

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### A Magazine Devoted to The Living of the Higher Life

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### THE VITALITY OF LIVING TRUTH

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He who would lift up high the banner of mysticism and proclaim its reign near at hand, must give the example to others. He must be the first to change *his* modes of life; and, regarding the study of the occult mysteries as the upper step in the ladder of Knowledge must loudly proclaim it such despite exact science and the opposition of society.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

THOSE who consider themselves to be “free” men and women hardly suspect the exploitation to which they are constantly subjected on the mental plane. Their minds are made up for them by their respective priests, politicians and social idols. The fetters of modern science, of art, of beliefs and pseudo-knowledge, and of a dozen other things, all prevent us from evaluating things correctly. Slavishly we adopt and follow those values of subjects and objects, of individuals and institutions, which parents, teachers, friends have formulated for our “benefit.”

False valuation obtains even among those who call themselves Theosophists. Those who have not the courage to pursue and to come upon right values which belong to the Soul are but nominal Theosophists; they have not perceived the reality which is behind and beyond illusion. Because of them the pure Movement is corrupted. If there has been a vulgarization of the Message brought by H.P.B.—a fact obvious to anyone who cares to compare the

extant literature of the early days with what passes for Theosophy in many quarters today—it is due to the weak-mindedness and lack of courage on the part of so-called Theosophists to seek true values within themselves, in consultation with their Souls.

Elimination of false values results in real inner conversion. He who has undergone this process and has come to recognize himself as Soul changes his habits, customs, manners, modes of life, to suit the demands of new values. The inner courage yields the outer courage to *live* according to the dictates of the Soul. And our changed mode and method of existence speaks more eloquently to the Souls around us than do words. Far too many students have fallen under the spell of mere words, and those who are most glib on subjects such as Rounds and Races, Pitris and Ah-hi, or even the Three Fundamentals, fail to reach those Souls who earnestly seek the Truth. If the world will not listen to Theosophy, if its message is misinterpreted and misapplied, if that “vitality which living truth alone can impart” has been largely lost, the responsibility for it rests emphatically on every student of the Teachings.

In this era of transition when we see about us the shattering of old forms of thought—religious, social, political, scientific—there is a profound need for the reproclamation of the vitalizing truth of Theosophy and its application by individual students to the urgent problems of the day. The future of Theosophy in the world depends largely upon the quality of its students. It is time we refrained from blaming a cold and hard-hearted generation that refuses to listen to what we have to say. That species of fault-finding with the world, except where it is our duty to point out injustice and hypocrisy, is too often an excuse for our own inaptitude and lack of fire. Ours the task of sowing the seed as best we know how. Those who watch and help our efforts with Their Compassion and Their Wisdom will see to the rightful harvest.

The world is tired of information; it cries out for the vitality of Truth, and the future of Theosophy is commensurate with the success of our effort to meet that need. The need may often be inarticulate; but it is none the less urgent. It is not necessary to be “spellbinders”

in the oratorical sense. It is realization and understanding that give vitality to Truth. If the world appears to be disinclined to come to us for Theosophy, let us take Theosophy to it, not by forcing it down people’s throats, but “by taking every opportunity of talking to others,” “by assisting in circulating our literature” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 246); and for the truly earnest other ways open up. It is true that “Theosophy is for those who want it”; but are we infallible in our judgment as to who wants it? Ours the duty of offering it. If we do just that, with all the ability of which we are capable, we have done enough.

Student-servers must observe and take the line of least resistance. Let them not fancy that by pointing out their weakness to others they will arouse them to an appreciation of Theosophy, any more than by praising their goodness and virtues. Their problems must be sought; all who are evolving have them. People may not be consciously aware of their problems, but problems exist. After finding them out let us not say—this is your problem and this its solution. Meanwhile, such Theosophical truths can be put in their way as will arouse them. What our Movement needs is not mere explainers of the doctrine but those who think first of the needs of their hearers and suit their talk to them.

The lesson contained in the wise allegory printed by Mr. Judge in *The Path* for October 1893 needs to be borne in mind, for a grain of selfless heart endeavour is worth all the intellectual exposition in the world.

#### AN ALLEGORY

Walking within the garden of his heart, the pupil suddenly came upon the Master, and was glad, for he had but just finished a task in His service which he hastened to lay at His feet.

“See, Master,” said he, “this is done: now give me other teaching to do.”

The Master looked upon him sadly yet indulgently, as one might upon a child which cannot understand.

