

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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HUMAN MIND : OBSCENE AND PURE

A SPIRITUAL POINT OF VIEW

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IDEAS are purifiers. They free the mind from prejudices. They humble the proud mind. They soften the hard mind and give it a gracious shape. They curb the craving mind and endow it with some altruism. They take the sting out of lust and reveal what love is. They chase every passion away and befriend us in our desolation. Ideas are great philanthropists.

Students of Plato have learnt to look upon Ideas as substantial spiritual entities: they are not vague formlessness, but their forms are not rigid, breakable and mortal. They are entities but not separated, one from the other; they are substantial but not material; they are spiritual but not distant; they are steadfast but not static; dynamic and potent, they symbolize activity without motion. Collectively these Living Ideas form the complete Wisdom-Religion or Theosophy.

Sometimes each Idea is pictured as a radiant and shining god, *Deva*. These Ideas live and breathe and influence, and are inheritable Intelligences. They are collectively God, *i.e.*, the Logos.

The Great Teachers, and sages, seers, poets and singers embody within themselves some of these Living Ideas, and when in

their corporeal nature they are able to give expression to these Ideas, they become inspirers and instructors of the masses of humanity. Geniuses are men and women who incarnate within themselves one of these Living Gods. The original view about a human Genius was that he had within him a tutelary deity. Genius was regarded as a protecting companion of such a person, was born and died with him; and this popular belief had a basis of real truth. Just as our body is born and dies, so does Genius come to birth within our consciousness; its parents are Dispassion and Love; when these virtues weaken, the action of this Genius weakens; when these virtues are neglected in practice, this Genius dies, *i.e.*, departs.

One of the functions of Theosophy is to enable its votary to incarnate within himself the Living Genius, a Radiant God. Theosophy insists on virtue and recognition of virtuous beings; it is intolerant of vice and teaches every student to be equally intolerant of vice, however understanding he may be and charitable, to vicious men and women. Theosophy is intolerant of sin because it shows to the sinner the way to fight and overcome his sin.

Each student who is earnest tries to overcome his weaknesses; each devotee attempts to invite his Genius, his Protecting Companion, his real Friend and Guide, to come and abide in his mind. This alone makes him a Living Unit. In the human Kingdom the dead are very many; the Living are the few; the really Living are those who have incarnated within themselves the Living God, *Punya-Purusha*; the Man of Virtue comes to reside in our mind when *Papa-Purusha*, the Man of Sin, is driven out of it.

Each man of flesh has his evil genius—not another person, but a force which circulates in his blood, as his blood circulates in his flesh. But this is also true: there are Evil Forces, Ideas of Death generated and sustained by the Black Brothers of the Shadow. Writers of obscene books, painters of obscene pictures, singers of obscene songs, come under that evil influence. The thoughts and ideas of such men and women hinder the spiritual progress of humanity. Theosophical students should shun obscenity wherever

it presents itself—in any shape, or in any mind.

The Record of Theosophy left behind by H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge contains Living Ideas. Our first duty is to make them our daily companions; but that is not sufficient. We should so hold them in our minds that they become the gauge with which we measure all thoughts, all ideas. As we strengthen the presence and the activity of the Living Ideas, we are able very quickly to value the thoughts presented in a newspaper column or in the pages of a book. Almost instantaneously we are able to decipher the hidden mischief which is obscenity. We have to learn to protect ourselves against the insidious manner of obscenity; for example, that which blackens the advertisement pages of many a newspaper. The stages of Theosophical growth are marked by the student's capacity (1) to understand the Theosophical Ideas scattered in our authentic literature; (2) to assimilate them sufficiently to push out vices and to curb the vicious tendencies in himself; (3) to hold them in his consciousness in such a manner that he is able to reject the attack and the intrusion of the dead ideas which, like white ants, eat away our very humanity; (4) to gather the *pranic* force of the Living Ideas of Theosophy to such an extent that the Mind-Soul of those Teachings, represented by H.P.B., begins to precipitate Its Image in his heart. This is the student's Second Birth. It is the Birth of Genius whose father is Dispassion and whose mother is Love.

MAHAT or the "Universal Mind" is the source of Manas. The latter is Mahat, *i.e.*, mind, in man. Manas is also called *Kshetrajna*, "embodied Spirit," because it is, according to our philosophy, the *Manasa-putras*, or "Sons of the Universal Mind," who *created*, or rather produced, the *thinking* man, "*manu*," by incarnating in the *third Race* mankind in our Round. It is Manas, therefore, which is the real incarnating and permanent *Spiritual Ego*, the INDIVIDUALITY, and our various and numberless personalities only its external masks.

—*The Key to Theosophy*

THE RELIGION OF EXPERIENCE

THE BUDDHA SHOWS THE WAY

ALL human beings have beliefs. Some have beliefs drawn from what are called holy books—bibles and korans; others have beliefs drawn from scientific research and publications; and the millions the world over who cannot read have beliefs rooted in customs and traditions.

Most followers of the "religion" of modern science have much in common with believers in religious creeds. Their creed is different, but it is still a creed, about which there is as much credulity, superstition and even fanaticism as there is about religious creeds. The feeling of blind belief dies hard, and takes a long time in the dying!

Science, however, has rendered one service to the world. It has not only advocated but emphasized that speculations must not be taken for facts, that theories must not be accepted as laws, and that repeated experimentation must be gone through ere one can assert, "This is the Truth." Unfortunately, in spite of this, scientific theories and speculations pass for established facts, and there is as much of blind belief in the realm of science as there is in the domain of religion.

The Buddha anticipated modern science by many centuries. He taught that the Universe was governed by Law, that everything was an effect from a cause, and that there was no miracle in Nature or super-Nature. Further, he had proven for himself, by long search and repeated experimentation, the facts and truths of life, individual and universal.

Consider the historical setting. He came to an India that had forgotten the way of research in matters religious. In one *sutra*, he pointed out that the Brahmanas had not known the art of realizing Brahma for several generations. The Mighty Art was lost, as Krishna said to Arjuna at the dawn of *Kali Yuga*; it was lost once again 2500 years later, before Lord Buddha descended, "this last of many times," to help humankind. In the 19th century, not only was

the Mighty Art lost but the very idea of experimentation and repeated research to ascertain the Truth was regarded as novel and new. And, even today, research and experimentation in matters of religion, in matters pertaining to Soul, Spirit and God, is still looked upon by many as sacrilege, as blasphemy.

The Buddha taught that religion must be experienced. If there be a God, that God must be known. If there be super-Nature, it must be pierced. If there be the Supreme Spirit, it must be realized. His attitude was virile; nothing was so sacred that it had to be hidden from the human mind, and especially from the human heart. "There must be refuge!" he said in that famous oration before his departure from the palace.

If such a one, having so much to give,
 Gave all, laying it down for love of men,
 And thenceforth spent himself to search for truth,
 Wringing the secret of deliverance forth,
 Whether it lurk in hells or hide in heavens,
 Or hover, unrevealed, nigh unto all:
 Surely at last, far off, sometime, somewhere,
 The veil would lift for his deep-searching eyes,
 The road would open for his painful feet.

