

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः !

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### "SHOAL — 'WARE SHOAL!"

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ENQ. Have you any prohibitory laws or clauses for Theosophists in your Society?

THEO. Many, but, alas! none of them are enforced....

ENQ. May I be told what are these perilous reefs in the open sea of Theosophy?

THEO. Well may you call them reefs, as more than one otherwise sincere and well-meaning F.T.S. has had his Theosophical canoe shattered into splinters on them!

—*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 247

HIDDEN reefs and ridges, even shoals that show above the water only when the tide is low, have always constituted hazards for the navigator on uncharted seas. On unsuspected, treacherous obstructions to its passage, how many a ship has broken up or foundered in years gone by! These hazards of the deep are far less serious today for skilful navigators equipped with compass, chart and radio, but even these would at their peril disregard the warning flashed by a lighthouse or sounded by bell buoys as the waves move them: "Shoal! 'ware shoal!"

Students of Theosophy today are sailing the often stormy seas of human life. These seas are not uncharted. Those who have navigated them successfully and passed over to the other shore have left their testimony as to the right way to go. It goes without saying that each must first of all determine where he wants to go. Just as a man cannot direct an arrow aright before he has determined at what mark to shoot,

so, as Coleridge added: "To him that knoweth not the port to which he is bound, no wind can be favourable."

That decision taken, we have the compass of our conscience and the knowledge of our duty by which to check our course. And, more valuable even than the radio which makes it possible for modern ships to keep in contact with the shore and with other vessels, is for us the possibility of constant contact with the Higher Ego, in our own heart consciousness. That we so rarely and spasmodically turn to it for guidance may be due either to the lure of the worldly life or to our immaturity, however old our bodies are, or to the fact that we do not really try our best; or, perhaps, to all three. We are at best but "budding occultists," but ours is the responsibility that comes with sensing something of the world's sore need and glimpsing also the great possibilities of sacrifice and serviceableness to which we have it in our power to rise.

Even the most experienced and self-confident navigators, on approaching a treacherous harbour, stop outside it and take aboard the harbour pilot, familiar with its dangers and knowing the safe channel that avoids them. It is such a harbour pilot that we ignore and slight when we fail to seek the counsel of the Higher Ego. As Mr. Judge reminds us, "Reliance and pressure upon our own inner nature, in moments of darkness, are sure to be answered by the voice of Krishna, the inner guide." (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 27)

And always we have the stars to steer by—the Blessed Masters and Their immemorial wisdom, Their Messengers and the example set by these and others who have "lived the life." There are, besides, for our protection the many warnings uttered by H.P.B., Their Messenger, to serve as lighthouses and bell buoys, warnings which, if heeded, will keep us off the rocks.

If these ethical warnings are followed to the letter they will save us many a difficulty, many a fruitless regret. On the positive side, they will win for us deserved respect from others and, more important still, allow us to respect ourselves. Without well-founded self-respect—which is poles apart from vanity—how could we feel the genuine self-confidence which H.P.B. described as "the first step to that kind of WILL which will make a mountain move"?

To paraphrase a few of these Theosophical "don'ts":

*Do not desire to appear to others as better than you are:*

The profession of a truth is not yet the enactment of it; and the more beautiful and grand it sounds, the more loudly virtue or duty is talked about instead of being acted upon, the more forcibly it will always remind one of the Dead Sea fruit. *Cant* is the most loathsome of all vices....(*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 228)

Better one hundred mistakes through unwise, injudicious sincerity and indiscretion than Tartuffe-like *saintship* as the whitened sepulchre, and rottenness and decay within. (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, p. 2)

*Do not gossip, backbite or slander:*

...true or false, no accusation against another person should ever be spread abroad....keep silent about such things with every one not directly concerned. (*Key*, p. 252)

Always...say openly and direct to his face anything you have against him. (*Key*, p. 250)

*Do nothing underhanded:*

Every Theosophist has to fight and battle against evil—but he must have the courage of his words and actions, and what he does must be done openly and honestly before all. (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, pp. 10-11)

*Do not fear anyone or anything outside of yourself:*

...fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of...conscience. (*Key*, p. 238)

*Do not hold a grievance against another:*

Never...harbour revenge against those who happen to injure you. (*Key*, p. 250)

...a man who, believing in Karma, still revenges himself and refuses to forgive every injury, thereby rendering good for evil, is a criminal and only hurts himself. (*Key*, p. 198)

These warnings are not rhetorical statements of an unattainable ideal. They are plain and unequivocal statements of the moral law, undeviating and unerring, compassionately offered us for our protection. It is as foolhardy for us to flout them as for the captain of a ship to say, when warning signals flash or sound: "Wait till I see the breakers; then I will believe!"

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# CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

## I. — Self-Preparation

ONLY to the rank materialist is man no more than an animal—a product of nature superior to the monkey and the ape, yet indubitably an animal. To such an one, the higher aspirations are meaningless. They remain at best a purposeless posturing in the void, a bundle of hallucinations created in the fertile imagings of the animal man. Just because his thoughts cannot rise beyond the material aspects of things is the materialist doomed. Since during life he had consistently denied the existence of the immortal, the sum total of his earthly existence had been unproductive of that which could be distilled into an essence consubstantial with the divine. There is thus hardly anything of the materialist which can survive, and therefore in his individual record that particular incarnation has to be written off as a failure.

Higher in the scale than the materialist are those who deny the presence of the divine in man but who none the less believe that beyond death is an eternal realm of bliss which is obtainable by the propitiation of a God or Gods. These may be pious and holy men, but their worship carries them off into the realms of the minor gods at best, or into those of the elementals, the evil spirits and the ghosts of dead men. Ignorance is their undoing and they pay for it dearly. The selling of the soul to the devil (which expression epitomizes all that is the antithesis of the Spirit) is not a rare occurrence, and once the fruits of that contract are enjoyed, the price has to be paid even to the extent of a pound of flesh with no beautiful Portia to save the day.

There remain only the very few who believe in the gnosis and are convinced that hidden behind the veils of matter there exists, overbrooding each man, that which Jesus called the Father in Heaven. Theosophy holds that the only God one can know of is by, through and within himself. H.P.B., explaining this in *The Secret Doctrine*, says: "Esoteric philosophy shows only *physical* man as created *in the image* of the Deity; but the latter is but 'the *minor gods*.' It is the HIGHER SELF, the real EGO, who alone is divine and GOD" (I, 445). In this God reside wisdom, puissance and ubiquity. Knowledge, and even omniscience, need not, therefore, be searched outside of the individual himself. If by means within his reach he can cleanse and render transparent the

sheaths of his soul, then at some time when the Soul rests in calmness and lucidity the higher Light may percolate through and make his eyes see the hidden treasures of the Occult.

There are, however, no short cuts to this Wisdom, no "occultism without tears," the rules of which if learnt by rote give the desired results. Purity, steadfastness, devotion and harmlessness are to be achieved on all planes before an approach to the shrine becomes possible or even desirable. Madame Blavatsky has stated that when the self-evolving ascetic has "made himself master of his (1) *Sharira*—body; (2) *Indriya*—senses; (3) *Dosha*—faults; (4) *Dukkha*—pain; and is ready to become one with his *Manas*—mind; *Buddhi*—intellection, or spiritual intelligence; and *Atma*—highest soul, *i.e.*, spirit; when he is ready for this, and, further, to recognize in *Atma* the highest ruler in the world of perceptions, and in the will, the highest executive energy (power), then only may he, under the time-honoured rules, be taken in hand by one of the Initiates." But—and this is also profoundly true—"if the candidate has the latent lust for money, or political chicanery, or materialistic scepticism, or vain display, or false speaking, or cruelty, or sensual gratification of any kind, the germ is almost sure to sprout; and so also, on the other hand, as regards the noble qualities of human nature." Under the pressure of the discipline, "the real man comes out."

