

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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POVERTY AND PAIN

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From sensuous delight comes grief, from sensuous delight comes fear; he who is free from sensuous delight neither sorrows nor fears.—BUDDHA, *Dhammapada*

Fascination by the body and its powers is the great death.—SHANKARA, *Vivekachudamani*

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart.—H.P. BLAVATSKY, *The Voice of the Silence*

THE FESTIVALS connected with the names of Gautama Buddha and the Great Shankara are celebrated by the Buddhist and Hindu devotees of the two Teachers during this month of May; in this they are like Theosophists who remember on the 8th of that month their Teacher H. P. Blavatsky, of whom we wrote last month. The teachings of the Buddha, of Shankara, of H. P. Blavatsky bear the hall-mark of Immortality and Regeneration. They confer on their pupils that “Beauty which will not fade” of which the Bhikkhu Upagupta spoke to the poor and maimed courtesan Vasavadatta of Mathura. The story has more than one lesson for every aspirant and so we reprint it following this article.

The ripening of Karma brings pain. But it carries within itself its own reward. The departure of outer beauty and the oncoming of outer ugliness, which looks like terrible affliction, contains the seeds of future bliss. “Where there is much suffering there also is

great bliss," says Upagupta to Vasavadatta. This is reminiscent of H. P. Blavatsky's *Secret Doctrine* (II. 475):

Woe to those who live without suffering. Stagnation and death is the future of all that vegetates without a change. And how can there be any change for the better without proportionate suffering during the preceding stage? Is it not those only who have learnt the deceptive value of earthly hopes and the illusive allurements of external nature who are destined to solve the great problems of life, pain, and death?

The philosophical aspect of this doctrine is to be found in the following from the same volume (p. 103):

It is only by the attractive force of the contrasts that the two opposites — Spirit and Matter — can be cemented on Earth, and, smelted in the fire of self-conscious experience and suffering, find themselves wedded in Eternity. This will reveal the meaning of many hitherto incomprehensible allegories, foolishly called "fables."

Suffering and Sorrow are natural concomitants of Evolution and Progress. Ordinary men by the million are engrossed in sensuous existence. They fail to see that they are inviting pain by incurring heavy debts contracted for the purpose of sensuous enjoyment. Ignorance carries them along; suffering follows, "even as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the bullock." Then they halt and look around in bewilderment and yearn for the way out.

The ancient teaching about suffering and progress implicit in the terms Dharma and Karma is to be perceived in this Kali-Yuga, dark and hard, in the peculiar struggle now going on between the so-called "have's and have-not's." Modern knowledge lends itself to the use of the gauge of our civilization which divides the human kingdom into the rich and the poor. Money determines a man's worth, and while knowledge and character are respected, it is lucre which counts the most. Poverty is regarded as a stupendous bar to progress; the latter is seen as subservient to a high standard of living. The so-called low standard is companion to poverty. Therefore the truth that poverty itself has its virtue is not seen. "No good can ever come out of poverty," say the up-to-date reformers. The simple and all-too-visible truth is ignored that in many a palace of the rich and in many homes of those whose standard of living is high there are ignorance, immorality, sordidness which beat all rec-

ords when compared with their equivalent in the hovels of the unwashed. The profound truth pointed to by Mr. Judge is not adequately valued by many a student of Theosophy; so how can it become a teaching to be presented to the race-mind of the twentieth century? He says:

But to be born in extreme poverty is not a disadvantage. Jesus said well when, repeating what many a sage had said before, he described the difficulty experienced by the rich man in entering heaven. If we look at life from the narrow point of view of those who say there is but one earth and after it either eternal heaven or hell, then poverty will be regarded as a great disadvantage and something to be avoided. But seeing that we have many lives to live, and that they will give us all needed opportunity for building up character, we must admit that poverty is not, in itself, necessarily bad Karma. Poverty has no natural tendency to engender selfishness, but *wealth requires it*. [Italics ours.] (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 9-10)

We are not upholding the life of sackcloth and ashes as the ideal. But we cannot remain blind to the evil which upholds the view that money alone makes the mare of progress go! Very wealthy men, affluent families, and gold-fraught civilizations have met their doom in and through lucre. Has that no message for you, reader?

Economic poverty brings the great opportunity, but the neglected and exploited poor are made to forget that fact. The religions of the priests do not teach the doctrines of Reincarnation and Karma and so the Goddess of Poverty which can enrich the character is hindered in her grand and beneficent work.

But more — these words of the great philanthropist, W. Q. Judge, have a message for the future: "*Poverty has no natural tendency to engender selfishness, but wealth requires it.*" Money begets selfishness, the womb of pain and suffering.

Is it a wonder that Jesus and Pythagoras and Buddha of old, and H. P. Blavatsky and Gandhiji in modern times, pointed to the value of poverty and advocated that man should not look upon money as a possession for his personal use but should learn to hold it in trust for the good of all?

Reformers and educators do not inquire about the place and use of poverty because they do not distinguish between the first and the second of the Four Noble Truths of the Buddha. The

first is, "Sorrow is"; and the second, "the Cause of Sorrow." Our reformers try to remedy the evil of sorrow caused by pain and suffering, before inquiring into the cause, and they do not ask about the Cause because the necessity of the very manifestation of sorrow is not examined with care and discernment.

The Monk Upagupta refused to go to the beautiful Vasavadatta for he knew that there were pain and suffering entombed in that body — that in reality it was ugly. But when affliction overtook her, the compassion of the Bhikkhu led him to her — to counsel, to help, to inspire, and the fallen woman "became calm and a spiritual happiness soothed the tortures of her bodily pain"; for, "where there is much suffering there is also great bliss." And then "she died in pious submission to the punishment of her crime."

Shankara asks in his illuminating *Crest-Jewel of Wisdom*: "How can a man escape, who is fascinated by all five senses?" And he adds:

Things of sense are more penetrating in the hurt they cause than the venom of the black serpent. The poison slays only him into whom it enters, but things of sense destroy through mere beholding.

He only who is free from the great snare of sensuous desire, hard to escape from, builds for liberation, and not another, even though he know the six philosophies.

The central plank in the platform of self-reform is that the incarnated soul is capable of learning from his environment. Be he a possessor of great wealth or born to adversity, he can use the knowledge of Theosophy which enables a man to turn every force of evil to good. Poverty is not bad Karma, nor wealth good Karma; he who uses his poverty to good purpose enriches himself; and he who uses his wealth wrongly and personally impoverishes himself. It is the task of the embodied spirit to control and guide his senses and organs so that they shine like lights in the Temple of the Body.

VASAVADATTA

[Reprinted from *The Gospel of Buddha* by Paul Carus.—Eds.]

There was a courtesan in Mathura named Vasavadatta. She happened to see Upagupta, one of Buddha's disciples, a tall and beauti-

ful youth, and fell desperately in love with him. Vasavadatta sent an invitation to the young man, but he replied: "The time has not yet arrived when Upagupta will visit Vasavadatta."

The courtesan was astonished at the reply, and she sent again for him, saying, "Vasavadatta desires love, not gold, from Upagupta." But Upagupta made the same enigmatic reply and did not come.

A few months later Vasavadatta had a love-intrigue with the chief of the artisans, and at that time a wealthy merchant came to Mathura, who fell in love with Vasavadatta. Seeing his wealth, and fearing the jealousy of her other lover, she contrived the death of the chief of the artisans, and concealed his body under a dunghill.

When the chief of the artisans had disappeared, his relatives and friends searched for him and found his body. Vasavadatta was tried by a judge, and condemned to have her ears and nose, her hands and feet cut off, and to be flung into a graveyard.

Vasavadatta had been a passionate girl, but kind to her servants, and one of her maids followed her, and out of love for her former mistress ministered unto her in her agonies, and chased away the crows.

Now the time had arrived when Upagupta decided to visit Vasavadatta.

When he came, the poor woman ordered her maid to collect and hide under a cloth her severed limbs; and he greeted her kindly, but she said with petulance, "Once this body was fragrant like the lotus, and I offered you my love. In those days I was covered with pearls and fine muslin. Now I am mangled by the executioner and covered with filth and blood."

"Sister," said the young man, "it is not for my pleasure that I approach you. It is to restore to you a nobler beauty than the charms which you have lost.

"I have seen with mine eyes the Tathagata walking upon earth and teaching men his wonderful doctrine. But you would not have listened to the words of righteousness while surrounded with temptations, while under the spell of passion and yearning for worldly pleasures. You would not have listened to the teachings of the Tathagata, for your heart was wayward, and you set your trust on the sham of your transient charms.