“There are already many to teach intellectual conceptions of the Truth,” he replied. “Thinkest thou to serve best by adding thyself

to their number?"

The pupil was perplexed.

"Ought we not to proclaim the Truth from the very housetops, until the whole world shall have heard?" he asked.

"And then —"

"Then the whole world will surely accept it."

"Nay," replied the Master, "the Truth is not of the intellect, but of the heart. See!"

The pupil looked, and saw the Truth as though it were a White Light, flooding the whole earth; yet none reaching the green and living plants which so sorely needed its rays, because of dense layers of clouds intervening.

"The clouds are the human intellect," said the Master. "Look again."

Intently gazing, the pupil saw here and there faint rifts in the clouds, through which the Light struggled in broken, feeble beams. Each rift was caused by a little vortex of vibrations, and looking down through the openings thus made, the pupil perceived that each vortex had its origin in a human heart.

"Only by adding to and enlarging the rifts will the Light ever reach the earth," said the Master. "Is it best, then, to pour out more Light upon the clouds, or to establish a vortex of heart force? The latter thou must accomplish unseen and unnoticed, and even unthanked. The former will bring thee praise and notice among men. Both are necessary: both are Our work; but—the rifts are so few! Art strong enough to forgo the praise and make of thyself a heart centre of pure impersonal force?"

The pupil sighed, for it was a sore question.

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THE Self alone is real. The world of the senses is superimposed upon it.

—*Srimad-Bhagavatam*

## THE LIVING POWER OF BUDDHISM

THE living power of Buddhism offers each of us steps and principles that would enable us to live our daily lives. Religion and life are so much divorced that not only do people fail to consult the *Dhamma* —the Doctrine of the True—in the performance of all actions, but hardly anyone believes that we can live by the power of the *Dhamma* as we live by food and water and air in the physical body. We take good care to procure for ourselves sleep, exercise, nourishment, for we know that without these health suffers and the body dies. But we are not taught when young, and we fail to learn when we have grown up, that the *Dhamma* provides nourishment for the soul.

Buddhism provides a code of laws and it tells us what actions to do, what to avoid, and what penalties Nature imposes on those who break those laws. But Buddhism also has a scientific code of hygiene which teaches us what keeps the mind and soul alive and healthy. It offers right "hygiene-power by which all of us can live. It also provides an "exercise-book" in which correct exercises for right effort are given. But in this Dark Age, *Kaliyuga*, hygiene and exercise form part of one subject and therefore Right Living and Right Striving—two of the steps on the Noble Eightfold Path—may be considered together.

Life is one continuous battle. Every true Buddhist is engaged in the greatest of all wars—the war against the lower nature, personified as Mara. It is claimed, and rightly so, that not a drop of blood has been shed in the name of Buddha and Buddhism. Ere he left his palace and his kingdom, Prince Siddhartha resolved to find the Light, and said:

My chariot shall not roll with bloody wheels  
From victory to victory, till earth  
Wears the red record of my name. I choose  
To tread its paths with patient, stainless feet,  
Making its dust my bed, its loneliest wastes  
My dwelling, and its meanest things my mates.

In these words we at once find declared the Power and the

Purpose of Life. Just as there is air but we must train our respiratory system so that we may breathe; just as there is electricity like a radiant ocean but human intelligence has to find its existence, learn its laws and utilize it, so also there is power, energy, *Jiva*—a boundless ocean—but we have to know how to tap it, how to press it into service. Each one of us feels that there is Power in Nature, but we know not how it manifests. A materialistic philosophy of life prevails, and while we acknowledge that there is Power we do not see that there is also Purpose. It was to teach humankind that there is both Power and Purpose in the whole of Nature that Lord Buddha acted out in his Incarnation the mighty drama of the Soul. Like any one of us, he felt the Power in Nature; like some of us, he felt that there was Purpose in Nature, but he behaved face to face with them like none of us. He not only questioned what this Power and Purpose is; he went further and set the example by acquiring that Power and making full use of that Purpose.

That is the first lesson we must learn: the Power of Life must be used, the Purpose of Life must be fulfilled. We must imbibe and assimilate Power; we must work out and express Life's Divine Purpose.

Thus the Living Power of Buddhism is that Power or Energy which enables one to live day after day; and the Purpose the *Dhamma* reveals helps one not to defile that Energy and Power, but on the other hand to humanize it, to elevate it. Here is a fundamental idea: the Power of Life is ours; by our ignorance, by our folly, by our laziness, we defile it, we pollute it, we degrade it. We are ignorant of the purpose inherent in life, in living Nature. Our follies, our sins of omission and commission, are the result of the non-recognition of the Purpose of Life. As Life is universal and omnipresent, it floods every thought and word of ours, it is in the cooking-pot and the fountain-pen, and therefore we can use it, we can press that power into our service all day long, in speech or silence, in thought as well as in feeling.

