

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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LIVING THE HIGHER LIFE

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NY are the men and women in the East as in the West who are anxious of changing and improving their own mode of living, of making progress in the higher or spiritual life. Ancient Philosophy teaches that human happiness and human progress are not dependent on social reform, or on religious institutions, any more than on political legislation. These cannot bring about the true inner reform which make a person noble and unselfish. The only true reform, therefore, is that of the individual by himself, through his own efforts. Human environment continues to be ugly or debased because ugliness and debasement exist in human nature. This is being perceived by the most advanced thinkers and therefore they are talking about a moral life, a soul life, a simple life, as an answer to most of the problems that beset us, even in the economic and political spheres.

The lives of many men and women are ruined or degraded or wasted in a humdrum way because they copy what they see around them or what they hear, and believe anything and everything that comes in the name of religion or of science, of one or another political party or social institution, of this individual or that, without going to first principles. The very first requirement of the higher life is virility of thought, vigour of mind. We must stop being mentally lazy and intellectually indolent, and exert the power of our

human consciousness, which is the power of reason, of thought, of self-energization and self-determination. Let us not believe or follow passively and blindly; let us accept or reject only after due thought and deliberation. The higher life is a life of self-effort; it needs strength and fearlessness.

If this is grasped it will not be difficult to understand why religious influence is a weakening and debasing influence. Soul life is not life according to any religion; it is not going to a church, a mosque, or a temple. Soul life is *living* the life according to the dictates of the Soul. Priests, bishops, *moulvis* and *purohits* advocate the religious life; Prophets, Christs, Sages and Seers teach the spiritual life. If one aspires to understand what the Christ taught, one must study for oneself the Sermon on the Mount instead of going to the churches; if one desires to appreciate the grandeur of Krishna, one must study for oneself the *Gita* rather than go to the temple priest. This going away from the narrow, erroneous notions of religions which divide human beings instead of uniting them as true religion should, is the first step in the living of the higher life.

The moment the fetters of religious beliefs and the limitations of political and social theories fall away, the aspirant to the higher life gets out into a free atmosphere where the mind is virile, where intellect can work vigorously. Instead of believing blindly he begins to look within for guidance, and in so doing he sees the necessity of studying the identical truths which the masterminds of all ages, however few in number, have taught about human nature, its weaknesses and how to overcome them, its powers and how to develop them. The second requirement of the higher life is the ascertaining of these age-long truths, consistently taught by the Rishis and the Mahatmas, the Buddhas and the Christs, down the ages. Thus we come to the existence of a code of knowledge, and we learn that the Science of the Soul is an exact science and its laws, rules and regulations are universal and impersonal, precise and definite like those of mathematics.

These immemorial and proven laws of the higher life begin with the basic idea that the living of this higher life does not entail external changes, that no change of outer environment is necessary.

The higher life is not a life apart from home and family and the affairs of men, in some strange environment, a monastery or an *ashrama*, a jungle or a mountain top. It may be asked: What, then, did Jesus mean when he said, "Come out from among them, and be ye separate"? The isolation which all the great Teachers have recommended is a very different type of isolation—separation from the lowest tendencies within our own devilish natures. The higher life begins in the home, where we find ourselves. It begins with a change, not in outer circumstances, but in inner attitude. Can a clerk, an accountant, a business manager, lead the higher Soul life? The answer is a most emphatic yes. Paupers and princes alike can begin to live the higher life by assuming a new attitude to their poverty and prosperity. People demand one kind of facility or another kind of freedom *before* they begin to live the Soul life. That is a wrong beginning. The ancient Rishis and Teachers instruct us that the environment affects a person only in proportion as he is ready to be affected; but, on the other hand, through self-reform he compels the environment to change automatically.

When we have determined that we must stay where we are, it is easy to deduce that we must think of our old environment and circumstances differently. We are where we are not by chance or accident, but under law. We ourselves attracted to ourselves our environment. It follows that none else but ourselves, each one for himself, can and should change that environment, through his own individual effort. Man is the maker of his destiny. He must see that he himself has fashioned in the past his present circumstances and that his future growth depends upon his right endeavour in the present to live not as a body, not even as a mind, but as a Soul. That is the teaching of the *Gita* which says that even the most sinful of men can cross the ocean of evil in the bark of spiritual endeavour. That is the teaching of Jesus who referred to the Kingdom of Heaven as being within us.

Thus the change in inner attitude results in our perception that we are, in our true nature, Souls, capable of willing, of thinking, of feeling; that as Souls we are in the body and possess a mind so that unlike beasts we may ascertain the real value, *i.e.*, the educative

value of each event, each object in our environment, each person we contact. The moment this vision of our environment and of the world at large is gained, that moment the higher life begins. For many people the process is unconscious and indirect, which makes it lose half its benefit. We have to make it a deliberate and self-conscious process, under observation.

It is generally believed that physiological practices and ascetic rules of physical life are all that is required to live the higher life. This is a pernicious doctrine. Beware of false asceticism, Ancient Philosophy teaches us. Actions on the physical plane will take care of themselves if high and noble thoughts have been generated from within ourselves. It is on the mental plane, therefore, that we have to begin and make the *mind* exercise asceticism. The higher life begins with thought and ideation. It is only when we forget our personal self and fix our ideation and imagination on that which we truly are, that progress in the higher life is possible. Only when the mind is not swayed by *Kama*, is freed from the hundred cords of desire which bind it, can it be raised, through will-effort, to the Self, our inner Star and God, itself a beam of the immaculate Light of the Supreme Spirit. The path of the higher life cannot be trodden until we cease to identify ourselves with the personality and perceive that we are beings of Light, capable of lifting ourselves to the source of Light (Truth) and of Warmth (Compassion).

Right ideation has naturally to be founded on right knowledge. The higher life is not only a better, more useful and nobler life; it is also a wiser life, based on greater knowledge, greater wisdom, greater perception and understanding. From the spiritual point of view, knowledge and understanding must go hand in hand with goodness, unselfishness and purity. Try as we will, we will not succeed in being good, unselfish and pure unless our mind has really become enlightened through true knowledge. Therefore it is that study is necessary. Study of metaphysical ideas and universal concepts purifies the lower mind and the lower, personal life.

Further purification comes about when we practise daily meditation based on this study of universals. Through a self-conscious, deliberate attempt to ideate in terms of impersonal and

universal laws, to meditate on ideas and teachings that have nothing to do with our little, personal self and the people who surround us, but with the unity of all things, the brotherhood of all beings, we gain a broader mind, a wider horizon; we are able to understand things, not from the selfish point of view, but from that of the Supreme Self, as the *Gita* puts it. If this daily meditation is sustained and regular, it will bring about a change in our attitude during the day, resulting in understanding, contentment and peace.

Then at the end of the day, before going to sleep, those aspiring to live the higher life are recommended to examine themselves, watchfully, honestly and sincerely, in the light of the Higher Self and the Science of the Higher Self. It is a most profitable practice to review every night our actions during the day, and actions include our thoughts, feelings, words and deeds; to examine our motives; to see whether we are coming closer and closer to our own inner ideals and aspirations, and to determine to what extent we have lived within ourselves according to our highest resolves. It is not in terms of our own personal likes and dislikes but in the light of the Higher Self that we are to examine ourselves. For this we will need knowledge about that Higher Self. Again we come to the necessity for study. It is necessary to know what are the laws that govern the spiritual aspect of our own being, as well as the spiritual aspect of the whole of Nature. If we study and understand the Science of the Self we will have a sure gauge for checking ourselves; if not, we will find all kinds of excuses for ourselves and will try to justify our weaknesses. This self-examination, then, has to be based on knowledge, which alone gives us the power to see ourselves as we really are.

