

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

Vol. 66, No. 7

May 1996

### LOYALTIES

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, December 1957.]

IT has been said that every man is a philosopher. Each lives by his philosophy. He does so most often unconsciously to himself. His inner attitude to life remains undefined to himself, till he progresses to the point of inquiring about the purpose of the life that surrounds him. But, for any observant and thoughtful inquirer, the philosophy of any person is not very difficult to determine. It is the outer behaviour that bespeaks one's philosophy.

The outer behaviour of a person has a myriad sides. It is a congeries of the expressions of thoughts and feelings in words and deeds. But there is one factor common to a man's many acts. His loyalties speak loudly, revealing his defects and merits. He may have many or only a few loyalties; he may have conflicting loyalties. Again, his loyalties may change, bettering or lowering his status as a person in one or another phase of life.

His loyalty to his city was emphasized by the late Pherozeshah Mehta, a man of great civic qualities; so it was by Joseph Chamberlain of Birmingham; and by his superb loyalty to the City State of Athens Pericles has come down to us as a great figure in history.

There is patriotism-loyalty to one's own country.

Breathes there the man with soul so dead,  
Who never to himself hath said,  
This is my own, my native land!

A very long list of names could easily be made of those coming in this category.

A more restricted sphere is the family, but as a field for the practice of loyalty it plays a very significant part.

The peasant's loyalty to his farm, the scholar's to his knowledge, the artist's to his art, are all telltale expressions of the person's philosophy.

One's loyalty is often very restricted, and in that measure defective. One who praises one's own city, exclaiming, "Of no mean city am I," and condemns the worth of other cities, shows a paucity of knowledge and a narrow-mindedness. A chauvinist who proclaims, "My country, right or wrong," and who is therefore unjust to other nations, is less than human; he acts like a beast of prey, unmindful of the destruction that he causes. Partial loyalties, like half-truths, bespeak moral blindness and mental limitations.

Personal loyalties which hamper the growth of the liberal mind, which harden the heart of love, which inhibit growth in the power to sacrifice, do not further the progress of the human soul.

Great movements in human history have resulted from the expansion of personal loyalties. Great men become such by letting their loyalties in a restricted sphere grow and embrace vaster loyalties. The Indian village *panchayat* of old was not a constrictive institution; it laid the foundation for the future district board, provincial state, united India.

The village state evolved into the city state in world history, as the feudal orders and dukedoms evolved into nations. A simple-minded girl from Domremy, Jeanne d'Arc, changed history, not so much by compelling the English to raise the siege of Orleans as by raising the cry: "France for the French." This was in the Europe of the early 15th century. In our own times Wendell Willkie's cry of "One World" has already evinced its great potency in fashioning One World.

There is the famous statement of the Prince of statesmen and diplomats, Sri Krishna, in the *Udyoga Parva* of the *Mahabharata*:

For the sake of a family, an individual may be sacrificed. For the sake of a village, a family may be sacrificed. For the sake of

a province, a village may be sacrificed. And lastly, for the sake of the Self, the whole earth may be sacrificed.

For enabling one's Great Self to perform its *dharma* to the Supreme Spirit, the petty personal self should be subdued. That is why Krishna called upon the blind Dhritarashtra to bind his wicked son Duryodhana and thus avert the tragedy of war between the Pandavas and the Kauravas. For every student of Theosophy there is more than one practical lesson in the thesis presented by Krishna at the court of the Kaurava King where he acted as the Ambassador of the Pandavas in the cause of peace and to prevent the fratricidal war.

Our worldly loyalties should be used in the service of the spiritual soul; we should not allow them to exploit the cause of truth, of virtue, of beauty. He who loves his son (Duryodhana) more than his friend Krishna is an unworthy King, is an unworthy man.

The Esoteric Philosophy teaches that we should so love our parents and children that the loyalty to our personal family may grow into the superb loyalty to the spiritual family of all human souls. Our patriotic feeling for our motherland should expand into loyalty to the One World when it comes into being.

Every small loyalty should become an avenue to a greater loyalty. For the love of the Supreme Spirit one should not call his father "householder"—that is reversing the process: making the Supreme loyalty utter falsehood, become evil and express ugliness. Similarly religious loyalty should expand from loyalty to a single sectarian creed to loyalty to the Truth which manifests itself in living Nature as the Most High. Personal loyalty to the Pope should grow into loyalty to Christ and to God. One cannot be faithful to the Pope and to Christ, to Mammon and to God.

Traditional and historical loyalties, spatial and geographical loyalties, when rightly considered and evaluated give birth to universal and eternal loyalties. He who is loyal to the dead past, or he who is loyal to the passing present, or he who is loyal to hopes of a future heaven, is bound to become a narrow, dogmatic and fanatical person. But he whose loyalty grows to embrace the ever-lengthening history of soul culture, to perceive the superb beauty of

the Eternal Now, who learns to see the expanding universe in a tiny grain of sand—his evolution brings to him the Vision of Truth, of Light, of Joy.

What are the great thoughts of Theosophy that will enable the student, whose sphere of loyalties is limited, to unfold them into eternal loyalties? In *The Key to Theosophy* H.P.B. speaks of the real nature of Theosophy as the Religion of Life: "Its creed is Loyalty to Truth, and its ritual 'to honour every truth by use.' " The seekers of Wisdom-Truth "in every age have more or less clearly apprehended the Theosophical doctrines and wrought them into the fabric of their lives."

Applying this to the present generation of earnest students, which truths of the Esoteric Philosophy should first be wrought into the fabric of our lives?

(1) The Immanence of Deity clearly points to the positive practice of Universal Brotherhood. Castes and classes, discriminations based upon the colour of the skin and creedalism, and other factors which are upheld by modern civilization do violence to the sacred idea of the omnipresence of Spirit. Such a phenomenon as untouchability in India clearly points to a denial of the wisdom taught by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, that He, as the Light of all lights, presides in the heart of each and every one—not in the Brahmana only but in the *Mlechcha* also; in all men and all women dwells Hari, the Divine; and St. Paul proclaimed that in God we "live and move and have our being." The student of Theosophy refuses to call others heathens or heretics, *kafirs* or infidels. Recognizing the One Self in the many forms of life, he is able to understand the diversity in Nature because he knows the doctrine of Emanations, and in human nature because of the fact of Reincarnation.

(2) The differences between the learned and the illiterate, the wise and the foolish, the healthy and the diseased, the saint and the sinner, are easily understood in the light of reincarnation and metempsychosis. The eye of wisdom is the eye of love, and he who loves, understands. But what piece of knowledge gives birth to love and understanding?

(3) The universe is governed by Law. Every event, every form, organic or inorganic, so-called, is an effect from a cause. Justice works incessantly; but, being divine and infallible, it ever and always adjusts, and its punishments are opportunities for growth in harmony. Each one is the maker of his own destiny.

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.

Also, each one is, albeit unwittingly, an agent of Karma for many, for the whole of Nature. By the Law of Unity, the many are linked by and in the One.

By correctly applying the three truths we shall be able to expand and elevate our small loyalties and transform them into greater loyalties. Creedal beliefs learnt at home or at school, to which we are loyal today, will become transmuted into the Religion of Knowledge which will enable us to endeavour successfully to make Theosophy a living power in our lives. Karma spells self-improvement; there is no purifier like spiritual knowledge. If we try to attain to spiritual wisdom, we shall draw to ourselves the help of the Wise Ones.