It therefore follows that long before any practice at concentration is entered upon, the student must orient his thinking in two important directions.

Firstly, he has to get rid of the false notion that the energy that feeds his ignoble desires can ever be sublimated. The fury, force and fire of the animal passions cannot, so to speak, be turned inwards, nor can they be stored and shut up in one's breast until their energy remaining unexpended is turned towards higher and holier purposes. The very idea is pernicious. The muddy stream of the animal sewer cannot be turned into the crystalline waters of life. If the wave of effort has only paralysed the passions without effecting their total annihilation, then there can be no hope for success. For, the presence even of a mere shadow of a personal desire within the precincts of the sanctuary which is being laboriously prepared is sufficient to destroy that equilibrium which alone can aid in the invoking of the divine harmony. It is only when the power of the desires is slayed past

reanimation under the force of an unflinching will, when all the lusts and longings of the flesh are dead, and when even recognition of the personal self is killed out, that union with the Higher Self can take place. Till then, the effort must be at the eschewing of the lower and the garnering of the higher forces at each phase of activity. The cautiousness implicit in such effort cannot be relaxed nor is it susceptible of suspension during the dark hours of body, mind and soul.

The second important orientation is based on one of the Rules of Chelaship. That Rule is:

The *upasaka* while studying must take care to be united as the fingers on one hand. Thou shalt impress upon their minds that whatever hurts one should hurt the others, and if the rejoicing of one finds no echo in the breasts of the others, then the required conditions are absent and it is useless to proceed.

These are *sine qua non* conditions, and unless they are provided for it is not only useless but dangerous to "sit for meditation." Unbrotherliness, immorality, instability, a leaning towards the phenomenal and the selfish—all these create forces and generate nerve currents that usurp and occupy places which normally should be reserved for the enthronement of the spiritual. Until these places and planes are won back and cleansed, the effort to invoke good will produce only evil. Those who rush into spiritual practices without first going through the purificatory processes will find that their efforts end in frustration which sooner or later will result in a cessation of all efforts. It is futile to expect men who have spent years in coveting earthly gains and pleasures to renounce that way of life and adopt one where they will have to find their solace in the hard and thorny way to *Jnana*. You cannot erase a long lifetime of demerits with the mere waving of a hand. The cleaning of the Augean stables is itself a lesson the importance of which cannot be minimized.

Years and lives which have been spent in questionable pursuits and wrong practices leave their scars upon the person. These manifest themselves in the following traits : (1) Violence which erupts uncontrolled and which fails to respect life. (2) Untruthfulness which arises through avarice or anger or ignorance. (3) A tendency towards the achieving of ill-gotten gains; a filching of that which rightfully

belongs to another and which is coveted through greed, anger, revenge and ignorance of the laws of brotherhood. (4) A non-continnence in respect to all cravings as a result of which the mind and the organs become filled with unclean images. (5) A hankering after gifts from others in the wide sense of receiving something from Nature or from man which is not legitimately due. The modern concept of prayer is one aspect of this. (6) Uncleanliness which beclouds the mind and pollutes the senses and the organs. Unclean thoughts and fancies leave their marks upon the external man in the shape of diseases, a coarseness of the physical organism, and a setting of the facial expression which betrays the rottenness within.

All these are grave impediments which muddy the waters of life. It is this muddiness which prevents the reflection of the azure blue from above and cuts off from below all sight of the treasures over which their frothy turbulence casts an impenetrable veil. But, if each such impediment is the result of a wrong way of life and action, then the possibility always remains that each can be removed through corrective discipline. The effort to move godward starts at this level. The first step towards the freeing of the mind begins in the mire of one's sins and failings. The lotus has its roots in mire and slime. It is possible for one possessed of evil to shake it off, if he so desires, and bloom as does the lily in the light of the rising sun.

To sum up, one must have the faith—

- (1) That the Spirit overbroods each human being.
- (2) That eternal life's pure waters cannot mingle with the muddy torrents of monsoon waters.
- (3) That the force which moves to righteousness is a different force from the one which activates passions and impure desires.
- (4) That any departure from spirituality has always resulted in violence, uncleanliness, etc.
- (5) That until the lower is killed past reanimation the presence of impurity even in a latent condition will vitiate all effort.
- (6) That a science of corrective discipline exists and its application starts the upward pilgrimage.

*(To be continued)*

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## THE MESSAGE OF THE MASTERS

THE dictionary definition of the word "message" is: "a written or verbal communication"; but is this a sufficient interpretation of the meaning? There also seems to be a communication that lies beyond the realm of words, and it is something that goes straight to the heart, which is the true spiritual centre of each individual. It is in this non-verbal communication that lies the most potent message of the Theosophical Masters, and in the early days of the Theosophical Movement it was only the "few" who were able to appreciate fully the import of such a silent intercourse.

We only need to turn to the words of the Masters themselves to find some clues as to what Their real Message is. For example, we have the following interesting sentence in one of Their letters: "The truth is that till the neophyte attains to the condition necessary for that degree of illumination to which, and for which, he is entitled and fitted, most *if not all* of the Secrets are *incommunicable*." This is a very important statement and worth musing upon. The significant words in this extract are: "...most *if not all* of the Secrets are incommunicable." If this is true then what is the point of studying Theosophy? Well, there is every reason to do so, for we need to train our mind and make it fit to absorb these higher truths. We need also to make sure that we train it in the right way, according to age-old traditions and methods that have been passed down from generation to generation. To fasten our own "brain-mind notions" onto the teachings serves no purpose except to boost our "egos" and give us a false sense of power. Unfortunately, the personal self has tainted the work of many an otherwise devoted worker for the Theosophical Cause, and it is therefore of great value that the works of H.P.B. and of the Masters have been preserved in their pure state. It is also fortunate that there have been students in the past who were able to elucidate the teachings without adding anything that was not in line with the original ideas, or detracting from them. Even today there are those who continue this tradition, while others seem to be somewhat lost in the modern rush for instant enlightenment, and numerous "New Age" groups have sprung up to accommodate this desire. It is very difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff without some kind of guidelines. The signposts are provided by the study and practice of genuine

## Theosophy.

Now we have to consider what was (and is) the main concern of the Masters in starting such a Movement. There can be no clearer answer to that than in the words of one of Them: "The *Chiefs* want a 'Brotherhood of Humanity,' a real Universal Fraternity started; an institution which would make itself known throughout the world and arrest the attention of the highest minds." This is crystal clear and pre-empted the efforts of some later students to emphasize the intellectual study or the psychic experiments that are of no account unless they are subservient to the main ideal. No one who studies deeply the teachings of H.P.B. and of the Masters can fail to be struck by their emphasis on the practice of Brotherhood and the moral discipline needed to appreciate this *sine qua non* at its highest level. The fact that many have missed the point is evidence of the confusion caused by a preponderance of literature that has given precedence to the less important aspects of Theosophy and thereby led some earnest students astray.

Is there not enough food for thought and discussion in the many books and articles of H.P.B.? In these we find the same impersonality that permeates the great scriptures of the world and the writings of Theosophical thinkers of all ages. They are free from the personal opinions that most writers are fond of extolling. To the beginner, these arguments may seem very attractive and plausible, and indeed they may have an element of truth in them. But if we are sincere, why settle for anything less than the best? Why follow a path that may lead down a *cul-de-sac*? If we have the right motive, that of helping humanity, and if we wish to realize our non-separateness from our brothers and sisters, then why should we want to know about psychic powers, or how to meditate just to "feel good," or how to assume certain yogic postures? To exalt any of these practices to a level of importance in our study-application is a sign that the personality still reigns supreme. It is necessary to discover a sense of perspective and to use certain things as a means to an end, and that end is to awaken our fellow human beings to an awareness of their Divinity and to the fact that this Divinity pervades the whole universe. We also need to exorcize the fear of death and show people that they can bring themselves to a position where they are in complete control of their lives, and that, come weal or woe, they can remain unshaken and centred in the SELF,

which is the SELF of all creatures. Is this not a wonderful message, and one that the world sorely needs?