As the aspirant marches onward on the path of spiritual progress, he comes to recognize the tremendous value of silence and secrecy. He will not gain what he is attempting to gain by talking to others about it; it will only hinder him. His very desire to tell others what he is doing is a subtle expression of pride which belongs to the lower, personal nature and is one of the greatest enemies of true progress. It requires true humility, not mock modesty which is a form of subtle pride, to live the higher life—that silent humility

which makes the disciple "appear as nothing in the eyes of men."

It may be asked: Is a change in inner attitude all that is required to live the higher life? Is there nothing to be done in a more practical way, no outer rules to follow? Indeed there is a great deal to be done. The whole of the manifested universe is a triple expression of Motion, Space and Time. Motion is causal and Time and its myriads of objects are effects in Space. Everything and therefore every man in the universe is affected by these three, and our environment is nothing but a manifestation of Space, Time, and Motion or Causation. For living the higher life, therefore, three aphorisms have been given to us in reference to outer things, events and circumstances: Purity in Causation, Accuracy in Space, and Punctuality in Time. These three aphorisms can be applied in every walk of life, and they are all the Law and the Prophets anyone needs to lead a better and a nobler life. Each of us moves in four spheres; applying this trinity to these four departments of our daily activity, we have to be pure and accurate and punctual in our thoughts, in our feelings, in our speech and in our deeds. If any one of us were to examine himself, he would find that there are a number of things which he indulges in that are unnecessary. We have to make it a practice always to ask ourselves: "Is it necessary for me to do this?" This will greatly help us to be pure in our motives, to be accurate in the execution of our duties, to be punctual in all our tasks.

The aspirant to the higher life has to be well trained in patience—not the patience which is shot through with self-pity and false resignation, but patience of the type of which the Mahatma wrote: "Great man is he who is strongest in the exercise of patience." Many are the difficulties to be encountered and many too the helps to be obtained, but unless one starts right one will go wrong a long, long way. The immediate step in front of us is to look within to find the captain, and then to steer our vessel on the sea of life with the accurate compass, the punctual chronometer, but above all with that motive of unselfish good-will and desire to serve the passengers, our fellow men, by taking our own ship to the Haven of Beauty and Virtue, of Wisdom and Compassion.

GOD IN NATURE AND IN MAN

THERE are two words that provide the clue to the understanding of this subject. The word "creation" leads to false conclusions. The word "emanation" leads to correct conclusions.

Creation implies a creator, distinct and separate from the creatures that are created, out of substance which too is said to be created. Out of what? This is an illogical concept, and any philosophy or religion which says that God and His creation are separate is misleading.

The other term, emanation, gives the right clue. The Universe is the emanation of God. God and Universe are not distinct and separate; the Universe *is* God. God is the One Principle of Life, and the Universe is but the primary form of Life, ever in close unison with the Source from which it came.

There is also confusion about Spirit and Matter as two distinct realities. Spirit is God, the Principle of Life, and Matter is the manifested Universe, the primary form, shadow or reflection of Life. Spirit crystallizes into Matter.

Thus our very body is but a miniature copy of the Great Prototype, the Body of the Universe. The powers of our body are derived from those of the manifested Universe. So, too, our mind and our soul and their powers are derived from the Mind and Soul of the Universe, which also have powers. This identity between the Universe, Nature and Man should be understood.

The approach to Deity is said to be by means of prayer, which is futile if offered to a Creator. True prayer is worship, or establishing the right relationship between ourselves and Deity, which is *within*. Numerous are the modes of worship—through knowledge, good works, devotion, sacrifice, and so on. In Hindu Mysticism, all of these are known as various forms of *Yoga*.

Yoga means Union of Man and God. Sometimes we overlook that through true *Yoga* or Union it is not only Man who becomes God, but also God who attains Manhood. In other words, when Man realizes God, the Impersonal Principle of Life attains to self-consciousness, which is universal. The aim of *Yoga* is not to become God, but to attain the state of God-Man.

This study of Man and God and the union between them has a practical aspect. What use is the knowledge of Divine Wisdom of the Gods if it does not lead us anywhere?

To begin with, practical people work for some definite result: getting wealth, or fame and glory, or power in one form or another—power to know and control, to know and teach, to know and be altruistic, etc. It is not wrong for man to desire to acquire any of these powers, provided he understands the reality or the unreality which the powers represent. Nature is rich, is famous for its innumerable glories, is powerful and controls men, teaches men, loves and is compassionate to men.

What is necessary for us to note is that between our conception of these powers and Nature's expression of them there is a vast difference. Human frustration is due to this difference. Man is really successful only when the powers he has are used in the way in which Nature intends them to be used.

The one fundamental mode of Nature is expressed in her Law of Justice. Nature uses her powers in absolute justice. Nature is ever harmonious, and when she is apparently harsh and cruel she is only adjusting disturbed harmony.

In man's desire to pray to God we have the expression, however distorted, of his desire to be godlike. Take the crudest prayer: it signifies man's innate belief that God (whoever he believes him to be) has the power to adjust. But man's sense of justice is crude and crooked. His prayer amounts to his saying: "I have done wrong; you, God, make it right." If we want to be successful in the real sense, we must develop the sense of justice which is Nature's. Nature knows neither hatred nor favour.

This cannot be done unless we prosecute the study of the interrelationship between Man and God—beginning with Man, *i.e.*, ourselves, and remembering always that we are linked in every part of our being with Deity in the entire manifested Universe.

The powers of God in Nature include: (a) *desire* to create, *i.e.*, emanate; (b) *thought* to execute that desire; (c) *action* to sustain correctly whatever is created or emanated.

(a) *Desire* is the first power. Man has many desires; Nature has

one single desire. Human desires work to possess; Nature's desires work to give. It would be natural and easy if man accepted and used what Nature gives, but he does not; hence conflict arises. Desire to give, *i.e.*, Altruism, is the mark of divinity. At the present stage of evolution, Love is the link—not love that desires to possess, but love that wants to give—not as humans give, but as Nature gives.

It is human love, desiring to possess or to give personally something to someone, which causes our woes. Many expressions of evil arise out of personal affection, which may not desire to possess directly, but which indirectly indulges in injustice for the sake of those we love. A mother may become unjust to other children out of love for her own; a lover does injustice to others out of love for his own beloved; a teacher at school having a favourite becomes unjust to other pupils; and so on.

(*b*) *Thought* is the second power. If following Nature's example we desire justice, then we will seek knowledge to execute justice in the daily routine of life. World events show injustice everywhere, because of the absence of principles rooted in accurate knowledge.

(*c*) *Action* to sustain injustice follows, and thus we go from bad to worse. Theosophy teaches us not to act till we have thought, and not to think of ways and means till we have perceived the desire impelling us to action. "Wait after a letter and sleep on a plan," advises Mr. Judge.

In this process, we come upon that Spirit-being in us who should be the real cause of our desires, thoughts and actions. Ordinarily, we act with the body, not with the soul; think with the mind, not with the soul; desire with the lower sensuous self, not with the soul.

It is the Spirit-being, the real soul, who is the God in us and who alone can be just. We are not children of error and sin, but are emanations of the Divinity which each one of us is in essence. To know his own divinity, to know God, each one must know himself. Theosophy gives the basic idea that God in Man and God in Nature are one and the same.