Expansion of loyalties implies acquiring a more enlightened faith. Loyalty to Truth means loyalty to many truths in the One Body of Knowledge, and the Faith in our Heart manifests itself in expressions of Loyalty in the world of deeds.

---

Study all Scriptures written, near or far;  
Worship all images and saints of earth;  
But if you do not study who you are,  
All your best actions are nothing worth.

—SANSKRIT VERSE

# INTUITION—THE INSTINCT OF THE SOUL

## II

(Collated from the writings of H. P. Blavatsky)

TO fully define Theosophy, we must consider it under all its aspects. The interior world has not been hidden from all by impenetrable darkness. By that higher intuition acquired by *Theosophia*—or God-Knowledge, which carried the mind from the world of form into that of formless spirit, man has been sometimes enabled in every age and every country to perceive things in the interior or invisible world.... The search after man's diviner "self," so often and so erroneously interpreted as individual communion with a personal God, was the object of every mystic, and belief in its possibility seems to have been coeval with the genesis of humanity, each people giving it another name....

Plotinus, the pupil of the "God-taught" Ammonius, tells us that the secret *gnosis* or the knowledge of Theosophy, has three degrees—opinion, science, and *illumination*. "The means or instrument of the first is sense, or perception; of the second, dialectics; of the third, intuition. To the last, reason is subordinate; it is *absolute knowledge*, founded on the identification of the mind with the object known." Theosophy...develops in man a direct beholding; that which Schelling denominates "a realization of the identity of subject and object in the individual"; so that under the influence and knowledge of *hyponia* man thinks divine thoughts, views all things as they really are, and, finally, "becomes recipient of the Soul of the World," to use one of the finest expressions of Emerson. "I, the imperfect, adore my own perfect"—he says in his superb Essay on the *Oversoul*. ("What Is Theosophy?": *H.P.B. Articles*, I, 43, 45-46)

Theosophy is...the ally of every honest religion—to wit, a religion willing to be judged by the same tests as it applies to the others. Those books, which contain the most self-evident truth, are to it inspired (not revealed). But all books it regards, on account of the human element contained in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature; to read which and comprehend it correctly, the innate powers of the soul must be highly developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the

intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics, and no one can understand or rightly appreciate them through the explanations of another mind, even though this mind be claiming a direct revelation. ("What Are the Theosophists?": *H.P.B. Articles*, I, 52)

Occult truth cannot be absorbed by a mind that is filled with preconception, prejudice, or suspicion. It is something to be perceived by the intuition rather than by the reason; being by nature spiritual, not material. Some are so constituted as to be incapable of acquiring knowledge by the exercise of the spiritual faculty; *e.g.*, the great majority of physicists. Such are slow, if not wholly incapable of grasping the ultimate truths behind the phenomena of existence. There are many such in the Society; and the body of the discontented are recruited from their ranks.... Sometimes vanity blinds what was at first strong intuition, the mind is effectually closed against the admission of new truth, and the aspiring student is thrown back to the point where he began. ("Lodges of Magic": *H.P.B. Articles*, I, 290-91)

As the ranks thin around us, and one after the other our best intellectual forces depart, to turn into bitter enemies, I say—Blessed are the pure-hearted who have only intuition—for intuition is better than intellect. ("She Being Dead Yet Speaketh": *H.P.B. Articles*, I, 121)

Every one of us possesses the faculty, the interior sense, that is known by the name of *intuition*, but how rare are those who know how to develop it! It is, however, only by the aid of this faculty that men can ever see things in their true colours. It is an *instinct of the soul*, which grows in us in proportion to the employment we give it, and which helps us to perceive and understand the realities of things with far more certainty than can the simple use of our senses and exercise of our reason. What are called good sense and logic enable us to see only the appearances of things, that which is evident to every one. The *instinct* of which I speak, being a projection of our perceptive consciousness, a projection which acts from the subjective to the objective, and not *vice versa*, awakens in us spiritual senses and power to act; these senses assimilate to themselves the

essence of the object or of the action under examination, and represent it to us as it really is, not as it appears to our physical senses and to our cold reason. "We begin with *instinct*, we end with omniscience," says Professor A. Wilder, our oldest colleague. Iamblicus has described this faculty, and certain Theosophists have been able to appreciate the truth of his description.

"There exists," he says, "a faculty in the human mind which is immeasurably superior to all those which are grafted or engendered in us. By it we can attain to union with superior intelligences, finding ourselves raised above the scenes of this earthly life, and partaking of the higher existence and superhuman powers of the inhabitants of the celestial spheres. By this faculty we find ourselves liberated finally from the dominion of destiny (Karma), and we become, as it were, the arbiters of our own fates. For, when the most excellent parts in us find themselves filled with energy; and when our soul is lifted up towards essences higher than science, it can separate itself from the conditions which hold it in the bondage of everyday life; it exchanges its ordinary existence for another one, it renounces the conventional habits which belong to the external order of things, to give itself up to and mix itself with another order of things which reigns in that most elevated state of existence."

Plato expressed the same idea in two lines: "The light and spirit of Divinity are the wings of the soul. They raise it to communion with the gods, above this earth, with which the spirit of man is too ready to soil itself.... To become like the gods, is to become holy, just and wise. That is the end for which man was created, and that ought to be his aim in the acquisition of knowledge." ("Le Phare de l'Inconnu": *H.P.B. Articles*, I, 428-29)

The INFINITE cannot be known to our reason, which can only distinguish and define;—but we can always conceive the abstract idea thereof, thanks to that faculty higher than our reason—*intuition*, or the spiritual instinct of which I have spoken. Only the great initiates, who have the rare power of throwing themselves into the state of Samadhi—which can be but imperfectly translated by the word *ecstasy*, a state in which one ceases to be the conditioned and personal "I," and becomes one with the ALL—only those can

boast of having been in contact with the *infinite*: but no more than other mortals can they describe that state in words. (*Ibid.*, p. 432)

Prof. Max Muller...shows us that: "There is a philosophical discipline which examines into the conditions of sensuous or intuitional knowledge," and "another philosophical discipline which examines into the conditions of rational or conceptual knowledge"; and then defines for us a third faculty.... "The faculty of apprehending the Infinite, not only in religion but in all things; a power independent of sense and reason, a power in a certain sense contradicted by sense and reason, but yet a very real power, which has held its own from the beginning of the world, neither sense nor reason being able to overcome it, while it alone is able to overcome both reason and sense." The faculty of *Intuition*—that which lies entirely beyond the scope of our modern biologists—could hardly be better defined. ("The Popular Idea of Soul-Survival": *H.P.B. Articles*, II, 231-32)

---

"BEAUTY is Truth, Truth Beauty." The words to many are meaningless. And it is certain that by no poring over the words themselves can the vision which they express be attained. Nor, probably, if we turn them about, like a jewel of many facets, will they reflect a gleam.

We may turn them in many ways. We may say that the Real is Beautiful. The answer straightway is that the Real is full of ugliness and pain. And this is true: who will deny it? But the Beauty of the Real is a Beauty which resides as surely in pain and ugliness as in beauty itself. There is the sorrow which makes "Sorrow more beautiful than Beauty's self." But that sorrow may still be called, by our human standards, beautiful. The Beauty of the Real is beyond this. It lies in the perfection of uniqueness which belongs to every thing, or thought, simply because it *is*.