"The charms of a lovely form are treacherous, and quickly lead into temptations, which have proved too strong for you. But there

is a beauty which will not fade, and if you but listen to the doctrine of our Lord, the Buddha, you will find that peace which you never would have found in the restless world of sinful pleasures.”

Vasavadatta became calm and a spiritual happiness soothed the tortures of her bodily pain; for where there is much suffering there is also great bliss.

Having taken refuge in the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha, she died in pious submission to the punishment of her crime.

DOGMA? Faith? These are the right and left pillars of every soul-crushing Theology. Theosophists have no dogmas, exact no blind faith. Theosophists are ever ready to abandon every idea that is proved erroneous upon strictly logical deductions. . . . Dogmas are the toys that amuse, and can satisfy but unreasonable children. They are the offspring of human speculation and prejudiced fancy. . . .

Realizing as they do the boundlessness of the absolute truth, Theosophists repudiate all claims to infallibility. The most cherished preconceptions, the most “pious hope,” the strongest “master passion,” they sweep aside like dust from their path, when their error is pointed out. Their highest hope is to approximate the truth; that they have succeeded in going a few steps beyond the Spiritualists, they think proved in their conviction that they know nothing in comparison with what is to be learned; in their sacrifice of every pet theory and prompting of emotionalism at the shrine of Fact; and in their absolute and unqualified repudiation of everything that smacks of “dogma.”. . .

If fact and logic were given the consideration they should have, there would be no more temples in this world for exoteric worship, whether Christian or heathen, and the *method* of the Theosophists would be welcomed as the only one insuring action and progress—a progress that cannot be arrested, since each advance shows yet greater advances to be made.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE GREAT QUEST

Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

—James, I. 22-25

RIGHT STUDY is the magic wand that charms the mind away from the hypnotic attraction of trifles, and helps it to gravitate towards things that are congenial to its own pure nature and its very root — the Self.

But this kind of study is not generally undertaken by men who covet the prizes of this world. Only an earnest wish to solve the puzzles of life or to refine one's own character, purging it of its weaknesses, takes a man towards the higher study. Those for whom the world has attractions seek knowledge which will aid them to satisfy their ambitions. In fact, men and women of today are educated to run the race of life in the competitive spirit and to win it by fair means or foul. They are taught to look upon the world not as a battlefield on which they should fight the evil within and wickedness without, but as upon a racecourse where people speculate with their intelligence and gamble away their lives. For a single success there are a million failures.

The wrong view of life has produced a wrong system of education. The craze is to amass as much knowledge as is possible, without caring whether it has a definite utility of its own. Our universities are intent upon treating the brains of the young like a warehouse where corn and chaff are heaped together, with unfortunately a preponderance of the latter. Brought up as the student of Theosophy is, in such uncongenial circumstances, he has not only to disburden himself of a large amount of useless lumber, but he has to train his mind afresh, so that it may not wander into deserts where no nourishment is to be found. While modern education colours his mind, family and society colour his heart, weaken-

ing its perception, narrowing its vision from the universal to the particular and personal.

Study of the Self is self-study. Even students, though they use the words "Deity" and "Atman" and "Self," are so saturated with the idea of a God outside (owing to family and school upbringing) that generally it is not perceived that study of the Great Self is self-study, and should begin with study of the small or lower self and its walk in life.

In our constitution, the higher mind and the lower continually strive for mastery, and in the minor incidents of daily routine, we constantly and often unconsciously place ourselves under the sway of the one or the other. To undertake a study of the true Self, the lower must be paralysed, its force subdued, in order that the higher may come into its own, bringing with it true light without which study is a desultory pursuit and barren of results. Our Self, which is but a portion or aspect of the All-Self and partakes of its qualities, can be felt and known by us by an unswerving zeal and a patient application in daily life of the things learnt from Theosophical books. This alone is the solvent of all the evils that flesh is heir to. As practice widens, our power for beneficent works increases; as loving deeds multiply, through the continued use of study, self-knowledge increases, till it embraces the All-Self.

The study of the Self requires a bent of mind guided by a purposeful desire to achieve that inner equipoise which helps the evaluation of everything. Those who have these — the bent of mind and the desire to achieve — instinctively seek the company of those similarly imbued. The unity of thought, will and feeling that pervades a conclave of students reacts for their mutual good, helping them on to see the unity of all things. Good comrades are like the sturdy timber which time has seasoned. They support our falling edifice, and help us to tide over our weaknesses and the vicissitudes they cause. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name there am I in the midst of them," is a fact of Occultism which is soon known by the earnest mind who joins the gathering of genuine Theosophists. Supplementing these, the wide-awake companions, an extending as beneficent an influence, are the authentic textbook which help to keep the mind tuned to a higher note of moral intellection. What companions are to a gathering, books are in one's loneliness. These two give idea-pictures which tone the imagination

the creative faculty of making images, which is the strengthener of the human soul.

Then, study demands and in part creates an atmosphere of inner equilibrium which helps us to remain unconcerned with fruits of action. Study is pre-eminently the effort to tune oneself to be in harmony with life, that is, to find through persevering devotion the link that binds one unit of the human race to another and the rest. And if the unity that is felt is to be realized, then the potency of selflessness which the mind sees as benign has to be acted out in the hard school of the selfish world. The results of study when diverted to selfish ends lead to that isolation, first temporary, then permanent, which is the opposite pole to unity realized through unselfishness and then selflessness.

The student knows from the first that the task before him is of a long duration — not of a life but of lives. How else then can he begin save by giving as well as receiving help and instruction? What a deep significance is there in these words of a great Theosophist? — “Those pearls you found for another and gave to him, you really retained for yourself in the act of benevolence.”

Each soul energized to take up the great quest joins the army of those who lay aside all considerations of self in order that the Self may shine forth. There are deserters and run-aways; there are those who dare not be in the right with two or three, who follow the pull of the world. But for all the renegades and cowards, there are those who hear in the heart the Ancient Call and who become active partners in the Company which carries on the business of Right Living. They begin the watch over the fitful, wayward self of matter, endeavouring to manifest the serene Self of Spirit. Beginning with self-study, they find the Self of All — the Great Light.

THESE THINGS, O Asclepius, will appear true if thou understand them; but if thou understand them not, incredible. For to understand is to believe; not to believe is not to understand.

—HERMES TRISMEGISTUS

“REWARD FOR UNMERITED SUFFERINGS”

KARMA AS JUDGE, GUIDE AND REWARDER

[Reprinted from *The Path*, March 1891.—EDS.]

IN the *Key to Theosophy*, on page 161,¹ the author uses a phrase which has been objected to on the ground that a strict construction of it overthrows the whole doctrine of Karma. The words referred to and the contiguous sentences are:

Our philosophy teaches that Karmic punishment reaches the Ego only in its next incarnation. After death it *receives only the reward for the unmerited sufferings endured during its past incarnation.*

The italicized portion is the part objected to, and the objection raised is that, if all that happens to us so happens because it is our Karma, then it cannot be *unmerited*: hence, either the statement is incorrect or Karma is not the law of justice, but there must be some other one governing man and the vicissitudes of his life.

Let us go further down the same page and see if some sentences in the same paragraph do not bear upon the meaning of the author. She says:

If it may be said that there is not a mental or physical suffering in the life of a mortal which is not the direct fruit and consolation, rest, and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. Death, however, since he does not preserve the slightest recollection of it in this actual life, and feels himself not deserving of such punishment, and therefore *thinks* he suffers for no guilt of his own, this alone is sufficient to entitle the human soul to the fullest consolation, rest, and bliss in his *post-mortem* existence. Death comes to our spiritual selves ever as a deliverer and friend.

All students of theosophy known to me believe that Karma is the great governing law, that all suffering and reward come from and through Karma; and, as I understand from the published and unpublished views of H. P. Blavatsky, she holds the same opinion. Therefore, such being the case, what we have to inquire into is the meaning intended to be conveyed by the passages cited. There is no doubt whatever that the author of the *Key* agrees, except per

¹Indian ed., p. 158.

haps about hell, with the Buddhist priest who, writing several years ago in the *Theosophist*² upon this subject, said:

In this light Karma may be defined as... that irresistible force which drags the criminal into the hell fire amidst his loud lamentations, the powerful hand that rescues the wretch from the merciless hands of the infernal angels and takes him to a happier place for the amelioration of his miserable condition, or the heavenly angel *who bears away, as it were, the enraptured soul to the blissful abodes above* and takes it back after a very long course of heavenly enjoyments to this world, or to hell itself, paying little or no attention to the sorrowful tales of the reluctant soul.