Those who impart this knowledge are Those who have realized Their own inherent Divinity, and are able to express it for the benefit of humanity.

THE LANGUAGE OF SYMBOLS

SOME may wonder why H.P.B. took such great pains to set forth various symbols and myths in her *Secret Doctrine*, and to explain elaborately those universally found in diverse religious works and ritual practices. Frequent reference to ancient symbols or symbolic representations may tax one's attention and provoke one to ask why she chose this archaic and complicated mode of presentation. We might as well ask why *The Voice of the Silence* was written in a poetic-prose form, using various paradoxes and metaphors; or why *The Key to Theosophy* was written in a dialogue form. Why are many of the world scriptures in verse form? And what is the "Mystery Language" H.P.B. spoke of?

One may rest assured that H.P.B. had a definite purpose in devoting so much space to symbols and ideographs in her *Secret Doctrine*. Some of her writings, and especially *The Secret Doctrine*, were specifically addressed to the dedicated students and seekers, and were not for the armchair philosophers, the lazy, the obtuse, or the unbelievers, as she warns in the Preface to *The Key to Theosophy*.

A remarkable fact is observed that the metaphors, symbolic portraitures or imagery, and recognizable ancient symbols are employed in all religious literature as also by the mystical poets throughout the world. Another fact of observation is that the glyphs, emblems, mythical figures, ideographic inscriptions and other symbolic portrayals belonging to countries far apart in time and location are remarkably identical and hence universally transmitted throughout. However, the correct interpretation of and the suggestive ideas associated with symbols need proper application of the keys—seven of them in ancient symbolism as delineated by H.P.B. The following is an attempt to give the probable motives and purposefulness in the art and science of ancient symbology.

(1) Symbolic forms of expression help the memory—just as verses and scriptures in the poetic mode are better remembered than what is said in the prose form. H.P.B. writes: "Since the symbolic formula attempts to characterise that which is above scientific reasoning, and as often far beyond our intellects, it must needs go

beyond that intellect in some shape or other, or else it will fade out from human remembrance" (*S.D.*, I, 473). W. Q. Judge writes in his article "Theosophical Symbols": "Symbols are also valuable for the older reason that, while the books, the writings and the other works of men fade away and are no more for subsequent ages, the great symbols do not disappear" (*The Heart Doctrine*, p.158). Similar reason is given by H.P.B.: "...an historical, real event was deduced—by those versed in the hieratic sciences—from certain emblems and symbols recorded in the ancient archives of the temples. The religious and esoteric history of every nation was embedded in symbols" (*S.D.*, I, 307)—hence preserved for posterity.

(2) In addition to and beyond the intellect, we need to cultivate intuitive perception to unravel the metaphysical and sacred symbols. Dwelling on great abstract ideas symbolically represented (for instance, SPACE and the "Great DEEP") is conducive to the awakening of intuition. This is the most important use we can make of the study of *The Secret Doctrine*—to develop our intuition. W.Q.J. writes: "Intelligent study of them [the seven symbols pertaining to and contained in the Seal of the Theosophical Society] will be beneficial, for when a consistent symbol, embodying many ideas is found and meditated upon, the thought or view of the symbol brings up each idea at once before the mind." (*The Heart Doctrine*, p. 155)

(3) Although "a deep and philosophical meaning" is attached to ancient symbols (*S.D.*, I, 379), they have both an inner or abstract as well as an outer or commonplace recognizable significance. A symbol (*i.e.*, the image) stands for something else (*i.e.*, a concealed idea), but also gives the information about the representative object portrayed, or a hierogram. The cross, for instance, is a chosen ensign historically associated with Christianity, but its root idea and the higher meaning as known to the ancients are lost because veiled for so long. (*Vide* "The Fall of the Cross into Matter" in *S.D.*, II, 553-562). Similarly, the immemorial arrangement of the signs of the Zodiac may have an acknowledged explanation by the astronomers; but behind and beyond the obvious one must search for the abstruse significance. The symbol embodies a vast storehouse of knowledge regarding "the great cosmic and microcosmic periods

and events" which the sun's zodiacal path covers. "Man is himself a zodiacal highway through which his own particular sun makes a circuit." ("Two Lost Keys: The Bhagavad-Gita—The Zodiac": *Vernal Blooms*, p. 236)

(4) Ancient symbols were not adopted haphazardly but "combined the conception of the Divine Invisible with the earthly and visible" (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 22), on the lines of analogy. "As above, so below." W.Q.J. writes that a symbol "must be an actual part chosen to represent or stand for the whole. It need not be the whole, but may be a lower form or species used as a representative of a higher of the same kind" ("Theosophical Symbolism": *The Heart Doctrine*, p. 149). The frequent and appropriate employment of the key of analogy and correspondence sometimes opens up vistas of knowledge otherwise not suspected by ordinary thought. It is to exercise our faculties along these lines that part of *The Secret Doctrine* is written in an enigmatic style. Besides, even though something is sought to be concealed, one may yet find a revelation, something suggestive enough for one versed in the language of symbolism and allegory, as also for the bold diver into recondite teachings.

(5) Regarding the *source* of the true symbols and the keys thereof, *The Secret Doctrine* (I, 612) states that these were passed on by the Wise Men, and they are still in the keeping of the Initiates. Even when we cannot at times understand or appreciate the symbolic forms of expression of the ancient doctrines, we may leave them awhile, but should not belittle the power, the source, and the sacredness of the symbolic language.

(6) As for the *keys* to the meaning of some universal symbols, H.P.B. is at great pains to explain them in *The Secret Doctrine* and offers one or the other of the seven keys to interpret the symbols. As to the test and the value of a sacred symbol, she writes: "Every symbol must yield three fundamental truths and four implied ones, otherwise the symbol is false." She also states: "Every religious and philosophical symbol had seven meanings attached to it, each pertaining to its legitimate plane of thought, *i.e.*, either purely metaphysical or astronomical; psychic or physiological, etc., etc."

And if, "instead of being correlated...any one of these meanings is accepted as the one and sole explanation of the whole symbolic idea," then the latter becomes even more puzzling. (*S.D.*, II, 538)

(7) The most important function of symbology is explained in *The Secret Doctrine*. One of the objects of H.P.B.'s mission was to prove the underlying unity of concepts in diverse religious traditions and philosophical systems which were geographically and historically at a great distance from one another. The universal agreement in ancient symbols proves this unity, and furnishes the best proofs of the once universal diffusion of the primitive Wisdom-Religion and "the 'Mystery Language' of the prehistoric ages, the language now called SYMBOLISM" (*S.D.*, I, 309). H.P.B. further writes:

Every symbol—in *every* national religion—may be read esoterically, and the proof furnished for its being correctly read by transliterating it into its corresponding numerals and geometrical forms—by the extraordinary agreement of all—however much the glyphs and symbols may vary among themselves. For in the origin those symbols were all identical. Take, for instance, the opening sentences in various cosmogonies: in every case it is either a *circle*, an *egg*, or a *head*. DARKNESS is always associated with this first symbol and surrounds it—as shown in the Hindu, the Egyptian, the Chaldeo-Hebrew and even the Scandinavian systems—hence black ravens, black doves, black waters and even black flames. (*S.D.*, I, 443)

(8) There is a hidden living power embedded in every universal and sacred symbol. This may be aroused so as to bring forth the hidden association or the thought originally impressed upon the symbols by their wise original creators (THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, Vol. 55, p. 8). That may be the reason why they are sometimes preserved as talismans or used as a protective shield. The auspicious seal of the Theosophical Society, as also the membership pin designed by W. Q. Judge, are not mere ornamental devices but were artistically and thoughtfully fabricated to represent and to impress the chief doctrines and principles the Society stood for. They have a compelling power and a charm of their own for one

who is attuned to the power behind the Theosophical Movement of our era.