The greatest of all wars is the war against one's own lower nature, one's own animal disposition. And this task is so important and so absorbing for the sincere aspirant that no time is left for him to

fight the so-called enemy outside. But there is something more—this particular war, one against our lower nature, is causal; it is the cause of *all* wars; it is the archetypal war. Once that war ends in the triumph of the real warrior, all wars cease for him. Right striving, or correct endeavour, is the holy war. So let us keep in mind these two fundamental concepts: (1) the Power of Life must be controlled and utilized and (2) in doing that, the Purpose of Life must be fulfilled by humanizing that Power, which alone elevates it.

We can know how far we are succeeding in utilizing the Power of Life or *Jiva* by noting to what extent our thoughts and words, our affections and aversions, our deeds and actions are human. Sometimes people do not undertake the fight, do not begin to lead the higher life, because they feel that to be divine is beyond them. But we are not expected to be divine all at once; let us begin by being human. "Humanize your lives" is the great message. Divinity will follow. We cannot be divine before we are human. Mostly we are animal-like.

Right Living and Right Striving consist in humanizing the whole of existence. To kill the animal in us we must learn to act understandingly and deliberately, and not impulsively; to live in freedom which love and sacrifice bring, and not as one of the herd.

Right Living then begins when we turn from the fight and struggle outside, with others, to fight the animal in us, to fight the upas tree in us, to fight the mineral poisons in us. Our task is to tame and to purify the lower kingdoms, not of the great universe, but of the small universe which each one of us is. There is the power of Life-*Jiva* everywhere, and in each kingdom it has its own specific and legitimate function, its own *dharma* or purpose to fulfil. In our human constitution, we come across every aspect of life—in the cells of the body and in the brain, in the molecular and the atomic and sub-atomic conditions. They are there for a dual purpose: primarily, to be humanized by man; secondarily, they form a vehicle, they provide a basis, for the human being to gain knowledge. So right living takes them into account; we not only fail in our human evolution by giving way to the animal in us; we also hinder the progress and growth of the whole ocean of matter

of which the human-animal forms a part. Right Living is not possible without some understanding of the Purpose of Life, and if that Purpose is not known, then Right Striving is impossible.

Let us turn to the *Dhammapada* and see what applications are available for what we have been saying, in the words of the Buddha.

Evil tendencies of the unrestrained and careless go on increasing if they neglect doing what ought to be done and do that which ought not to be done. (Verse 292)

Is not this the condition of most men and women? They make the false pretext: "Well, I suppose it had to be; it is my nature." It is not human nature to be anything else than human. Only those ignorant of the Purpose of Life make such excuses. One desire gives birth to another; therefore did the Buddha compare Kama-desire to fire and said that the whole of humankind is burning with the fire of passion. Our very human nature tells us that something is wrong with us when we fail and fall. And so good people, everywhere, try to curb their evil tendencies, and to wage war against their lower selves. But they do it without adequate knowledge and often give up the good fight in sheer despair. To such, the fight is wearisome, very long and very fruitless. Therefore it is said:

Long is the night for him who cannot sleep. Long is the yojana (a ten mile distance) for him who is weary. Long the chain of birth and death for the foolish who do not know the true law. (Verse 60)

Our struggle against evil will not be indefinitely prolonged if we get hold of the chart and the map of the battlefield. We must learn the whereabouts of the enemy; the strength of the enemy; the kind of weapons he possesses. Therefore we must study the *Dhamma*. It is the map of the great battlefield, drawn by the Master-Warrior, the *Kshatriya* of *Kshatriyas*, the Lord Buddha. What is his first injunction?

As a merchant ill-attended and having much wealth avoids a dangerous way; as a man who loves to live on avoids poison; so should one shun evil.

He whose hand has no wound may touch poison. Poison harms not one who has no wound. No evil is to him who does no evil. (Verses 123-24)

If we are merchants going to a distant market and our caravan is small, it makes sense to avoid a dangerous road. That dangerous road is the road of evil. Evil surrounds us in a more tangible way than germs of bodily diseases. Germs of passion and lust and anger and impatience and greed abound. If we have a fruitful soil, these germs attack us. If a disease is raging, only those catch it who have suitable soil for it. If we are healthy and if our bodies are unsuited to the elementals of the disease, they will not attack us. This is equally true of emotional germs. We in our ordinary mental and moral state cannot afford to take chances and play with the germs of evil. So, the first thing is to avoid evil. How?

