons of Heathendom were as hornless and as tailless as the Archangel Michael himself in the imaginations of his worshippers. The “horns” were, in pagan symbolism, an emblem of divine power and creation, and of fertility in nature. Hence the ram’s horns of Ammon, of Bacchus, and of Moses on ancient medals, and the cow’s horns of Isis and Diana, etc., etc., and of the Lord God of the Prophets of Israel himself. For Habakkuk gives the evidence that this symbolism was accepted by the “chosen people” as much as by the Gentiles. In Chapter III, that prophet speaks of the “Holy One from Mount Paran,” of the Lord God who “came from Teman, and *whose brightness was as the light,*” and who had “*horns coming out of his hand.*”

When one reads, moreover, the Hebrew text of *Isaiah*, and finds that no Lucifer is mentioned at all in Chapter XIV, 12, but simply *Hillel*, “a bright star,” one can hardly refrain from wondering that *educated* people should be still ignorant enough at the close of our century to associate a radiant planet — or anything else in nature for the matter of that — with the DEVIL!<sup>9</sup>

—H.P.B.

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<sup>8</sup> In *Revelation* there is no “horn broken,” but it is simply said in Chapter XIII, 3, that John saw “one of his heads, as it were, wounded to death.” John knew naught in his generation of “a horned” devil.

<sup>9</sup> The literal words used, and their translation, are: “*Aik Naphalta Mi-Shamayim Hillel Ben-Shahar Nigdata La-Aretz Cholesch Al-Goum,*” or, “How art thou fallen from the heavens, Hillel, Son of the Morning, how art thou cast down unto the earth, thou who didst cast down the nations.” Here the word, translated “Lucifer,” is Hillel, and its meaning is “shining brightly or gloriously.” It is very true also, that by a pun to which Hebrew words lend themselves so easily, the verb *hillel* may be made to mean “to howl,” hence, by an easy derivation, *hillel* may be constructed into “howler,” or a devil, a creature, however, one hears rarely, if ever, “howling.” In his *Lexicon*, Parkhurst says: “The Syriac translation of this passage renders it ‘howl’; and even Jerome observes that it literally means to ‘howl.’ Michaelis translates it, ‘Howl, Son of the Morning.’ But at this rate, Hillel, the great Jewish sage and reformer, might also be called a “howler,” and connected with the devil!

# THE SEVENFOLD MAN

## I.—THE SPIRIT AND ITS ASPECTS

Spiritual and divine powers lie dormant in every human being; and the wider the sweep of his spiritual vision the mightier will be the God within him.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHY describes man as a sevenfold being. This is not out of fancy, nor out of superstition, but for a good scientific reason.

The sevenfold man is a natural phenomenon in exactly the same way as the seven-coloured rainbow is a natural phenomenon. How man comes to be sevenfold is not more difficult to understand than it is for our intelligence to perceive how number seven plays the leading role in the antenatal life of man. In many ways the significance of number seven can be demonstrated; for example, the study of any calendar, ancient or modern, reveals the important place that it occupies.

The root of the study is in this truth: man and God are absolutely interlinked. A single drop of water contains the same properties as are to be found in the vast ocean. The new-born infant is tiny, but it is the exact copy of the adult. Similarly is man the miniature copy of the Universe, for which reason he is called the Microcosm, the small cosmos, while the Universe is named the Macrocosm, the Great Cosmos.

Just as the tiny babe is going to grow larger hands and feet, is going to learn to use its eyes and its ears, so is man learning through the evolution of all his constituents. The infant grows to be a man in the process of evolution; so also, man unfolds into God.

The new-born babe has eyes and ears, hands and feet—however tiny, they are there; and growth is from infantile to adult size. In the baby eyes is the capacity to see; in the baby arms is latent that strength to move objects; in the baby fingers is latent the power to hold a pen and to write. So also with the whole of man. In the human blood is latent the ability to feel and to desire; in the human head is latent the capacity to think and to reason; in the human heart is latent the power to sacrifice and to serve.

Anatomists who have studied the human body describe it as composed of so many systems, so many organs. Classifications are for convenience in understanding and explaining the make-up of the body. Similarly, sages who study the anatomy of the whole of man describe

the human constitution in detail for the convenience of our understanding. Different classifications exist, each revealing some particular point of view. Putting aside false and fanciful classifications with a warning to the reader that such do exist, let us confine ourselves to such facts as would enable us to grasp as clearly as possible a difficult subject. In doing so we should use terms with understanding and intelligence.

We can look at man as a unit — a life in the Ocean of Life. These two are not distinct and separate, but are of the same substance, like a wave and the sea. Rising in and from the sea the wave sinks into it, to rise again. So in the Ocean of Life man, a unit of Life, rises and falls and rises again, appearing to be distinct and separate, yet not so; in reality they are of the same substance.

But there are many waves of different heights and so there are many forms of Life — mineral, vegetable, animal, human and other units of Life. All the myriads of lives in the Ocean of Life are but the emanations of the latter.