Construing together the sentences in the paragraph from the *Key to Theosophy*, we find that she says, in effect, in the later sentences on the same page, that all suffering is the direct fruit and consequence of some sin committed in a previous existence, but that as the *personality* in the life when the suffering comes has no recollection of the cause which brought it about, the punishment is *felt* by that personality to be undeserved, and another cause is thus set up which has its action in the *post-mortem* condition. The difficulty raised by the objection put is that the whole matter has been made objective, and Karma has been looked upon as a material or objective law, and the *post-mortem* state placed in the same category. The true Ego neither suffers nor enjoys, and is not bound at any time by Karma; but as *Devachan* is a subjective condition in which the Ego therein creates for itself out of its own thoughts the surroundings fit for it, so we may say, without at all interfering with our conceptions of Karma, that after death this Ego receives the reward for the sufferings which *it thought* were unmerited in the life just quitted. The word "unmerited" as written in the *Key* is not to be construed as being used by any Karmic power, but as the conception formed by the Ego during life of the propriety or impropriety of whatever suffering may have been then endured.

For, as we have seen in other studies; *Devachan* — the *post-mortem* state under consideration — is a condition wherein no objective experiences are undergone by the Ego, but in which the thoughts of a certain sort had during life act in producing about it, or rather within its sphere, the blissful subjective experiences neces-

²*Theosophist*, Vol. I, p. 199.

sary for the resting of the soul. Hence, if when in the mortal frame it considered itself unjustly treated by fate or nature, it set up then and there the causes for bringing about a so-called reward for the suffering which to it seemed unmerited, just so soon as it would be released from the body and the causes be able to act in the only place or state which will permit their action.

This blissful state, as intimated in the quotation made from the *Theosophist*, is Karmic reward in the plane of Devachan. The "Karmic punishment" referred to in the *Key* is not the opposite of this, but is the opposite of Karmic reward acting on the plane of objective earth life. For the opposite of devachanic reward or bliss must be on a similar plane, such as the "hell" spoken of by the Buddhist priest, or Avitchi. If these distinctions are clearly borne in mind, there cannot be much difficulty with any of these questions.

To me Karma is not only judge, it is also friend and deliverer. It is essentially just. The conditions are laid down. If I comply, the result inevitably follows. It is my friend because it will, just as inevitably as life and death, give me a rest in devachan where the tired soul which needs recuperation as well as the body will find what is best for it. And a mere phrase like "unmerited suffering" invented by me in my ignorance here upon earth will be one of the factors used by this very Karma to bring about my peace and joy, albeit that still again inexorable Karma awaits me at the threshold of Devachan to mete out in my next appearance upon this terrestrial stage my just deserts. And thus on and ever on and upward we shall be led from life to life and stage to stage, until at last the conviction has become an inherent portion of our being that Karma is not only just but merciful.

—A STUDENT

If you keep a green bough in your heart, the singing bird will come.

—CHINESE PROVERB

DUTY, "THE ROYAL TALISMAN"

IF Mr. Judge did not say it, would it occur to us that the royal talisman is Duty — Duty, so dull a thing, so tedious as it often seems to us in the course of the daily round? Yet say it he does, in a letter addressed to his "Dear Brothers and Sisters," obviously a group, which implies diversity of temperaments and circumstances, whom on this point he advises collectively. Bidding them never to despond, though their spiritual progress seem slow, never to yield to "doubt and darkness," which is "a wile of the lower man striving to keep you back," what, he asks, is "the royal talisman" that can bear them up and carry them on? "It is DUTY, Selflessness. Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga. . . . If you can do no more than duty, it will bring you to the goal."¹

For this seemingly simple method Mr. Judge gives good reasons. "We have to exhaust all Karma, which means duty,"² he writes in another letter, and in yet another he warns that "Often we do not know our duty, but that too is our own fault," adding some words which offer food for reflection: "It is a Karmic disability."³

The linkage of Karma with our duty can be too easily overlooked. Duty seems to pertain to the everyday. In modern verbiage don't we look on it as a "bind"? Mr. Judge allows for this when he writes, "Try to take pleasure in doing what is your duty, and especially in the *little* duties of life. When doing any duty put your whole heart into it."⁴

Yet are not such "little" duties, routine duties, the very ones that try our patience most, so repetitive are they, such time-stealers when we long to be doing something more important? Mr. Judge knows this. "When one stops to think, to weigh, and to consider what is one's duty, or which of many duties should be performed first, it is indeed perplexing and difficult to know *what* to do. But if you will do just what lies before you without thinking about all the other things and without troubling your mind about all the things you can't do, then it will all be different and everything will grow brighter for you. Do what you have to do now, and don't trouble about other things; they will be looked after in due time; but what will help you in all these matters is to be content, to do what you

¹Letters That Have Helped Me, p. 72.

²Ibid., p. 119.

³Ibid., p. 43.

⁴Ibid., p. 134.

can, and to let the rest go.”⁵

The fact to bear in mind is that these lesser things *must* be done, and if they lie to our hand we cannot ignore them, even to do what may seem to us more important; *e.g.*, to study or meditate. For, says Mr. Judge, “It is in and through the incidents of daily life, in work well done, in duties thoroughly performed, that we to day can most readily make progress in the higher life—slow progress, it may be, but at any rate sure. These are stepping stones to better things.”⁶

Such a standard of values is based not on theories but on the fact that these minor duties, trivial as they may seem, are warp and woof on the Karmic loom whose wheel revolves throughout the whole course of our earthly life. Naturally, duty (comprehensively varies as greatly as do the circumstances and abilities of those performing it. That confronting H.P.B., W.Q.J., and every other great soul who has been a blessing and a guide to his fellow mortals was very different from that of a humble labourer, or a composer who could give the world his glorious music, or a sufferer from some life long disability such as blindness, but each one of these had his or her own appointed Karmic task, through the performance of which their immediate duty was to be done.

Some interesting light on this, though only a glimpse, is to be found in an extract from one of Mr. Judge’s letters. He writes: “I merely want to work. I seek no powers; *nothing*. I am devoted as far as my lights in each life will permit to the service of the altruistic army. Just now I only find the T.S. to work in here. Next time some other way—or the same. I am ready ‘to step out of the sunshine into the shade so as to make room for others,’ and I seek no Nirvana.”⁷

In these words he bares his heart. We see his total self-abnegation and humility, and feel how far we come short in our own little best efforts to “do our duty.” But if, he says, “we follow the rule of doing our actions because they ought to be done, we will at last do only what is right to be done.” And who would forgo the hope remote though it seem at present, of such a steadying of our feet upon the Path?

It would certainly be much to our own advantage to do our

⁵Letters (Am. Ed.), p. 177.

⁶Vernal Blooms, p. 30.

⁷Letters (Am. Ed.), p. 1

what is right to be done, only what our better self would do if it had supremacy, but Mr. Judge's reason for saying so goes deeper. After first warning us that "acting, as is the usual way, for the sake of results...causes rebirth over and over again unendingly," he continues: "We are to do our duty with the thought that we are acting for and as the Supreme Being, because that Being acts only by and through the creatures. If this be our real rule it would in time be impossible for us to do wrong, for constantly thinking thus we grow careful as to what acts we commit and are always clearing up our view of duty as we proceed."⁸

"May you have the light to see and to do!" was Mr. Judge's invocation for a seeker whom he bade attend to his duty, "no matter how small the duty may be."⁹ Perhaps its seeming smallness is why some of us miss seeing our own. Our eyes wander in search of something greater. But omit one small stitch in a piece of tapestry and the pattern is marred, though at the time we may not notice it. Sometimes we can put it right, but sometimes not, least of all on the plane of duty. We may long to "make up," but, as a rule, there is no return of just the same opportunity.

We know that Mr. Judge, left alone in New York while H.P.B. and Colonel Olcott were in India, was far from happy in the routine work of the T.S. office, notwithstanding that it was work for the Movement. Yet he performed it faithfully as his immediate duty, accepting that part of his Karma without demur. That it did not embitter him or hinder his spiritual advancement was proved by the fact that the great creative period of his Theosophic life came afterwards.

The same is true of H.P.B. herself. For many years she has been belittled and maligned, a hard Karma indeed, onlookers would say, and the reason for it is, of course, beyond our understanding. But she too trod the path of duty unflinchingly, with (to quote Mr. Judge) "the power and the knowledge that belong but to lions and sages.... H.P.B. had a lion heart, and on the work traced out for her she had the lion's grasp."¹⁰

Such, for Theosophists, are two who nobly exemplified the power of the Royal Talisman to counter such ills as untoward circumstances, frail bodily health, misrepresentation, abuse and enmity.

⁸*The Heart Doctrine*, pp. 54-55.

⁹*Letters*, p. 132.

¹⁰*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 4 and 7.

Few of these are likely to be our lot; we may ask, on the contrary why our sphere is so limited, our opportunities to serve Theosophy so sparse. Mr. Judge's answer is — "We must be satisfied with what time and Karma give us *after we have done our duty* and the best."