—JOHN MIDDLETON MURRY

## FATE AND FREE WILL

"LIFE" and "determinism" are two constantly recurring words in recent scientific discussions. In biology as in physics, the problems of life-evolution are keenly debated. And lately astronomy has come in with its limitless universes and plumbless depths of space. Even noted scientists now talk of Universal Mind—another name for the *Mahat* of ancient Indian philosophy. Science comes closer to the old truths, but its conceit is such that it does not yet care to look into the philosophical propositions of the Ancients, who knew much more than they are credited with knowing. Modern astronomy repeats that if God exists he must be a mathematician, for did not the Platonists teach that God geometrizes and that the Universe is arithmetic in motion and geometry in repose? Presently, scientists and philosophers must join hands to figure out the exact arithmetic of the universe—a familiar phrase to the student of Buddhistic philosophy.

But what has all this to do with fate and free will? Everything. If God moves in figures and forms, his wonders to perform, God must be nothing more and nothing less than Law. If Life evolves forms mathematically, it must be infallible, it cannot err, for mathematics is an exact science. Law and Life are synonymous terms and every atom of dust, every blade of grass, every creature on earth, every savage and every sage, expresses life by Law and under Law. It is Law that is at work in the formation of beautiful crystals. The rhythm of forms, which every tyro of botany has observed, is Life manifesting Law. The reptile creeps and the bird soars by the action of the same Law by which humans speak and asses bray—though sometimes both sound alike! The formation of a cell and that of a star are governed by the same Law. Was it not Kant who identified the starry heavens above and the moral law within? The whole universe, the entire manifestation, is an expression of Law, ever and everywhere present, working incessantly and infallibly. "It knows not wrath nor pardon": it measures with justice each and every act, word, desire and thought.

That is the first thing we must understand. Science is groping to

define Law in the moral world, though it has succeeded in defining some of its many variants in the physical world. The law of motion, the law of concretion, the law of disintegration, the law of evolution, are some of the laws of which science knows, and its findings make it affirm that nothing happens by chance, there are no miracles, and that Law and Law alone is at the foundation of the universe. Whatever else be the nature or name of Deity, Law is the first and basic principle of the order we name Cosmos.

With this Theosophy concurs. Theosophy also says that Law is the only God that exists. Law is omnipresent and works at every point of space. Law is omnipotent and acts every minute of time. Law is omniscient and functions as infallible justice. This Law is not framed by any person or being, but is the cause, sustainer and renovator of every person and being. Theosophy also says that there are no miracles, and it adds that there are more things modern science is ignorant of than there are things it knows about. While science has not yet discovered how the Law works in the universe of morals and in the universe of mind, Theosophy has; and Theosophy but reiterates ancient Wisdom. That is the fundamental difference.

The ancients were more concerned with soul than with body, with morals than with matter, and so they paid more attention to the working of the Law in its spiritual aspects than in its formal phases. Of all ancient philosophies, the Buddhistic has more to say about the invisible action of the Law than any other. If there is any single teaching that can help men and women of today, it is that of the doctrine of fate and free will as the Great Buddha taught, repeating the more ancient truths of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

The doctrine of fate and free will is the doctrine of Karma, Action. It is as much misunderstood now as it was in Buddha's time. Karma is not fate, though fate is an aspect of Karma; nor is it the expression of free will only, though free will plays a most important part in it. It is not action as we know action—something we do with our bodies. It includes action of tongue, of feelings, of thoughts, of human will. Karma is Perpetual Motion ever in repose. Its metaphysical concepts are difficult to comprehend; its

moral presentation is simple. Every spiritual teacher and religious philosopher has given that moral teaching.

There is this aphorism: "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects." This is simple, self-evident, but like all other simple truths it is also profound. When people say, time and again, "such is my fate"; "such is my Kismet"; "such are my *samskaras*"; "such is my Karma," they overlook that there must have been a being who made that fate, that destiny, that Karma. So we have two factors—*Karta*, the actor; and Karma, the action. There can be no action without the actor; no destiny or fate without the being who wove that destiny, who manufactured that fate.

People are puzzled because they do not always see the actor and the action together, which really means that they do not see the actor performing the action. To take an example: a person who has been deaf since birth might say, "Deafness is my Kismet, it is my Karma." It is, says Theosophy, but what, or who, caused this Karma? The general Law must be learned and then applied to oneself: "There is no Karma unless there is a being to make it or feel its effects." So deafness, in our example, is made, and the being who made it is the very one who now suffers the effect, who is now born deaf.

That brings us to the second fact about Karma: each Karma, each action, is a process, a motion—cause, effect, cause once more. Karma is not static or stationary; it is dynamic, moving, like the waters of a river. At any given spot on the bed of the river, water does not remain stationary for two seconds. Any single action of ours is a complex process. Our thought on any given subject results from all our connections—mental, moral and physical—with that subject. So every action is an effect of a cause, however hidden that cause. Also, every action is a new cause producing numerous effects, often equally unknown to us and hidden from view. From these two ideas can be derived all the necessary instruction for daily living, which would save us much pain and suffering in the future.

We need, then, to gain the recognition that nothing happens by chance or accident, for we live in a universe of Law—an honest universe. Again, nothing happens to us save that which we as souls

have fabricated. What we see as effects may puzzle us because we do not perceive the cause, but whatever happens, comes as an effect from a cause. By our thoughts we make one kind of Karma; by our feelings, another kind; by our words, the third; by our deeds, the fourth.

We think, we feel, we speak, we act. When we cease to do this fourfold action, we cease altogether. To live implies action on the four planes.

Let us look at ourselves, first from the point of view of effects. We have a mind; it is our effect-Karma from the past. If we did not use our mind in the past, we have a dull mind in the present. If we misused our mind in the past, we have a diseased mind now. If we used the mind wisely in the past, we have a keen and fine mind in the present.

Next, if we have a moral character that is strong, our past feelings made that. Cruelty begets cruelty, selfishness is born of selfishness, compassion multiplies compassion, kindness results in kindness. "See yonder fields! The sesamum was sesamum, the corn was corn," says the Buddha. "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?" asks the Christian scripture. "The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn," says *The Voice of the Silence*. We cannot sow meanness and expect our character to be generous in the future; we cannot practise kindness without strengthening our character. Our character, our morals, are the effects of our own past feelings.

Thirdly, we cannot have a sweet or soothing voice which comforts others if we have indulged in lies or gossip. The way we speak, the things we speak, are effects; for, does not *The Voice of the Silence* again say, "A harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but ever comes again"?

Finally, our body, ill or well, ugly or handsome, inefficient or capable, dull or keen, indolent or energetic, is the result of how we treated it in the past or what we did with other bodies we had in previous lives.

All these four departments of our being—mind, character, speech and deeds—exist and function in an environment, under an

outer set of circumstances. Our environment, the family and the country in which we find ourselves, is the result of thoughts, feelings, words and deeds with which we affected families and countries in past existences.

We have looked at ourselves from the effect side of Karma. But, as we have seen, Karmic effects become in turn causes of future effects. Let us now look at the fourfold Karma as causes in the present.

As we think now, so will be our mind in future lives and even in the future of the present life. Similarly, character and morals are changing, and as we feel and desire today will be our moral nature tomorrow. The condition of our body and the deeds it will be able to perform in the near or distant future is being determined now. Our words, likewise, come home to roost. And with the help of mind, character, speech and bodily actions we affect our environment, and we come back to it as we left it, made by ourselves.