Another unfortunate trend in modern society is the fascination with externals. It seems that too many judge the book by the cover and are entranced by clever presentations instead of the words that are actually written or spoken. If we wish to find our way to the Soul of things, then it is important for us to listen very carefully to what is being said and to weave Theosophy into the very fabric of our being. Perhaps it is a sign of the times that many are losing the power to do this. Some grumble that the original Theosophical writings are too hard to understand, and they prefer modern writers "in touch" with contemporary thought. The truth is that Divine Wisdom does not alter and a perusal of the works of Theosophists of previous ages will prove this. In the teachings of the Neo-Platonists, the Vedantins and some schools of Buddhism, for instance, it is easy to find the common thread. This is also true of many other spiritual traditions. This is a good testing ground. The fact that many modern writers come up with ideas that, although fascinating, are not in line with this golden thread of thought shows that they are working from false premises and are consciously or unconsciously misleading their followers. H.P.B. was very aware of such movements in her time and was quick to point out their mistakes. Today such cults and sects are very prolific and often a lot more subtle and insidious in their nature. This is why it is essential that movements such as U.L.T. exist in order to preserve the original message in all its integrity.

It is common to hear someone say, "Oh, that Theosophy business has had its day! The world has moved on since then and all that Victorian stuff is no longer valid! Truth has moved on apace!" But does the state of the world prove that? It appears not. The fact is that there may not be enough of us who are prepared to do as H.P.B. says and "drive ourselves to think." She also said that "to the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle." Perhaps that is a message that we should all take note of. Nothing worth getting is easily won and there is no special meditation method, psychic practice, or magic crystal that can give it to us. To come to any real understanding of Theosophy requires quite a bit of hard work, and progress in this direction is not always as smooth as most people would like it to be. Perhaps this is why some of the more extravagant cults and sects in

society are so popular; they appeal to the sense of wonder that all of us have, but if the message that they are conveying has little substance then the whole thing may be a waste of time for the serious student. If we really want to know the TRUTH, then we will obviously search the places where that TRUTH is most evident. We should know intuitively what is right and what is mere glamour, and we will be unconcerned about the form that the presentation of the teachings takes.

In essence, Theosophy is a wonder, because it helps to free our minds from entanglement in any sectarian views and conceptual ideas. If one comes to the teachings in the true spirit, then this becomes self-evident. Many students do not get beyond a superficial knowledge of the basic Theosophical tenets, while there are others who have a vague awareness of the deeper aspects of Theosophy but are very much rooted in the outer representations. It is left to the "few" to grasp the real message of Theosophy and to understand that TRUTH is to be experienced if it is to really mean anything in our lives. This has always been taught by all the real mystics worldwide since time immemorial and is expressed clearly in the writings of H.P.B. and the Masters if we only make the effort to look. A cursory study of these writings will not give us the real insight that we desire. If we are skipping from one viewpoint to another, we will learn little of real value.

We have to become aware of the fact that genuine Theosophical teachings have a depth that is not shared by most of the so-called spiritual movements of the day. This statement is not made from a sense of blind loyalty to the Theosophical Cause, and is not meant to promote Theosophy in the same way that a follower of some sectarian religion would extol the virtues of his own particular way of thought. It is a reality that can be tested by anyone, if he or she is willing to come to the teachings with an open mind and to study them earnestly and deeply. There is everything that anyone wants to know in these teachings, and quite a bit more in the bargain! The main thing that Theosophy helps to give us is a sense of balance. Study and practice of Theosophical teachings provide us with an overall view of the spiritual path. Ethics and cosmology, the nature of man and of the universe, are blended into one harmonious whole. Whereas other movements may emphasize one thing or the other, Theosophy promotes a soul-satisfying equilibrium.

The work of the Theosophical Movement in general has often been said to have an appeal only for intellectuals. In modern society with its multifarious problems, people want some practical solutions; and this is only right. But if one reads some of the magnificent articles that H.P.B. wrote for various magazines, as well as many by W. Q. Judge and a few others, then it becomes evident that Theosophy *does* provide a very detailed exposition of how to go about helping our fellow men. Of course we have *The Voice of the Silence* which gives in the language of poetry and imagery a set of instructions that the serious student can follow. However, it is only an intense study of pure Theosophy that can reveal to us the truly catholic nature of the teachings. Superficial study might lead to misconceptions and misinterpretations, as well as misrepresentations! So it is important to study, and study well, so that we can put our findings into practice for the good of all.

We can only come to understand the *real* message of the Masters if we prepare and attune ourselves to that level of thought where the Masters dwell. We are not talking here of conceptual thought but something much higher. If we do not make a concerted effort to actualize the teachings that we profess to follow, then stagnation will eventually set in, no matter how much progress seems to be made in the initial stages. We need to learn what *real* Brotherhood means and put it into practice. This word is used *ad nauseum* in modern society and is most often equated with fractional brotherhoods and has little to do with the realization of Human Solidarity and the Oneness of *all*. To experience such Oneness is the goal of all who take Theosophy seriously and are willing to listen to the Message of the Masters which is plain to those who can think clearly; it is only withheld from those who "cannot see the wood for the trees."

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THE miracle is this—"the more we share, the more we have."

—LEONARD NINMOY

# OUR GOD AND OTHER GODS

## From Belief to Knowledge

PERHAPS there is no other sphere of human life as the religious where the power of belief holds such potent sway. From belief to knowledge is but one step, yet it is the longest step anyone can take, entailing time which must be reckoned not by years but by *yugas*.

From belief to knowledge—that seems the legitimate course of human evolution. All the social sciences, like the science of ethics, trace in a variety of ways the line of human progress from belief to knowledge.

Whether we look at a single human individual or at a whole community, we will find that belief often reigns supreme, and many of the beliefs centre round the God idea. Even when clear-cut knowledge is available, belief corrupts that knowledge or takes away from its real potency. To study what kind of God is our own, or anyone else's we have to trace the nature of our belief, or, if we are fortunate and truly civilized, the nature of our knowledge, about God.

From savagery to civilization, the struggles of evolution are intimately bound up with the concepts of fear and praise. Fear is the expression of hatred; praise, of love. All of us, children or adults, civilized or savage, are governed by the primary instincts of love and hate; we praise all that we love, and we fear all that we hate. We love and praise, hate and fear, in ignorance; and the measure of our ignorance is the measure of our savagery. The savage loves and hates, praises and fears, in absolute ignorance; he is a being of instinct, and in that he is more akin to the animal than to man, though he has in him the germ of mind. That germ fructifies by the constant interplay of the primal instincts of love and hate.

Beliefs have to do with instincts, not with intelligence. Instincts are irrational—they may be right or wrong—for reason is absent.

Almost all human beings have an instinctual belief in God. The savage has a totem or a fetish for his God; the civilized man has his idol, image or symbol of Deity; the philosopher and the mystic rationalize their instinctual belief and then experience it in realization. Human beings may be divided for this purpose into three categories: (1) savages; (2) ordinary men and women of our civilization who have

learnt to use at least in some measure their reasoning faculty, their intelligence; and (3) philosophers and mystics who have rationalized their primal instinctual belief and have known and realized Deity or God.

Between the belief of the savage in his totem and the belief of the ordinary person in his cross, or crescent, or fire, or idol, there is but a difference of degree. The intelligence of the ordinary person does not bring him knowledge of Deity or God. He knows many things, but he does not possess knowledge about God. When the savage is afraid he propitiates his totem; when the Christian is afraid he crosses himself; when the Hindu wishes to propitiate his god, he does *pooja*. When the savage offers praise, he decorates his totem, but so do the Christian and the Jew who decorate their altar, and the Hindu his idol. On the other hand, between the ordinary man or woman of every religion and the true philosophers and mystics, the difference is not one of degree of knowledge or of ignorance, but one of kind. The philosopher rationalizes, the mystic realizes; they *know*, while ordinary people only *believe*.