This Life is the basic principle, the foundation substance, and is both Spirit and Matter. Spirit and Matter are not two independent realities, but two aspects of the One Life. Concretized or solidified Spirit is Matter; rarefied and etherealized Matter is Spirit; and between subtle Spirit and gross Matter there are various states of the One Life, just as, for example, there are intermediary states between gaseous vapour and solid ice. The Spirit aspect of the One Life is called God or Deity; the matter aspect is called Nature.

Being of the same substance, man also is Spirit and that Spirit we must designate as human Spirit, Deity being the Universal Spirit. Deity is the Self of the Universe; therefore, it is also named the Universal Self. Human Spirit is the real Self of man — the Spirit-Self.

Nature or Matter is a bundle of emanations, aspects, modifications of Spirit or Deity, and so the poet sings correctly:

And not from Nature up to Nature's God,  
But down from Nature's God look Nature through.

Therefore, if we are to understand our own complex constitution we must proceed from the God within us and look at the different aspects of that constitution. All the constituents of Man, from the highest to the lowest, however different they may appear, are but modifications of the basic principle — Spirit.

Nature is the vehicle of God or Deity — the Universal Spirit. Simi-

larly, man's nature is the vehicle of the human Spirit. This nature is variegated in the universe as in man; but the Sages have thoroughly examined it and have divided it into six classes — the nature both of cosmos and of man. They have taught that like the six cardinal points man's nature is sixfold and that the Spirit at the centre is the seventh or the Root-Principle.

Correspondingly, its different organisms represent the nature aspect of the body, but that which holds all of them in one body represents the Spirit aspect of the body. Similarly, our six constituents make up the nature or matter aspect of man, the unit, but Spirit holds them all together and uses every single one of them to fulfil the aim of evolution. Therefore Mr. Judge states that "we make no error when we say that Theosophy declares there is *Atma*, which works with and through the six vehicles. . . . Let us say that there is one principle which acts through six vehicles."

This one principle is thus defined by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Atma is Spirit, one with the Absolute, as its radiation. . . . It is neither your Spirit nor mine, but like sunlight shines on all. It is the universally diffused "*divine principle*," and inseparable from its one and absolute *Meta-Spirit*, as the sunbeam is inseparable from sunlight.

Just as hands and feet, head and heart, and all other parts and organs belong to one physical body, so also soul and mind and body and all else belong to one Form of Life and that we call the human Spirit. Pain in the little finger is felt in the brain and affects the whole body; so pain in any single constituent affects the whole man. A wrong feeling poisons body and mind alike; an evil thought worsens the character and weakens the very soul. The reverse is equally true: one single pure and noble aspiration elevates the mind, cleanses the feelings, nourishes the health of the body itself, and so on. And because that human Spirit is one with the Universal Spirit, we uplift or degrade the whole Universe through our action — mental, moral or bodily. Says H. P. Blavatsky:

It is an occult law, moreover, that no man can rise superior to his individual failings, without lifting, be it ever so little, the whole body of which he is an integral part.

Man is Spirit and weaves for himself six suitable fabrics in and through which he contacts the manifested cosmos, and in the process he unfolds all his latent powers. That process, called evolution, is a very

long one. The gain? Spirit starts like a seed and ends as a full-grown tree laden with honey-flowers and luscious fruits. Just as from the seed sprout root, trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, fruits, so from the Spirit-seed come six aspects of the tree we call man. What are they? In various religions they are variously named and variously described. Theosophy gives these terms:

1. Human Spirit or *Atma*
2. Spiritual Soul or *Buddhi*
3. Human Soul or *Manas*
4. Animal Soul or *Kama*
5. Vital Energy or *Prana*
6. Astral Body or *Linga Sharira*
7. Physical Body or *Sthula Sharira*

Desires-feelings-passions do not constitute a body; nor do thoughts. There is neither an emotional body, nor a mental body. Only two bodies are organized vehicles and these are the physical body and its ethereal double, named the astral body.

(*To be continued*)

THE SANDAL WOOD retains its fragrance even when it is ground several times; the sugarcane continues to be sweet even when cut into pieces; gold maintains its attractive feature, despite persistent melting. In the same manner, the excellent souls never deviate from their inborn virtues till their end.

Trees laden with fruit bend down. Clouds with the weight of fresh vapour lie low. Noble souls do not get puffed up with riches. This is the natural feature of benevolent persons.

A vicious man keenly observes others' trifling (mustard-sized) blemishes; whereas he ignores his own glaring (bael-sized) defects, even though he is aware of them.

The characteristics of virtuous souls are: they are devoid of arrogance; they do not revile others; they do not talk harshly; they bear with unpleasant remarks; they are not overcome by rage; they stand unmoved on hearing others' inauspicious utterances; and they, keeping themselves spotless, camouflage others' lapses.