Is this not a wonderful, just Law that inspires! We need not lie down and mourn, we need not blame our heredity; we need not pray to any god or gods, or propitiate devils or demons; we need only to take ourselves in hand and say, "I shall be what I choose to be." "I shall make my destiny and rule my stars." "I am a free being, the creator of my own fate; I shall break the chains of my fate and be free." Once that resolve is made and the fact is understood, half the battle is won. So let us take the strong, virile position of a warrior, and not degrade ourselves to the condition of a coward who throws the blame for his misdeeds and stupidity on the shoulders of Karma, or of family, or whatnot.

If at the same time we do not seek knowledge to base our actions upon, it will be sheer bravado, and every pride brings its fall. So let us seek information humbly but confidently, and Theosophy gives us that information. Theosophy is the science that instructs us in the ways of changing and improving our Karma. There is not a circumstance in the life of anyone, there is not a problem in our struggles, for which Theosophy has not an answer. This might sound sweeping, but it is true.

What is to be done for the shaping and moulding of our own

future in the departments we have considered above?

First, what shall we do to improve our mind so that it does not act as a fetter, does not enslave us? The mind loses its narrowness and gains breadth as well as depth by moving away from subjects that deal only with our narrow personal selves. Most people use their mental activity only for personal ends: "What shall I eat? Where shall I go? How shall I act?" The mind needs universal, cosmic ideas to dwell upon. It uses the brain as its vehicle and instrument, and the grooves and grey matter of the brain are affected by the ideas on which the mind dwells. Let us use our will and resolve to place our mind on Universal Ideas. Without breadth and depth, the mind cannot learn the Truth, nor can one be true to oneself. So let us dwell on ideas which touch, not our personal and petty self, but the Great Self of all mankind.

Next, feelings: Egotism, pride and selfishness are the three bastard children, however hidden, in the characters of most men and women. They have to be eliminated, for they enslave us. If Universal Ideas break the fetters of mind, impersonal feelings break those of low morals. People love selfishly, are charitable because of pride, and labour to satisfy their own egotism. Let us analyse and see if we love impersonally, without the desire to be loved in return. Are we giving in charity so that we might become famous? Are we doing anything without bringing in our own personality? We shall be surprised to find how very personal we are, and how rare is the quality of impersonality.

As for speech, the *Gita* tells us: "Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech." Do we guard our speech all day long? Even though we may not indulge in gossip or malicious talk, yet how many times a day do we not speak of ourselves? Is it not common to find men and women wanting to hear their own voices? Theosophy asks us to learn soul-speech, and for that it is necessary to practise silence at certain periods.

Finally, deeds: Theosophy says, do your duties, but do not look longingly for results. Act with dispassion, and the fetters of action will fall away. In addition to duties, "deeds of sacrifice, of mortifi-

cation, and of charity should not be forsaken," says the *Gita*.

So universal ideas, impersonal feelings, holy and sacred words, dispassionate deeds—these produce an environment where harmony and peace prevail. Outer arrangements are of no avail. Peace comes from the mind; power comes from the heart; helpfulness comes from speech; sacrifice comes from deeds. One who has overcome fate by free will has peace, power, helpfulness and sacrifice. The Perfected Super-Men are Men of Peace and Power, who help all in a grand Sacrifice, irrespective of persons and without looking for reward. Let us copy Their great example. Their precepts are with us; They Themselves exist as facts and not just as ideals. Seek, and you shall find.

---

FULL and entire liberty of conscience allowed to all, fraternity reigning between the rich and the poor, equality recognized in theory and practice between the aristocrat and the plebeian—are still so many castles in the air and for a good reason. All this must come about naturally and voluntarily on both sides, but the time has not yet arrived for the lion and the lamb to lie down together. The great reform must take place without any social shocks, without a drop of blood being spilled; which can happen in no other way than by the recognition of the axiomatic truth of Oriental Philosophy, which teaches us that the great diversity of fortune, of social rank and of intellect, is due but to the personal Karma of each human being. We reap only what we have sown. If the *personality* of each physical man differs from that of every other, the immortal *individuality*, or immaterial being in him, emanates from the same divine essence as does that of his neighbours. He who is thoroughly impressed with the philosophic truth that every Ego begins and ends by being the indivisible WHOLE, cannot love his neighbour less than he does himself. But, until this becomes a religious truth, no such reform can take place.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE AGE-OLD WISDOM

ALTHOUGH it is a sad commentary on the state of the present civilization that progress has not resulted in happiness, it proves at the same time the truth of the age-old precept in the *Katha Upanishad*:

The good is one thing; the pleasant is another. These two having different purposes, bind a man. Of these two, it is well for him who takes hold of the good. He who chooses the pleasant misses his end. The good and the pleasant approach a man; the wise man considers and distinguishes the two. Wisely does he prefer the good to the pleasant. But a fool chooses the pleasant for its worldly good.

It is obvious, therefore, that the sphere of influence of any progressive society is to be found elsewhere than in works of a material nature, which supply physical wants for the moment but leave the person dissatisfied and perpetuate a civilization that breeds rivalry, war and conflict. Our real inner nature, when freed from the trammels of matter, alone can triumph over all difficulties. That inner nature touches the depths reaching beyond the ephemeral.

The era of rebuilding has already begun; the drift of modern thought is clearly in the direction of liberalism in all fields of activity, in philosophy, science and religion. Physical life need not necessarily be a vale of sorrow and it is incumbent on us to realize our responsibility in making our life on earth what it ought to be. If each is righteous, desires to do the right thing and acquires the necessary knowledge, all that is done will be right and will leave good results. The time is ripe for the resurgence of righteousness in all fields. And the time will pass again just as surely as the Sun moves northwards and then south again.

The Law works just and true. What has been *is* and shall be. We have power over nothing but the present moment. It is by working in and upon the present conditions that the nature of the future will be changed and in no other way. This calls for reliance upon the Law. As the Law is just and merciful, all that comes to us must be

viewed as just and merciful. All errors spring from an effort to turn the great to small purposes. They divert the streams of spiritual forces into muddy pools of stagnant, selfish interests. In the great economy of Nature, governed by Law, each being is placed exactly where he needs to be to eradicate defects. All the necessary conditions for his growth are present and the question lies before him: Will he take them as "pain" or as "opportunities"? All down the ages, men have been endeavouring to correct the existing conditions by simply rearranging them. The rearrangement of errors does not make for knowledge; errors arise because of ignorance; knowledge that will enable us to find out the causes that produced the existing conditions must be sought. There is no need to grope or to stagger or to stray, for the chart that has led many to the goal is to be found in the Holy Writ promulgated once again in the philosophy of Theosophy.

What is Theosophy? It is a teaching in regard to Nature and Man which has existed ever since the first glimmering of nascent thought made man seek instinctively for the means of expressing his own independent opinions. Theosophy is not a new-fangled religion invented by H. P. Blavatsky and the Masters, but antedates all recorded history. There were Theosophists before the Christian era, for Diogenes Laertius traces Theosophy to the early days of the dynasty of the Ptolemies in Egypt. He names as its founder an Egyptian Hierophant called Pot-Amun, a Coptic name signifying one consecrated to Amun, the God of Wisdom. But the word "Theosophy" was revived in the third century by Ammonius Saccas, the founder of the Neo-Platonic School. He and his disciples called themselves "Philaletheans," "the lovers of truth," while others termed them "Analogeticists" on account of their method of interpreting all sacred legends, myths and mysteries by a principle of analogy and correspondence, so that events that were related as having occurred in the external world were regarded as expressing operations and experiences of the human soul.