ON two wings is a man lifted up above earthly things, on simplicity and on purity; simplicity of purpose, purity in affection.

Thou art not lowlier if thou art praised nor meaner if thou art reproached.

Fire trieth iron, and temptation a just man.

Our sensual desires draw us to rove abroad; but when the time is past, what carriest thou home with thee but a burdened conscience and distracted heart?

Love feels no burden, thinks nothing of trouble, attempts what is above its strength, pleads no excuse of impossibility; for it thinks all things lawful for itself.

Give me strength to resist, patience to endure, and constancy to persevere.

Let not Thy peace be in the tongues of men, for whether they interpret well or ill of thee, thou art not therefore another man.

—THOMAS A KEMPIS

SIMPLIFYING LIFE

I came hither [Craigendputtoch] solely with the desire to simplify my way of life and to secure the independence through which I could be enabled to remain true to myself.

—THOMAS CARLYLE

Life is the apprenticeship to progressive renunciation, to the steady diminution of our claims, of our hopes, of our powers, of our liberty.

—AMIEL

SIMPLIFICATION of varieties and sizes of products and of stocks makes it possible for the manufacturer to cheapen production and for the merchant to have less money tied up and less space devoted to slowly moving items. Tremendous savings in many lines are attributed to the application of this principle.

The lesson for the individual is obvious. The most important application of simplification from the standpoint of each man is to his own life—to his possessions, emotions, desires, and thoughts. Our lives are not purposeful, moving toward their goal with the irresistible sweep of a river seeking the sea, because our interests are diverse; we lack the discrimination to sift out and discard the inconsequential.

Once a man resolves to live as soul, he has to subject his whole nature to a careful analysis, to differentiate between that which is in line with his object and that which offers resistance to its achievement. As a man preparing for a long and arduous journey discards all luggage but the bare essentials, that he may not be impeded in his advance, so the soul must strip itself of all the hampering impedimenta with which it sees it can dispense, however harmless they may be in themselves.

If simplification is to be attained, the criterion of selection must be that which is necessary. There are innumerable things which may appear desirable, but the necessities of the soul are few and as easily recognizable as those for the body. To keep our physical instrument in good condition, fresh air, pure water, wholesome food and adequate clothing and shelter are indispensable. So simple are the actual needs of the body, from the standpoint of the soul. From that viewpoint, the accumulation of wealth as an end, instead of

merely as an instrument of service, is a waste of time, and, worse, leads almost certainly to an obscuring of the real purpose of life.

The refinements of civilization have their place, if sight be not lost of their true function, which is to contribute toward freeing the soul from the trammels of sensuous existence. Time-saving appliances, for example, are good if the time and energy thus saved are devoted to more constructive purposes. Things of beauty in the home are good to the extent that they create an atmosphere conducive to high and noble thinking. Thus tested in the light of the soul's needs, the necessary things, comparatively few in number, are recognized and all the rest can be dismissed from the mind, clearing our consciousness of all the host of non-essentials which have cluttered it.

Similarly the emotional nature must be subjected to scrutiny. Most of our emotional reactions are a hindrance to the soul. A few simple, strong emotions rooted in the Impersonality of the higher nature are all that are needed — pity for all animate things; gratitude to the Instructors of the race; desire to learn that we may help with knowledge; and aspiration so that its light may energize and guide us. Our simplification programme will involve discarding all the rest.

Desire is an indispensable part of the equipment of him who seeks the heights. But as a heap of sticks is to a ladder, so are un-governed, unrelated desires to a dominating purpose. To carry the simile further, desires contributory but subordinate to the attainment of a worthy aim are the rungs, held in place and made of use by the side-pieces which represent the synthesizing purpose. It is the multiplicity of desires, the concern arising from attending to the inclinations of the senses, that draws our thoughts first in one direction and then in another. Countless are the channels into which the thoughts of the personal man tend to flow and many the ruses of material nature to scatter his force and hold him back among the mediocre of the race.

There are as many potential reactions of like or dislike as there are objects and creatures in this universe. When one recognizes that if he is wise, he defies with vigour their power over him. He sets out deliberately to use the law of attraction and repulsion, instead of remaining its puppet. By working intelligently with the law, he comes at last to transcend it, in the only true sense.

But the control of thought must go hand-in-hand with the abo

tion of selfish desires. We strengthen the desires on which we let our thoughts dwell, and, conversely, our desires intrigue our thoughts. Controlled thought goes by a straight line to its goal, like the arrow from a skilful archer's bow. The thoughts of most resemble more the purposeless course of a fly on a summer day, darting idly now here, now there, and back again, with only the negative result of dissipation of energy.

Control of thoughts calls for constant vigilance and the practice of steady concentration on the task at hand. To whatever object the inconstant mind goes out, it must be subdued, brought back, and consciously directed to the subject under consideration. It is by brooding over an idea, studying it from every angle, that intuitive perception is cultivated.

Simplification means purification of human nature, the material field of human consciousness; this nature, electrical and magnetic in essence, is capable of attracting and repulsing the invisible constituents which form the basis of bodily cells. The secret of magnetic personality, the radiant personality, the peace- and power-emitting personality, is locked up in the process of purification, symbolized in the rite of Baptism, which in actuality every chela under training is made to practise.

THERE ARE two days in the week about which and upon which I never worry. Two carefree days, kept sacredly free from fear and apprehension. One of the days is Yesterday. . . . And the other day I do not worry about is Tomorrow.

—ROBERT JONES BURDETTE

WHAT PROOF HAVE WE?

II

[We reprint here from *The Path* for February 1894 the concluding portion of address to the Blavatsky T.S., London, by Mrs. J. C. Keightley. The first portion appeared in our April issue.—EDS.]

SINCE, then, we find that phenomena are not proof, the nature of proof still remains unexplained. What proof does the Law offer? In almost all cases witnesses come forward and detail the narrative which Court and Jury hear. Take, for example, a murder case. Is the murder shown? No! Is it described? Not always. A tale is told by more or fewer witnesses. Told to whom? To what? To the minds of the Jurymen and the Court, and the Mind, the eternal witness, hears, weighs, sums up, judges, condemns or sets free. Here, then, we have the Law. The oracular embodied common-sense of the land recognizes that proof is subjective and not objective, and that the mind of man is the sole arbiter, the sole judge, and that the evidence upon which he makes up his verdict is evidence cognizable by the mind of man alone, valid to him alone; that mind is indeed the power behind the throne. For, mark you, if the minds of the Jury differ in any case, the Jurymen in the minority who have not seen the case from the standpoint of the majority acquire no condemnation therefor. They are not reproached—not justly reproached, at all events, because they have not seen the case as others do and have not derived the same conclusions from the same evidence. All that is said is that their minds have not acted upon the evidence normal to the majority. And yet even in the history of the Law these minorities have proved to be right with the passage of time. Innocent men have been hung on the verdict of a majority. Take another point: the Law itself recognizes the constitutional inability of two or more minds to see an event alike. Bribed and perjured witnesses always tell the tale exactly alike; by this peculiarity the Law recognizes them. Veracious witnesses, being so many different minds have each seen a different side of the occurrence. And in this guise we have the Law itself unconsciously acknowledging that every mind is at a different standpoint of evolution from every other. In this lies the reason why each person must gain his own proof through

his own experience. To what, now, do these facts lead us? To this: in this highly civilized day, in our *very* Christian countries, you will take the life of your fellow beings on subjective proof when you will not for one instant receive the same as valid at the hands of your fellow Theosophists.

If, then, the Theosophist chose, as I doubt not he would choose, to disregard the peremptory nature of this demand for proof and the fact that it is seldom asked except for argumentative purposes, which, as everyone knows, end in mere contention; if he chose, I say, to give serious attention to the question, his natural reply would be this: "What is that for which you demand proof? Is it for the whole bulk of Theosophic teaching? Is it for the existence of the Masters? Is it for the reality of phenomena? Now of the latter question I think we have already disposed, but there is one thing more which might be said, and it is this: If you are not yourself master to some extent of the laws lying behind nature, or operating through nature, you do not know whether any phenomena which may be produced before you consist in (a) mere mesmeric or hypnotic phenomena causing you to see what has no temporary existence at all, or (b) the actual phenomena in which something has been created by the use of occult or hidden Law, which something did not exist in objective form at all before. It is thus clear that only to the Adept, who needs it not, can valid proof of this kind be given, and that those who ask for it are ignorant in the deepest sense of ignorance. To be ignorant and to know it is a depth; but to be ignorant and not to know it is a greater depth still.