Sensible ideas should be accepted even from youngsters, who very often possess ideas beyond the reach of wise men. The lamp, though dim before day-light, is capable of shedding light on objects inaccessible to the sun.

—*Sanskrit Sayings*

## THE CURSE OF ALCOHOL

[Reprinted from *Theosophical Free Tract No. 10*, first published in November 1947.—Eds.]

ENOUGH MATERIAL has appeared in Theosophical publications to show the sincere inquirer why the drinking of alcohol is condemned by our philosophy. The results of over-indulgence are plainly evident to all, even to confirmed alcoholics themselves, but it has been shown that even the effects of moderate drinking are traceable for some time in the brain and blood of man. And the cumulative effect of even small amounts of alcohol, insufficient to intoxicate, is injurious, aside from the ever-present possibility of the moderate drinker's becoming a "compulsive drinker."

Leaving aside the purely physiological effects of alcohol, let us consider the psychological reaction, which has been scientifically ascertained through experimental tests.

Man is man because of his mind; the thinking power is the faculty *par excellence* which lifts man above the level of the brute. Its principal organ is the brain, a complex instrument with varied functions. On the fore-brain, the cerebrum, we depend on this plane for the expression of all the higher faculties of the reasoning mind, such as attention and concentration, the powers of decision and judgment, of logic and control, the capacity to assimilate new ideas, the power to memorize. Alcohol acts first on the fore-brain and these are the faculties which are first affected and directly impaired even by small doses of the drug; with larger doses the impairment becomes progressively greater. Judgment, reason, sensation and emotion are affected by alcohol in that order. Note that it is judgment which is the first casualty — "and from loss of discrimination loss of all!"

It is usually thought that alcohol stimulates the brain, yet modern physiologists agree that it is really a depressant. True, after a drink there appears to be a greater and quicker flow of ideas. In the ordinary individual there are certain inhibitions which produce a mental tension, sometimes unknown to the man himself. Alcohol, in depressing the higher centres of the brain, releases some of these subconscious inhibitions and thus diminishes tension. This leads to mental relaxation coupled with a feeling of confidence. But such a state, artificially induced, is subnormal. Though the flow of ideas is rapid, the ideas are superficial and the confidence felt is but a fictitious sense of competence and self-esteem. This latter is dangerous inasmuch as it leads to carelessness or lack of caution. For

example, the motorist under the influence of alcohol is more ready to take risks than normally, and the delayed reaction due to alcohol constitutes a further menace.

The impoverishment of thought has been shown through several tests. To take but one, the naming of related words, *e.g.*, those suggested by "Butter." Normally the responses were "Cheese," "Bread," "Yellow," but with a little alcohol the words suggested were "Bitter," "Flutter," "Butterfly," words more closely related to the sound than to the meaning. Also simple arithmetic tests brought a quicker response at the expense of accuracy. But a common subjective effect was the individual's pleasant consciousness of being right.

Alcohol heightens the action of the senses but decreases the ability to distinguish between sense impressions. It lengthens the time required to respond to a given stimulus, produces a false estimate of the lapse of time, and otherwise weakens the co-ordination between the mind and the senses, together with the organs of action. Kant's definition is still valid: "Drunkenness is the unnatural state of inability to organize sense impressions according to the laws of experience."

Thus, even the performance of the hand may suffer, particularly when fine co-ordination is needed and the work requires dexterity and skill. Another important factor is the setback noted in the carrying out of the familiar and, more especially, unfamiliar tasks under the influence of alcohol. Students of Theosophy will readily understand why this is so. Memory, says H.P.B., is in all parts of the human organism and therefore every piece of work trains and impresses the corresponding organ in the body. Thus, through repeated exercises of the hands, for instance, their little "lives" are so well impressed as to respond automatically without conscious direction on the part of the Man. This automatic memory would indeed function better in a man under the influence of alcohol than would the mind as such; the attention of the latter is necessary for a new task, however simple.

This memory of the cells of the body, it may be added, plays a role in alcohol addiction itself, as Dr. J. Haskel Kritzer, M.D., brings out in "Alcoholism — A Deliberate Tragedy" (*Journal of the National Medical Society*, U.S.A., January–March 1947), where he writes that the cells trained to depend upon alcohol for sustenance react when deprived of it in a fierce and torturous craving, which further goads the man to drink. He quotes an ancient proverb: "The man takes a drink, the drink takes a drink, the drink takes the man." As Mr. W. Q. Judge has written

If possible he [the victim of the drink habit] should be made to understand that the desire for drink is now a habit in certain lives in his body whose very existence depends upon their being fed with alcohol. The desire is not in himself unless he is foolish enough to identify himself with the desire. Once he ceases to so identify himself, the desire will lose more than half its power over him.