It was this same teaching that was once again promulgated by H. P. Blavatsky in a language known to the largest number of people in the world, in the last quarter of the last century. As in the case of

every great teacher, she was as much misunderstood by her friends as misrepresented by her enemies. Her message, too, has been misrepresented and mutilated by those on whom it fell to pass it on, for each can only give to the world his own interpretations of what she taught. The original teachings of Theosophy as recorded by H.P.B. are accessible to all inquirers, and it is surprising, therefore, that they should have been distorted in less than a century of their repromulgation. But that has been the case with the teachings of all the great teachers, as the character and understanding of the exponents affect what they give out.

Theosophy, as presented by H. P. Blavatsky, is submitted to inquirers neither as a revelation nor as a hypothesis but as the Mathematics of the Soul. It is submitted as a system of knowledge which may be studied, applied and discussed in the same way as the scientific knowledge which has been acquired today. There is no room in Theosophy for miracles, luck or chance. It is throughout a teaching of Law, of cause and effect, of self-evolution, of knowledge to be gained by observation and experience, by self-devised and self-induced efforts.

Everyone who is earnestly searching for knowledge of the Divine Principle, our relation to it and Nature's manifestations of it, is a student of Theosophy. Theosophy is likewise the ally of honest science, as distinguished from that which passes for exact physical science today, which is amoral and therefore not necessarily humane. It is also the ally of every honest religion, *i.e.*, a religion willing to be judged by the same tests as it applies to others. Those books which contain the most self-evident truths are to it inspired, not revealed. But it regards all books, on account of the human element in them, as inferior to the Book of Nature, to read and correctly comprehend which the innate powers of the soul must be developed. Ideal laws can be perceived by the intuitive faculty alone; they are beyond the domain of argument and dialectics. All are working for one and the same object, namely, the disenchantment of human thought, the elimination of superstitions and the discovery of truth. And as each of the great ones and their disciples have trodden the royal road to knowledge, Theosophy

listens to all and takes them all into its fellowship.

It is obvious that all organized religions, systems of thought, governments, parties, sects, have their origins in efforts for the better co-operation of men, for conserving energy and putting it to use. But, unfortunately, they all get corrupted in time and must change, as the times change, as human defects come out and as the necessities of intellectual and moral evolution compel such alterations. In its wider aspect, the Theosophical Movement is the path of progress, individually and collectively, of human beings. Wherever thought has struggled to be free, wherever spiritual ideas, as opposed to forms and dogmatism, have been promulgated, there the great Movement is to be discerned. Theosophy is not a belief or dogma formulated or invented by man, but is a *knowledge* of the laws which govern the evolution of the physical, astral, psychical and intellectual constituents of Nature and of Man. It breaks down racial and national antipathies and barriers and opens the way for the practical realization of the Brotherhood of all men.

---

THEOSOPHY, or rather the occult sciences it studies, is something more than simple metaphysics. It is, if I may be allowed to use the double terms, *meta*-metaphysics, *meta*-geometry, etc., etc., or a universal transcendentalism. Theosophy rejects the testimony of the physical senses entirely, if the latter be not based upon that afforded by the psychic and spiritual perceptions. Even in the case of the most highly developed clairvoyance and clairaudience, the *final* testimony of both must be rejected, unless by those terms is signified the *photos* of Iamblicus, or the ecstatic illumination; the *agoge manteia* of Plotinus and of Porphyry. The same holds good for the physical sciences; the evidence of the reason upon the terrestrial plane, like that of our five senses, should receive the imprimatur of the sixth and seventh senses of the divine ego, before a fact can be accepted by the true occultist.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THE PATH OF OUR CONSCIOUSNESS

IN ancient philosophy, two paths are spoken of—the path of forthgoing and the path of return. During the first half of its incarnated existence, human consciousness is generally said to be on the path of forthgoing; during the latter half, it is on the path of return.

The path of forthgoing has its definite laws, and on it the human consciousness expresses itself through the three instruments of the head, the heart and the hands. Consciousness working through the head is treading the path of knowledge; working through the heart, it is treading the path of devotion; and working through the hands, it is treading the path of action.

For all ordinary people, on the path of forthgoing knowledge is acquired because of the desire for the return that knowledge brings; love and devotion are expressed to obtain the return that they bring; action is performed for the return that it brings. Consciousness working through the hands wants the return of wealth. Working through the heart, it wants the return of love. Working through the head, acquiring knowledge, it requires the return of power. People seek knowledge so that they may have power over others; they express love through the heart so that they may have love in return; and they perform works with the hands so that they may gain wealth.

The spiritual life, on the other hand, requires that we turn back on the path of return. We cannot do away with the head, the heart or the hands, but we *can* do away with this triple desire for wealth, love and power, and have another motive. *Light on the Path* enjoins us to kill out ambition, the desire for life and comfort, the sense of separateness, the desire for sensation, the hunger for growth. Desire for comfort leads to ambition for wealth, power and love, and this ambition in turn produces the desire for life and the sense of separateness. We err in thinking that the fault lies in our heart, our head or our hands, or that it lies in wealth, power or love. That is not so. It is the personal use of these for self-gratification or self-glorification that creates a good part of the evil existing in the world.

If we want to live the spiritual life, we must eradicate the desire for the return of wealth, love and power and use the hands, the heart and the head for other purposes. We should remember that the spiritual life does not demand that we shall have no body of head, heart or hands. The consciousness must be trained so that it works, but not for the sake of wealth; it loves, but not for the return of love; it gains knowledge, but not to have power over others. The spiritual life means treading the path of knowledge, of devotion and of action, not for the returns they bring but for another purpose. The general concept, and the wrong one, is that the man of knowledge cannot tread the other paths, whereas all that is meant is that at a particular time a particular expression of consciousness predominates. The consciousness of some is more engrossed in the gaining of knowledge than in anything else. In any single life we pass from one stage to another. We send boys and girls to school and college during the earlier years of their lives; at that stage the aspect of knowledge predominates. But as they grow, they reach the stage of the householder and try to build a home for themselves and their loved ones and engage themselves in professional or business activities.

Just as in any single life there are the stages of knowledge, love and activity, so there are stages in consciousness which may cover several lives. A person may be treading the path of knowledge, for instance, not for a few years, but perhaps for several lives. When we say that one is treading a particular path, we mean that that particular stage of consciousness is the predominant factor in one's life. So, when we speak of the spiritual life, we must always consider the person. The spiritual life for one who happens to be on the path of return may be one thing, but it may be quite a different thing for one who is on the path of forthgoing. We must guard against teaching the same spiritual doctrines to all. We must also remember that true service means enabling a person to take the next step in front of him, and for some of us the next step may be very different from that which is in front of others.

Let us understand clearly whether going away from our duty strengthens or weakens us. If the desire for wealth falls away from

us, it may be for one of two reasons: because we have grown more spiritual, or because we are lazy. We must recognize that as long as the desire for wealth enables us to do our work better, we are on the path of forthgoing in that particular respect. If the desire for wealth disappears but the desire to do our work continues, as far as that work is concerned we are on the path of return. Similarly, the desire for knowledge will not disappear on the path of return but only the desire to overpower others by means of that knowledge. Then we shall seek knowledge not for the sake of competing with others, but in order that we may help them better. But, if our desire for knowledge dies because we have ceased competing with others, then we are not on the path of return. Then again, if we are unable to love any more because there is no return of that love, we are still on the path of forthgoing. But if we continue to love even though we do not receive love, we are on the path of return. At the present time we are at the midway point of human evolution and most of us are on the threshold of the return path.