(*The Light of Asia*, Book the Fourth)

Through trial and error, he succeeded in finding the "refuge" that he sought. Ever after, his advice and injunction to every inquirer was: "Seek and find." Knowing the truth of Reincarnation and Karma, he also knew that each human soul could grasp this much or realize that much; he recognized the limitations imposed by Karma in the life of every individual; he knew that not everyone could experience within himself the glory of *Nirvana*. But the long striving must begin for each sometime, somewhere, and he showed the way to the Religion of Experience—for the *Bhikkhu*-renouncer as for the householder.

This cardinal fact about the Religion of the Buddha should be kept in mind. Buddhism is not a matter of traditional belief; is not a matter of holy books; it is a matter of life and experience.

In the *Tevigga Sutta*, which belongs to the first division of the *Digha Nikaya*, the Buddha gives an exposition of the place and value of experience in the religious life. Two Brahmana youths, Vasettha and Bharadvaga, entered into an argument, each proclaiming the path announced by the Brahmana-teacher of his own sub-clan to be the true path leading to union with Brahma. To resolve the matter, they approached the Enlightened One who was then residing on the bank of the river Iravati, near the village Manasakata where at that time many learned and wealthy Brahmanas were living. In reply to Vasettha's question, "Do all paths lead one who acts according to them into a state of union with Brahma?" the Blessed One replied:

Vasettha, it is like a string of blind men clinging to one another; the foremost cannot see the way, neither can the middle one, nor the hindmost. Even so, methinks, Vasettha, that the talk of the Brahmanas versed in the Three Vedas is but blind talk. The first sees not, the middle one sees not, the hindmost sees not. The talk, then, of these Brahmanas turns out to be ridiculous, mere words, vain and empty....

Just even so, Vasettha, though you say that the Brahmanas and all connected with them have never seen Brahma, now what think you, Vasettha, does it not follow that this being so, the talk of the Brahmanas, versed though they be in the Three Vedas, is foolish talk?

Are we not all in the position of those two youths, Vasettha and Bharadvaga, who in matters of soul and spirit, of heaven and hell, in all that pertains to religion, but follow blindly, believe without questioning, a priest, a text or a tradition? How many seek real knowledge, and experiment to gain actual experience of true Religion? Knowledge of religion does not consist simply in knowing what is written in holy books, and accepting it without questioning. A learned Hindu may read the Vedas and accept them blindly, or reject them equally blindly because he accepts scientific data! The Buddha advocated not just the reading of sacred texts or listening to religious discourses, but prosecuting the study of religious propositions so that through experimentation and experi-

ence realization may dawn. He taught to Vasettha and Bharadvaga what the obstacles were in the way of the Brahmanas learned in the Three Vedas.

We must recognize the value and importance of the study of sacred texts, not with a view to believe, but with a view to learn, to find out what the Ancients taught, to ascertain their line of reasoning and argument. The Buddha had the truly scientific attitude. Let us see what are the steps we ordinary men and women should take to practise true religion, to experience true religion.

Knowledge of theory is the first step. There are those who hastily desire experience; they want to experiment right away. The correct attitude, however, is to avoid the two extremes. It is not enough to be good and virtuous and holy; virtue without knowledge is of little avail. On the other hand, religion must be practised, must be experienced, and theoretical knowledge of what should be experienced and how the practice should be conducted, must first be learnt. Every scientist knows that research and laboratory experiments are not practical unless sound theoretical knowledge is first gained. Science emphasizes both theory and practice. Likewise every devotee of the Buddha must also become a devotee of his *Dhamma*, which means that he must take to the study of the *Dhamma*; he must find out the fundamental propositions advanced by the greatest Doctor of Divinity—the Enlightened Buddha.

This theoretical knowledge has to be acquired by intellectual study, by attentive and penetrating reading. Each of us will find that in our study we come across highly recondite matters which are beyond experimentation as far as we are concerned. There are problems which can be solved only by profound minds capable of prolonged meditation, who have penetrated into the kernel of matter, and all of us are not constituted for that. But we also find problems within our range of comprehension, awaiting our analysis—problems we are capable of experimenting with and solving. We must acquire the knowledge of how the experiment is to be made. All of us may know that two parts of hydrogen and one part of oxygen produce water, but experimental proof of this demands

further knowledge of the method to perform the experiment; so also we must make sure that the correct theory for making experiments in matters religious is obtained. This too the Buddha taught. In the rules of conduct laid down for the *Bhikkhus* or disciples, in the practice of *Dhyana* or meditation that is enjoined, we learn of this correct method.

So theoretical knowledge of religious facts, of spiritual verities, is essential, and, further, theoretical knowledge of how to perform experiments is equally necessary. Theory should precede practice; mental understanding should be gained before launching into experimentation.

In *all* matters the Buddha was direct and simple. Just as he proceeded with the most palpable and most familiar experience of universal suffering which surrounds us on every side as the first item of his Doctrine, so also he consistently and constantly advocated a direct and simple attack on the "great disease." The *Tevigga Sutta* from which we have quoted above has something to convey to each of us:

Again, Vasettha, if this river Iravati were full of water even to the brim and overflowing, and a man should come up and want to cross over because he had business on the other side, and he standing on this bank should say, Come hither, O further bank! come over to this side! Now what think you, Vasettha, would the further bank of the river, because of the man's invoking and praying and hoping and praising, come over to this side?

Certainly not, Gotama....

Now, suppose this man was bound with a heavy chain, his arms behind his back, what think you, Vasettha, would that man be able to get over the river Iravati to the further bank?

Certainly not, Gotama....

Verily, Vasettha, that Brahmanas versed in the Three Vedas but omitting the practice of those qualities which really make a man a Brahmana, and adopting the practice of those qualities which make men non-Brahmanas—clinging to those five things that predispose to passion, infatuated by them, guilty of them, seeing not their danger, knowing not their unreliability, and so

enjoying them—that these Brahmanas after death on the dissolution of the body, become united with Brahma—such a condition of things has no existence.

Are we not, most of us, in the position described by the Buddha? Do we not also cry, "O Vishnu, O Shiva, come!" Or, "O Mazda, O Allah, help!" Or, "O God, O Christ, save!" And then are we not, most of us, loaded with feelings and desires, false knowledge and wrong thoughts, a hundred bundles of worldly luggage, without abandoning which we desire to realize Nirvana, to cross over to the other shore? And again, are we not, most of us, tied down by bonds of what is called affection, by family and racial attachments, by the chains that our relations and friends have put upon us?

What does the Buddha teach? He says to Vasettha that there are five bondages; these five blind the soul and make him see this beautiful earth as evil hell. What are these five bondages?

Forms perceptible to the eye—desirable, agreeable, pleasant, attractive forms—that cause delight and are accompanied by desire and lust. Sounds of the same kind perceptible to the ear; odours of the same kind perceptible to the nose; tastes of the same kind that are perceptible to the tongue; substances of the same kind perceptible to the body by touch. These five things predisposing to passion are called in the discipline of the Noble One, a "chain" and a "bond." And these five things predisposing to lust, Vasettha, do the Brahmanas versed in the Three Vedas cling to; they are infatuated by them, guilty of them, see not the danger of them, know not how unreliable they are, and so enjoy them.

What the eyes see, and the ears hear, and the nose smells, and the tongue tastes, and the skin feels, all predispose the man, says the Buddha, to Kama—passion or desire.

Is there anyone free from these? Does it require profound metaphysical knowledge to know the answer? And yet how few are there who recognize the insidious power of the senses? The Brahmanas versed in the Three Vedas, says the Lord, do not practise right control of these five bondages; therefore they fail.