Ignorance always binds men and women in chains. It is the prolific parent of superstitions, and one of these is the notion that God cannot be known. Present-day humanity is filled with this notion, and it is religious beliefs that are mostly responsible for it. The true Prophets never taught such a gospel of ignorance; it is the priests of every creed who have invented and sustained it. Every time a Prophet comes to proclaim that God can and should be known, so many times the priests teach in his name that God cannot be known, that to try to know him is pride and blasphemy.

It is this priestcraft that has obscured the true knowledge about Deity. The primal belief that within us as without us there is a Mystery to be fathomed, a Hope to be realized, a Wisdom to be mastered, gets crushed when priestcraft succeeds. Atheism, agnosticism, materialism are but natural reactions to the suppressed and repressed heart-instinct which believes in Deity.

Theosophy, which means literally the science and the knowledge about Deity, is against separative religions because of this superstition they encourage, which in turn gives rise to atheism, materialism, agnosticism. Theosophy is Gnosis; it says that God can be known, should be known, and teaches the method of obtaining that knowledge.

Therefore the true philosophers and mystics of every religion can be regarded as Theosophists; they are the natural outcome of true religion.

The religionist says, "Pray from a distance, but do not pry into the mystery of God; you cannot know God." The Atheist says, "Do not pray; there is no God to be known." The Theosophist says, "Seek, for knowledge about Deity is available; the way to Godhead surely exists."

The ordinary men and women of today possess sufficient knowledge, but they do not apply what they know to the problem of God. If they would use the Law of Analogy and Correspondence, they could widen their sphere of the known and narrow their sphere of the unknown. If they do not, it is because they are reluctant to have their beliefs disturbed. The orthodox Muslim or Jew would find his Allah or Jehovah shatter into pieces if he applied his knowledge that the universe is governed and sustained by Law. The orthodox Christian would find his Christ, "the only begotten Son of God," neither unique nor the one and only; he would have to acknowledge that there have been and will be many Sons of God, as great and glorious as Jesus the Christ. The atheist and the materialist would likewise find their respective gods of disbelief shattered.

Atheists believe that there is no God. Agnostics think that it is impossible to know whether there is a God or anything beyond material phenomena. Gnostics hold that they can and do know. Monotheism believes in only one God, but it has anthropomorphized the concept and attributed human form or personality to God. Polytheism believes in more than one God, or a hierarchy of Gods. Pantheism holds that God is everything—living Nature, Life—and everything is God. Finally, there is the God of Pansophia, all-knowledge or wisdom, which comprises "the universal traditions gathered and preserved by the Initiates, who have perfected them into an almost faultless system." (*S.D.*, II, 133)

The Hindus speak of the "three faces" of Deity—Brahma, the creator, Vishnu, the preserver, and Shiva, the destroyer-regenerator. They are not three separate, personified gods, but three aspects of the One Impersonal Deity.

Man is an embodied god, therefore a Trinity. As in the universe, so in man, the creative, preservative and regenerative aspects are at work, all three proceeding from within without. They are the three

aspects of Intelligence in motion. Brahma, the creative Intelligence, is represented by pure Kama, the divine desire of creating happiness and love. Vishnu, the preservative Intelligence, is represented by Manas: and Shiva, the regenerative Intelligence by Buddhi.

All is Life, all is Consciousness, *i.e.*, Intelligence. Life is Consciousness which is simple in its manifestation in the lower forms of life, becomes more and more complex in the higher forms, until at last in man it becomes self-consciousness, from where it has to proceed to Universal Self-consciousness. Self, Atma, is in all, but in the lower kingdoms of Nature it does not know itself; in the human kingdom it knows itself, and has further the capacity to transform itself into Mahatma. Man then becomes a god.

People worship false gods when they look without; and those who advocate worship of such gods are false teachers. The true Teachers have warned us that

ignorance created Gods and cunning took advantage of the opportunity....Remember the sum of human misery will never be diminished unto that day when the better portion of humanity destroys in the name of Truth, morality, and universal charity, the altars of their false gods.

We must gain perception of Buddhi, the Shiva aspect, which brings us to Second Birth. The true *Dwija*, the "Twice-born," is one who has "died" in his feeling and mind nature, giving birth to Wisdom. Though living on earth, he has become like unto a god for whom neither earth nor heaven hold any mysteries.

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In a controversy, the instant we feel anger we have already ceased striving for the truth, and have begun striving for ourselves.

—THOMAS CARLYLE

## THE GOLDEN KEYS

NEAR the beginning of the Third Fragment of the *The Voice of the Silence*, the “aspirant to godlike Wisdom” says to the Guru:

Yea, Lord; I see the PATH; its foot in mire, its summit lost in glorious light Nirvanic. And now I see the ever narrowing Portals on the hard and thorny way to Jnana.

This verse precedes the enumeration of the Paramitas or the “six transcendental virtues” and their culmination, the “seventh step of Wisdom,” *Prajna*. Every verse, every sentence of this priceless *Book of the Golden Precepts* is full of meaning, rich with suggestion for the enlightenment of “the few” for whom it was recorded. It offers help in gaining self-knowledge and self-realization at whatever stage on the inner Path an individual may find himself. It is not the Path that varies—“The Path is one for all, the means to reach the goal must vary with the Pilgrims.”

Bearing this in mind, it should be noted that the disciple says in the verse quoted above that he *sees* the Path, sees the ever narrowing Portals. This seeing is a necessary first step. H.P.B. has “rent the veil before the secret Path” and made it possible for us to see the way, but we are warned that each one will “have to travel on alone. The Teacher can but point the way.” We must recognize that it could not be otherwise. It is an essential, an immutable spiritual rule that the disciple must always be left free to choose; but in order to choose intelligently he must first see; and for this, help is given.

That the Path leads from “mire” to “glorious light Nirvanic” is not all that the aspirant sees; he sees also “the ever narrowing Portals on the hard and thorny way to Jnana.” Each one begins to travel on the Path from where his own Karma has placed him, with the faults and weaknesses of his character, the unessential details that fill his daily life. This is the “mire” in which the lower end of the ladder rests for all of us. But, when the Path is seen, there arises from the vision the conviction that we must make light our burden by purging our lives of all dross, that our characters and activities must be purified, and that this must be done as quickly and as wisely as possible. The seeing of the “ever narrowing Portals” means just this, for the way is indeed made “hard” by our selfish desires, and “thorny” by the machinations

of the lower Manas.

When the disciple sees this, the Teacher exclaims, "Thou seest well, Lanoo," and finds him ready to have the "golden keys" to the Portals explained to him.

The Paramitas may be regarded as the ever-active spiritual Powers or creative Forces of Nature. Man, being the microcosm of the great macrocosm, has the essence of all these in him. According as he conceives and uses these Powers, he becomes. They are *divine* Virtues, impersonal and universal, but to be practised by the individual soul that he may achieve conscious Godhood, making of himself "a Bodhisattva, son of the Dhyanis."

The interrelation between the seven Paramitas has to be understood. If we put them in a circle (like the seven globes of the planetary chain) we shall find that the first and the seventh, *Dana* and *Prajna*, are on one plane and make a pair; the second and the sixth, *Shila* and *Dhyana*, are on the next plane and make another pair; the third and the fifth, *Kshanti* and *Virya*, come next and make a third pair. Remains the middle Paramita, *Viraga*, desirelessness or dispassion, which constitutes for us the starting point.

If we reflect upon this interrelation between the Paramitas, it will be seen that *Kshanti*, patience, brings strength, *Virya*; *Shila*, harmony, ensures perfect contemplation, *Dhyana*; *Dana*, spiritual love, creates the Compassionate Wisdom, *Prajna*, which clears our perception. At our stage of evolution, much depends on the application of the middle Paramita, *Viraga*, dispassion, for when, with its help, illusion is conquered and truth alone perceived, the development of the other Paramitas follows.