Experiments and tests, however numerous, are still limited. The dethronement of the Thinker is bound to produce far-reaching consequences on behaviour, both psychological and physical, the full implications of which it is not possible to examine. Dr. Kritzer writes:

Unlike most diseases, alcoholism, like narcotics, destroys the man, for it divorces the animal man from the real man, the thinker, the perceiver, the chooser, thus leaving the mere shell, an animated shadow in a human form. He is often more destructive and vicious than the unmolested animal, for in the alcoholic the human vices and animal passions held in check by the thinking man, the controller, are now set free. The result is too well known. It is recognized as a major contributing source of evil, immoralities, and diseases, especially venereal and mental diseases.

Dr. Courtenay C. Weeks proved in *The Aryan Path* for November 1939 the close relation between alcohol consumption and prostitution. In his Hyslop Memorial Lecture earlier that year he pronounced alcoholic indulgence "the most potent and prolific single agent in the production and perpetuation of broken personality."

The student of Theosophy knows also that the nervous system, which undergoes such a marked change and depression through alcohol, is the connecting link between the physical body and the inner astral man. In the normal man these two are intertwined and work conjointly, but alcohol loosens the connection, in however small a degree. As the astral is the real personal man in which are all the powers and faculties, the resulting lack of co-ordination between mind and body is easily understood, a disjunction comparable to the effect of pursuing mediumistic practices, warned against by Theosophy.

Chronic alcoholism may lead to any of several physical diseases, polyneuropathy, cirrhosis of the liver, etc., and also certain mental disorders. Psychic as well as physical is the dangerous acute condition known as *delirium tremens*, the explanation for the psychic side of which is that the terrible sights and sounds seen and heard by the alcoholic, and commonly believed to be the result of imagination, come from the

opening of the consciousness to the lower astral light.

When a man drinks himself to death it is the brain that brings on death. The fore-brain is not the only part of the brain affected. When the concentration of alcohol in the blood reaches about 0.2 per cent. a man is dead drunk; if it reaches 1 per cent. the man is dead; the middle brain, which controls the involuntary muscles, becoming paralysed, breathing and heart action cease.

Everything in Nature owes its distinctive quality, pure or impure, to the magnetism which inheres in that form. Wine and spirits, we are told, contain and preserve the bad magnetism of all the men who helped in their fabrication. Such substances, then, when taken into the system cannot but arouse the lower in man and stupefy the higher. As alcohol in all its forms has a markedly injurious effect on man's psychic condition, it is strongly condemned by all the great Teachers of humanity. The aspirant to the higher life and the would-be Occultist cannot afford to indulge in it, however little, as liquor drinking, paralysing as it does the higher centres of the brain, prohibits the development of the inner powers which make it possible to gain higher knowledge and to live the higher life.

It is gratifying to see the increased interest displayed in the treatment of alcoholics. Modern trends of treatment are largely in the direction of psychotherapy. They aim at removing the cause of the habit rather than only at breaking it. Thus, when alcoholic indulgence is due to the man's inability to make normal adjustments, he is helped along that line by the physician. Psychological treatment also includes a system of re-education whereby the physician assists the patient to reorganize his life through planned activities.

"Alcoholics Anonymous" is one desirable organization which gains the co-operation of the addict himself, which is indispensable to the cure. It enables the patient to overcome his habit of drinking by instilling into him confidence in a Power on which he can draw for help, a Power which students of Theosophy know comes from the Self within, and by turning his interest away from himself to the effort to help others — an excellent tonic for all ailments, including alcohol addiction.

Where access to liquor is facilitated by the proximity of saloons, the temptation to drink is of course greatly increased. It is the government of each country that is responsible for the drink evil. It derives revenue from the liquor trade, creating by its licensing system a class of interested parties who stimulate the trade and become the greatest opponents

of any Government measures to introduce reform. In Bombay alone, according to the figures for 1945-46, more than eight crores, or 26 per cent of the revenue of the Province was derived from alcohol.

Those who have the welfare of humanity at heart and confident that the economic and social gains from the elimination of the drink evil would more than offset the loss of revenue from alcohol. Think of the gain which abstention from alcohol would bring to the citizen who spends such a large part of his earnings in drink, leading to debt! The sweeper class in Mysore, for example, are reported to be getting adequate wages to live comparatively comfortably, but whole families are toddy drinkers and most of their income goes to the toddy-seller; the money-lender obliges by paying the bill, and so the villager falls more and more deeply into debt. When this becomes over-heavy, suicide may in some cases be resorted to.

The overcoming of the drink evil can rescue thousands of families from destitution and likewise reduce the number of suicides. The money saved is bound to be spent at least in part on foodstuffs, clothing, improved dwellings, and other necessities of life, a gain to industry as well as to the drinker and his family.

From calculations on the drink bill of the English nation, it has been said that the amount spent on alcohol could have supplied the whole population of the United Kingdom the year round with all the bread, butter, cheese and milk required, or all the people the year round with house rent, linen and woollen goods.