And then follows a profound but direct analysis of a truly practical value to all of us. These five bondages are not causes; they are results, effects. The difficulty is not with our senses, nor with worldly objects; it is neither the eyes which see nor the forms seen that are the cause of mischief. These bondages are caused by five inner and invisible forces. The *Tevigga Sutta* goes on to name these five causal forces:

Vasettha, in the discipline of the Noble Path, there are these five hindrances, which are called "veils," "hindrances," "obstacles," and "entanglements." What are the five? The hindrance of lustful desire, the hindrance of malice, the hindrance of sloth and idleness, the hindrance of pride and self-righteousness, the hindrance of doubt. These are the five hindrances that in the discipline of the Noble Path are called veils and hindrances and obstacles and entanglements. Now with these five hindrances, Vasettha, the Brahmanas versed in the Three Vedas are veiled, hindered, obstructed, entangled.

There are these five forces that throw a veil over the objects of the world and so we value those objects wrongly. Evil things look good, unimportant things look precious. We do not see objects as they actually are; we perceive them through the veils covering them. Because of this, these forces are called hindrances. They hinder right perception and correct valuation; and thus they become obstacles to soul-life. Why? Because they entangle us. The entire world of objects, persons and things is covered by a veil, and therefore all of them assume a value different from the correct one; they hinder right perception and act as obstacles because they entangle us. Is there anyone who does not know about the five causal forces which are veils, hindrances, obstacles and entanglements—lust, malice, sloth, pride, doubt? These, says the Lord, are matters of experience; deal with them, starve and kill them out. "Destroy the evil; do good" are two halves of the one whole—the Religion of Life. As all of us possess evil as well as good, we need knowledge to deal with both of them. Amitabha and Mara are in the heart and the blood of each one. The crown of Mara is made up of

these five dazzling jewels—lust, malice, sloth, pride and doubt. These entangle us; these are obstacles and hindrances; these act as veils which make us believe right to be wrong and wrong to be right.

Let us experiment to kill these hindrances in the daily routine of life; this is the sure source of soul-experience. Nirvana and Brahma look far, far away because these are veiled by the fivefold force of passion or Kama. The religion of experience is for all; it begins with the visible forces close to us. Religion does not consist in going to temples, churches, mosques or synagogues. People carry as offerings flowers, or incense, or sandalwood, or candles in their hands, but have they these in their hearts and in their heads? Study of religion is the first step; practice of controlling the senses through the death of the five forces of Kama is the second. If we expect some strange religious experiences, we will be waiting in vain. We may not see invisible colours, nor hear inaudible sounds, nor have strange visions, but we will understand what we see and hear because the bondage caused by the veil of Kama is removed. Let us attempt this great and wonderful task!

IF an individual attempts to move in a direction other than that in which Nature is moving, that individual is sure to be crushed, sooner or later, by the enormous pressure of the opposing force. We need not say that such a result would be the very reverse of pleasurable. The only way, therefore, in which happiness might be attained, is by merging one's nature in great Mother Nature, and following in the direction in which she herself is moving: this again, can only be accomplished by assimilating men's individual conduct with the triumphant force of Nature, the other force being always overcome with terrific catastrophes. The effort to assimilate the individual with the universal law is popularly known as the practice of morality. Obedience to this universal law, after ascertaining it, is true religion, which has been defined by Lord Buddha as "the realization of the True."

—*The Theosophist*, November 1883

ARJUNA SEES THE WAY

AS in Patanjali's *Yoga Aphorisms* and in *The Voice of the Silence*, so in the *Bhagavad-Gita* the instruction starts from where the aspirant is at the moment.

It is easy to say, "I wish to progress on the Path," but once the flush of emotion has died down, we have to begin to work out the details of what we have decided to do, and here we encounter difficulties.

Both the *Voice* and Patanjali start with the mind—which is ourselves as we are—modified by emotions. So in the *Gita* Arjuna at the outset asks to see those he has agreed to fight. Realizing the need for a righteous war is one thing, what that war means in actuality is quite another; and so with ourselves—once we begin treading the Path, we find that it necessitates a complete change in all our familiar pathways of life. As Arjuna looked at the two armies, so we look at ourselves; and as he saw that the armies on both sides were composed of his friends and relations and those he had grown familiar with, so we find that amidst all the familiar mental and emotional pictures that we hold dear, there are those that have to be destroyed. These are the "modifications of the mind" that Patanjali speaks of. We suddenly find ourselves faced with extinction, for all these modifications make up our life. We have failed to recognize how much we *are* our thoughts, are made up of our thoughts, and hence if we are to get rid of many among them, how can we be happy again? Reasoning from what he already knows, Arjuna draws a mental picture of what will happen as the result of the war. All will be chaos, even the good will be tainted. How can he live after all are slain—his emotions, his ideas and ideals, all familiar things!

At that stage, Arjuna is centred in his feeling nature. Krishna asks him to see that his refusal to fight is nothing but a despicable weakness, based in his feelings, and he tells him to get over his dejection and "stand up." He is shown a picture of himself at the moment, disgraceful for a warrior, contrary to duty, and leading to dishonour. Arjuna thought he was acting rightly in refusing to

stand up and fight, but he is shown by Krishna that he is just overpowered by emotions. These are better emotions than fear of consequences to oneself only, still they are emotions, and emotions, good or bad, are no true foundation for right action.

Therefore Krishna begins to deal with the "modifications" of Arjuna's mind, and points out that his basis of thinking is wrong. This is reminiscent of the "misconceptions" mentioned by Patanjali; and in *The Voice of the Silence* "the Thought-Producer" is called "he who awakes illusion." By gradual steps, Krishna leads Arjuna to see that if his duty as a warrior-soul is not discharged, he will meet with disgrace. He has to get rid of all emotional entanglements, rise above pain and pleasure—the "obstacles" mentioned by Patanjali—and he must "give up his life," that is, the life he now knows, if he would live.

Having thus cleared Arjuna's mind, Krishna begins to deal with the practical aspect of his teaching. Mere philosophizing is not enough; it is "practical, devotional" action that is called for. In this path "there is only one single object," and to pursue it, constancy and devotion are required. To gain this devotion, Arjuna must start with the mind, be mentally devoted, and thus affect his actions, making them perfect. Through knowledge and contemplation, says Krishna, he will be able to judge for himself the meaning of all systems.

Then follows the description of the wise man, which again takes us back to Patanjali and *The Voice of the Silence*. In time, such a man will arrive at "profound devotedness toward the Supreme Spirit," manifested as the Spirit in the body. This Supreme Spirit is "THAT SELF" of the *Voice*, from which we have radiated. Note that in Patanjali this Supreme Spirit is considered in its *comprehensible* manifestation as *Ishwara*, the Spirit in the body; likewise, in the *Gita* it is this aspect of Krishna that attracts us. The picture of Him in his divine, universal form is difficult to grasp at this stage and only comes when we have the gift of the divine vision.