To conclude, *The Secret Doctrine* furnishes plenty of illustrations in the art of deciphering a symbol and the appropriate key to be applied. This exercise may tax and discourage the beginner, but it is an ancient method of educating the seeker after spiritual knowledge. Certainly, the frequent references to the symbolic language are not meant to confuse but to arouse the higher faculties latent in the student. The wisdom of *The Secret Doctrine* and the inner thread of its genius or spirit become apparent only to those who are willing to penetrate with patience and diligence into the vast ocean of this *magnum opus*.

THE discoveries of the age are already whole centuries in advance of its ethical culture, and the knowledge that should place still further power in the hands of a few individuals whose ethical code is below, rather than above, that of the ignorant, toiling, suffering masses, could only minister to anarchy and increase oppression. On these higher planes of consciousness the law of progress is absolute; knowledge and power go hand in hand with beneficence to man, not alone to the individual possessors of wisdom, but to the whole human race. The custodians of the higher knowledge are equally by both motive and development almoners of the divine. These are the very conditions of the higher consciousness referred to. The synthesis of occult science becomes, therefore, the higher synthesis of the faculties of man. What matter, therefore, if the ignorant shall scout its very existence, or treat it with ridicule and contempt? Those who know of its existence and who have learned something of its scope and nature can, in their turn, afford to smile, but with pity and sorrow at the willing bondage to ignorance and misery that scorns enlightenment and closes its eyes to the plainest truths of experience.

—W. Q. JUDGE

"THEOSOPHY MUST BE MADE PRACTICAL"

THEOSOPHY is a body of knowledge which embraces the entire Universe, hence every aspect of ourselves. Naturally, any individual can only grasp that much of it which he is capable of understanding. As Mr. Judge says in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, it gives food for thought to the greatest minds and will not at the same time overwhelm the understanding of a child.

Let us understand the different stages of gaining knowledge: (1) We generally familiarize ourselves with the actual words of any proposition, such as the Three Fundamentals, or the Aphorisms on Karma. Words properly used are important, for they clothe the ideas held by the writer or speaker, and by learning the words, themselves symbols, we learn accuracy. (2) We try to understand the ideas of which the words are symbols, and this is only possible by means of deep thought piercing through the word-meanings, and by the use of logic and analogy. While doing this we have to keep in mind the context in which the words or ideas are placed, and that context is not merely the preceding and following sentences but also our own mental environment formed by our presently-held ideas on the subject. Why is it that we so often fail to gain real advantage from what we learn and try to understand? It is because knowledge deals with brain-mind (words), with mind-feelings (ideas which are often covered over by preconceptions of likes and dislikes), and, finally, with application in the environment of life itself, *i.e.*, in our daily living. Whereas logic and analogy help us to see the truth and reasonableness of what we study, it is application in day-to-day living that enables us to *know* the propositions we study as truths and thus to understand their *foundational* aspect throughout the whole Universe. To have *proof* enables us to be convinced and sure, and the only proof is that which comes to us through thought and application. Hence "*Theosophy must be made practical.*"

If we study what the Great Teachers have said, we see how They made Their teachings practical.

One great universal truth is that of the law of Karma—of cause

and effect, action and reaction. Every Great Teacher has taught that we reap what we sow. This is made graphic to us by an image we all understand and which we know to be a fact in nature: "The pepper plant will not give birth to roses, nor the sweet jessamine's silver star to thorn or thistle turn." To make this idea practical in daily life is to see that we are now reaping what we have sown in the past, and that we shall reap in the future what we are now sowing. This attitude breeds confidence, strength, repose, forgiveness and compassion for others. It also makes clear to us what we should do when we have sown a wrong action or thought. We must ask ourselves against whom we have erred. We realize from an understanding of this law that we have erred primarily against ourselves, not against a god or even against another being, for we can only bring to another that which he himself has earned. But since harm has come to another through our agency, the idea of repentance or remorse arises. Shall we say we are sorry? We often do, but we do not always mean it; we just feel satisfied that in saying the words we have corrected the error, and then we forget all about it! We are taught by a Master of Wisdom that repentance is no use, tears are no use; an error can only be redeemed and balanced by future acts.

Before we can gain real understanding of this advice we need to learn and to study it so that it comes constantly to mind, and then must we try to understand how and why it should be so. For example, what kind of acts redeem or balance an error? Obviously we have first to discover what kind of error we have committed—and how often we fail here! Do we realize our error ourselves or do we need someone to point it out to us? Do we see it when it is pointed out, or do we fight against the acceptance of it? What in fact is an error and what is its root? All errors are rooted in ignorance. We err when we act without thought.

Having committed the error, we should try to find out what are the necessary acts that would redeem it, and then we must act. That is true repentance, whether our error is against our own higher nature or against a fellow human being, or against the lower kingdoms of nature. Here the ethical advice which we repeat

verbally but do not accept as a statement of Law, of action and reaction, helps us. "Hatred ceaseth not by hatred," we are told; "hatred ceaseth by love." As water will put out a fire, so love will destroy hate. Thinking about hate acts as added fuel to the fire of existing hate. Only love will remove the hate. But how can we change hatred into love? Are not both rooted in the same principle in us—*Kama*? The Buddha did not hate his evilly-inclined cousin Devadatta, nor did Yudhishtira hate Duryodhana, and Jesus asked for forgiveness for those who had harmed him. Once we realize that our reaction to someone, whether it be hatred or what we think of as love, is born in our emotional nature, we shall know what to do. What is above hatred and love, above *Kama*? *Kama* has to be absorbed by *Buddhi*, Universal Compassion, by the time we reach our goal in the spiritual nature, we are told. Therefore to control hatred and love we need to develop *Buddhi*. Compassion is rooted in the ONE. All parts, all individualities make up that ONE. The great desire of that ONE is for universal happiness and love. When we try to understand the *Rig Vedic* saying, "Desire first arose in IT," we begin to see the higher aspect of this Desire. *The Theosophical Glossary* tells us that it is an

all-embracing desire for universal good, love, and for all that lives and feels, needs help and kindness, the first feeling of infinite tender compassion and mercy that arose in the consciousness of the creative ONE FORCE as soon as it came into life and being as a ray from the ABSOLUTE....*Kama* is pre-eminently the divine desire of creating happiness and love....

To get rid of hate, therefore, we need to learn to alter our whole character so that we express the desire for happiness and love to all, in however little a way. In fact, when we think about it deeply, instead of hating a person when he shows traits that are truly bad, we ought to pity him, for he will receive, *under Karma*, the due effects of his error. Incidentally, the evil in him cannot harm us unless in the past we ourselves sowed the seed that has now flowered to our detriment! Therefore the whole issue is much more complicated than at first envisaged. Hence the need for compassion and love.

Another great teaching is that we are made by thought, that all our environment is created by thought; therefore thought is the base from which any regeneration must come.