The Paramitas being *divine* Virtues, their nature must be imagined with the help of what we can understand of the nature and character of divine Men. Thus *Dana* may be thought of as the very essence and spirit of *giving*—giving everything; holding to no possessions; sacrificing freely and joyously one's all on the altar of service. *Shila* is absolute harmony, perfect integration, perfect development in symmetry, as a whole, with no lopsidedness; a flawless sense of the fitness of things. *Kshanti* is the patience that accepts everything—as Mother Earth accepts, without resentment, without rejection, the foul and the lovely alike. *Viraga*, dispassionate awareness, is the central point within, a looking on all, evaluating all, without losing one's inner

equipoise; ascribing no false values to anything because of one's likes and dislikes; illusion conquered; the Truth, uninfluenced by pain and pleasure, perceived. *Virya* is the dauntless energy which will fight its way to the end against all foes. *Dhyana* is the constant remembrance of the Real within the unreal, the True behind the untrue; it is therefore the perfect contemplation of the golden Heart of Truth. *Prajna* is divine consciousness, making of man a Bodhisattva—he whose essence (*sattva*) has become intelligence (*bodhi*); the awareness belonging to one who has returned “from the other shore.”

Such to the Portals are the golden keys.

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Not only in the Theosophical Society, but out of it, are tyros in Occultism. They are dabblers in a fine art, a mighty science, an almost impenetrable mystery. The motives that bring them to the study are as various as the number of individuals engaged in it, and as hidden from even themselves as is the centre of the earth from the eye of science. Yet the *motive* is more important than any other factor.

These dilettanti in this science have always been abroad. No age or country has been without them, and they have left after them many books—of no particular value. Those of today are making them now, for the irresistible impulse of vanity drives them to collate the more or less unsound hypotheses of their predecessors, which, seasoned with a proper dash of mystery, are put forth to the crowd of those who would fain acquire wisdom at the cost-price of a book. Meanwhile the world of real occultists smiles silently, and goes on with the laborious process of sifting out the living germs from the masses of men. For occultists must be found and fostered and prepared for coming ages when power will be needed and pretension will go for nothing.

—W. Q. JUDGE

## LIFE'S PILGRIMAGE

THE Secret Doctrine teaches

the fundamental identity of all Souls with the Universal Oversoul, the latter being itself an aspect of the Unknown Root; and the obligatory pilgrimage for every Soul—a spark of the former—through the Cycle of Incarnation (or “Necessity”) in accordance with Cyclic and Karmic law, during the whole term. (I, 17)

In this obligatory pilgrimage which each individual Soul has to undertake, we are clearly warned that we cannot look forward to any privileges or special gifts except what are won by each Ego by his own “personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations.” Who is this pilgrim and what is this pilgrimage? H.P.B. explains:

“Pilgrim” is the appellation given to our *Monad* (the two in one) during its cycle of incarnations. It is the only immortal and eternal principle in us, being an indivisible part of the integral whole—the Universal Spirit, which it emanates, and into which it is absorbed at the end of the cycle. (*S.D.*, I, 16 fn.)

In other words, the pilgrim is the reincarnating principle, and the duration of the pilgrimage is the time that intervenes between the emanation from the Universal Soul and reabsorption into It.

In these days pilgrimages have lost their significance. Although they are undertaken by many, there is much of self-deception and superstition characterizing them. Neither the place of pilgrimage nor the pilgrims are the better for having undertaken them and there is no enlightened understanding or searching examination of this question. Be that as it may, the pilgrimage referred to in the teaching given above is the archetypal pilgrimage, an inward journey which every human Soul has to undertake if he is to become at last one with his divine counterpart. It does not require soulless rituals and showy paraphernalia. It is a cultivation of absolute dependence on one's internal resources, a dependence on that which is permanent, the true Self, the immortal aspect of our nature.

The purpose of life's pilgrimage is to realize the crystal ray of Alaya which is within us.

The Law of God, the Law which is God, ever leads the

struggling mortal to change his school for learning from the without to the within. Not to north or south, east or west, zenith or nadir, should men and women turn if they aspire to possess the Light of Peace, Understanding and Contentment. The Masters teach that each mind should go within to the cave of the Heart. There the Immortal Warrior awaits the mortal fighter. There is Krishna waiting for Arjuna, bent on transmuting him into MAN, *Nara*—the Disciple who will attain Adeptship and become a Master. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. XXVIII, p. 275)

From *Nara* to *Narayana* is a long and strenuous pilgrimage which each Soul has to undertake sooner or later. There is no choice in the matter. The question is: Are we going to be wise travellers and pilgrims, taking counsel from those who have performed the journey before us and advanced far ahead of us, or are we going to neglect them and their experiences? Are we going to equip ourselves properly to meet the trials and tribulations of the pilgrimage, or are we going to be foolhardy, undertaking the journey in a light-hearted manner? The success or failure of our spiritual adventure depends on what answers we have for these questions.

This inward journey has three aspects: study, mortification and realization.

By study is not meant mere theoretical or book study. It means, in the language of *Light on the Path*:

Regard earnestly all the life that surrounds you.

Learn to look intelligently into the hearts of men.

Regard most earnestly your own heart.

For through your own heart comes the one light which can illuminate life and make it clear to your eyes.....

Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this.

Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

This study, if properly and regularly undertaken, will bring us nearer to a realization of the truth contained in the Three Fundamental Propositions of *The Secret Doctrine*—about God, transcendental and immanent, about divine, universal Law, and about the fundamental

unity of all Souls with the Universal Oversoul. We shall then be in a better position to realize that Universal Brotherhood is a fact in Nature and that for the successful completion of the pilgrimage we must learn to become real devotees. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita*:

He who seeth me in all things and all things in me looseneth not his hold on me and I forsake him not. And whosoever, believing in spiritual unity, worshippeth me who am in all things, dwelleth with me in whatsoever condition he may be. He, O Arjuna, who by the similitude found in himself seeth but one essence in all things, whether they be evil or good, is considered to be the most excellent devotee. (VI, 30-32)

Krishna assures those who, thinking of him as identical with all, constantly worship him, that he will “bear the burden of the responsibility of their happiness.” (IX, 22)

Mortification should be viewed from the point of view of self-discipline. Pilgrimage and the pampering of one’s lower propensities cannot go together. We have to curb and control our lower tendencies. We have to purify ourselves in the fire of true knowledge. In attempting this, we have to bear in mind what Krishna says about those who “practise severe self-mortification not enjoined in the Scriptures.” He describes them as being “full of hypocrisy and pride, longing for what is past and desiring more to come.”

What constitutes proper mortification of the body, speech and mind is defined by Krishna in the Seventeenth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*; and further practical advice can be found in these words:

Three simple rules, corresponding to our triple nature, adequately observed, will recompense us beyond measure:

(1) Mortify speech by not talking about oneself and thus drawing attention to oneself.

(2) Mortify the desire to get advantage over someone, or to retaliate, or to attempt self-justification, or to insist on having one’s own say, much less on having the last word.

(3) Mortify the mind by destroying pictures of self-esteem when non-self-consciously formed and by desisting from reproducing them, or deliberately forming such new ones.

The positive gain from the first rule will be purification of the

senses; from the second, increase of compassion and brotherliness, while from the third will result the power of concentration. (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. VI, p. 162)

Study and mortification lead to realization. *The Voice of the Silence* gives instructions which, when scrupulously followed, are valuable and also point to the realization which will inevitably result therefrom:

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions: mistrust thy senses; they are false. But 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.

But we have to take note that the successful termination of our pilgrimage will turn out to be a hollow triumph unless the enlightenment won by our effort is used for the benefit of humanity—to enlighten men's minds and hearts.