As far as action, whether physical, emotional or mental, is concerned, the motive is of primary importance. In the *Gita*, that motive is *duty*—that which is due from us to others, in the

surroundings in which we are placed and with the capacities that we have. It is not for us to say, "I do not like this duty," that is, think of our duties in terms of our likes and dislikes. There are duties we are born with, and others that we acquire as we go along. But duty is a varying term, for at certain times in our life we have certain duties, while as we progress towards knowledge we have others. Duties and actions have to be performed because they are ours under Karma. We are only the immediate agents of Karma in this respect. It is *how* we act and do our duty that is our contribution, that is, our present responsibility. Hence the importance of the Paramitas and of the detailed advice of Patanjali. Arjuna has to free himself from the results of his actions. His duty, *dharma*, is to fight, for he is a born warrior. He has to "rest content with fate," as the *Voice* puts it, for such is his Karma, the "Karma of the Cycle of his births." *How* he discharges his duty is of significance to him. He must free himself from all emotions and desires, likes and dislikes, because the war in the midst of which he finds himself is perhaps the last stage of prior actions, and as such must be looked upon as the wiping out of past causes. But, if emotions are allowed to hold sway, then fresh Karma is generated and the effects will have to be worked out later on, in other lives.

It is the duty of the soldier to fight, and his future will not be affected by this, for he is just doing his duty. But, and this is so very important, it is *how* he fights, with what feelings he enters the combat, and maybe dies, that is *his* Karma. Duty-action has to be separated from feelings. The remembrance of the teaching that we are but agents of action will help us in this. Personal feelings have to be transformed into devotion to the Supreme, however we view that Supreme. As *Light on the Path* puts it, we must let the "warrior" fight in us. It is a movement and a feeling from *above* our personality rather than a movement *of* the personality.

Fear is a deterrent all along the way, as the *Voice* points out. But we must not act out of fear of consequences, or because we have been told this and that, but only when we, each one of us, have sought the answer within ourselves and found it satisfying. "Act as

seemeth best unto thee," Krishna tells Arjuna at the end of the Eighteenth Discourse. If we do not follow this advice, no benefit accrues to us from the action, that is to say, it is a wasted effort.

The fact that Krishna is the driving force, the charioteer, throughout the battle, suggests that Arjuna is only the agent; but he still directs Krishna to take his chariot where he wants it to be.

The battle of Kurukshetra and its aftermath is high tragedy, but Krishna is there throughout. Until we have attained perfection, all life is a tragedy for us when we see the miseries of the world, which in fact are self-inflicted. Only the remembrance of the glorious Vision of Krishna as the Supreme Spirit can sustain us in times of darkness, just as in the *Voice* it is Compassion that speaks and puts us on the final right track, which is union with the whole of Nature. Patanjali ends in the same vein: "the abiding of the soul united with understanding in its own nature," unaffected by pleasure and pain, good and evil, cold and heat, and so forth. This is called Isolation by Patanjali, but, as Mr. Judge points out, this is not negation or coldness. To "consciously partake universally of the great life of the universe," the soul must "stand firmly 'in its own nature.'" In the *Gita*, Arjuna ends by saying that his delusion is destroyed, and he is "collected once more"—another way of saying he is in control of himself.

This is what we must bear in mind through the early as well as later stages of our growth. Our meditation, when perfect, enables us to become one with the abstract, without form, but it is necessary at the outset to realize that concentration, control of ourselves in the constantly moving stream of life, will bring that continuity of consciousness throughout the day and the night, and through life after life, until we realize the truth : THOU ART THAT.

Do not consider any vice as trivial, and therefore practise it; do not consider any virtue as unimportant, and therefore neglect it.

—CHINESE SAYING

CONTROLLING THE MIND

ONE thing that is emphasized, not just in Theosophical teaching, but in almost every esoteric system throughout the world, is the control of the mind. It is the most important practical advice that can be given to the student of Occultism. References to mind-control contained in the literature of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism, Gnosticism, Jainism, etc., would make a long list, indeed. In Theosophical discipline, the importance of controlling the mind is constantly stressed.

In her enumeration of the principles of man (*The Key to Theosophy*, Indian ed., p. 90), H.P.B. has this to say about Manas, which is a dual principle in its functions:

The future state and the Karmic destiny of man depend on whether Manas gravitates more downward to Kama rupa, the seat of the animal passions, or upwards to *Buddhi*, the Spiritual *Ego*.

Elsewhere in her writings, she refers to the fact that the mind is the battleground. We can relate this to the *Bhagavad-Gita* which symbolizes this idea in the form of the great war between the two tribes, the Kauravas and the Pandavas. We must also remember what *The Voice of the Silence* says: "The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer."

This mind is the key to all our efforts on the Spiritual Path. What we have to "slay" are the mind's binding qualities. It is a mistaken idea that we have to kill the lower mind; the terms "higher" and "lower," in fact, applied to the mind, only refer to its qualities. There is in truth only *one* mind and it is the refocusing of this that constitutes spiritual progress. To "control" it, we have to slowly but surely alter its affinities until it is totally centred in the Divine. This is its natural state, where it feels totally "at home." The mind experiences the world through the senses, but too much of an identification with sense experiences, as a result of desire, can create "mind-forged manacles" which chain us to low levels of awareness. Also, scientists are researching the correlations be-

tween thought and physical illness. It is being proven that negative thought does indeed affect our health. This is probably because thought is subtle vibration, and discordant vibrations have a powerful influence that eventually works itself out on the physical plane.

The remedy for all these problems is to concentrate on high and lofty ideas and ideals, on the spiritual dimension to our being. It is here that the mind can find its relaxation and its recreation. The mind can be weighed down with intellectual study and thought. Too much of this study and thought can actually numb the Spirit and hold back our progress. The real journey consists in bringing light to all the dark corners of our Soul by a gradual purification of the mind. This can reach its highest levels only in ceaseless contemplation of Divinity. Reading spiritual texts, meditation, working for others, living a moral life, can bring about the gradual tearing down of barriers created by the mind. This is the method recommended the world over and has been employed effectively for millenniums by generations of seekers. If students of Theosophy but follow the guidelines given by H.P.B. and the Masters, they will be well on the way to understanding the Truth and placing themselves under the direct guidance of their Higher Self.

Acquiring of self-knowledge should be our aim. We are told:

The first necessity for obtaining self-knowledge is to become profoundly conscious of ignorance; to feel with every fibre of the heart that one is *ceaselessly* self-deceived.

The second requisite is the still deeper conviction that such knowledge—such intuitive and certain knowledge—can be obtained by effort.

The third and most important is an indomitable determination to obtain and face that knowledge.

Self-knowledge of this kind is unattainable by what men usually call "self-analysis." It is not reached by reasoning or any brain process; for it is the awakening to consciousness of the Divine nature of man.

To obtain this knowledge is a greater achievement than to command the elements or to know the future. (*Lucifer*, October

1887; reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No.7*)

True knowledge lies within each one of us, and only living the life and meditation can awaken in us the intuitive awareness of the real nature of things. The mind has to be trained to gravitate towards its natural "home." It has to avoid all the pitfalls of the illusory world of the senses which feed the lower mind, by fixing itself upon the Reality beyond these senses. Once we have some glimpse of our true nature, we begin to see society as it really is, empty and meaningless, full of hypocrisy, immorality and cupidity. This is when the problems start, because the Inner Man is brought face to face with facts that the lower mind did not wish him to consider. The Inner Man feels restless, trapped, and wishes to free himself from the prison-house of the world. We now know that there is something better, nobler, and we resolve to find it. If we have studied Theosophy rightly and pondered deeply the Oneness of all things, we will be developing an unselfish love for all creatures and ultimately vowing that we will not rest until all beings have attained enlightenment. This is the way of the Bodhisattva, outlined in *The Voice of the Silence*. It is an attitude of mind that we can encourage right from the outset.