With respect to our own wrong actions on which repentance or apology is needed, we must try to find the *original* wrong thought of which the action is only an expression. The one who is always late for an appointment, or even for a meal, or who promises to get something done by a certain time and never succeeds in doing it, needs to look into his own character. If not, there will undoubtedly come a time when he will fail in something vitally important. We say, "Better late than never," but like every other slogan this has its opposite—"Too late!" There is the story of the boy who could not get up early in the mornings, and one day when the car came to take him to a picnic he was not ready, and so the car left. He ran after it, but, alas, he was too late! Medicine may arrive too late; one may arrive too late to greet someone who is dying, or be too late to catch a train. The consequences of being too late should be engraved upon our memory if we would learn to follow Nature and work on with her, and if we would be punctual in *all* things, not just in those matters that seem important to us. The saying from the *Old Testament*, "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven...and for every work" (*Ecclesiastes*, III, 1, 17), should be applied. And let us not be late on those occasions which do not affect us personally, while being on time on occasions that do affect us personally. Visualization of the consequences of our acts, *i.e.*, planning, is very necessary, and this is thought-produced.

It is because Theosophy has to be made practical that we are advised to think over the day to come in the early morning, and at night-time to look back at the day and see where we have forgotten to practise what we wanted to, where we have gone wrong, where we think we have acted rightly.

We do not analyse our thoughts or our thinking sufficiently. We are asked to make our mind tranquil, yet this is perhaps the most difficult of all things to achieve. We may have a concentrated mind, but it may be concentrated in love as well as in hatred. The mind can

even become so enmeshed in our thinking, in our logic, in trying to convince ourselves that we are right in what we think or understand, that there is no real control, that is, control by the higher of the lower. The desire to prove ourselves right, the desire to prove another wrong, or the desire for any other achievement affects the mind; so in all our meditation or thought we should try to seek the underlying motive or energizer. Ruled as we are today mostly by desire, we can get help from the *Gita*, Chapter II. Our first step in making practical the forsaking of every desire which enters into our heart is not to start with desire but to concentrate on becoming "happy and content in the Self through the Self." Let us start, therefore, with the fundamental conception of the Self, the SELF, and all other Selves. Content with what we are today and where we are (an active content, not a passive acceptance of the *status quo*), happy when we are in a period of prosperity, and undisturbed in adversity, we become tranquil in mind. Nothing but the ceasing of personal desires can produce this condition. We need to know where they are situated. In the "heart," we are told.

So the core of our being is the heart. Perhaps we do not spend sufficient time in thinking about the "wonder" of the Universe. Engrossed as we are in what we see and feel, we miss that which is the power behind the visible—call it the *heart* of the Universe, that universal Compassion and Love embodied, in part, by such as Krishna, Gautama the Buddha, Jesus the Christ, and the great Hierarchies of Perfected Souls whose throbbing hearts, full of Compassion, keep back the awful Karma that might befall us all. Therefore are we so often told, in one set of words or another, "Come unto Me," "Devote all unto Me." The Buddha's great Sangha is open today to all of us. Our very Theosophical Movement is intimately connected with Him; and though, as we are in that Movement, we are in His Sangha in the true sense, we fail to be conscious of this and miss its immense value to us.

As for the great truth of Universal Brotherhood, we can never bring about its practical realization by asking others to be brotherly to us. All progress starts within ourselves; it is the only progress we can achieve, and in achieving it we help the world towards

brotherhood. The great truth that "Theosophy must be made practical" lies here. We say that "the brilliance of the sun which illuminateth the whole world, and the light which is in the moon and in the fire are the splendour of [Krishna]." Do we think of this when we look at the sun or at the moon, or at the fire with which we cook our food? Yet we must do so if we want to realize within us the truth of Universal Brotherhood, if we want the Universal Self to operate in and through us. Thought has no barriers of time and space; therefore what we do with ourselves affects the whole. "Learn that no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes." (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 37)

It is because of the efforts made life after life to assimilate and express this universality of the SELF, by Divine Compassion, that at the end one reaches the goal and all Nature thrills with triumph.

THEOSOPHISTS do not believe either in God or in the Devil. They believe in the Great ALL, in *Sat*, *i.e.*, absolute and infinite existence, unique and with nothing like unto it, which is neither a *Being* nor an anthropomorphic creature, which *is* and can never *not be*. Theosophists see in the priest of any religion a useless if not a pernicious being. They preach against every dogmatic and infallible religion and recognize no other deity, which dispenses suffering and recompense, than *Karma*, an arbiter created by their own actions. The only God which they worship is TRUTH; the only devil which they recognize and which they fight against with unabated fury is the Satan of egotism and human passions.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

STUDIES IN "NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA"

III

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, March 1948.]

THOUGH a man say in a moment of illumination, "My delusion is destroyed; I am collected once more; I am free from doubt, firm, and will act according to thy bidding," all such affirmations bring their shadow with them and are followed by minutes, hours, days, years of darkness. For, between the illumination and its reflection in action is the dreary path of failures. Krishna therefore at once gives great encouragement to Arjuna. He says:

In this system...no effort is wasted, nor are there any evil consequences, and even a little of this practice delivereth a man from great risk.

That this encouragement is desperately needed by all aspirants is shown by the fact that it is so often repeated! In *The Voice of the Silence* we read: "Learn that no efforts, not the smallest—whether in right or wrong direction—can vanish from the world of causes."

But how shall the man, caught in the slough of despondency caused by his repeated failings, believe these statements? There is no way save through devotion. The *Gita*, the Lord's Song, is both the Book of Action and the Book of Devotion, for the one without the other is barren. Mr. Judge reminds the reader of this:

Without devotion a vast confusion arises within us, that has been likened by some to a whirling motion, by others to the in-rushing, overpowering flow of turbid waters.

Man must rebecome conscious of the Divine side of life; he needs desperately the knowledge that he is not alone in the limitless expanse of Space. Though at the final goal he must stand alone and keep his footing while that same limitless Space, in its very vastness, seems to overawe him, and the thunderous motion within it surges round him, before that moment comes he must sow the seed of Devotion to the One whose outer garments are Space and Motion but whose Essence is illimitable Bliss. It is now, at the

present time, that man must seek the One in the many, and learn to love It; it is now that he must try to rely on that One Self and so gain, bit by bit, a real devotion to That which is the rock or steady ground in the turmoil of earth life.

The Divine Vision given by Krishna to Arjuna is not the lot of any man; it is earned by each soul for himself through the completeness of devotion. But at this stage he does not have to wait for some illumination; he has only to look at his own heart and learn to find *there* the Krishna whose flute sounds so gay and whose mocking laugh is full of tenderness. He needs to sing, with Laurence Hope:

Be still, my heart, and listen,
 For sweet and yet acute
 I hear the wistful music
 Of Khristna and his flute.
 Across the cool, blue evenings,
 Throughout the burning days,
 Persuasive and beguiling,
 He plays and plays and plays.
 In linked and liquid sequence,
 The plaintive notes dissolve
 Divinely tender secrets
 That none but he can solve.
 O Khristna, I am coming,
 I can no more delay,
 My heart has flown to join thee,
 How shall my footsteps stay?

Instead, he fears the God of Wrath—let him learn of the Gracious Guru; he recoils from the Man of Sorrows—let him learn of the smiling strength and tenderness of the Divine C^owherd; he worships the God of Chance—let him learn of the God of Law, helpful, trustworthy, just. Love, not wrath, must lead him on. Strength and tenderness, not sorrow, must be his ideal. Reliance on the Law must be his watchword. Thus will real devotion grow in him so that he can actually act for and as the Self. All else will fit in if he realizes that "the essence of the instruction given by Krishna

is to become devoted."