Two things are necessary: first, we must know ourselves in reference to our consciousness, whether we are on the path of forthgoing or on the path of return; and, secondly, we must find out the particular aspect of the path we are treading. We must analyse ourselves and use our best judgment, honestly and sincerely; otherwise our self-expression will not be natural. When we have done that, we shall be able to take the next step.

---

THE first lesson taught in Esoteric philosophy is, that the incognizable Cause does not put forth evolution, whether consciously or unconsciously, but only exhibits periodically *different aspects of itself* to the perception of *finite* Minds. Now the collective Mind—the Universal—composed of various and numberless Hosts of Creative Powers, however infinite in manifested Time, is still finite when contrasted with the unborn and undecaying Space in its supreme essential aspect. That which is finite cannot be perfect.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 487

## THE ASPIRANT'S QUEST

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.

—*Light on the Path*

THROUGHOUT the ages, there have always been those who have tried to understand the mystery that lies deep within themselves. They exist today as they did in the days of the Delphic Oracle and in the far earlier times of the Indian Rishis. To their intuitive perception it becomes evident that the priceless knowledge exists and that instruction is always available to the right person who knocks. Yet, too often, their long search goes in vain and their questioning remains futile. In such cases, the effort has to be carried forward into other lives and under more propitious circumstances. This must inevitably be so because in all such cases the aspirant fails to secure the key that will open the door for his initiation into the circle of the true neophytes. The chief obstacle that bars entry and stops all progress lies in one's inner and often hidden motives. The search has to be one-pointed, the devotion steadfast.

To know himself, the aspirant has to know his own pedigree—the sources from which the various and complex sheaths of himself came to be derived and fused together for the achievement of a purpose and a plan which he now has forgotten and which leaves him today a derelict without helm, chart and compass. He owes to himself the duty to know and recognize the relationship of himself to the sheaths he inherits and to understand his own kinship with Nature and with that ubiquitous Presence that men call God. The answer to the great mystery is locked up within him, so that in essence he is to himself the Way, the Truth and the Life. Knowledge such as this is priceless because in the process of gaining it the aspirant, like the prodigal of the parable, takes his first steps for a return to the land of his fathers.

Although it is a truism that we have to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, it is equally true that we have to render unto God the things that are God's. There is a plethora of knowledge that is being forced on young minds about Caesar and the things that are to be offered in tribute to Caesar. Scant time and attention is being paid to impart a knowledge of what is pleasing to God, where it can be gathered and in what manner it has to be placed at the altar. To reach to even a rudimentary knowledge of this, requires strain and strong search and service of those who are the chosen servants of God. But, even before this is attempted, the aspirant has to question his own motive. Is he seeking for something which, when won with hard labour and untold sacrifices, will raise him to an enviable stature? Does he seek martyrdom because martyrdom sets him apart from others? Does he will himself to go through torture so that for aeons thereafter peace and content shall be his? Does he seek for the higher knowledge only to hug it to his bosom as the miser his hoard? Does he seek to have mastery over nature's finer forces to become a miracle worker? If he does, his motive transmits to his actions the taint of selfishness so that in the process of his endeavour he distils that drop of poison which, overspreading his entire effort, makes it malignant and potent for harm. Our modern institutes of learning are spewing out human minds that are trained to covet and applaud the lower motive and the selfish bent. This brood then becomes the creator of strifes and wars, of intolerance and persecution, of hatred and envy and greed. The earthly and therefore the selfish knowledge defiles and destroys. It creates false appetites and is divisive and therefore destructive of unity. Salvation is not attainable with such knowledge.

The perennial philosophy requires something more than the intellect to grasp and contain it. It cannot be poured into unprepared minds lest these minds perish and the wisdom get lost. The act of preparing the mind so as to become a receptive channel for the divine is no facile operation. It entails great risk; for, it is a frightening process this, which requires the aspirant to grasp his wavering mind and turn its fixed leanings from the non-eternal to the eternal. The heat engendered in the process is intense because

he finds himself contemplating a vast nothingness as he continues to shed his lower attractions one after the other. The familiar grounds are abandoned, the new have yet to be discovered. It is during this period of his life when only negation is seen that the student can find his salvation in doing service, in strong search, in questioning, and in humility. The mind has to be kept occupied and though it may seem to drift, it is by these exercises being trained to move in the direction of the eternal.

In the act of shedding the non-eternal, the motive of the aspirant again comes into prominence. Men have been known to practise austerities, charity and even sacrifice to gain unworthy ends. Unease, discomfort and even torture are invited and suffered in order that some desire be fulfilled, some ambition attained. For the neophyte, it is the motive that soars above the non-eternal. His act of sacrifice is sanctified because from it he extracts the essence which alone can be an offering worthy of the Supreme. The act of abandoning earthly pursuits is sacrifice. The act of restraining the senses and emotions is sacrifice. The act of entering the void and living in it is sacrifice. Each is to be considered a step that is necessary and an abandoning that is imperative. These conditions through which the Soul has to learn to move are a necessary part of his training, are in fact processes which aid in questioning and in strong search. It is in such periods of stress that the fire of true knowledge gets kindled. In this fire, all desires, all fruits of actions, all earthly considerations are to be offered as oblations to the Supreme. As the aspirant approaches this state, two dominant characteristics mark the entry of his life into the higher atmosphere. He abandons all possessions and raises himself above the enjoyments that things and objects can offer.

All this is a preliminary or rather a preparation for the receiving of the hidden doctrine, the secret instruction. The sacrifice advocated in the Fourth Chapter of the *Gita* is not the sacrifice made with material things. It is the sacrifice made through spiritual knowledge that is of the essence. A rich person may assume the mendicant's robe and give away all that he possesses in charity and the earth laud him for his self-abnegation and sacrifice. Yet, if he light not the

Tathagata fire, if his action is not the natural outcome of his spiritual knowledge, it profiteth him nothing. Desire, anger and greed generate heady and intoxicating fumes that cast a dense and impenetrable fog which envelops the mind and shuts it off from its higher potentialities. To remove any possibility of a sudden upsurge of these, the disciple is asked to control his senses and to make his actions duty-oriented. The senses bring the noises and the vacillations of the outside world and thus have the power to vibrate within him such chords as are sympathetic. The inner chords have, therefore, to be tuned to a diviner pitch and the senses have to be so trained as to bring in only such outside data as the Soul may desire.

Superhuman tasks these, and yet they are capable of achievement by practice and absence of desire. When in doing something, the neophyte performs his action because it is right to be performed and thus does it with no particular expectancy of gratification, he rises above the occasion and from his high unaffected position can visualize and extract the spiritual knowledge that lies hidden behind the circumstance and the event. He acts, and in acting remains indifferent as to what will eventually follow that action. He does his duty without favour or fear because it is right to be performed. In all this, he remains free and untainted because he desires nothing and nothing abhors. Whatever comes to him is thus welcome. Pleasure and pain he sees as the ebb and flow of experience—something which the Soul needs and which therefore is provided by nature. He can do all this and retain his equipoise because he offers each action and reaction to the Supreme. In the act of offering he offers himself. Thus firmly fixed in devotion, his act of sacrifice ceases to be a ritual or an offering. It becomes no mere formality, no austerity, no act of homage. It becomes a natural flow of life, a great tide moving its appointed course towards the Supreme.