Thought is there for us to use. The lower mind is an instrument that we can employ for our purposes if we but prevent it from wandering here and there at the beck and call of outside stimuli. It is possible for us to train the mind to be sensitive to the suffering of others and to use it in a healing capacity. We can send out loving, purposeful thoughts to those in need and be sure that they will be helped. If we are centred in the Divine and have brought the mind under the control of that Divinity within us, then there is no limit to what we can accomplish. Once we have overcome desire, we can begin to exercise Spiritual Will. Purified desire, that is, desire which has lost all trace or tinge of "self," transforms itself into Spiritual Will.

Mind-control comes not from a forcing of the thoughts in a particular direction, but by gentle repose in the Self. But this does not mean that such a repose is easy to attain. Certainly gritting our

teeth and clenching our fists will not bring it about. We have to learn the art of true relaxation amidst the turmoil of life. This is the secret. It has nothing to do with passivity or with any kind of soporific state. It is a falling back upon the Self which pours into our hearts and minds a regenerating energy that is exhaustless. It is by reliance on something beyond the mind that the mind is controlled. The mind cannot control itself. If this is attempted, it is like the hamster that goes round and round on its wheel, expending much energy but getting nowhere.

We can best open up intelligently and with knowledge to the higher part of our being if we discover the true "mysteries" that lie concealed in the depths of our consciousness. We are all capable of doing this and thereby realizing our Divinity. The Adept has, by supreme effort and a moral life, attuned himself to this higher dimension, and is willing to show others how to reach the same state of mind. The ways may be different for every individual, but the general rules are the same and the results are identical. We must not make the mistake of thinking that these rules are "hard and fast"; such an attitude finds no place in genuine spiritual training. To force a certain way of life on another person or even on oneself is an insult to one's higher nature. Whatever is done, must be done voluntarily. The control of the mind must be undertaken because we feel that it is the right thing to do. It is no use pretending; if we do, we may find that we do not have the stamina to go on to the bitter end. We should not follow the Path because we have read a book or two and these have made us feel guilty about the way we are living! We need to cultivate a genuine desire to help our fellow men and fathom the mysteries of the Universe. We need to have a real soul-longing to go deep into our being, a real hunger for Truth. This is the feeling that will prompt us to attempt to control the mind and thereby find ways to ease the pain of humanity through a direct realization of the Brotherhood of all.

OUR allegiance is to the principles always, and not to the persons.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent;
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

—SHELLEY: *Prometheus Unbound*

WHAT is good? Fundamentally, for us, to obey our conscience is good, and therefore, apart from universal conceptions, there can be no set, detailed programme of what is good. Similarly there can be no single standard of evil for every human being. The guide for each one is his conscience, which, as Cardinal Newman said, is "that aboriginal Vicar of Christ within us, a prophet in his information, a priest in his blessings and anathemas, a monarch in his peremptoriness." But side by side with this statement must be considered the warning: Take care that your conscience is not that of a fool!

Let us therefore analyse our conscience. It is said that there are, in fact, three consciences.

The first is the remembrance of those things that we are taught in our early childhood, and throughout life, as not proper to be done. The taboos of this kind of conscience will naturally vary with the family, the nation and the civilization. For instance, the conscience of a Roman Catholic differs from that of a Protestant as regards Sunday observances. The conscience of those who favour cinema houses being open on Sundays differs vastly from that of those who believe in the observance of the Lord's Day. The conscience of a man who thinks it wrong to have more than one wife (though he may have mistresses) differs from that of the man whose religion allows him to marry more than one wife.

The second kind of conscience is that with which we are born, and it is much more deeply seated. It is the result of our experiences in other lives, lives in which we learnt that certain things ought not to be done. It is our innate moral code. For example, most of us would not steal even if the opportunity presented itself to us; it would be against our nature.

These two kinds of conscience change or grow with knowledge and experience. In the first case, greater knowledge would enable us to decide afresh whether "taboos" are based on moral principles or on mere custom; in the second, inner restraints become more deep-seated in character, or we defy them and they do not bother us any more.

The third kind of conscience is that which gives us a higher and deeper sense of the rightness of things. It is often called the "still, small voice" or the Voice of the Silence. This is the knowledge of the Soul penetrating our consciousness. But it cannot penetrate it until we have already made the two other kinds of conscience strong by use.

We can perhaps better understand the working of the three kinds of conscience if we look at the prominent question of Brotherhood, as it affects us.

Many have been taught to look upon the "heathen" and the "foreigner" as inferior to themselves. We know of the difficulty that is being experienced in admitting the Blacks to equal citizenship with the Whites, or the Harijans to religious equality with the upper castes. But the second kind of conscience is stirring in the world, and in time it will insist that all human beings be admitted to equal partnership in the One World State. This will come about mainly because the older generation, whose conscience of the first kind was infected in youth with contempt for the heathen, the foreigner, the Black and the Harijan, will die out, while the present-day youth is not being influenced nearly so much in this way. But it will take time to make the change felt.

At the moment, most people in the world look upon brotherhood from the expediency point of view, for they see that until

mutual tolerance and fellow feeling are established among the peoples of the world, there will be wars—wars so terrible that self-preservation demands tolerance on all sides.

But there is another feeling growing in the hearts of many in the world, that war is wrong in principle, *i.e.*, against conscience. This idea has gained prominence, owing mainly to the work of pacifist movements and of men like Gandhi, who demonstrated the force of the passive resistance doctrine. But the question to be decided by each one for himself is: What is the right thing to do when wars of aggression begin, either against one's own country or between other countries, or when some terrible wrong is being committed in the world?

There are three possible answers a person might give: (1) "I shall not fight." (2) "My country makes me fight through conscription and I cannot help it." (3) "I shall fight because my conscience tells me that I should sacrifice comfort, and perhaps life itself, for the sake of what *I* see to be right." Those who take the first or the third course do so in terms of their conscience, but for those who take the second course, declaring their own helplessness in the matter, there is no excuse because, even if conscription is the law of the land, each should, in his own mind, make his own choice; for all actions should be voluntarily undertaken.

A materialistic philosophy of life favours war in order to gain some material advantage; for, according to those who uphold such a philosophy, might is right; and as you would destroy weeds in a garden, so you may destroy your enemy who is spoiling your garden. This conception of rightness also underlies the system of capital punishment. If man were merely his body, and to destroy the body meant an end to him, there might be wisdom in this course of action. Hitler tried to exterminate the Jews; he failed. Germ warfare, or even nuclear warfare, might be used to exterminate an enemy; but just as the bombed sites of the last war have burst into bloom from buried seeds, so will the earth refurnish itself. Only Universal Law can destroy the material world fully, and then there will be Universal Rebirth.

Orthodox religionists might justify war for a righteous purpose, as have Christians in the past, in spite of the sayings of Jesus that "all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword," and "love your enemies." During a war, prayers are offered for the success of the armies of one's own country and for the confusion of the enemy, with whom, by the way, one's country might later make common cause.