On the physical and mental planes, abstention from alcohol cannot but improve health. There is, for instance, markedly less tuberculosis among non-drinkers. There is also greater mental balance; workers are more clear-headed, alert and efficient. Attendance at mills and factories is more regular and all this leads to larger production, which is an added gain to the State. Abstention is bound to lead to fewer accidents; the percentage of road accidents involving drinkers is abnormally high.

On the social plane, abstention produces better-behaved citizens. Not only is there less crime among non-drinkers, but many a brawl is avoided. The number of domestic quarrels is considerably less among non-drinkers, and respect for women is more marked.

Let us remember that the average man slowly drifts into the habit. "Social drinking" and cocktail parties have much to answer for. Even the confirmed drunkard started with just one glass. A taste for alcohol has to be acquired by most people. The first few drinks are often re-

pugnant, but gradually, for the artificial and temporary sense of well-being which alcohol affords, a man may turn to it more and more until, as Dr. Kritzer puts it in the article cited, he reaches the border line "when the feeble admonition of the 'still small voice' slowly yields to the deceptive self-assurance . . . of being able to 'quit any time I want to.'" Then he may find himself "the slave of alcohol with a steadily diminishing choice in the matter, for the very nature of alcohol is a compulsion to repeat the drink rather than to leave it; also it weakens the will to want to quit." What a blessing it would be to the potential new recruits to make alcohol less readily available! The greatest gains would be observed in the next generation.

Apropos of the statement by a prominent social worker in this country that many a man falls into the drink habit by having alcohol prescribed as medicine, it is worth noting that the American Medical Association passed a resolution in 1917 opposing the use of alcohol as a beverage and declaring that "the use of alcohol as a therapeutic agent should be further discouraged."

What are the forces which drive the common man to the liquor shop? Mr. Judge throws light on the question:

Generally speaking, the habit of drinking intoxicants is due to a desire to get rid of what might be called the present personal consciousness. When people drink to try and drown sorrow, pain, worry, they clearly do it with that motive in view. But others drink without any such ostensible motive, though still with the same actual motive, for they long to get rid of what is to them an intolerable sense of identity, of monotony, of sameness. It is an effort to produce by extraneous aids what can only be done properly and lastingly by interior development. People read trashy novels, gamble and so forth with the same motive, that is to say with the intention of getting rid of their personal identity for the time being. Ultimately the race will come to realize that this can only be achieved by identification of the ego with the higher instead of the lower nature.

Differences in the strength of anxieties and in the tolerance for anxieties and frustrations are one factor in men's becoming moderate drinkers or even getting drunk. Some need more props than others to support them against the fact that the world cannot be moulded to their wishes. Such neurotics, who are intellectually but not emotionally mature, may be helped to find better ways out of their dilemma than intoxication. For the ordinary person at the present time, Mr. Judge

suggests "healthy and interesting occupation" as the best cure for such a habit, an idea which is being used in the treatment of alcoholics in the West today.

The common man needs recreation centres. The Government can offer facilities for recreation by providing *bhajans*, dramas, sports and other diversions. But the best remedy is education. There must of course be education in the evils of alcohol, in which conviction must be brought to the point of giving the individual courage to refuse when offered a drink. But there must also be education on the positive side, education which will create a taste for literature, art, music and other healthful and creative pursuits which will turn men away in a normal and natural manner from the curse of alcohol.

It is interesting to note that in his institutional practice Dr. J. H. Kritzer had observed a direct connection between meat eating and the craving for alcohol. Withholding meat from an alcoholic patient caused a marked lessening and final entire cessation of the craving for alcohol. It returned immediately if meat was taken. An additional argument for a pure diet.

And, W. Q. Judge states that—

No habit, however firmly entrenched, can long survive the sustained impact of "cyclic law" knowingly applied and strengthened by man's resolute will to conquer.

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WHENEVER I see an erring man, I say to myself: "I have also erred"; when I see a lustful man, I say to myself: "So was I once"; and in this way I feel kinship with everyone in the world and feel that I cannot be happy without the humblest of us being happy.

—MAHATMA GANDHI

## CONCORD IN THE ORDER

Blessed is the birth of the Buddha; blessed is the teaching of the Good Law; blessed is concord in the Order; blessed is the austerity of those who live in concord.

—*The Dhammapada*, Verse 194

LORD BUDDHA speaks of the fourfold blessedness in the verse quoted above from the chapter on the Enlightened Ones, the third of which blessedness — concord in the Order of *Bhikkhus* or disciples — is the subject of this article. All four are closely connected and interdependent. Concord in the Order depends on the clear understanding and also the application of the other three.