“The Siddhis of perfection may loom far, far away”; but unless we make the right resolve now, and dedicate all our achievements of this life and of the incarnations to come to the service of humanity, we will not be able to distribute freely and generously the life-giving *prasad* of our successful pilgrimage to those who in their wretched desolation sit starving for the bread of Wisdom.

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THAT which is known as you is the result of one continuous existence of an entity. Your present body and your soul (or the personality) are the results of a series of existences. Your Karma is a result of co-existence. The individuality, or spirit, is the cause of the soul and personality, or what is called "you." You are the manifestation of an entity and are the result of many appearances of that entity upon this stage of action in various personalities.

—*The Path*, November 1887

## GURUS AND CHELAS

[We reprint here a letter written by T. Subba Row to an unknown addressee and published in *The Theosophical Forum*, Vol. VI, No. 7, March 15, 1935. Subba Row, referred to by H.P.B. as "one of the best metaphysicians and Vedantic scholars in India," was the personal Chela of one of the Mahatmas.]

COLONEL Olcott was in our midst and I had charge of preparing everything for his tour in the southern district. This, together with my official duties, left me but little time to attend to anything else. You will see from the *Theosophist* that Col. Olcott was welcomed all over the place with as great, if not more, enthusiasm and pomp and heartiness as any reigning prince would have been.

I am glad that you agree with me in thinking that the ways of Mahatmas are inscrutable. If we compare ourselves with those below us in the scale of civilization, we can easily find that on almost all points our ways are inscrutable to them. The Adepts belong to a higher plane and are surrounded by quite different conditions. They do not look upon things from our standpoint. We cannot, therefore, criticize their actions until we know something more of them and arrive at their plane of existence. As a matter of fact they take into consideration before arriving at a conclusion many points we overlook, either through our impatience or from our inability caused by the underdevelopment of faculties which will be unfolded in us when we evolve into the fifth round. They are all artificial fifth rounders and possess more sense than we do. As a matter of fact I know of many chelas, high chelas too, very near initiation, who are ignorant of the art of reading and writing. Will you believe this? Nevertheless, it is a fact, I can assure you. When these develop the sixth faculty, the existence of which is not chimerical—seeing mediums in trances, and mesmeric patients under control, prove beyond a doubt that they are occasionally on the borderland of a superior sixth sense (I allude to what is known as clairvoyance)—when, I say, the neophytes develop that faculty, they know everything. They can read or write in any language, by a process known only to initiates and which I know not how to describe plainly in writing to you. Our Gurus, be it remembered, never teach us as our English schoolmasters. Nothing by word. They simply impress in our minds and help us develop the higher fifth

rounder's faculty.

You speak like a born Brahmin of India, when you say, "The way to eternal life is a gradation from the humble aspirant to the lay chela, and so on to an Adept." Only denounce the notion eternity from your mind. There is no such state anywhere. Progress, progress, that is all we see in the universe. Every state, however blissful and however long, several billions of years maybe, still has an end to it and therefore it *cannot* be called *eternal*, in the Christian theological sense. As far as I understand, the gradation with which men are concerned at present is as follows: When a man first offers himself as a chela or resolves to become a chela, he is an irregular probationer; whether he is notified of it or no, is immaterial. After at least five years, the time may be indefinitely prolonged extending to even several births in some cases, when the stamina to *raise* and elevate ourselves to the higher level is wanting, he becomes a regular probationary Chela. He has to be at least seven years in this state. The time may be prolonged as before observed. The Chela may or may not be informed of his state. This period is a difficult one. The Chela is exposed to all temptations at the hands of the advanced Chelas. He must show his fitness for what he aspires to at every corner; he must show that he has more of the Spirit in him than of matter—in short his determination to become a precocious and artificial fifth rounder should be unshaken under any circumstances.

He may fall, but he can also recover the lost ground if he has determination enough. Then he becomes a regular probationary Chela, coming into close connection with his Master or Guru. After some time, the minimum period again is seven years, if the Chela is found fit, he is initiated and is called an Adept. After this they assure me are numerous grades of initiations, and in fact the Adepts are ever going to a higher grade than before. Where the end is, I am not informed and conjectures are misleading. An artificial fifth rounder has by no means reached a place of rest. He has to advance still to Taposatya, of course in the proper time only. But he can enjoy bliss, which we have now no sense to conceive, until the time comes for him to advance to the sixth and seventh rounds.

For western minds wherein physical intelligence has attained a high degree of development, and spirituality (not devoutness or piety) is just beginning to grow, it is difficult to comprehend these positions.

Mr. A. O. Hume is a type of this class of westerners. Mr. Hume is disappointed. He first expected the Mahatmas would come to his house, occupy apartments, dine with him and give him lessons two or three hours a day on Occultism as he has seen his Munshi teach him the vernacular when he first came to India a raw civilian. He thought a few short months, and he could display all the powers he had seen and heard the Adepts exercise in the Arena of Europe. He is a senior wrangler and nothing could be difficult for him. The keenness of his disappointment when he found that the Oriental method of teaching was not in *words* and that he had by certain methods and a life of chastity, truth, universal benevolence and above all *unselfishness* to develop a sixth faculty—the keenness of his disappointment was equal to his conceit and ignorance. In his eastern moods he is patient and contented; in his western moods, which return to him now and then by sheer force of habit, he kicks over the traces and calls the Adepts names.

The “Fragments of Occult Truth”<sup>1</sup> contain very little. In fact they are the first drops struggling to the surface from the spring of occultism. A very small minority of the Adepts permit them to be given out. The rest are against giving any such information to the outer world. My venerable Guru is one of that minority. We shall see by the result whether the civilized world deserves this gift.

Your observation that you must be up and doing if you want to secure your immortality is perfectly true. This is impressed in the mind of every Occult student by his Guru. Mere goody-goodness and irreproachable life will not help us. We must swim against the current and by dint of perseverance mount higher. If not, we will be left where we are to vegetate and rot in the scale to which we may have come. The Kingdom of Heaven ought to be taken by force. Will, irresistible, indomitable, will alone carry upward an Occult student. If he has not got that, he has *no chance* whatever. Only one who toils hard can ascend a mountain peak.

It is good to read all the books you mention, Patanjali among others. But do not begin to practise anything mentioned therein without consulting those who know something about it. You will bring ruin on your body without which you can do very little towards

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<sup>1</sup> Reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vols. 24 and 25.

progress. It is not time for you, I think, to begin Yoga. Try to lead the life mentioned in H.H.'s first pamphlet (*Esoteric Theosophy*) as far as you can for some time and thus qualify yourself to become a Chela. Remember that your body has to be fitted to that pursuit in the first instance. Our Gurus leave us free to study what we like. But if we practise anything without consulting them, we will fall into the ditch. No man can become an initiate without a Guru. Indeed without him one cannot advance one *real* step in the direction of Occult study. The practice in India, how they obtain Gurus, is this—from the time a man knows he is inclined to spirituality, and finds that the worldly pleasures (Maya or mirage) have no charms for him, he begins to contemplate in a lonely place and to will, *will*, WILL that a Guru shall come to him and help him. He seldom fails if he is in earnest. From that time he so devotes his life, chelaship begins. I have already told you, being informed of it beforehand is immaterial. It is not necessary one should be a member of any society to deserve a Guru. But the Occult Fraternities in every part of the world have now made a rule that admission into their ranks must be sought through the "Theosophical Society." I mistake no confidence when I inform you that I know personally of many instances in which those who were Chelas—a very high Chela one of them—before the advent of the Society among us in India, were compelled by their Gurus to join the Society on pain of their being forsaken by them. But joining the Society alone will not help you. You must work, work uphill. What I did, I repeat, is nothing to be admired from my Hindu standpoint. There is not one Hindu Brahmin who will not do the same a hundred times over. Please do not consider me rude when I say, I am not at liberty to give out what is taught me, what I am instructed by my Guru to do. What I do may not suit your bodily constitution and habits of life, and if in your fresh eagerness to rush into Occult study you follow the same and ruin your body, I am responsible for the consequences of these actions, and my Guru too, according to the eternal laws of Karma. There are as many ways to develop the now dormant organ in us as there are persons. The clear seeing Guru alone can say what is good for each, taking into consideration his individual constitution, temper, mode of life, habit, character, etc.