The philosophical point of view is that war is wrong; there is no doubt about that at all, for killing is wrong, and wrong here means that which will not bring about the desired good effect. On the other hand, we are born into environments that demand some kind of corrective action; so what shall we do? Pacifism is rigid—no war, or rather, take no part in war. Passive resistance, in the sense in which Gandhi used the expression, is a non-combative force and links up with the injunction: "Resist not evil." Active resistance becomes punitive; passive resistance causes a change of heart in the enemy. Granted that the passive resister might be killed, but in active warfare also he might be killed. To die for an idea or an ideal is a force, the strength of which we can hardly gauge. Passive resistance to any wrong is a vital force and needs no instruments of warfare. On the other hand, those who gather armaments run a great risk; for energies gathered must one day be expended, and armaments have a way of getting used.

All one can do in this chaotic world today is to formulate one's own ideas on these questions, not for one's own good, but on a basis of moral and ethical principles. Then can one say, as Krishna says to Arjuna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* after expounding this very principle throughout the 18 chapters: "Act as seemeth best unto thee."

Let us remember, however, that to impose one's will on another is a kind of violence, and that real passive resistance or pacifism necessitates abhorrence of all cruelty—cruelty to human beings, cruelty to animals, or neglect of what is due to Nature as a whole. Even the exploitation of the earth falls under this head.

The value of an appeal to conscience becomes more apparent when we look upon life and its consequences as subject to Law, for

then Brotherhood takes on a new meaning. It is seen as a fact already existing, neither a matter of expediency nor a "feeling." And, since the world is made up of units, all anyone can do is to start on oneself and find out the basic reasons why one should live a life of brotherliness to all.

A THEOSOPHIST above all men ought ever to bear in mind the advice of Epictetus: "If evil be said of thee, *and if it be true*, correct thyself; if it be a lie, *laugh at it*." We welcome a *witty* satire always, and defy ridicule or any efforts in this direction to kill the Theosophical Society, so long as it, *as a body*, remains true to its *original* principles....

The chosen motto of the Theosophical Society has been for years—"There is no religion *higher than truth*"; the object of *Lucifer* is in the epigraph on its cover, which is "to bring to light the hidden things of darkness." If the editor of *Lucifer* and the Theosophists would not belie these two propositions and be true to their colours, they have to deal with perfect impartiality, sparing no more themselves than outsiders, or even their enemies. As to the "weak-minded theosophists"—if any—they can take care of themselves in the way they please....

We do not believe in allowing the presence of *sham* elements in Theosophy, because of the fear, forsooth, that if even "a false element in the faith" is *ridiculed*, the latter "is apt to shake the confidence" in the whole....

We are painfully conscious that "he who tells the truth is turned out of nine cities"; that truth is unpalatable to most men; and that—since men must learn *to love the truth* before they thoroughly believe it—the truths we utter in our magazine are often as bitter as gall to many. This cannot be helped.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE MAN OF POSSESSIONS

IN the brave days of old when each young courtier served and fought for his beauteous lady and chivalry flourished, a young man, wealthy, aristocratic, with the world at his feet, threw all this over and took as his beauteous lady "My Lady Poverty." He gave all he had to the poor and devoted himself to the service of God and to "My Lady Poverty." That young man we know as St. Francis of Assisi.

In similar manner, Prince Siddhartha who became the Buddha renounced his wealth, his throne, all that men count dear, in order to solve the problem of sorrow and find the way to Peace.

What is there about worldly possessions that makes it so difficult to find peace and the truth? Did not Jesus also tell the rich young man how well-nigh impossible it was for him to enter the Kingdom of Heaven? Surely then it is worth our while to consider this problem and to see whether a surfeit of worldly goods is not more of a burden than a blessing. We will find that it is so, with one exception that we will deal with later.

A rich man is in truth beset with just as many worries as he has possessions. There is a storm: "Have the tiles blown off my roof? Have the fruit trees been ruined in my garden?" Stocks and shares go up, go down: "Shall I sell out? Shall I buy? Will I lose all my money?" Oh dear! oh dear! many indeed are the anxieties of the man of many possessions. In fact, one might say that instead of the man possessing his possessions, his possessions possess him!

And now we will deal with the exception that was spoken of earlier: that man who has possessions yet is not bound down and burdened by them. This attitude can be acquired provided the ethical teachings of Theosophy, those of the Great Teachers, are carried out. Theosophy teaches that nothing you have is your own. Even your body is not your own. Your parents gave it to you, and it is kept alive by the earth, the air, the water and the fire; and after death to the earth, the air, the water and the fire it returns. You have it on loan from Nature. And so with your possessions. When you die you cannot take them with you. They also are given to you on

loan, not for your own selfish pleasure and gratification, but for the benefit of others. This does not mean that you should give them away in injudicious and indiscriminate charity; you should rather adopt the attitude: "This is not really mine, but only given to me in trust to use wisely and well for the good of my fellow men." In this manner one's whole attitude towards one's possessions changes. They are still a responsibility, but a responsibility fraught with joy in the service of others; and when under Karma those possessions are lost, that loss is not a calamity but a freedom from responsibility, enabling one to devote one's energies in other ways for the good of others.

But now we come to the other side of the question. It is obvious that possessions are not to be coveted and that when we have them they entail certain responsibilities. Also, many wise and holy men have renounced all their possessions, finding them an obstacle to the acquirement of knowledge and the attainment of peace. Then why does *Light on the Path* say, "Desire possessions above all"? It seems paradoxical until one reads the following:

But those possessions must belong to the pure soul only, and be possessed therefore by all pure souls equally, and thus be the especial property of the whole only when united. Hunger for such possessions as can be held by the pure soul, that you may accumulate wealth for that united spirit of life which is your only true self.

Here it is not wealth of silver, gold and jewels that is meant, but wealth of soul and spirit. We have all seen people rich in love for their fellow men, rich in sympathy, rich in compassion, rich in wisdom. These are the possessions to be desired, and, when obtained, they are to be poured out like the waters of a flowing river to irrigate the parched and arid souls of those thirsting for love, compassion and wisdom.

Thus have the Great Ones done.

ONE OF THE IMMORTALS

[We reprint here another of the William Quan Judge memorial articles which appeared in *Theosophy* (formerly *The Path*) for May 1896. The writer, Dr. Jerome A. Anderson, was a prominent American worker, active on the Pacific Coast. A leading San Francisco physician and an active member of many medical associations, he put aside all the honours of his profession that lay within his grasp, devoting his best efforts to Theosophical work.—EDS.]

MEN can really be judged only by their equals or superiors. The Adept side of the character of Wm. Q. Judge stands above criticism or judgment by all not Adepts; we can only recognize something different from ourselves, and, in a far-off way, imitate, admire and reverence. That many of us *did* recognize the greatness of the soul manifesting through the frail body, is a supreme consolation in our hour of bereavement. His pupils were not altogether unworthy of their Teacher; there was, and is, a spiritual kinship which has been mightily strengthened during this our last, and all too brief, association.