Now again, as to proof, as to the existence of a Great Lodge or Hierarchy of Wise Beings. On this I purposely touch very lightly: and I may say, indeed, that if any one came to me saying that I had published my belief in Theosophical teachings and were to ask, "Have you any proof?" I should reply: "For myself? Yes! Certainly I have proof. For you? No! For you I have none at all." You would mistake if you were to call this pride on my part. The reply would arise wholly from the knowledge that no man can in any sense be the saviour of another man. Each man must arise and must get his own proof, with the help, perhaps, if he be working, of his fellow-workmen. But of proof as to the existence of the Elder Brothers of the race, I may permit myself to make one very common-sense remark, as it appears to me. Reverse the case. Say that I am living in

Thibet and that I am asked as to the existence of certain living, very prominent, very highly evolved and able men, residents of America, but who have been known to visit other lands. I tell the Thibetans of these men; they ask for proof of their existence. I show pictures. They are not proof. I show letters. They are not proof. I call upon other men and women who have seen them to testify. Their word too is denied. I point to the religious and other books of America and show that a knowledge of these men has existed for a long period of time. This too is not proof. I call upon our learned men, who admit that the existence of such highly evolved men was always part of the belief of the residents of the country. My Thibetans shrug their shoulders at this mass of testimony and remain unconvinced. And any one of you, if you were standing by me, would no doubt say to me, "In heaven's name why not leave them to their ignorance?" Now this is precisely what I should do; in fact, I should never have proceeded so far as this imaginary picture points out. And why? Because it is part of my experience that no one gets any living proof that way, and I should not waste my time in attempting the impossible. It is not that I know more than the supposed inquirer. It is that the content of my consciousness is not the content of his consciousness and never can become so by any effort of mine. He will have to live and work and get the proof himself, as I did if I have it at all. And when we add to this fact, that the proof of a man's being a Mahatma or a Great Soul has to do with the interior and mysterious processes of the soul itself; that the soul alone recognizes the Great Soul; that such a Being is first met upon the plane of soul, and there only at first; I think you will concede that this subject of proof becomes a very difficult one, and that you must be content to leave me to what you may, if you please, call my delusions; or else you may accept the working hypothesis of living the life if you would know the doctrine, and thereby work out the matter to its ultimate conclusion. For other means than life and work there are none. Other proof of the existence of Great Souls mastering the bodies in which they dwell, having communion with mankind travailing in pain on the one hand, and with the great boundless freedom of spirit on the other; other proof, I say, than that your soul first touches Their souls, there is none. There will never be any other proof until you have first mastered that truth and have learned to know the intangible eternal presences by a pro-

more sure than the presence of an evanescent form.

Or, again, the proof asked may be that of certain fundamental propositions of Theosophy, such as those laid down in *The Secret Doctrine*. These are, first, the existence of a boundless, eternal Principle of Life; second, the universality of the law of periodicity, or Karma; third, the spiritual identity of all souls with the Over-soul. Such proof can be sought, and can, so far as my own experience goes, be found in every department of life. I admit that in this so-called scientific age the merest weaklings are so inflated with the rabies of science that they think they must have scientific proof of everything, and hence would deny what may be called proof by analogy. Science itself, laboriously great but often true, treats us no better. But permit me to take a case in point, an illustration from a lecture recently delivered in this hall on what are called "The Lives." In that lecture it was shown that science demonstrated certain action and reaction always taking place in the unit, as it is called, of protoplasmic matter. It was also shown that this series of action and reaction was precisely the same as those given in *The Secret Doctrine* relative to the action of the life-principle in regard to the Solar systems, worlds, man, and even the constituent cells of his body. Now, as I say, science would refuse us the right to this proof by analogy. But let us see if we cannot wrest it from her own utterance. For what says science further, after postulating this unit of protoplasm and definite actions and reactions taking place? Science shows at once this fact, that the whole visible universe is built up of a series of just such units. In this conclusion, then, she herself gives us that proof in regard to the universe to which we have laid claim. Or take another case. In the same lecture it was said that protoplasm, the basis of all life, was built up of certain well-defined chemical constituents, but that if you put those constituents together in their exact proportions, living protoplasm would not result. What would be absent? Life would be absent. The scientist claims that there is no such thing as life *per se*, life in itself. But may we not fairly claim that if the absence of life or motion prevents this chemical structure so carefully builded up after the living model, from being alive, it is a fair conclusion that there is a something called Life whose absence makes the difference between a living thing and a dead thing, as science uses the terms "life" and "death." I speak advisedly of the terminology of science, for to the Theos-

ophist Life and a change in the modes of Life alone are known.

Going thus rapidly over the whole ground of proof, what I would finally suggest to my fellow Theosophists is this: The proof that is wanted is the proof of the great spiritual side of life and that which in all directions underlies the visible and material. Now the proofs of life are everywhere. They are found in all occupations in all departments of life, in all sciences, in all arts; they are best found in the beings of whom life itself is composed. Take, for instance, the question of evolution, that great moot point which is said to have been the chief among the discoveries (re-discoveries I should call them) of this century. You may find it everywhere. You may find it in statecraft, in the tendency away from warfare and towards arbitration. You may find it in the trades, in the tendency away from monopoly and towards co-operation; yes, even in the limited co-operation of monopolists, which is its most dangerous form. You may find it in education; in the tendency, growing greater every hour, to give the same advantages to both the sexes. You may find it in theology, in that these later days have seen the study of comparative theology, in part adopted, in place of the method where a man learned only his own form of belief and, at most, the best argument of other schools, in order to be able to refute. You may find it in the industrial life of cities; in the custom of embracing the sale of all manner of goods in one shop, instead of employing that shop as a place where only one species of good could be obtained. You will find it in the drama, which, opening at the beginning of the century with the statuesque method of the Greek stage, and passing through the romantic, the melodramatic or intensely real, the ideal (as in some plays of Tennyson and others of his school), has finally culminated at the close of the century in a school of playwrights who show all the situations of life arising out of and caused by the complexities of character of that thing painfully created, life after life by man: I mean, the heart of man itself. That heart has built up the whole of life about us. It is responsible for all the strange alternations, struggles, differences, and tragedies of life. The latter-day dramatist has seen it; the prophetic seer has sung it for centuries also. If you turn to music, if you turn to painting, evolution is still plainly discerned.

If, then, Theosophists wish to point out such proof relative to the ancient Eastern beliefs as may serve as sufficient basis for a n

to begin work upon, let them turn to the various departments of life and demonstrate the first faint clues of greater riddles in them. Not a mother among her children, not a workman by his bench, not a photographer spreading his film ready for the transforming fingers of light to create some radiant image and cast it out of space upon the glass, not any man or any woman working anywhere but can bring some material from his or her place of life with which to build broad and wide the base of this universal temple which we can and will raise to the skies. Do not look abroad in things unknown to you for proof; seek that proof of the building spirit, the living spirit, the unseen all-powerful workman, in the Life of which you are part; and having discerned Him behind his customary mask, bring to us the faithful image of that which you have seen. The mother, observing the birth of character with the child, watchful of the development of the mere animal mind, joyous discerner of the first unfolding of the immortal soul, can put together argument for Reincarnation, for the belief that the strong character already shown in infancy — character dissimilar to that of all ancestry perhaps — has been moulded by many a prior life. In the inter-correlation of forces, the behaviour of energy, its conservation and interaction, the scientist can find still other proof. When the microscopist can find no bacteria present in a speck of matter placed under his most powerful lens, the photographer, preparing a plate sensitized to the action of the rays of the ultra-violet only — the unseen rays whose action and existence can only be demonstrated by chemistry — the photographer, I say, photographing by these rays, produces pictures of living and moving bacteria to which the wonder-revealing lens was blind. The astral ray revealing the lower astral forms — is it not a fitting sequence? And H. P. Blavatsky said that the greatest proof of occult theory would be found along biological and chemical lines. The schoolboy reads in his Natural Philosophy the first law of motion: "Action and reaction are equal and opposite in direction." It is true of emotion as well. And it reveals the Law of Karma. H. P. Blavatsky pointed out the path. We should each seek to give our own proofs. No more is needed. No more can be asked. The proofs lie within yourselves; your daily acts fecundate them, your lives are their heralds. You have but to speak them. There is not one of us from whom all the rest may not learn something of proof, were that proof but brought before them. And is it not a duty that

we owe to our belief, to demonstrate the real amplitude of its base?