You may ask me as many questions as you please. I shall answer them as far as I know. Only when I tell you that in some instances

I am not at liberty to say further, do not consider me rude or conceited. Implicit obedience to my Guru is absolutely necessary, obedience in thought, mind and deed. For my Guru can read my innermost thoughts.

When I opened the letter in my office, in the presence of my clerks, out dropped a full written sheet in the handwriting of my Guru. He clearly saw the letter and on its way to its destination, thrust a note of his into it. This illustrates one mode as to how, now and then, we receive communications. The passage of matter through matter you must have been familiar with in high spiritual circles. To me it is an intimation that *he, my personal God, has noticed* the letters. By the "sequacious herd" I meant the ordinary people who ever think by proxy and take without inquiry to any belief that a popular leader inculcates. Between them and the initiates is a class of learned and inquiring men, trying to become initiates and occupying the various grades from the ordinary man to the Adept. These are the interpreters to the people of what is passing in the Adept circles. All knowledge of Adepts and their doings, people learn from these direct. But of late English education has dwindled this number into very, very few, and these find still fewer to sympathize with them. So the ordinary people having lost trace of this important class, the Adepts become to them the Gods of Fable, and not real living men. English educated youths, brimful of western science and materialism, deny the existence of the Adepts, whose real existence is difficult to be proved by direct evidence owing to the retirement of this intermediate class, while the old folks maintain that they do not know they live.

A man who stands on level ground commands a view of things within a certain distance. If he ascends a hill he sees his view extend over a greater distance than before, and so on if he ascends higher and higher; the view is still more extended if he has a telescope to aid his eyes. Now if he has formed an opinion of an object that he saw dimly at first sight from level ground, will he not have a more correct notion of it when he views all sides of it from a higher stand with the aid of a telescope? What will be his position if he took to dogmatize upon the first opinion as the only true one? Just the same in my case. I am in a fog, because I am not yet in a position to know and to take into proper account all the circumstances which have entered into that series of actions which culminated in my seeing my Guru so early. *He*

knows it. What my Karmas are, what my latent capacity is, how near or how far I am unfolding my now dormant higher senses, all these he *knows*. I may guess, but that is not knowledge. How can I tell you a thing unless I know it absolutely? It would amount to uttering an *untruth*. What my *affinities* are at this my own incarnation, I am not yet arrived at a stage to know. *I will know it* some time. My own Guru has several Chelas. Some of them have been initiated, others are in the various intermediate grades.

If you had my Guru for your own, or any Guru for that matter, you should be happy being relieved of several incarnations. By process of occult training, and becoming an artificial fifth rounder, you reach safe the other shore of the wide ocean of the fourth of the seven oceans of the Hindu Puranas, in which you will see drowned so many of the ordinary human beings. You will wait there till the time comes to *move on*. What your state then may be I cannot describe, because that higher sense of spirituality without whose development one cannot even imagine this state is not developed in me. Neither can you at present conceive of it ever so faintly. You may be favoured for aught I know. An Adept is not *made but becomes*. If you are determined to become one, you *will* become one. The immutable laws of Nature decreed so. Once we have the determined, inflexible will, we will carry everything before us. Mind under normal conditions is of the same clearness in all persons. By our earthly desires, passions, anger, lust, hatred, love, etc., we ruffle the clean surface and allow sediments to be deposited at the bottom. If the bed of a lake is of red clay, the water is of red colour; if of white sand, is pearly white; if black, black, and so on. Thus a man who has an overruling passion, of any sort, views things distorted by his frailties. Two misers have the same idea of money. Two countries have the same idea of the importance of fashion, and so on. In the same way if we bring our brain to the clear level of the Adept, by banishing from us any feeling for anything worldly, love, hatred, anger, avarice, or any absorbing passion, we are enabled to carry a brain which can be *impressed*. *This is the mode first adopted by our Gurus to teach their Chelas!* This may be done without the Chelas knowing anything about it.

He would only unconsciously to himself find thoughts suggested to him. It is for this purpose a rigid life, as given in H.H.'s first

pamphlet, must be led. We receive communications now and then in a mode we call psychological telegraphy, that is to say, whatever our Masters think, is made to pass in our brain just the same way I suppose a mesmerist makes his thoughts pass into the brain of the subject. Only *we remember* it always, whereas the subject loses traces of them when he awakes. The *impressment* cannot be done if our brains are not as clear as crystal, free from all taints of absorbing worldly feelings of all sorts. When a man brings his brain to this condition of purity, every thought that passes into the minds of others will pass through his as a message, as a message sent from one station to another is heard in all intermediate offices on the line of the telegraph.

The kingdom of Heaven ought to be taken by *force*. If you bring your brain to this state and then *think* of the adepts, they will be forced to take up and assist you.

—S.R.

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CHELASHIP has nothing *whatever* to do with means of subsistence or anything of the kind, for a man can isolate his mind entirely from his body and its surroundings. Chelaship is a *state of mind*, rather than a life according to hard and fast rules on the physical plane. This applies especially to the earlier, probationary period.... It should never be forgotten that Occultism is concerned with the *inner man* who must be strengthened and freed from the dominion of the physical body and its surroundings, which must become his servants. Hence the *first* and chief necessity of Chelaship is a spirit of absolute unselfishness and devotion to Truth; then follow self-knowledge and self-mastery. These are all-important; while outward observance of fixed rules of life is a matter of secondary moment.

—*Lucifer*, June 1889

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The Winter 1994 issue of *New Perspectives Quarterly* examines how the boundaries of life and death are being redrawn as medical science intrudes into the sanctuary of the human individual. With embryo-cloning, DNA mapping, genetic cleansing and organ transplants, the technological system has invaded a realm held sacred by all previous civilizations. As stated editorially by Nathan Gardels:

The great issue of the future for liberal technological societies will be how and where to draw the limits between culture and nature, between human and divine....The paramount issues today are more about the boundaries of the person than about the boundaries of the nation-state....

Issues such as abortion, euthanasia or physician-assisted suicide today dominate the headlines....As science grows more sophisticated, hints of the coming concerns loom before us....

For example, will people be bred and cloned for the manufacture of human organs to be traded on the commodity futures market? Will parents be able to choose the blueprint for their dream child like they might now for their dream house? Will ethnic groups seek to remove any impurities or reinforce favoured traits in their genetic pattern?...

The sacred will surely be called back into the secular experiment. In what may be the weightiest paradox of progress, the far-reaching advances of technological society are resurrecting the religious imagination.

The two edges of our existence, coming to life and dying, are returning to the center stage they had occupied in premodern times. But the script of human origins and destiny is being written anew....

Nothing concentrates the religious imagination like the mysteries of life and death. As applied science not only begins to unravel those mysteries, but manipulate them for human ends, a redefinition of life's dominion will take place.

What then will become of the angels? And what will become of man? Will he find himself so close to the secret of life, yet, as T.S. Eliot darkly foresaw, "farther from God and nearer to the dust"?

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In the same issue of *New Perspectives Quarterly*, Octavio Paz, the

Mexican poet and essayist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1990, observes that death defines life, and how we look upon death reflects our ways of living. The breath which creates life and gives matter its form is the same breath that corrodes and withers and defeats it. But in today's consumer civilization death is such a disagreeable fact that it is seldom taken into account and talked about.

Our death illumines our lives [writes Paz]. If our deaths lack meaning, our lives also lacked it. Each of us dies the death he is looking for, the death he has made for himself....