A man should hasten towards the good; he should restrain his evil thoughts; if he is slack in doing good his mind inclines to delight in evil. (Verse 116)

Do not just try to fight evil, but engage yourselves in meritorious actions—that is the advice of the Buddha. But he gives a very salutary and significant warning—do not do good deeds perfunctorily, *i.e.*, casually, as if they did not matter, as if they were unimportant. The same teaching is enlarged thus:

An act carelessly done, a vow badly kept, wavering obedience to discipline—all this will bear no sweet fruit.

If anything is to be done let a man attack it unflinchingly. A lax ascetic scatters more and more the dust of his passions. (Verses 312-13)

If men and women were as enthusiastic in fighting evil as they are in sense-indulgence, if they propitiated with as much zest their noble ideas as their passion-plans, they would soon succeed. There are three factors which the Buddha mentions: (1) duties and actions, (2) vows and resolves, (3) discipline and practice. In each department we must be energetic, attentive, thoughtful, efficient and thorough. In the high concerns of life we must show both enthusiasm and energy. These two are aspects of the Life-Power

in Nature. Next, continuity and perseverance is required:

If a man does what is good, let him do it again and again.  
Let him set his heart on it. Happiness is the outcome of good  
conduct. (Verse 118)

The Power of Life cannot fulfil its purpose by haphazard action. Nature persists, and persists most absorbingly; so day by day we must be absorbed in right doing of meritorious deeds. Therefore very definite and specific teaching is given:

As the rust sprung from iron itself corrodes and eats into it,  
so with the man who sins. His own deeds bring the sinner to an  
evil end.

Let a wise man remove his impurities, one by one, little by  
little, day by day, as a smith removes the impurities of silver.  
(Verses 240 and 239)

Within each one of us is the iron of passion, which corrupts whatever silver there is in the *upadhi* of action. Our silver has become impure by the rust of our iron nature. If we meditate upon this alchemical symbol we will learn numerous lessons. Our animal impurities, however, will not depart at once; they have to be eliminated one after another, a little now, a little tomorrow. Let us have patience.

In our effort to fight the devil within us, we encounter a difficulty from those who surround us and who desire to continue in their sense-life of noise and rush. So the *Dhamma* recommends *satsang*, good company:

Beneficent it is to catch sight of the Noble Ones; to live  
with them is continuous happiness. A man is happy if luckily  
he escapes the sight of fools. (Verse 206)

The foolish are very many and the Noble Ones but few. It is difficult for many to part company with the foolish, but once again it is a matter of consubstantiality. If we develop sufficient nobility in ourselves, if we show sufficient strength of character, then the foolish, finding no pleasure in our company, will leave us. But it is no use our seeking the company of the Wise if we have not

attempted to curb folly in ourselves and to develop some wisdom. For—

A fool associating himself with a wise man all his life sees  
not the truth, even as the spoon enjoys not the taste of the soup.  
But a thoughtful person associating with a wise man soon  
perceives the truth, even as the tongue enjoys the taste of  
the soup. (Verses 64-65)

What have we learnt? That Right Living consists in avoiding evil, and doing our duties by the light of the *Dhamma*. Thus we shall shorten the period of test and of effort. Persistently, regularly, we must attack the hard iron in our nature, and bit by bit remove it. To do this the help of the *Dhamma* is also required. Then, we must avoid those who avoid the *Dhamma*; seek the company of those who speak and live the *Dhamma*. Without this aid we shall fail. When we do this, we succeed in making an island of ourselves. The *Dhammapada* gives three images for us to work upto in our endeavour to live rightly. They are: (1) Island, (2) Rock, (3) Lake.

By endeavour, by vigilance, by discipline and self-control,  
let the wise man make for himself an island which no flood  
can overwhelm. (Verse 25)

Solid rock is not shaken by the gale. The wise man is  
not moved by praise or blame. (Verse 81)

After hearing the *Dhamma* the wise become tranquil,  
like a deep lake which is clear and calm. (Verse 82)

We shall not be discouraged, for ere long our own human nature will assert itself, will reveal itself, and when we know ourselves as *Manushyas*, then shall we catch a glimpse of the further Path to Divinity, to *Nirvana*. From animal-man to human-man, from human-man to divine-man—thus stretches the Path of Life. The Power of Life, and the Purpose of Life once mastered, make of us masters of Life itself as was the Great Enlightened One, the Triple Anniversary of whose birth, enlightenment, and casting off of the body of flesh falls this year on May 26.