Or perhaps it is proof of our ideals that men ask. What kind of proof, think you, would hold good of an ideal? I can conceive no other proof than its action upon the life. Were I asked, "Who are these men who have attained in ever so small measure to some proof of these great truths?" I would make answer thus: They are those who have looked upon a far star beyond the tempest. They are those who have worked and toiled and waited, who being crushed have arisen, who having fallen have struggled and have arisen again and again. They are those who have done this for the sole and pure sake of the realization of an ideal which assures them that the salvation of one is inextricably bound up in the salvation of all. They are those who have seen the mighty image of Unity and Harmony far beyond the contemplation of the mere mortal mind, and who work on towards it regardless of themselves, caught up in the glory of that immortal ideal. For the proof of a man is his life. The proof of an Ideal is its life in the soul.

"THERE IS a *personal* God, and there is a *personal* Devil!" thunders the Christian preacher. "Let him be anathema who dares say nay!" "There is no personal God, except the grey matter in our brain," contemptuously replies the materialist. "And there is no Devil. Let him be considered thrice an idiot who says aye." Meanwhile the occultists and *true* philosophers heed neither of the two combatants, but keep perseveringly at their work. None of them believe in the absurd, passionate, and fickle God of superstition, but all of them believe in good and evil. Our human reason, the emanation of our finite mind, is certainly incapable of comprehending a divine intelligence, an endless and infinite entity; and, according to strict logic, that which transcends our understanding and would remain thoroughly incomprehensible to our senses cannot exist for us; hence, it does *not* exist. So far finite reason agrees with science, and says: "There is no God." But, on the other hand, our *Ego*, that which lives and think and feels independently of us in our mortal casket, does more than believe. It *knows* that there exists a God in nature, for the sole and invincible Artificer of all lives in us as we live in Him. No dogmatic faith or exact science is able to uproot that intuitional feeling inherent in man, when he has once fully realized it in himself.

THE PHILOSOPHIC LIFE

It is generally believed that philosophy is cut off from the pressing problems of everyday existence and that its pursuit is a pastime for those who have no burden of practical responsibilities, or for book-worms and armchair dreamers who wish to escape action. The philosopher is thus held to be an impractical man, one who makes an unnatural dichotomy of attitude between the inner life of thought and the outer life of action.

The above belief is the result of misunderstanding of the business of philosophy. Genuine philosophy shows men how to live. If it could not do that, if it could not serve practical ends, it would not be worth having. It must show men not only what they really are but also what course of life should be the object of their behaviour to enable them to face the day-to-day problems of life. Philosophy, then, does not end in abstraction, but in action.

The artificial divorce that exists between philosophy and practical life should come to an end. We should realize that true philosophy is intimately linked with life and is useful as a guide, an inspirer and a judge. It is therefore primarily for men living in the world of action. It is interested in the full circle of existence, not merely in a segment. The moment we begin to reflect upon life, the moment we begin to consider the lesson of experience, the moment we search for meaning or explanation of the world in which we find ourselves, that moment we become philosophers for the time being. Therefore the value of philosophy is the value of its practical contribution to everyday existence. The connection of the home, the office, the factory, the farm, etc., with philosophy is direct and plain. Philosophy is the guide of all life. Its real worth is to tell us how to live, and how to meet and master our difficulties and temptations.

Such knowledge cannot be got in a hurry. But once it is won, it proves its practical worth by standing every test. The wisdom it confers, the ethics it upholds, the strength it gives, the tranquillity it bestows and the intellectual capacity it develops — all combine to make the student a better man. If he turns to politics he will render better service to his nation. If he takes up manufacturing, his products will be of a superior quality. The man trained in philosophical reflection will tackle each practical problem as it arises with clear insight, and he will be in a better position to give cor-

rect judgement upon any matter.

The true philosopher will always be found a rational, sensible, practical and balanced man in his everyday dealings. For he well understands that the two wings of a bird must move to keep it in balanced flight and that the two sides of man — thought and action — must operate to keep him in balanced existence. Amid the restless hustle of modern society he keeps inwardly calm and undisturbed. The philosophic discipline trains the mind and through the mind, all the acts of the man. Thoughts that are constantly and intensely held tend sooner or later to manifest in deeds. It is because we have not realized the power of concentrated thinking to help or hurt others that we have brought forth the hideous age in which we find ourselves. Thus philosophy will be of the greatest help in reaching right decisions in practical life. What could be more useful than this?

Human conduct is ordinarily governed by desire. All desires, emotions, passions, energies, longings, sympathies and antipathies begin to regulate themselves when we understand them better, when we understand ourselves better and when we understand the world better. The value of this study in restoring emotional balance can be observed in many ways. It disciplines passion, overcomes bad habits and eliminates nervous fears. It tranquillizes the heart, puts reason into the head and purpose into life. It is of special value to rulers, politicians, as also to professional men such as physicians, lawyers, educators and business executives. The benefits received affect both the personal and professional sides of life.

Thus the true philosopher finds the world a useful school wherein he learns much and lives with a purpose. Experience offers him not merely theoretical food for thought but also practical training for wisdom. He does not run away from the world like the ascetic, for he knows that he is in the world to learn its lessons. He remains ever unruffled while he passes through the experience of pain and pleasure, gain and loss, success and failure. The philosopher ultimately realizes the oneness, unity and interdependence of all life. Having realized this unitary consciousness he simultaneously realizes that it is the duty of the strong to assist the weak, of the advanced to help the backward, of the wealthy to lighten the burden of the destitute, and of the wise to enlighten the ignorant.

FRAGMENTS

II

[Reprinted from *The Path*, January 1897.—Eds.]

I

THE TRUEST HAPPINESS is to be found in the deep *interior* study of the great mysteries of nature and life, seeking thus to find the best manner in which the soul may express itself, and in a constant fulfilment of this manner of expression when found. If they can be taught to see and feel this, and the true meaning of it, the work is done. Labour therefore faithfully to accomplish this in yourself, for we can teach others only what we ourselves know, and this knowledge is one with experience. The divine light burns for all; take your part of it, and illuminating first your own heart, the power will then be yours to illumine others. Remember, words are not needed. In the silence these things are done. Those in whose midst you may live, quiet and unknown, will have the radiance cast upon them merely by your presence. It is not what you say and do, but what you *are* that tells, and that will leave its ineffaceable mark upon each character you meet as upon all time. The Soul desires to express itself in its reflection, your life. So live that it may do so. So think and act that you may become a channel for higher things to descend to the lower planes.

II

Meditate on things you want to know. * * * Seek all knowledge within yourself, do not go without. You understand what is meant by this; not that books should be neglected, but that information obtained from them should be *drawn within*, sifted there. Study all things in this light and the most physical will at the same time lead to the most spiritual knowledge.

III

Duty is not an ogre but an angel. How few understand this! Most confuse it as they do conscience.

IV

Sorrows, crosses, these are our opportunities could we but see it so. But he is far along who does so see it. He has attained who fully realizes it.

V

The Lodge force working in a pure devoted heart sets free the soul and lets it speak. The eternal verities resound for ever upon the spiritual planes and when the mind is pure and will hearken, the soul echoes them.

VI

What of the darkness! What of the light! They are one to those who *see*. How plain these matters are in higher moments, how drearily obscure at other times! This will show you the value of higher moments perhaps, and what those always living in them enjoy.

Be what you love. Strive after what you find beautiful and high and let the rest go. Harmony, sacrifice, devotion, take these for key-notes, express them everywhere and in the highest possible way. The beauty of a life like that, the power of it, who can measure or set bounds to!

VII

Can you not live so as to feel the great throbbing heart around you, so as to express that feeling in even the smallest detail? Let there be nothing cold or cynical in your view of life. Sense the pathos and the pity of it, trusting that some day to your now darkened eyes the mystery and the pain will be untangled. Feel, feel, with everything that cries, with everything that suffers, and in even the most broken fragment of a life, find some beauty. Let your own quivering heart-strings teach you the anguish in other hearts and live to ease it. Pain is our best teacher. Do not dread nor flee her therefore, she comes in mercy. Go forth to meet her, trembling perhaps, but reverently, patiently, unflinching; only so can the lesson be learned, and from the dark hours spent with her a light shall arise, showing the way to stumbling feet, giving the power to comfort and console. And in the peace of that your heart shall understand and be satisfied.

VIII

How much misinterpretation and misunderstanding there is regarding these things, and by the most enthusiastic, the most devoted souls, whose emotional intensity driving them along, blinds them utterly; and in the *full chase* of new experiences they see not that they are following only their own desires, and again losing the substance for the shadow. It is discouraging, and yet the forces th

generated can be used for higher ends, and the good intention of the deluded one counts for him. But remember, O disciple, that in the silence these things are performed and recognized, and in the silence alone. Few indeed understand how complete that silence must be, few save those who have at some time known the peace of it. All *excitement* is *psychic*, and though these whirlwinds of force descend, you must learn to hold yourself still in their midst, feeling neither attraction nor repulsion, else chains are forged to draw you to them. There are some who need this lesson badly, all more or less. * * * The great force acts dually and you must stand *still*, not passive or inactive but unswayed. You must learn to take psychic emotions in hand as well as physical. * * *

Hold your purpose and your ideals clearly and steadily before you. Desiring truth you shall surely have it, intending righteousness you shall surely so perform though all things seem to conspire against you. In times of confusion and difficulty rest upon that and you may then unshaken see no agreement, no light ahead. * * *

IX

I measure the height not merely the depth of a soul by its stillness.