Death in our time does not have any significance that transcends it or that refers to other values as it did, for example, in ancient Mexico. The opposition between life and death was not so absolute then. Life extended into death, and vice versa. Death was not the natural end of life but one phase of an infinite cycle. Life, death and resurrection were stages of a cosmic process that repeated itself continuously....

Fear makes us turn our backs on death, and by refusing to contemplate it we shut ourselves off from life which is a totality that includes it....Death and life are opposites that complement each other. Both are halves of a sphere that we, mired in one dimension of time and space, can only glimpse....

Man, if he detaches himself from immediacy, can transcend the temporal opposition separating these spheres and perceive them as a superior whole. He must open himself out to death if he wishes to open himself out to life....

A civilization that denies death ends by denying life.

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With increase in life expectancy and the growing proportion of the elderly in our society, the problem of growing old gracefully has assumed a greater relevance today. Research now suggests that it is time to revolutionize our thinking about what aging actually is, particularly in the precinct of the human mind.

In the November/December issue of *Psychology Today*, Kristin White deals with the problem of age-related deterioration in mental functions. The hopeful note that is struck is that this is a reversible trend. Aging, it is now clear, is not only part of an ongoing maturation process that all our organs go through, but is also closely related to

mental activity. There is a growing body of evidence that body and mind influence each other in many ways, and this interaction can be seen even in the aging process.

Aging should not be thought of as decline, say today's researchers. Learning goes on and some skills, in fact, improve. Mental function in the aged, the researchers say, is largely determined by three factors—mental lifestyle, impact of chronic disease, and flexibility of the mind. In the new picture of mental aging, it is not all a matter of "use it or lose it." "The brain's wonderful plasticity remains throughout life," says Marion Diamond, Ph.D., of the University of California at Berkeley. People who abandon mental activity when older, experience slowing and deterioration of many functions—many of them reversible when the person resumes mental activity.

One of the most profoundly important mental functions [writes White] is memory—notorious for its failure with age....One thing, however, is already fairly clear—many aspects of memory are not a function of age at all but of education....What a person already knows helps him to learn new material. New information can be fixed securely in the memory if scaffolding is in place for it to fit in....

A busy mental lifestyle keeps the mind fit, says psychologist Warner Schaie, now director of the gerontology center in the College of Human Development at Penn State. "People intensely involved in life retain their intellectual abilities better than mental couch potatoes....A person who stops solving problems arrives at a point where he can't solve problems," Schaie declares....

The great individual variability in tests of mental function that shows up as people age suggests something crucial: major deterioration is not preordained by nature. Substantial decline is not necessarily built into the brain. What commonly occurs must not be interpreted as inevitable.

Every psychologist knows that as we live our unique histories we develop in increasingly divergent ways. No doubt, we're building our own customized assortment of neural networks....

We can to some degree outwit the effect of time on the mind by adapting our mental procedures around whatever declines occur. Most of us, sooner or later, will lose in efficiency. We will have trouble juggling several different tasks at the same time. We can do as well as ever on any single one of them by planning work on one

thing at a time, with fewer interruptions. And we can perform tasks as well as when younger if we take off the pressure to do them in a limited amount of time.

The physiological changes which take place with advancing age cannot, then, be separated from psychological factors, and therefore how to age gracefully is primarily a psychological question.

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Vaclav Havel, the President of Czechoslovakia and a great playwright, is among those who believe that hope, in a karmic sense, holds the key to happiness (*Parade*, April 1994). Complete skepticism, he observes, is the consequence of discovering that one's enthusiasms are based on illusions. This skepticism leads to a dehumanization of history—a history taking its own course, having nothing to do with us. But we all contribute to the making of history depending on how we acquit ourselves in the here and now.

The kind of hope I often think about [Havel writes] is, I believe, a state of mind, not a state of the world. Either we have hope within us or we don't. Hope is not a prognostication—it's an orientation of the spirit. Each of us must find real, fundamental hope within himself. You can't delegate that to anyone else.

Hope in this deep and powerful sense is not the same as joy when things are going well, or willingness to invest in enterprises that are obviously headed for early success, but rather an ability to work for something to succeed. Hope is definitely not the same thing as optimism. It's not the conviction that something will turn out well, but the certainty that something makes sense, regardless of how it turns out. It is this hope, above all, that gives us strength to live and to continually try new things, even in conditions that seem as hopeless as ours do, here and now. In the face of this absurdity, life is too precious a thing to permit its devaluation by living pointlessly, emptily, without meaning, without love, and, finally, without hope.

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The separative tendency inherent in the lower man has as one of its natural expressions, faultfinding. Compulsive faultfinding can

undermine any relationship, and is above all detrimental to the person himself. As stated in *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita* (pp. 207-8):

Our individualistic tendencies incline us to think that a sense of superiority is necessarily present with power and the absence of fear. And again, if we take the simplest, most definite and most easily understood of these qualities, "not speaking of the faults of others," we see only a pale and negative virtue. Yet faultfinding is the most universal and most insidious expression of conceit and self-assertion. Speaking of and pointing out the faults of others is a vice which masquerades under many forms of virtue but in reality it is used to hide our own faults and present the appearance of a righteousness we do not possess—a vice which perpetuates self-delusion and negatives every apparent virtue.

Psychologists have done new work on the faultfinding tendency in recent years. They have looked at the roots, the deeper motivations, needs and anxieties that make people criticize others, and have come up with methods for avoiding or limiting it. In the April issue of *Parade*, Clare McHugh outlines what psychologists are saying about the urge to criticize and how to control it:

The first thing compulsive critics must do in order to change is understand why they do it. Many people, psychologists report, become compulsive critics out of fear....

Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., the author of *Getting the Love You Want*, points out that one partner in a relationship often criticizes the other for things that are equally true of him or herself....

Psychologists draw two conclusions about criticism from recent studies. One, that it is a habit born of a stereotype, for example, "he's a hopeless slob." The habitual critic unconsciously reduces people to the sum of their faults....

The second generalization is that the most highly critical people are also very self-critical. This gives rise to the tantalizing idea that the key to laying off others may be to learn to lay off yourself....

Jeffrey Young, Ph.D., agrees that changing your thinking is the most important part of dealing with a problem with criticism, but it's also the most difficult. In his psychology practice, he spends hours trying to convince such clients of the cost of their mind-set....Before they can change, people in a compulsively

critical mode must accept that they hurt themselves with their behaviour by alienating other people and souring relationships with those closest to them....

When we compulsively criticize other people, we are refusing to accept them as they are. But we are also refusing to see ourselves for what *we are*. Change means finding the clarity to deal with the very areas in ourselves that make us most uncomfortable. It takes hard work and calls for a commitment to self-restraint. And yet the rewards are considerable.

Speech is creative; it creates confusion, ill will and strife at the lower end, and enlightenment, peace and concord at the higher. Fault-finding is a marked feature of lower speech and invariably such an attitude results in our missing the lesson to be learnt from any experience. Brooding over the faults of others is apt to lead one imperceptibly to act likewise. It would then be a case of the pot calling the kettle black. What we need is to turn the searchlight inwards.

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THERE are three distinct forms of knowledge. First, the knowledge resulting from observation, *i.e.*, knowledge gained through the senses, which are the primary sources of feeling known as the five senses, *viz.*: sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch. Secondly the knowledge of the intellect, that is, the instrument of sense, and without the association of the emotions; for instance, determining in our mind the beauty of truth and the abhorring of falsehood, without having before us any presentative images. Thirdly, intuitive knowledge, which a man is bound to believe, and the perception of which is forced upon him, his consciousness being compelled to accept it as true; for if he did not accept it as true, he would, as a natural consequence, have to deny the existence of mind altogether, and to make out knowledge to be a liar.

—BERACHYAH BEN NATRONAI HANAKDAN (c. 12th century)