It is only after the chela is given the knowledge of the true sacrifice that Sri Krishna in the Fourth Chapter of the *Gita* shows his disciple the gateways to the Ancient Wisdom, the *Sanatana Dharma*. In two ways does this knowledge come to the disciple of the purified heart. The Wise Ones come unbidden and give it to him because the fire which he has kindled by questioning, strong search,

service and humility singles him out from among the human multitudes. It is their act of service to him. It will be his line of service to act as their companion and lead other souls to their feet. His degree of involvement in this duty will raise or lower the intensity of his devotion. As the arc of this intensity rises and becomes one-pointed, it acquires the force needed for the steep rising towards Buddhi. When the disciple gets perfected in devotion, his union with Buddhi becomes established and he finds spiritual knowledge springing up spontaneously within himself in the progress of time. He no longer needs the aid of the Wise, for he himself is Wise and becomes a valued part of their band.

This ultimate consummation of knowledge has its roots in action. Action is therefore necessary as is the understanding of the formula that makes one realize that inaction can be made to be a factor, an esoteric base of any action. Sacrifice sanctifies it. Wisdom exalts it.

---

THE object which a Buddhist or Adwaitee Yogi sets before himself is the realization of the oneness of existence, and the practice of morality is the most powerful means to that end.... The principal obstacle to the realization of this oneness is the inborn habit of man of always placing himself at the centre of the Universe. Whatever a man might act, think or feel, the irrepressible "I" is sure to be the central figure. This, as will appear on the slightest consideration, is that which prevents every individual from filling his proper sphere in existence, where he only is exactly in place and no other individual is. The realization of this harmony is the practical or objective aspect of the GRAND PROBLEM. The practice of morality indeed is the effort to find out this sphere; and morality indeed is the Ariadne's clue in the Cretan labyrinth in which man is placed.

—*The Theosophist*, November 1883

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

For years, religion and science have been considered as antagonistic systems with irreconcilable differences. Now a growing number of scholars are talking to one another across the great divide. "Ignoring religion is fast becoming an untenable position" for scientists, writes Margaret Wertheim, under the title "God in the Lab" (*New Scientist*, 23/30 December 1995):

Secular humanists may be surprised to learn that there are now close on a thousand science and religion courses being taught in tertiary institutions round the world, the majority of them in the U.S. They may also be surprised to hear that few if any of these courses focus on conflicts between science and religion. Quite the opposite. Proponents of this burgeoning new field of academic research talk about the "overlap" between the two and the need to "develop models for a mutually respectful interaction." And far from dismissing that goal as dreamy utopianism, some are prepared to back it with dollars....

The goal of science and religious studies is twofold, says Robert Russell [a physicist and theologian, and director of Berkeley's Center for Theology and the Natural Sciences]. First, it must serve the theological and religious community by bringing into the discussion of religious issues insights from the sciences—for example, insights about our origins. Russell insists that theologians and ministers today simply cannot do their jobs properly unless they are aware of the monumental developments in science. If religion ignores science, he says, then "it cannot make its moral claims persuasive or its spiritual nourishment palpable, because its cognitive claims seem incoherent." In other words, to appeal to rational people today, religion must at least be compatible with science.

Secondly, science and religion scholars wish to bring a religious voice to the wider public discourse about science and technology. Here, Russell makes an analogy with the field of bioethics. Just as it is now accepted that we need an ethical perspective in the debates about biotechnology, so, he says, we also need the input of well-informed religious perspectives. The environment is another area where he sees an urgent need for

religious people to get involved.

Many scientists, however, still remain sceptical and are happy with the divorce between religion and science. Nor do they have any clear conception of what true religion is. What has passed for religion over the centuries is but fundamentalism, or orthodox beliefs based on a literal interpretation of the scriptures. Between religious orthodoxy and scientific extremism there is indeed little common ground, though science is certainly less materialistic today than it used to be. Scientific hypotheses, moreover, change with such rapidity that there is no finality about them. There is, however, a true science and a true religion, which, Theosophy says, are and must be one; for each of them pursues the truth, and truth is one, even though the means to reach it differ. They have their meeting-ground in the recognition of the One Divinity, the One Life, in and behind all objective manifestation and in the very perception of the majestic working of immutable Law. A scientist without reverence is the most impious of men. True religion, on the other hand, is the worship—in the silence and sanctified solitude of one's own Soul—of the eternal and uncreated spirit of Nature itself, the omnipresent, omnipotent and even omniscient creative potentiality, the ever Unknowable, the Causeless Cause of all causes.

---

In what is described as a "celestial visual delight," the comet Hyakutake, named after the Japanese astronomer who first spotted it, was visible in India during the month of March. During the last week of the month, when it was visible even to the naked eye, the comet was estimated to be at a distance of 15 million kilometres from the Earth and was moving towards the Sun. "It's even more special than Halley's comet," says Bharat Adur, senior scientist at the Nehru Planetarium in Bombay, "because of its spectacular size, brightness and the sheer length of its tail." (*The Times of India*, March 30)

According to current scientific thinking, the head of a comet is made up of frozen rocky matter usually consisting of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, methane, water, ammonia and other

substances in a highly frozen state. When the comet comes closer to the sun, the frozen material on the surface gets evaporated because of solar radiation and is blown away by the solar winds. This gaseous material is what appears as a tail.

"What does Science know of Comets, their genesis, growth, and ultimate behaviour? Nothing—absolutely nothing!" says *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 204). The essence of cometary matter, the Adepts assert, is "totally different from any of the chemical or physical characteristics with which the greatest chemists and physicists of the Earth are familiar." In his article "Comets" (reprinted from *The Path*, April 1895, in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, November 1985), Mr. Judge quotes *Secret Doctrine* paragraphs on the subject (I, 203-4) and explains:

It has not been understood what comets are, but these paragraphs indicate that the opinion of the Adepts is that they are the beginnings of worlds, *i.e.*, that we see in comets the possible beginnings of worlds. The sentence beginning the quotation—"Born in the unfathomable depths of Space," etc.—means that, a laya centre being formed, the homogeneous mass of matter is condensed at that point, and, the energy of nature being thrown into it, it starts up, a fiery mass, to become a comet. It will then either pursue its course in evolution, if it is accumulating to its matter from other masses, or will be drawn into them for their aggrandizement. The hint is thrown out that the parabolic moving masses, owing to their velocity, escape destruction because they are able to evade the attraction from greater masses.

In answer to the question, "Were all the planets in our solar system first comets and then suns?" H.P.B. replied (*Transactions*, pp. 145-46):

They were not suns in our, or their present solar systems, but comets in space. All began life as wanderers over the face of the infinite Kosmos. They detached themselves from the common storehouse of already prepared material, the Milky Way (which is nothing more or less than the quite developed world-stuff, all the rest in space being the crude material, as yet invisible to us);

then, starting on their long journey they first settled in life where conditions were prepared for them by Fohat, and gradually became suns. Then each sun, when its Pralaya arrived, was resolved into millions and millions of fragments. Each of these fragments moved to and fro in space collecting fresh material, as it rolled on, like an avalanche, until it came to a stop through the laws of attraction and repulsion, and became a planet in our own, as in other systems, beyond our telescopes. The sun's fragments will become just such planets after the Solar pralaya. It was a comet once upon a time, in the beginning of Brahma's Age. Then it came to its present position, whence it will burst asunder, and its atoms will be whirled into space for aeons, and aeons, like all other comets and meteors, until each, guided by Karma, is caught in the vortex of the two forces, and fixed in some higher and better system.