—Cavé

THE BUSINESS OF LIVING is joy in the real sense of the word, not just something for pleasure, amusement, recreation. The business of living is the celebration of being alive. . . . You don't become a better person because you are suffering; but you become a better person because you have experienced suffering. We can't appreciate light if we haven't known darkness. Nor can we appreciate warmth if we have never suffered cold. It's not what you've lost that's important. What is important is what you have left.

—DR. CHRISTIAN BARNARD

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

A survey conducted in Chandigarh and neighbouring rural areas revealed that the incidence of severe mental illness is no less in India than in the West. New cases of psychoses and schizophrenia, moreover, were found to be as common in the urban as in the rural population, and the younger age group was the worst affected. These findings were presented by Dr. N. N. Wig, currently head of the department of psychiatry, All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi, at the thirty-third annual conference of the Indian Psychiatric Society. Such data, Dr. Wig stated, can serve as an important and useful base for planning psychiatric services in our country. (*Medical Times*, January 1981)

Dr. J. S. Neki, director and professor of psychiatry, Post-graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research, Chandigarh, warned the delegates attending the conference that Western methods of psychotherapy applied to Indian patients could often result in serious damage. Contrary to the popular myth, psychotherapy is not an innocuous procedure. With side effects ranging from clinical complications to moral wrongs and interpersonal tensions, "it is not to be undertaken lightly," he warned.

Most psychotherapeutic techniques in use today have been devised in the West. But since the Western and Indian psyche and culture have very divergent points of view, Western models often fail to achieve results with Indian patients. Sometimes these can actually endanger health, by generating "tensions between the therapeutic orientation of the therapist and the cultural stance of the patient." Dr. Neki suggested taking a fresh look at culturally relevant techniques of psychotherapy — meditation, silence, and so on — which have fallen into disuse, "probably from not fitting into the conceptual frame of Western psychotherapy."

Dr. Neki highlighted the major differences between the culture and value systems of the East and the West. For example, as reported in *Medical Times*:

...the Western view analyses objects, classifies and codifies them, examines their form, shape and differences, while the East tries to identify the commonness between the elements, "the aesthetic continuum which is the common ground of phenomena and which is abiding and stable."

Again, family relationships differ in the West and the East. Dependency, considered derogatory in the West, is actively fostered in Eastern families. Children are taught to be independent in the West almost from the cradle; in India they are encouraged to lean on parents until such time as the parents grow old and in turn become dependent on them. In marriage, too, Western partners maintain their separate identity. The price paid for independence includes loneliness in old age and fragility in marriage, Dr. Neki remarked.

Even the idea of psychotherapy as practised in industrialized countries is alien to the Indian society where the guru-chela concept still prevails. While the Western psychotherapist behaves as an instrument of society, coaxing the patient to conform, the guru remains part of society and yet aloof from it, prepared to take on himself the responsibility for others.

Much more study is required to evolve distinctive methods suited to Indian patients, involving nothing less than "a re-examination of our entire conceptual system," as Dr. Neki put it.

According to the *Daily Telegraph*, London, "subliminal" messages, which communicate only to the human subconscious, either verbally or visually, are being increasingly used throughout the world as a way to influence people. For instance, a whispered message broadcast continuously in a New Orleans supermarket says, "I am honest; I will not steal," and this is said to have put an end to shoplifting that cost the store about \$85,000 a year. In other instances, subliminal projection is used as an advertising technique to promote a product. An advertisement is flashed on a cinema or TV screen for a fraction of a second so that the image penetrates to the viewer's subconscious, though it makes no impression on his conscious mind. The viewers remain unaware that they have seen an image unrelated to the rest of the film, yet the technique helps to promote the sale of the advertiser's product.

A subliminal message [*The Daily Telegraph* explains] whether in the form of a barely audible whisper or a message flashed on a screen, avoids the "conscious" part of the human brain which singles out subjects for "special treatment." Instead, because we have not consciously received the message, it is stored in our vast memory bank. From there it may come to the forefront of the mind at any time if triggered by some external event.

Subliminal messages also serve as a test of the efficient functioning of the brain. Would-be pilots in Sweden's air force have threatening pictures flashed at them for 0.004 of a second. If they do not react appropriately, they are pronounced unfit to fly.

The technique is attracting the interest of military chiefs, psychiatrists, politicians, filmmakers, and even religious fanatics. It is admitted that, if misused, subliminal messages could have dangerous effects or rob people of mental privacy. As in other spheres, so in this, vested interests may well apply the technique to influence people in whatever manner they will.

H.P.B. wrote that "There are occult properties in many... minerals, equally strange with that in the lodestone, which all practitioners of magic *must* know, and of which so-called exact science is wholly ignorant" (*Isis Unveiled*, II. 589). An article by Raghavendra Rao in the April issue of *Mirror* (Bombay) narrates the story of "The Curse of the Kohinoor." This world-famous priceless diamond was obtained by the British as part of a treaty after annexing the Punjab in 1849, and since then it has been among England's crown jewels. But to this day no royal prince of England is allowed to wear it, though it has been worn by ladies of the royal family. Historical records have it that many male wearers of the diamond have been struck by tragedy.

Not much is known about the early history of this "dazzling wonder," believed to have originally weighed 900 carats. It is said to have come from the diamond mines of Golconda and, according to the *Mahabharata*, it belonged to Karna. Later it went to Emperor Vikramaditya who ruled Ujjain in 56 B.C. Nothing further is known until the Kohinoor fell into the hands of the Mughal Emperor Humayun. Since then, it is believed that a curse has been at work and that the imperial stone has caused the strange deaths of at least seven kings, among others, and brought about other calamities. Humayun himself was killed as a result of a freakish accident when he was only 48 years old, and later the life of Shah Jahan, who had the Kohinoor set in the fabulous Peacock Throne, was meset by tragedies. The diamond kept changing hands, and as it did so, its owner's luck ran out. Ranjit Singh was the last Indian king to have worn it and after him it passed to the British.

Can some diamonds really carry a curse? [asks the *Mirror* article]. This question though very often asked has never been satisfactorily answered. Other than the Kohinoor, there are at least two famous diamonds known for their legendary curse. One is the "Hope" diamond, a rare diamond, blue in colour, which now rests permanently in the Smithsonian Institute, U.S.A., after having caused calamities in the lives of a number of people who owned it. Next comes the "Orloff," a rose-cut diamond weighing 193 carats. . . . Wherever it went, the stone brought ill-luck to the owner. Presently the Orloff is said to be in the Russian State Treasury.

The fatality that dogged the footsteps of Lord Carnarvon and 14 others after the opening of the tomb of Tut-Ankh-Amen may also be recalled. Can precious stones and other treasure be actually impregnated with malevolent power? It is quite possible. Any object on which evil thought energy is focused with knowledge, may have a tremendous malignant potency. H.P.B. writes in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 463) that "by a determined concentration of the will an otherwise inert object may become imbued with protective or destructive power according to the purpose directing."

Even waiving the possibility that a curse might have been laid on the one who took the diamond forcibly from its rightful owner, and on those through whose hands it passed later, would not the association with it of so many disasters be cumulative in its influence? Psychometry — the ability by a certain class of sensitive persons to see again the scenes through which an object contacted has passed — confirms H.P.B.'s statement that "every occurrence . . . leaves its indelible impress upon physical nature" (*Isis Unveiled*, I. 182). Is there no analogy between the possibility of suggestion by the associations clustering about an object, whether perceived by a sensitive or not, and H.P.B.'s warning that a "vibration in the air is sure to awaken corresponding powers, union with which produces good or bad results, as the case may be"?

But to what do those among the owners of the Kohinoor diamond who have not been overtaken by disaster owe their exemption? To what but to their Karmic heritage and/or to their character and motives in the life in which the stone was theirs?

According to *The German Tribune* (Hamburg), excavations in the Geissenklösterle, one of the most important of the ancient caves near Blaubeuren in the Aach Valley, have proved it to be a rich source of prehistoric finds (c. 30,000 to 40,000 B.C.). Among them is what archaeologists consider to be the oldest known work of art in Europe, approximately 33,000 years old by radio-carbon tests — the figure of a man, 38 millimetres high and made of mammoth ivory. Excavation director Joachim Hahn of the Tübingen Prehistoric History Department regards the raised arms of the figure, familiar from the stone age images of Altamira, as representing a praying or worshipping attitude.