For Wm. Q. Judge was an Adept—a great one, however much the true man was hidden behind the one of clay. Is it reasonable to suppose that at a time when the Great Lodge had for foes the intellectual giants—the Spencers, Mills, Huxleys, and Darwins—of an era the very apotheosis of materialistic agnosticism, they sent tyros or babes to do battle for the world? Nay; they sent their best and bravest; were there no other proof of this, the work accomplished would be sufficient. Right royally did H.P.B. march down to Armageddon; confounding the learned by her wisdom, mocking materialism by her wonderful exhibition of abnormal and at first sight supernatural powers. But she was the Knight errant, who fought amid the beating of drums, and the clash and clamour, the excitement and glory, of a princely tournament. None the less royally did Wm. Q. Judge do his knightly duty on his silent, unnoticed field of battle. His place, his task, it was to teach ethics; to turn aside the craze for phenomena and wonder-working into the

more healthy, lasting channels of love for our fellow men. H.P.B. laid the foundations well; but it was left for Wm. Q. Judge to build strongly and safely thereon.

What now remains of Christianity but an appeal to discredited "miracles," to an emotionalism which has neither an intellectual nor a spiritual basis? Yet Christ unquestionably taught the philosophy of H.P.B. and Wm. Q. Judge. It was swallowed up amidst the casting out of devils, and the healing of the lame and blind. So would the rush of phenomena-crazed and wonder-seekers have drowned out all philosophy and ethics, and left Theosophy to the fate of Christianity, but for the efforts of the mighty Western Adept, Wm. Q. Judge. He who fails to recognize this, the place and part in the battle of this century, occupied by our "Chief," will wretchedly fail in his estimate of his character. He himself well knew that which he had to accomplish, and not for a moment did he lose sight of his appointed task. Through all his writings, both public and private, ran the same golden web of brotherhood, toleration, unselfishness. "Letters That Have Helped me"—How many thousand re-echo the title after reading the book? It will go down to the ages still helping; for times, manners, customs, peoples, may and must change, but ethical teachings will endure. They are of eternity; not of time.

His private correspondence was immense, and who, of all the immense number of those written to can say that he ever received a letter which was not helpful, if read in the spirit in which it was sent? A mine of ethical and philosophical teachings will yet be unearthed out of these private letters, for many of the holders realize their value. "Do not judge in anger, for, though the anger passes, *the judgment remains!*" What a grasp of occult philosophy; what a deep knowledge of human life, is displayed in this apparently incidental remark, in a letter to the writer! All his letters are studded with like jewels, bestowed in the careless profusion of unbounded wealth.

And none were so high as to demand his attention and help; none so low that they could not command it. The universality of his

love was like that of Buddha or Christ. Looking beyond the humble or proud personality, he ever knocked upon the doors of the soul within; ever sought to arouse the Self which he recognized in every breast.

That he made enemies, is not matter for wonder. The world has ever crucified its Christs, and brought but hemlock to the lips of its ethical teachers. Little vanity is irritated in the presence of that which it cannot comprehend, but which it feels to be its superior. So the world must have its Golgothas, until the Child Humanity has grown wiser and less cruel. But for those who have attacked and maligned him, let there be no word of upbraiding; they were incapable of understanding him, and he—forgave them.

Yet while we reverence the Adept, let us not therefore lose sight of the man, for even in his simplest life he was great. Those who have seen him lay aside every care, and for the moment become the mirth-loving, gleeful companion, will not need to be reminded of this beautiful side of his character. To the children and the humble and lowly in the Society, he was a revelation. They heard of him with awe, they approached him with fear and trembling, they instantly recognized their own, and became his sworn friends forever. This was wonderful—how wholly the very humblest in our ranks, who came into his presence personally, loved and trusted him.

His work is done. He had drawn around him a living Society; a body of men well grounded in philosophy and ethics, who cannot be turned aside by the glamour of phenomena, or the desire to become wonder workers. Faithfully he stood at his post until the last of his chosen recognized their real work, and set about it in all honesty and sincerity. Had he ever flung phenomena at our heads we would have indeed been lost. But the pure philosophy, the high ethics, the generous love and work for others, of which he was a living example, at last brought forth their fruit, and the time came when he could safely pass on.

And so our great Leader sank to his well-won rest. No more the wan, emaciated body will be dragged by the imperious soul to its

ceaseless round of sacrificing toil; no more that pure heart grieve over ingratitude or weakness. Like the Gentile Adept of old he can truthfully say, "I have fought the good fight: I have kept the faith." And his reward will be the greatest that immortal man can win—the right to again fight in the very front ranks of those who serve humanity; the blessed privilege to again sacrifice and suffer; to be again reviled and crucified. For one day through the efforts of him, and such as he, Humanity will have been redeemed.

—JEROME A. ANDERSON

IN Theosophy the world is held to be the product of the evolution of the principle spoken of from the very lowest first forms of life guided as it proceeded by intelligent perfected beings from other and older evolutions, and compounded also of the egos or individual spirits for and by whom it emanates. Hence man as we know him is held to be a conscious spirit, the flower of evolution, with other and lower classes of egos below him in the lower kingdoms, all however coming up and destined one day to be on the same human stage as we now are, we then being higher still. Man's consciousness being thus more perfect is able to pass from one to another of the planes of differentiation mentioned. If he mistakes any one of them for the reality that he is in his essence, he is deluded; the object of evolution then is to give him complete self-consciousness so that he may go on to higher stages in the progress of the universe. His evolution after coming on the human stage is for the getting of experience, and in order to so raise up and purify the various planes of matter with which he has to do, that the voice of the spirit may be fully heard and comprehended.

—W. Q. JUDGE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

While there have been rapid changes over time in the world around us and in many branches of knowledge, philosophy is a subject which has altered little, observes Oliver Leaman, Reader in Philosophy at Liverpool John Moores University. In his essay, "The Future of Philosophy," appearing in the British Journal *Futures* (January/February 1995), he opines that it unlikely philosophy's character would radically change in the future, although the ways in which it will be presented will probably alter.

One of the features of philosophy which is worth emphasizing [Leaman suggests] is the way in which it returns again and again to the same problems. Were the companions of Plato and Aristotle to be around today, they would recognize the arguments which are being offered to deal with the problems which the Greek thinkers raised, and once some technical issues about terminology were explained to them, they would have little difficulty in joining in the debate....

This suggests that although philosophy will be much more in the public eye, the public eye will not transform philosophy to any great extent. Philosophers will not as a result of their involvement in professional decisions and strategies come to change their views of what ought to be done, or what human beings are. It will not, then, be the subject which changes but the philosophers themselves who change their public role....

If philosophers can preserve the sense of the distinctiveness of what they do, then they will be able to carry the present philosophical curriculum well into the future. If the future of our world continues to provide room for people to ask basic questions about who they are and how they should behave, then we can rest secure in the knowledge that those questions are likely to continue to be asked.

Leaman is of the view that philosophy is likely to attract those who are interested in developing a counterculture to the increasingly materialistic tone of society. Also, that there is likely to be more work on the application of philosophy to practical issues in

medicine and professional life in general, with philosophers becoming much more involved in practical decision making.