The transition from "Tell me exactly what to do" in the early days, to "My delusion is destroyed....I will act according to thy bidding," takes time, but the change will not occur unless and until man learns to see Krishna face to face in every manifested being, instead of seeing himself reflected in opposing forms. "Come and follow me," said the Christ. "Place thy heart and mind on me," says Krishna. Man has not tried this way yet. Says Mr. Judge:

The attitude to be assumed, then, is that of doing every act, small and great, trifling or important, because it is before us to do and as a mere carrying out by us as instruments of the will of that Deity who is ourself.

All life fits into this pattern; every question is answered if the instructions are "listened" to and obeyed. Whatever is done on these lines will be absorbed by Krishna. He will be at the right hand of anyone who follows this Path. Even if this Path is not followed, Krishna is there, for every man is Krishna and all paths lead, when earnestly followed with good spiritual endeavour, to Krishna, for He is the centre of the Universe. His Divine Words are with us today even as they were with Arjuna 5,000 years ago. All that is missing is the actual physical body which He wore as the Charioteer of the Prince, and that body so hid the glory of His Real Presence that even Arjuna did not recognize Him until his inner eyes were opened. In many Hindu stories it is shown that He goes away so that man may find Him in his own heart, even as Christ said, "If I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you." Through His instructions man can learn to love Him, to sense Him, not somewhere outside, but singing in the heart. Then indeed action and devotion become that worship or union which is the true Yoga.

Guided by the clear light of the soul, we have considered thy teachings, O holy sage! They have been efficacious for the removal of the obscurities surrounding Ishwara's abiding place in us; we are delighted and refreshed; may thy words remain with us, and, as a spring refreshes the earth, may we be refreshed by them!

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A BACKWARD GLANCE

H.P.B. tells us on the title-page of *The Key to Theosophy* that it is "a clear exposition...of the Ethics, Science and Philosophy for the study of which the Theosophical Society has been founded." She says elsewhere that it explains "clearly and in plain language what our Esoteric Theosophy believes in and what it disbelieves and *positively rejects*." Therefore we can easily see why the book was dedicated by "H.P.B." "to all her pupils that they may learn and teach in their turn." Her use of the initials "H.P.B." instead of the full name is significant.

With these ideas in mind, we can approach the book in quite a different way from that in which we approach other books on Theosophy. We are being "taught" as pupils are taught, by a teacher. We have to learn before we can ourselves teach. What we learn are "facts" as to what the philosophy teaches. But there is more to the study than the learning of facts: we must understand the facts and their interrelationship with one another. This we can understand when we look at the educative value of the book in the true spirit, that of developing the mind so that it can see a whole picture, not just isolated subjects.

Right at the beginning we find this being brought out, for the plan of the book is interesting. H.P.B. has said that it is in the continuity of the doctrines that lies their strength, and in many places she has reiterated that the Theosophical Movement has existed for ages and many witnesses to it have appeared from time to time in the world's history. Here, in one of her last works, she calls her Society the modern successor of the ancient Eclectic Theosophical School. The present Movement, then, is not to be viewed as something that just happened to come into being in 1875.

The Theosophical Movement is, she tells us, a resuscitation of the work of Ammonius Saccas (c. 175-242 A.D.), who started, in Alexandria, a system whose objects were similar to those of the Society she founded in 1875. The first object of his system was "to inculcate certain great moral truths upon its disciples, and all those

who were 'lovers of the truth.' " And she links this up with the motto adopted by her Society: "There is no religion higher than Truth." She also tells us that Ammonius Saccas had, as his chief aim, the reconciliation of all religions, sects and nations under a common system of ethics, based on eternal verities; and this, too, was one of the three objects of her Society. It should not be thought, however, that the teachings H.P.B. gave out are entirely copied from the Neo-Platonic Theosophy.

Lest we stop our backward glance too soon, she reminds us that the system of Ammonius Saccas was itself but a resuscitation of the work of Pot-Amun, who lived in the early days of the Ptolemaic dynasty (c. 300 B.C.). Even before that time a similar endeavour had existed, for it has been said that Ammonius Saccas propounded his instruction "according to the ancient pillars of Hermes, which Plato and Pythagoras knew before, and from them constituted their philosophy." Who was Hermes? Whether as the Egyptian Thoth or the Greek Hermes, he was the God of Wisdom with the Ancients, and, according to Plato, "discovered numbers, geometry, astronomy and letters."

H.P.B. does not draw our attention to any other society or system, similar to the Eclectic Theosophical system of Ammonius Saccas, that might have existed between that time and our own, though we are told of the Philadelphian Society and of the "Theosophical Transactions" published by it in 1697. She refers elsewhere to Apollonius as "an enthusiastic founder of a new spiritual school" (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 341), and to such characters as Fludd, Thomas Vaughan, Paracelsus, Pico della Mirandola and Count St. Germain, "whose temperamental affinity to this celestial science more or less forced the distant Adepts to come into personal relations with them, and enabled them to get such small (or large) proportion of the whole truth as was possible under their social surroundings." (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*, pp. 1-2)

We are also given a warning. H.P.B. tells us of the three heads under which Eclectic Theosophy was divided, and the third of these was Theurgy. What is Theurgy? It is a mystic belief that by returning to one's pristine purity of nature one can communicate

with the "gods" and move them to impart the Divine mysteries. To arrive at such an exalted goal, the aspirant must be absolutely worthy and unselfish. Otherwise Theurgy degenerates into mediumship or black magic. This has a message for us today, for the third object of H.P.B.'s Society was to investigate the powers latent in man, and much of her work was to separate the psychic from the divine powers. The development of the latter requires purity and holiness of life. Psychic capacities running riot, controlling instead of being controlled, H.P.B. warned, "lead the student into the most dangerous delusions and the certainty of moral destruction." But this warning was not heeded, and is not disregard of it one of the factors that disrupted the original Theosophical Society?

In the early pages of *The Key to Theosophy*, one other point stands out clearly with its message to us today. Theosophy, in spite of being "as old as the world," has remained unknown for long centuries, especially in the West, and the reason for its having been kept secret is that the average human nature is not only selfish, but is also unreliable when it comes to keeping the sacred and divine knowledge from desecration. "It is this that led to the perversion of the most sublime truths and symbols, and to the gradual transformation of things spiritual into anthropomorphic, concrete and gross imagery—in other words, to the dwarfing of the god-idea and to idolatry." Does this not contain a warning for us all? In any case we are warned to learn exactly what we are taught, without letting it be coloured by our preconceived ideas to turn the consciousness inward, and, with purity of life, to liberate that consciousness from the limitations of the senses and of personal life.

WHAT characterizes pleasure and pain is not any quality in the sensations themselves, so much as the cyclic attraction or revulsion that takes place within.

—SRI KRISHNA PREM

THE CHILD AS TEACHER

TO the earnest student of Theosophy, life is a school; a school not only where he himself learns but where all learn. Implicit in this view of life is the recognition of Immutable and Impersonal Law and its relation to personal exertion, *i.e.*, absolute justice. The student recognizes the goal of life and its relation to man, *i.e.*, reincarnation, and he further recognizes that there is Knowledge to be gained and there are Teachers to guide and help. He can learn the Teaching as to what the body is, whence its vitality and its magnetism, and what effects the desires and emotions and thoughts have on these three. He knows the Teaching that had there been no soul with its urge for rebirth there would have been no baby born; had there been no magnetic threads of past actions, feelings and thoughts, there would have been no astral body and no physical body. The application of the idea of Law in its relation to man, *i.e.*, Justice, is harder to make, for it is the complete trust that the child comes to the right place, at the right time, to the right environment, and that, from that point on, life is first what the parent or guardian makes it, and later what the child does, by personal exertion or otherwise, with its reactions to life.