This has given rise to a lively controversy: Did prehistoric man pray? What form of worship did he have? Many a motive has been ascribed to the prayers of early man, many a view advanced about the spiritual stage he was in.

An illuminating passage in *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of the origin of religion and early man's modes of worship:

What was the religion of the Third and Fourth Races? In the common acceptation of the term, neither the Lemurians, not yet their progeny, the Lemuro-Atlanteans, had any, as they knew no dogma, nor had they to believe *on faith*. No sooner had the mental eye of man been opened to understanding, than the Third Race felt itself one with the ever-present as the ever to be unknown and invisible ALL, the one Universal Deity. Endowed with divine powers, and feeling in himself his *inner* God, each felt he was a Man-God in his nature, though an animal in his physical Self. The struggle between the two began from the very day they tasted of the fruit Tree of Wisdom; a struggle for life between the spiritual and the psychic, the psychic and the physical. . . .

At the dawn of his consciousness, the man of the Third Root Race had thus no beliefs that could be called *religion*. That is to say, he was equally as ignorant of "gay religions, full of pomp and gold" as of any system of faith or outward worship. But if the term is to be defined as the binding together of the masses in one form of reverence paid to those we feel higher than ourselves, of piety — as a feeling expressed by a child toward a loved parent — then even the earliest Lemurians had a religion — and a most beautiful one — from the very beginning of their intellectual life. Had they not their bright gods of the elements around them, and even within themselves? Was not

their childhood passed with, nursed and tendered by those who had given them life and called them forth to intelligent, conscious life? We are assured it was so, and we believe it. For the evolution of Spirit into matter could never have been achieved; nor would it have received its first impulse, had not the bright Spirits sacrificed their own respective super-ethereal essences to animate the man of clay, by endowing each of his inner principles with a portion, or rather, a reflection of that essence. . . . It was the "Golden Age" in those days of old, the age when the "gods walked the earth, and mixed freely with the mortals." Since then, the gods departed (*i.e.*, became invisible), and later generations ended by worshipping their kingdoms — the Elements.

It was the Atlanteans, the first progeny of *semi-divine* man after his separation into sexes — hence the first-begotten and humanly-born mortals — who became the first "Sacrificers" to the *god of matter*. They stand in the far-away dim past, in ages more than prehistoric, as the prototype on which the great symbol of Cain was built, as the first anthropomorphists who worshipped form and matter. That worship degenerated very soon into *self-worship*, thence led to phallicism, or that which reigns supreme to this day in the symbolisms of every exoteric religion of ritual, dogma, and form. Adam and Eve *became matter*, or furnished the soil, Cain and Abel — the latter the life-bearing soil, the former "the tiller of that ground or field."

Thus the first Atlantean races, born on the Lemurian Continent, separated from their earliest tribes into the righteous and the unrighteous; into those who worshipped the one unseen Spirit of Nature, the ray of which man feels within himself — or the Pantheists, and those who offered fanatical worship to the Spirits of the Earth, the dark Cosmic, anthropomorphic Powers, with whom they made alliance. . . .

Such was the secret and mysterious origin of all the subsequent and modern religions. . . . (II. 272-74)

Two articles in the *Sunday Standard Magazine* for March 8 bring into focus "The Alienated Aborigines." Trevor D. Pearson recalls the theory that these pre-Aryan races have inhabited Australia for as long as Dravidian races have inhabited the Indian subcontinent. Some historians and geologists are of the view that the Australian land mass was once a part of southern Asia. Even from a philological

standpoint there is something in favour of this claim. Comparing several of the names of Australian native places with the names of places in south India and Ceylon, one finds a remarkable similarity.

In a companion piece, Rupa Chinai reiterates that the aborigines of Australia originated from Southern India and that the two continents were once part of a single land mass. The aborigines themselves believe that they have occupied the Australian continent for around 40,000 years, long before the coming of the white man some 200 years ago.

There is no typical Aboriginal [states Rupa Chinai] and their variety and skin colour is as varied as the Australian continent itself. Before the coming of the white man, 300 different tribes lived spread out all over Australia. They had no written script for their 600 different languages and dialects. But their arts and crafts speak of a people who were happy with their simple nomadic life involved in food gathering, hunting and fishing. The ancient Aboriginals had a unique understanding of the true meaning of ecology and treated their environment with respect. They utilized their limited resources to good advantage and took from nature what they needed to survive. Everything revolved around the land on which they lived. Trees, rocks, caves, water-holes, all had spiritual connotations. To the Aboriginals the land was their spiritual temple, the very centre of their heritage, culture and existence.

The first European settlers found themselves confronted with a culture beyond anything in their European experience. In their fear and ignorance and with their superior technology they almost succeeded in exterminating the Aboriginal tribes in states like Tasmania. From what was once a population of 300,000, the Aboriginal population was reduced to 60,000.

The Secret Doctrine corroborates that the proximity of India and Australia certainly existed in the pre-historic ages (II. 8 fn.) At the time when the Third Race flourished, Australia was part of an "immense Continent which had reigned supreme over the Indian Atlantic, and Pacific Oceans" (II. 327); and when it started breaking asunder it left remnants, Australia being one of them. Some of the Australian tribes, it is stated, "are the last remnants of the last descendants of the Third Race" (II. 328). They are believed to be among the simplest and the most primitive living human races.

It has been suggested by many geologists that the Australian

native — co-existing as he does with an *archaic fauna and flora* — must date back to an enormous antiquity. The whole environment of this mysterious race, about whose origin ethnology is silent, is a testimony to the truth of the esoteric position. . . . Since the Oölitic (Jurassic) period, *less change has taken place in Australia than elsewhere*, and the Australian flora and fauna consequently retain something of the Oölitic type. . . .

Where is the *raison d'être* for such a “curse of retardation”? It is simply because the nature of the environment develops *pari passu* with the race concerned. Correspondences rule in every quarter. The survivors of those later Lemurians, who escaped the destruction of their fellows when the main continent was submerged, became the ancestors of a portion of the present native tribes. Being a very low sub-race, begotten originally of animals, of monsters, whose very fossils are now resting miles under the sea floors, their stock has since existed in an environment strongly subjected to the *law of retardation*. Australia is one of the oldest lands now above the waters, and in the senile decrepitude of old age, its “*virgin soil*” notwithstanding. It can produce no new forms, unless helped by new and fresh races, and artificial cultivation and breeding. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 196-97)

Orison Swett Marden's reflections on “How to Read” (*Bhavan's Journal*, February 16) are reminiscent of Mr. Judge's short article, “Much Reading, Little Thought” (*Vernal Blooms*). Reading too many of the ever coming books and too little thought upon the matter read has little to commend it and creates mental indigestion.

If you do not read with a purpose and with the determination to retain what you read [the author writes], you are only wasting your time. Of course it is much easier to sit down and read with a passive mind than it is to think and reflect on what the eye gathers from the printed page, to absorb and make it our own.

But this is the only way to read to any purpose, for knowledge that is to be retained must be absorbed by a positive mentality. As John Locke said: “Reading furnishes us only with the materials of knowledge; it is thinking that makes what we read ours.” . . . It is only the book that has become a part of our being, a part of our life, that counts in making a cultured, educated man or woman. . . .

What does a book awaken in you? What does it do to you,

or for you? That is the best test of a good book or a bad one for you. When you put it down, do you feel that you are a little more of a man, or of a woman? Does it inspire and encourage you, make you a little more determined to push toward your goal, give you new viewpoints on life, a little more to live for, to strive for? . . .

Bacon says: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested. This means some books are to be read only in parts; others to be read, but not curiously; and some few to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention."

If your time is limited and your object in reading is self-improvement you would better confine yourself to the books that are "to be chewed and digested, to be read wholly, and with diligence and attention." Beware of those that are just to be tasted, books that leave nothing but froth and dissatisfaction behind. Have nothing to do with books that merely awaken emotions and stimulate the sensuous imagination. . . .

Out of the multitudes published every year, we can choose what books we will as our instructors, companions and friends. As Woodrow Wilson says in his little book, *On Being Human*, "It is within our choice to be with mean company or with great, to consort with the wise or with the foolish, now that the great world has spoken to us in the literature of all tongues and voices."

Mr. Judge was convinced that "a few books well read, well analysed, and thoroughly digested are better than many books read over once." If he had a youth to train "in our particular field," he said, he would "confine him to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the *Upanishads* and the *Secret Doctrine* for a very long time, until he was able to make books for himself out of those, and to apply the principles found in them to every circumstance and to his own life and thought.