The birth of the Buddha means not only the birth of the great Teacher, but also the awakening in each one of us the faculty of *Buddhi* through which ultimately a Buddha or an Enlightened One blooms. *The Voice of the Silence* states: "...within thy body — the shrine of thy sensations — seek in the Impersonal for the 'Eternal Man'; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha." On the highest spiritual plane, where each of us is a ray of Divine Light and Life, there is unity and harmony, but that has to be practised also in the daily affairs of life, on the physical plane. And that is the first object of the great Theosophical Movement — "To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour." And the inspiring Declaration of the United Lodge of Theosophists states that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and however situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching.*" It is unassailable because it is without any personal tinge, along absolutely impersonal lines. "Theosophy teaches the animal-man to be a human-man; and when people have learned to think and feel as truly human beings should feel and think, they will act humanely, and works of charity, justice, and generosity will be done spontaneously by all."  
(*Five Messages*)

This can be achieved as one tries to have an understanding of the operation of the great Law of cause and effect; therefore are we told "Blessed is the teaching of the Good Law." This Law is the Law of Love Eternal. As one practises the Law, one learns to preserve concord in the Order. A truer realization of the SELF is naturally followed by a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood. The divine Law is merciful and just. It works from within without. On the basis of the teachings, as we sow the seeds on all planes so shall we reap the effects

We have the individual responsibility of sowing right causes so as not to create disturbances. This will slowly bring about concord in the Order. Each one who belongs to the Order or the *Sangha* moves in the direction of his Higher Self and therefore becomes a centre from which radiate light and love, peace and joy.

The fourth blessedness comes to those who practise austerity in the Order. What is that austerity? The discipline of training and cleaning the mind, curbing the senses and sense-inclinations, not giving way to desires and passions, cultivating the virtues and purifying one's moral nature to the best of one's ability. This is really the divine discipline. It brings the individual more and more in harmony with his Divine Parent, closer to his Buddhist principle, which helps him in preserving concord in the Order of disciples.

What breaks the concord in the Order? Each one in the Order has a personality, with its own characteristics, tendencies habits, likes and dislikes. Therefore are there different viewpoints. When these clash with one another, the unity is broken, the harmony is ruptured, bringing about discord in the Order. Then begin adverse criticisms of one another, disagreements occur and the main object or brotherhood is forgotten. Mr. Judge in one of his letters addressed to Theosophists in London states: "In a place like yours, where so many of all sorts of nature are together, there is a unique opportunity for gain and good in the chance it gives one for self-discipline. There friction of personality is inevitable, and if each one learns the great 'give and take,' and looks not for the faults of others but for the faults he sees in himself, because of the friction, then great progress can be made." Therefore it is necessary to forget the differences in the personal nature and remain staunchly united in the study of the essential principles, their application and promulgation. This is the only way in which concord in the Order can be maintained. It will show forth marvellous results. True brotherhood can be established on the principle of give-and-take. Forgetting the shortcomings of others and appreciating their good points will always encourage friendliness and concord in the Order.

We are ever so grateful to Mother Nature for showering on us all kinds of blessings on the physical plane. We are provided by her with all the necessities of life which keep us alive and going. Her many, many beauties bring us joy and peace. She teaches us lessons in bounty and generosity, patience and humility, which human beings should follow. In *The Voice of the Silence* we are told: "Help Nature and work

on with her; and Nature will regard thee as one of her creators and make obeisance." To try to understand her laws and live in terms of those laws is to help Nature. We have many other blessings in life, of parents, family, friends, education, etc., but these are of a personal nature. The fourfold blessedness spoken of by Lord Buddha belongs to the inner plane and is therefore on a higher level.

Everyone does not wish to follow the path of the Enlightened Ones or to try to understand the great Laws. The men and women of the world are not anxious to join any Order or *Sangha*, nor do they care to practise the discipline or austerity that the life of discipleship calls for. So it is only the few who wish to discipline and train themselves for the spiritual service of their fellow beings in their own humble way. Sri Krishna gives the threefold austerities of body, speech and mind in the Seventeenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

Honouring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers, and the wise, purity, rectitude, chastity, and harmlessness are called mortification of the body. Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech. Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind. This threefold mortification or austerity practised with supreme faith and by those who long not for a reward is of the *sattva* quality.

This practice is indeed an arduous training, but once begun, it has to be continued, individually and collectively, by those belonging to the Order. It will not only help one another but actually raise the standard of the Order. The great teachers work in concord, with one thought, one feeling, for the spiritual upliftment of the race. On the cosmic plane, the seven Archangels, the seven Ameshaspends of the Zoroastrian philosophy work in unison and harmony, each performing its own task and duty. We have these glorious examples to inspire and encourage us to establish concord in the Order and to carry on Masters' work in the world.

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THE companionship of the holy and wise is one of the main elements of spiritual progress.

—SRI RAMAKRISHNA

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In the lead article in the December 1973 *Harper's Magazine*, social psychologist Stanley Milgram writes of the experiments set up by him to determine how far ordinary, decent people will go in following orders to inflict pain on other ordinary, decent people. His results suggest that most people can perceive torture as necessary and even beneficial. All a person needs to interpret his cruelty as nobility is a higher authority that he can obey without qualms because it grants him the rewards (praise, status, self-esteem) of serving a cause greater than himself. Such are the roots of man's inhumanity to man.