Those whose duty it is to teach children often look upon them as mere pupils; children are excellent teachers as well. Very young children are most impressionable; but we often overlook their capacity to impress adults. We admire the mothers of great men, but the converse psychological fact has to be recognized: the spiritual influence emitted by the innocent and pure child, the spiritual impress made on others, but especially on the mother, by the young. We forget that every child is born on earth "trailing clouds of glory"; that he descends to the darkness of the womb from the region of Light. One of the Upanishads says that when a babe is born on earth, a god, *deva*, dies in heaven. But these shining ones, these *devas*—and each one of us is that—do not know their own pure and divine nature and "shades of the prison-house" we call earth begin to close upon the divinity latent in the growing child.

Some educational genius must arise and tell humanity how not

to allow these ugly "shades of the prison-house" to close in and dim the radiant divinity. But, ere that full teaching returns to us, we adults must learn not only to love the young, but to respect and reverence them, for they are gods, each one of them. Let us not spoil their future by our narrow vision, and to deepen and broaden that vision let us learn to reverence the child. "Become as little children," says the Christian tradition, and Milton has sung gloriously of the "Heaven-born Child."

The pupil must regain the *child-state he has lost* ere the first sound can fall upon his ear," says *The Voice of the Silence*. We must all learn to regain the child-state we have lost—the state of innocence which overcomes ignorance, the state of purity which overcomes impurity, the state of trust which in the end ever defies mistrust.

It is by dwelling on our inherent perfectibility that we get rid of our imperfections. The last thing to doubt is the inherent perfectibility of all men... Without this sense of inherent perfection, there would be nothing worth living for: a few years of "pleasure and pain," and then it is all gone—and what has been gained? Do what we will, we cannot escape Life, for we *are* Life—all the time; most of us realize but a portion of its possibilities. Sometime we will learn what Life really means. We are working to that end, for others as well as ourselves—mostly now for those others "who know still less than we," but we also are learning all the time. Is it not worth all that it costs? Men make greater sacrifices than we are called upon to make, and for infinitely less—a few years of questionable happiness, and then oblivion as far as they know or can see. That we can see even a little of the purpose of life, is much; to feel it, is greater still; to realize it, is to Live.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

In 1970, Alvin Toffler described the symptoms of a new disease he called "future shock"—a psycho-biological condition caused by "too much change in too short a time." Technological and social changes were taking place so rapidly, Toffler argued, that individuals and society at large could no longer adapt to them and were heading for "a massive adaptational breakdown." Since the publication of *Future Shock* almost 30 years ago, the rate of social change has radically increased.

An article in the December 1998 issue of *The Futurist* draws from *Hyperculture: The Human Cost of Speed*, by Stephen Bertman, an educational consultant and professor of classical and modern languages, literatures, and civilizations at Canada's University of Windsor. The accelerated pace of life and work, says Bertman, is causing the rampant illnesses of our society—including the disintegration of the family, the degradation of the environment, unlimited commercialism, and unrelenting stress. "Hyperculture" is warping our morals and ethics, and the remedy, he argues, requires nothing less than a drastic slowdown; we must reassert control over the technologies that now dominate us in order to ensure a humane future for our children and ourselves.

We are becoming overwhelmed by "the power of now" and are losing our perspective and our ability to find our purpose and meaning for the future, writes Bertman:

Supported by an electronic network of instantaneous communications, our culture has been transformed into a globally integrated system in which the prime and unchallenged directive is to keep up with change.... Without question, this speed can be exhilarating. It brings us what we need and want faster than ever before. But that same speed can also add stress to our lives....

As we travel at warp speed, we fall under the sway of a new force, the power of now. The power of now is the intense energy of an unconditional present, a present uncompromised by any other dimension of time. Under its all-consuming power, the priorities we live by are transformed in a final act of adaptation

to electronic speed. Our lives cease to be what they once were, not because life itself has changed, but because the way we see it has been altered.

The power of now replaces the long term with the short term, duration with immediacy, permanence with transience, memory with sensation, insight with impulse....

By assigning the highest priority to speed, the power of now undermines the value of those experiences and activities that require slowness to develop: psychological maturation, the building of meaningful and lasting human relationships, the doing of careful and responsible work, the creation and appreciation of the arts, and the search for answers to life's greatest problems and mysteries. At the same time, by encouraging the immediate gratification of the senses, the power of now obscures the need to cultivate those skills and virtues—patience, commitment, self-denial, and even self-sacrifice—without which no civilization can long endure.

Today, society's highest goal is: "Get as much as you can as fast as you can." The long-term effects of this "hyperculture" still remain to be felt.

Another trend of our time that is causing concern is the information explosion. Far from making us any wiser, say the experts, the Information Age "could become a blank spot in human history." Joel Achenbach's article reproduced in *The Times of India* (March 23) warns against the gathering storm:

Institutions and individuals alike are coping with a deluge of books, journals, tapes, legal records, documents, electronic mail and torrents of raw data. All this material is supposed to be stored and preserved....

In 1472 the library at Queen's College in Cambridge, England, had 199 books. At the height of the Renaissance there were people who could claim plausibly to have read every important book ever written. Today, no one can read everything. The world of knowledge is a vast ocean; the best you can do is occasionally go for a swim. More than 50,000 books are

published every year in America alone. The number of journals published globally is estimated at 400,000. Soon every home will have access to hundreds of television channels. The World Wide Web now has millions of sites. "It's significant that we call it the Information Age, James Billington, the Librarian of Congress, says. "We don't talk about the Knowledge Age."...He says that in this era of data overload, we may be going in the wrong direction. "Our society is basically motion without memory."...

The Library [of Congress] has 113 million items, and every morning 20,000 more pour into the loading dock....Mr. Billington says the library must play a role in saving the Internet from turning into a dumb-bunny domain, a mere offshoot of what he calls the "audiovisual culture." The Internet shortens attention spans, he says..."It's inherently destructive of memory. You think you're getting lots more information, until you've found out you've made a bargain with the devil. You've slowly mutated and have become an extension of the machine."

In this our Information Age, the stress is only on quantity; it does not know the meaning of quality. It can in fact confuse the mind instead of leading to clarity of understanding. It deprives us of responsibility, judgment, wisdom, enlightenment, and dwarfs our status as human beings. T. S. Eliot has aptly summarized our dilemma: "Where is the life we have lost in living? Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge? Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?"

There is today a philosophy of physics and a philosophy of biology, but many philosophers have until recently overlooked the field of chemistry. But things are now changing. The chemists and philosophers gathered at Cambridge University, U.K., for the second meeting of the International Society for the Philosophy of Chemistry "are looking hard at the much-neglected philosophical underbelly of chemistry for anything from grand theories of matter to useful metaphors derived from the everyday work of chemists toiling in the lab over complex instruments and reactions."