Theosophy would say that philosophy has applications not only to specific issues, but to life itself and how to live it. There is nothing more important than to seek for such general applications instead of reducing philosophy to a mere logical discipline and evacuating it of all reference to the meaning of our lives and to questions of what makes them worth living. The latter would seem to merit the same condemnation that H.P.B. bestowed on another group of

...profitless and empty speculations, which, though they seem to fill our hearts with a glow of enthusiasm and to enlarge our mental and spiritual grasp, do but in reality cause a factitious stimulation, and blind us more and more to our ignorance not only of the world we inhabit, but even of the infinitude contained within ourselves. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 703)

"Religions must not identify themselves with political, economic, or social powers, so as to remain free to work for justice and peace." This was the commitment made by leaders of the world's 15 main religions at a meeting on "The Contribution of Religion to the Culture of Peace," organized by UNESCO in Barcelona (Spain) from December 12 to 18. Recognizing that though religions have the power to contribute to peace, yet they have often led to division, hatred and war, the religious leaders pledged to "remain mindful that our religions do not identify themselves with political, economic or social powers....We should distinguish fanaticism from religious zeal." The "Declaration of Barcelona" will be distributed in UNESCO's 183 Member States to encourage further signing. (*Unesco Sources*, February 1995)

Religion and politics indeed make an unholy alliance. But how far religion will contribute to the culture of peace will depend to a large extent upon how far the religious leaders themselves exemplify the policy of peace and brotherhood in their own life and action, and upon the extent to which their example is followed. The

realization of human brotherhood is the essence of all true religions. Without the spread of that realization, the orthodox in all religions will continue to be fanatical followers of their respective creeds, and mutual intolerance and recriminations and worse will persist.

What is it that makes an act a duty? Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on duty, compiled from his speeches and writings, appear in *Theosophical Digest*, 2nd Quarter, 1995 (published from the Philippines). Ideas of duty vary according to different states in life, different historical periods and different nations. Duty as an abstract term, therefore, cannot be defined clearly; we can only get an idea of it by knowing its practical operations and results. The ordinary conception is that duty is what one's conscience dictates. But Vivekananda goes further:

It is not the thing done that defines a duty. To give an objective definition of duty is thus entirely impossible. Yet there is duty from the subjective side. Any action that makes us go godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective standpoint we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennoble us, while certain other acts have a tendency to degrade and to brutalize us. But it is not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of tendency in relation to all persons, of all sorts and conditions. There is, however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries; and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus: "Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin." ...

Environments change the nature of our duties, and doing the duty which is ours at any particular time is the best thing we can do in this world....No man is to be judged by the mere nature of his duties, but all should be judged by the manner and the spirit in which they perform them.

We shall find that even this idea of duty undergoes change,

and that the greatest work is done only when there is no selfish motive to prompt it. Yet it is work through the sense of duty that leads us to work without any idea of duty; when work will become worship—nay, something higher—then will work be done for its own sake. We shall find that the philosophy of duty, whether it be in the form of ethics or of love, is the same as in every other Yoga—the object being the attenuating of the lower self, so that the real higher Self may shine forth; to lessen the frittering away of energies on the lower plane of existence, so that the soul may manifest itself on the higher ones. This is accomplished by the continuous denial of low desires, which duty rigorously requires. The whole organization of society has thus been developed consciously or unconsciously in the realms of action and experience, where, by limiting selfishness, we open the way to an unlimited expansion of the real nature of man.

A special function was organized by HelpAge India, New Delhi, to celebrate the U.N. International Day for the Elderly. Dr. K. L. Chopra, Chairman of the Heart Care Foundation of India, spoke at the occasion on how to relieve the effects of stress on the aging heart by Ancient Wisdom, Yoga and Meditation. Stress, he said, was one of the main causes of mental and physical setback to the elderly, and he named various factors which would help in reducing stress:

Melodies of music relieve stress and have been shown to induce a feeling of well-being due to release of chemicals called endorphines in the human system. It has been shown that blood pressure and pulse settle to favourable levels....

Laughter and humour are considered to be sound buffers to the effects of stress on the human heart. Being able to laugh, even at ourselves, reflects both self-acceptance and humility and keeps our ego in proper perspective. The value of humour was known to the ancient Greeks and Indians. It relieves the mind and the body of exhaustion and fatigue and strengthens our immune and hormonal systems.

Other factors which contribute towards health, happiness and bliss are positive thinking and emotions, forgiveness and

contentment, discipline, compassion and devotion to values. People who have *Prem Bhava*, *Sakha Bhava* and *Sewa Bhava*, meaning an attitude of love, friendliness and service, are happy inside and no amount of stress can overwhelm them.

The word "Yoga" means union of the individual consciousness or soul with the universal consciousness or Self....The paths of Yoga are *Karma Yoga*, the path of action, *Jnana Yoga*, the path of knowledge, including self-knowledge, and *Bhakti Yoga*, the path of devotion....

Meditation is a kind of uplifting, allowing yourself to go on a journey within, to subtler levels, towards the Self. Your attention learns to fly to the silent, peaceful, unchanging Self or consciousness which is your home base. The mind is infused with peace. This silence, which is the bliss of pure awareness, is very refreshing to the mind.... Inner energies wake up. You energize less and achieve more, you are able to take spontaneous right action. Thoughts are positive and an aura of happiness emanates from the level of the Self.

The experience of meditation teaches you how to relax, not how to be lethargic; how to enjoy living and how not to be afraid of dying; how to manage stress, not just how to avoid it; how to live more fully in the world and not how to withdraw from it. (*HelpAge India News*, Vol. IX, No. 4)

Prominent among those who have dedicated themselves to gaining a better understanding of the world's plants, insects and animals, and to preserving them, is sociobiologist Edward Osborne Wilson. Betsy Carpenter, in her profile of the Harvard professor, reiterates his warning that unless something is done to preserve the planet's endangered species, humanity itself will be in peril. (*Span*, March 1995)

All other environmental problems pale beside the ongoing extinction crisis, says this "modern-day Darwin," as he is known. In the next three decades, fully a fifth of the Earth's species could vanish forever, he warns. Yet currently, little is being done to preserve our rich natural heritage. "Wilson hopes to change that,"

writes Carpenter:

He argues passionately that the hemorrhaging of biological wealth not only destabilizes ecosystems and squanders priceless sources of medicines, crops, and fuel, but also—most frightening to Wilson—eats away at the human soul. Human beings, he contends, have a natural affinity and reverence for living things, attachments that are not simply inculcated by culture but deeply ingrained in basic genetic makeup. "If we let too many species go, we face an enormous psychological and spiritual loss."...

The main culprit is habitat destruction. At least half of the world's species—and perhaps 90 percent—inhabit tropical rain forests, which are being destroyed at a rate of 17 million hectares a year. Wilson estimates that in these forests alone 27,000 species vanish each year. Pollution and the introduction of exotic species—which crowd out native plants and animals—are also to blame....

The planet's biological storehouse is so unexplored that researchers can't even say for sure how many species exist: The total could be ten million or as many as 100 million, says Wilson. Marvellous diversity dwells in the most unexpected places....

Whenever a species dies, Wilson argues, a treasure trove of biological information encoded in its genes vanishes, too. All living species are survivors, shaped and honed by billions of acts of natural selection. All are very good at something, whether it is fighting bacterial pests or manufacturing oils, and in destroying them we block the development of a host of potential medicines, crops, petroleum substitutes, and fibers....

An even more vital reason to protect biodiversity, Wilson argues, is to preserve the ecosystem that we depend on to enrich the soil, modify the climate, even create the air we breathe.... Without this life-sustaining matrix, Wilson says, "our tenure on Earth would be nasty and brief."...

In the economy of nature, says Theosophy, everything is in its right place, and every species has its purpose. Loss of biodiversity has insidious consequences, which will be felt by future generations even more keenly than by us.