For many people [Milgram writes] obedience is a deeply ingrained behaviour tendency, indeed a potent impulse overriding training in ethics, sympathy, and moral conduct.

The dilemma inherent in submission to authority is ancient, as old as the story of Abraham, and the question of whether one should obey when commands conflict with conscience has been argued by Plato, dramatized in *Antigone*, and treated to philosophic analysis in almost every historical epoch. Conservative philosophers argue that the very fabric of society is threatened by disobedience, while humanists stress the primacy of the individual conscience.

The legal and philosophic aspects of obedience are of enormous import, but they say very little about how most people behave in concrete situations. I set up a simple experiment at Yale University to test how much pain an ordinary citizen would inflict on another person simply because he was ordered to by an experimental scientist. Stark authority was pitted against the subjects' strongest moral imperatives against hurting others, and, with the subjects' ears ringing with the screams of the victims, authority won more often than not. The extreme willingness of adults to go to almost any lengths on the command of an authority constitutes the chief finding of the study and the fact most urgently demanding explanation. . . .

This is, perhaps, the most fundamental lesson of our study: ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority. . . .

The essence of obedience is that a person comes to view himself as the instrument for carrying out another person's wishes, and he therefore no longer regards himself as responsible for his actions. Once this critical shift of viewpoint has occurred, all of the essential features of obedience follow. The most far-reaching consequence is that the person feels responsible *to* the authority directing him but feels no responsibility *for* the content of the actions that the authority prescribes. Morality does not disappear — it acquires a radically different focus: the subordinate person feels shame or pride depending on how adequately he has performed the actions called for by authority....

The problem of obedience is not wholly psychological. The form and shape of society and the way it is developing have much to do with it. There was a time, perhaps, when people were able to give a fully human response to any situation because they were fully absorbed in it as human beings. But as soon as there was a division of labour things changed. Beyond a certain point, the breaking up of society into people carrying out narrow and very special jobs takes away from the human quality of work and life. A person does not get to see the whole situation but only a small part of it, and is thus unable to act without some kind of overall direction. He yields to authority but in doing so is alienated from his own actions.

Even Eichmann was sickened when he toured the concentration camps, but he had only to sit at a desk and shuffle papers. At the same time the man in the camp who actually dropped Cyclon-b into the gas chambers was able to justify *his* behaviour on the ground that he was only following orders from above. Thus there is a fragmentation of the total human act; no one is confronted with the consequences of his decision to carry out the evil act. The person who assumes responsibility has evaporated. Perhaps this is the most common characteristic of socially organized evil in modern society.

Stanley Milgram's article invites us to reconsider the old dilemmas of conscience *versus* authority. The problem is that obedience is infinitely easier than disobedience; and when one grows up with little or no training in the imperatives of conscience, as most people do now, one has trouble distinguishing between the kinds of authority one should obey and the kinds one should not.

"We implicitly believe," wrote W. Q. Judge, "that in this curve of the cycle, the final authority is *the man himself*." One of the objects H.P.B. had in founding the Theosophical Society was to break down

that reliance upon "authority" which has been the bane of man for ages.

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In an article published in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta) by arrangement with the *London Observer*, Dr. Arnold Toynbee speaks out on the acquisitive society:

The technologically "developed" minority of mankind has been labelled "the acquisitive society" by an eminent British economic historian, and the stigma is well deserved, though mere acquisitiveness is not this society's peculiar characteristic. Every society and every individual living creature is a fraction of the universe which has succeeded in temporarily asserting its own separate individuality, and it seeks to maintain this by exploiting the rest of the universe in so far as it has the power.

Human beings are singular in being conscious of their greed and in being ashamed of it. Human beings also have non-material as well as material objectives — for instance, fame and the satisfaction of intellectual curiosity and the creation of works of art and the attunement of themselves to a spiritual presence — the urge that is the source of religion. These non-materialistic motives have restrained greed appreciably in the pre-industrial societies of the past. The prelude to the Industrial Revolution, 200 years ago, was the removal of these traditional restraints. This regress on the ethical plane is a more fundamental feature of the Industrial Revolution than the large-scale harnessing of inanimate physical energy through the application of science to technology.

Modern man has been induced to overcome traditional scruples about giving free rein to human greed by a doctrine that has made greed look respectable. It has been asserted that the selfish pursuit of individual or sectional economic advantage is socially beneficial. This, it has been argued, is the sovereign recipe for increasing society's material Gross National Product. The unleashing of greed by this doctrine has been the psychological driving force behind the modern way of life in the technologically "developed" countries.

But this seductive doctrine has been proved false by two centuries of experience of the consequences of acting on it, and anyway the thesis that private greed conduces to social welfare through the operation of "a hidden hand" is mere camouflage. In practice, people in the technologically developed countries have acted on the brutal maxim that "the nation's necessity is the merchant's opportunity."... The merchant's exploitation of the na-

tion's, or of mankind's, necessity is the moral misdemeanour that has brought the technologically developed countries to their present plight. Their immorality has overreached itself.