---

Scientists at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, New York, have just found out that the giant Indo-Australian Tectonic Plate, on which both India and Australia lie, has broken apart beneath the Indian Ocean south of the Equator. They say the break probably began several million years ago. The two countries are slowly drifting away from each other.

The Columbia geologists, who published their findings in a recent issue of *Earth and Planetary Science Letters*, say that the Earth's surface is divided into 13 major plates. The theory of plate tectonics holds that continents and oceans are carried on huge plates that ride atop the Earth's semimolten interior. These plates move only a few centimetres a year, yet fast enough to cover great distances over tens of millions of years. The movement of tectonic plates, they say, accounts for the formation of mountain ranges and volcanoes. The latest research suggests that, starting about eight million years ago, the accumulated mass of the Indian subcontinent became so great that the Indo-Australian Tectonic Plate buckled and broke under the stress.

Scientists believe that continents have been drifting around the planet throughout history, repeatedly coming together and

breaking up again. They theorize that on several occasions this has resulted in the formation of supercontinents containing all the land on Earth. When the last supercontinent broke up millions of years ago, the Atlantic Ocean was created, splitting North America from Eurasia, and South America from Africa. Then Australia, Antarctica and India separated from Africa, creating the Indian Ocean.

It is beyond question, says Theosophy, that continents rise and fall, appear and disappear under cyclic law, modified and guided by forces few of which are as yet known to science. *The Secret Doctrine* speaks of the ancient Continent of Lemuria, which "not only embraced an area in the Pacific and Indian Oceans, but extended in the shape of a horseshoe past Madagascar, round 'South Africa' (then a mere fragment in the process of formation), through the Atlantic up to Norway" (*S.D.*, II, 333). Present-day Australia is a relic of this giant Lemurian Continent, and its proximity with India "did certainly exist" in the pre-historic ages. (*S.D.*, II, 8 fn.)

What causes the shifting of continents and the changing geography of the Earth? *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 640) gives a hint:

It is absolutely *false*, and but an additional demonstration of the great conceit of our age, to assert (as men of science do) that all the great geological changes and terrible convulsions have been produced *by ordinary and known physical forces*. For these forces were but the tools and final means for the accomplishment of certain purposes, acting periodically, and apparently mechanically, through an inward impulse mixed up with, but beyond their material nature. There is a purpose in every important act of Nature, whose acts are all cyclic and periodical. But spiritual Forces having been usually confused with the purely physical, the former are denied by, and therefore, have to remain unknown to Science because left unexamined.

---

In spite of all the technological and scientific advance in recent times, many traditional beliefs, sometimes dubbed "superstitions," still remain. In an article entitled "Black Cats and Indians" (*Saturday Times*, March 16), Jerry Pinto examines the extent to which such old beliefs persist in Indian society today. Whether it is the evil

eye or the number 13, "superstitions" have a powerful sway on most communities, he writes; and while many of these beliefs are harmless, some can be paralysing:

It isn't just the evil eye; there are superstitions about everything and every act. There are personal superstitions and regional ones. However, there may be significant differences between the two...

The power of the word and the power of names have always had some measure of magic involved....Inordinate power was ascribed to names and images. In the early days of photography, many people experienced a primitive fear of seeing their own representations, just as census-takers were routinely given false names in some parts of Africa because it was believed that the man who knew your name or had an image of you could do you harm....

If a superstition is old, there's more likelihood of it having a wide number of adherents. Some of them are now practised under the rubric of good manners. "For instance, the practice of covering one's mouth when one yawns really dates to Rome in the age of the Caesars. They believed that every time we yawned, part of the soul was released. This weakened the soul and therefore you needed to cover your mouth with your hand," says Radha Vishwanathan, sociologist and anthropologist, at present working on a research project for the University of North Carolina....Now it's a matter of form, part of a code of manners....

Rahul Srivastava, lecturer in sociology at Wilson College, sees superstitions as prefiguring rituals. "In anthropology they are seen as forerunners for ritual. Superstitions are half-baked rituals, and like rituals, are largely negative. They are used to ward off evil influences, malignant stars, or whatever is perceived in that society, at that time, as being potentially harmful. It is an attempt to get a handle on events and to change their course by practising or repeating certain acts in order to get the feeling that you are influencing the way things happen."

While some beliefs, says Theosophy, are as degrading as they are ridiculous and absurd, others, such as belief in the "evil eye," or

in the power of words and images, cannot be dismissed as mere "superstitions." Rational explanations do exist for those who understand that there is more to a human being and to nature than meets the eye. Moreover, there is the undeniable fact that the same beliefs occur among widely separated peoples whose origins, according to scientific theory at least, can hardly be traced to a common stock except in the remotest of prehistoric times. The only explanation of the identity of these ideas, from this point of view, is that they arise from practical experience. In fact, many of the theories of the ancients, long regarded as mere superstitions, have lately been found to be well grounded in scientific fact.

No one has done more than H. P. Blavatsky to explain the principles of natural law involved in traditional beliefs and abnormal occurrences which are not understood by the modern mind and therefore branded as superstitions. In her books and articles, especially in *Isis Unveiled*, a rational explanation of each of them can be studied.

---

Recent successes with dowsing, or water divining, are intriguing scientists, writes Montague Keen in *New Scientist* (23/30 December 1995). Millions of people worldwide have inadequate supplies of clean water and are prey to diseases caused by polluted water. It is now being admitted that, combined with conventional techniques, dowsing can make prospecting for underground sources of water cheaper and more efficient.

Hans Schroter, for instance, works for GTZ, the German government's overseas aid agency which has helped improve water supplies all over the world. In addition to conventional methods of water prospecting, he uses dowsing; by grasping the two ends of a V-shaped steel wire and watching its movements, he can pinpoint drilling sites and estimate the depth, quantity and quality of the water below. His success has been phenomenal. Of the 691 boreholes he sank in Sri Lanka's arid north, only 27 were dry. In a region where other attempts to find water had no better success rate than 50 per cent, this is outstanding, say the experts.

About 10 years ago, Schroter's achievements came to the attention of Hans Dieter Betz, professor of physics at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich. Having examined Schroter's work and tested him and other dowzers in controlled conditions, Betz announced last November that "the results prove beyond doubt that some physical force is at work." Other scientists, too, have come to similar conclusions. For instance, Vincent Reddish, emeritus professor of astronomy at the University of Edinburgh, published recently the results of his own investigation. "We are dealing with a real physical force, as real as gravity and magnetism," he says. But just how dowsing rods give signals and act as detectors "is far from clear," admits Reddish.

One diviner has explained the power as "the susceptibility of the person to certain influences." This is in line with the suggestion in an unsigned review in *The Theosophist* (April 1885) that the preponderance of the watery element in particular individual constitutions may lead to a more perceptible effect on the rod in their hands. But many diviners do not use any rod or twig or instrument; they simply *feel* the presence of water. The phenomenon certainly points to the psycho-physiological affinities of the human organism with the powers and substances of Nature.

---

THERE are two methods of human activity—and according to which one of these two kinds of activity people mainly follow, are there two kinds of people: one use their reason to learn what is good and what is bad and they act according to this knowledge; the other act as they want to and then they use their reason to prove that that which they did was good and that which they didn't do was bad.

—LEO TOLSTOY