"A growing number of people have begun to consider chemistry from a philosophical viewpoint," writes Lila Guterman in *New Scientist*. Among the few dedicated researchers in this field is David Baird, a philosopher at the University of South Carolina in Columbia, U.S.A., who believes that "there's a whole pile of interesting science and history of science that has been unexplored from the philosophical point of view." Eric Scerri, a chemist at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana, is another strong campaigner for the philosophy of chemistry. Both Baird and Scerri draw philosophical inspiration from chemistry and are studying what it can reveal about our understanding of the nature of matter. The researchers believe that even looking at how chemists build and use scientific instruments like lasers, detectors and spectrometers can prove of help, because someone must design them using their knowledge of the Universe and its laws of physics, chemistry, optics and electronics. "The very nature of the material world is built into their instruments."

The Secret Doctrine speaks of "the missing links of chemistry" (I, 82 fn.), and calls chemistry and physics "the two great magicians of the future" (I, 261). Elsewhere ("Misconceptions," THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, May 1968), H.P.B. calls Alchemy the "mother" and "soul" of chemistry; and "as long as this truth is not recognized, chemistry will continue to run in a vicious circle and will produce nothing beyond materiality."

Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

It is easy to show...how Scientists, wedded to their materialistic views, have endeavoured, ever since the day of Newton, to put false masks on fact and truth. But their task is becoming with every year more difficult; and with every year also, Chemistry, above all the other sciences, approaches nearer and nearer the realm of the Occult in nature. It is assimilating the very truths taught by the Occult Sciences for ages, but hitherto bitterly derided. "Matter is eternal," says the Esoteric Doctrine. But the matter the Occultists conceive of in its *laya*, or *zero state*, is not the matter of modern science; not even in its most rarefied gaseous state. (I, 544-45)

There is but one science that can henceforth direct modern research into the one path which will lead to the discovery of the whole, hitherto occult, truth, and it is the youngest of all—*chemistry*, as it now stands reformed. There is no other, not excluding astronomy, that can so unerringly guide scientific intuition, as chemistry can. (I, 580-81)

All normal human beings are subject to periodic changes of mood, from peaks of cheerfulness or elation, to sloughs of despondency. "There's a theory in psychology that contends that whenever you feel an emotion, you later experience the opposite emotion in a milder form," says psychologist Charles Kimble of the University of Dayton in Ohio, U.S.A. This phenomenon, he comments, could explain why we feel exhilarated after being very anxious, or feel unexpectedly down after an enjoyable event.

Studies conducted by Dr. Kimble and his colleague Lourdes Maria de la Uz are reported in *Psychology Today*. They found that people can put themselves in a positive mood by watching a skit or by listening to classical music, or by reading something that makes them feel full of energy or joy. But these vibrations do not last long. After a while people begin to neutralize their positive feelings, sometimes by recalling negative memories from their own lives. "I don't know why someone would want to get out of a good mood, but we seem to have a built-in tendency to restore a neutral state," remarks Kimble. When left to themselves, "people are psychologically inclined to moderate their emotional reactions."

The mood cycles may be short or long, depending upon the individual, but most people are entirely unaware of the progress of these psychic transformations within themselves. Almost always, some external explanation is devised for a fit of the "blues," and people are apt to believe that there is no escape from these emotional cycles. Modern psychology continues to discover the *mechanisms* of psychic life, but is none the wiser as to the *causes* of psychic or emotional experiences. In contrast, students of Theosophy have the direct counsel of W. Q. Judge—based on a

knowledge of the soul and its creative powers. Attention is invited to his article "Cyclic Impression and Return and Our Evolution" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 24*) where he writes about cycles in moods and how we can use them to our advantage.

Psychologists are saying that behaviour is a key predictor of our physical well-being. Health psychology, or how to prevent and treat illness through psychological intervention, has lately been gaining ground in some hospitals, reports *Psychology Today* (January/February 1999). One proponent of the trend, Ronald Levant, dean of the Center for Psychological Studies at Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, has this to say about the new discipline:

Clinical Health Psychology...promotes study of the interaction between psychology and serious illness, disease prevention, physical rehabilitation and the general upkeep of good health....

Between 50 and 70% of all visits to physicians are for problems rooted in psychology. And mounting evidence proves that psychological intervention can be useful in treating a wide range of problems, from AIDS and asthma to obesity and osteoporosis.

I envision a day when psychologists will work alongside doctors and nurses....Psychologists should at least be part of the primary health care team.

The age-old wisdom that mind affects body in diverse ways is no longer in doubt, and fresh evidence is pouring in. New research shows that psychological stress—even a commonplace stressor like an exam—may be just as harmful to a wound's healing as neglecting physical treatment. (*Psychology Today*, November/December 1998)

If even a mild routine strain like exams can retard healing, conclude the scientists, then surgical patients and others who suffer greater anxiety face a major health risk. By inhibiting immune

system functioning, stress can lead to infection and weakness in patients.

"Wounds with long healing times can be a real drain if you've just had surgery," says Dr. Janice Kiecolt-Glaser of Ohio State University. Closing a wound "is an important—and exhausting—task for the body." It is the stress hormones, she explains, which can disrupt healing.

There is general lack of understanding about phobias, obsessions and compulsive acts by the public in general and even by many doctors. Quite often, people having minor phobias or compulsions make a spontaneous recovery, but for others they are serious problems of the psyche that interfere with their daily lives and that mere psychotherapy cannot cure, writes neuropsychologist Vanit Nalva in *Life Positive*. But even such cases can be nipped in the bud if dealt with understanding and patience, he says:

An obsession is a recurring and involuntary thought, image, or impulse that evokes anxiety. People who are obsessed regard the thoughts senseless and even unpleasant, but are unable to stop or ignore them....

Compulsions are recurrent actions that are generally performed in an attempt to dispel obsessive thoughts. But the effect is quite the opposite....

Phobia is a pathological fear of a particular class of objects or situations that are unrelated or even disproportionate to the threat they seem to present....

Obsessions and phobias generally result from severe stress, experiences over time, a fear of fear, a thought pattern transmitted by another person, severe trauma in the past....

Research indicates that these conditions may not generally be relieved by interpretative psychotherapies such as psychoanalysis. However, treatment that focuses on changing an individual's behaviour could be effective. One such therapy is behaviour modification....A behaviour modification therapist helps the affected person in avoiding ritualistic activity by exercising self-control or carrying out alternative activity....If,

along with behaviour modification, the person is also taught how to deal with stress, the progress is faster....

The crux is that you should be aware of your responsibility to yourself. The solution has to come from you alone—a therapist will merely show the way.

When the full effects of inharmonious mental attitudes are discovered by the public and by the medical profession, an important step will have been taken in diagnosing many an ill afflicting our civilization. The remedy lies in teaching people the truth about life and nature—the truth that worries and fears and phobias and the objects of sense which produce them belong to but a small and inconsiderable part of the whole being, and that regardless of what may seem to the personal man the crash of worlds, *Life*, which is himself, will continue to exist of its own power and essence as it has existed through the past eternities.

I COULD argue for the economic value of preservation—the biotechnology that leads to the discovery of medicines and so forth. But if you push me to the wall, I'm for zero deforestation, zero extinction. I believe we have a moral obligation to other species. The only real reason for saving them is that it's right....

When you're alone in the forest, you're aware that life is everywhere around you. I feel a part of it. At the same time, I realize that I am just one more form of life in a very complex system. This is as close to a religious experience as I get—which is why, when I see a rain forest being bulldozed to make a few dollars for a logging company, I feel like I'm watching Notre Dame or the Louvre being hit with a wrecking ball. It's strange, but wherever I am in the forest, I feel that I'm home.

—RUSSELL MITTERMEIER
(President of Conservation International)