The symptoms of these countries' social sickness have now become manifest. The work of most people in these countries is now factory-work or office-work. These kinds of work are spiritually unsatisfying; indeed, much of this work is frustrating and even exasperating. The sole consolation is the material remuneration. Consequently there is chronic bitter strife over the division of the cake. . . .

What mankind needs to do, in order to save itself from the dire visitation of Nature's wrath, is to renounce the objective of economic growth and to de-industrialize the world's economy to a level at which this can be brought back into a steady state. This necessary economic revolution will require a social revolution, and this will require a spiritual one. Is this indispensable spiritual revolution likely to be achieved in time to avert global disaster? We do not know the answer to this fateful question, but many people who are already alive may live to see (or may die in experiencing) what the eventual answer is going to be.

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Many thinkers these days are questioning the desirability of gathering more and more information, as is presently being done in various spheres of life. Some, like T. K. Mahadevan whose article "The Curse of Knowledge" appears in *The Times of India* for April 21, go to the extent of advocating a curb on knowledge by the United Nations. The article states:

"He that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow." Thus *Ecclesiastes*. In ancient India, novitiates questioning their guru too closely were promptly reprimanded. "*Ati prasnan pricchasi*" ("You are asking questions which are in excess of your needs") . . . .

There is that mystical parody in the Upanishad about men who run after knowledge somewhat too insistently. "They fall into the blackest darkness," the text snorts. . . .

Man is pretty well reconciled to the fact of his physical finiteness — disease, old age, death. But just as there are limits to how long we can live, aren't there also limits to how much we can know? What grounds do we have for the belief — it is almost a dogma with modern man — that our knowledge can grow exponentially and for ever?

Take radio astronomy, as an example. Periodically we are told, as the method of exploration attains new refinements, that there are many more trillions of stars in the cosmos than we thought there were. Fine! But the revelation leaves me cold. I get a greater thrill when I read the *Nasadiya Sukta* (what has been called the Hymn of Creation) of the *Rig Veda*. And I am no Banaras pundit!

Man must give up his mad pursuit of knowledge, curb his irrepressible itch to know, or he will soon encompass his final downfall . . . . What is at the root of our present crisis? Strip it to its barest bones, and what do we see? Surely, the villain of the piece is our excessive knowledge. Surely, we know much more — a vast lot more — than we need to know. Surely, a great deal of this knowledge is useless lumber, cannibalistically feeding upon itself and creating delusions of grandeur.

For far too long we have nursed the myth that the search for new knowledge is a process that enriches and ennobles human life. What we failed to see and what our ancients saw clearly is that knowledge is liberatory only up to a point. Beyond that point — and I believe we reached it long ago — knowledge is destructive. The destructive potential of excessive (and useless) knowledge has never been more apparent than it is today . . . .

With resource depletion staring us in the face, it is no longer unfashionable — indeed it's the trendy thing — to talk of zero economic growth, zero population growth, equilibrium society and so on. When men like Gandhiji said these things long ago — though not in the same jargon — we thought what delightful cranks they were.



A recent U.S. survey shows that belief in the devil has gone up in nine years from 37 to 48 per cent, while belief in the existence of God has gone down from 77 to 69 per cent. Commenting on this, an editorial in *The Times of India* (April 10) states:

The interpreters of these interesting data say that one possible reason for this new inclination towards things satanic is the current mood of stress in that country and the need to look for scapegoats in a depressing situation. But there is more to it than that. God-devil dualism has been an enduring facet of human thought through the centuries. When it reaches a crescendo, it presages decadence or worse. A witch-hunt, for instance, may well be on

the way, a throwback to the mediaeval era.... In the clerical view, proof of the existence of the devil is even ampler proof of the creator whose case they are supposed to represent! Twisted logic, but there it is.

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What distinguishes pornography today is the hypocrisy with which it is defended. A persuasive chorus of voices tells us that the unimpeded circulation of pornography represents a triumph of human liberty over the dark forces of repression. Commenting on this, an editorial in the *British Medical Journal* states:

Even those who deny that pornography has any effect whatever on the minds of its readers and viewers will usually admit that it should be kept away from children.

The educative effect, for good or evil, of books, films, and plays on children's minds is undeniable, and civilized society accepts the obligation of protecting its children from influences harmful to their health.

Yet for many people immaturity extends far beyond childhood. When relatively healthy people decry attempts to limit the citizen's freedom of expression they should remember that the weaker members of a community deserve protection, and not exploitation.

Although many would agree that reform is needed, the form it should take is debatable. In controlling pornography, the law cannot go far beyond the limits of public opinion, but there is evidence that the merchants of pornography are already doing precisely that. It is time the law caught up with them.

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