## PREPARATION FOR SERVICE

The work it has on hand and the end it keeps in view are too absorbing and too lofty to leave it the time or inclination to take part in side issues. That work and that end is the dissemination of the Fundamental Principles of the philosophy of Theosophy, and the exemplification in practice of those principles, through a truer realization of the SELF; a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood.

—*From the Declaration of the United Lodge of Theosophists*

MANY a new-comer to Theosophy becomes a student—so great, so beneficial is the impact of the philosophy on receptive minds. When such a student sees the self-sacrificing service of others, he himself gets fired with the aspiration to serve. His immediate reaction is to study the philosophy in order that he, in his humble way, may spread the teachings and so help in the task of benefiting humanity. For him, the easiest approach to Theosophy is to subscribe to the three objects of the Movement, to study the Theosophical tenets and to embody as best he can the ethics of *The Voice of the Silence*. The danger he faces is that he may fall in a rut, and thus fail to perceive the opportunities for expanding his powers of service.

In the early years of the Theosophical Movement, Mr. A.P. Sinnett, who was then a devoted student-server, received a communication from one of the great Founders of the Movement drawing his attention to the fact that the recognition of the higher phases of man's being was not to be attained by mere acquirement of knowledge. Now, after nearly a century of Theosophical endeavour, there still seems to lurk among students the misconception that to become theosophists all they have to do is to acquire knowledge. Book-study is thus undertaken in all earnestness and sincerity, but even after years of strenuous effort no enlightenment comes. The student finds that his studies have given him only a little headway and that in his quest of soul and spirit he has made no apparent progress. He thus finds that the enigma of nature has remained unresolved and that the possibility

of conscious communion with his Inner Self has not advanced beyond a theoretical assertion. To counter a lop-sided development which would result from the mere gathering and hoarding of information, Mr. Sinnett was told that the knowledge of spiritual facts had to be sought by personal experience and through actual observation. Books treating of Theosophical philosophy as well as devotional readings can and do help in establishing that serenity of mind which is essential for the gathering and evaluating of experience. They are aids valuable at all times, but they are no substitutes for the personal and conscious going through of spiritual experience. The student is expected to make a personal observation of any spiritual experience that may come his way. In the vast laboratory of nature he cannot stand aloof and expect to progress through the spiritual experience and observation of another. The effort must be entirely his. There are no short-cuts to attainment.

If the student desires to advance towards a more meaningful service of humanity, then must he supplement his book-learning with practices aimed at arousing his inner being to activity, and later on to power. This can be achieved in several ways, each of which has to be adopted so as to cleanse and clear his perception on planes other than the physical. Two of the ways which could be adopted with advantage are: (1) meditation and (2) the observance of silence for certain periods of time to enable nature herself to speak to him who comes to her for information. This latter method gives the student the opportunity to make his obeisance to nature and then to seek points by which the spiritual and psychic blending of himself with nature can be effected. (See the opening statement of the article "Some Words on Daily Life" in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 22*.) Both these methods require as a *sine qua non* the control of animal passions and impulses and the inculcating of an utter unselfishness of intention. A continuous devotion to the undertaking of this discipline is bound to breed enthusiasm the moment spiritual results begin to manifest under the student's own power of observation. The effort then takes on a more purposeful study of the laws that obtain in supernature, laws moreover which will enable him to aid the awakening of his dormant spirituality. It is only

when this practice has been continued for a sufficiently long time that the student can proceed to the more recondite tasks of controlling his involuntary powers and developing his will in the right direction.

By adopting such practices as the above, the student would in fact be furthering the third object of the Theosophical Movement which is: To investigate the hidden mysteries of Nature under every aspect possible, and the psychic and spiritual powers latent in man especially.

Theosophy is Universal Brotherhood. When the student is busy equipping himself for service, he has to be careful to see that each of his endeavours revolves round this central theme of Universal Brotherhood. His departure from this must invariably result in his straying away from the path. All that he learns of occultism, all the powers that are allowed to develop in him, all the qualities of service that burgeon in him, are due to the help and guidance he receives in the inner planes of his being from the great custodians of the Wisdom. Selfishness, even if it be latent, acts as a repellent and closes the channel through which light can come. Besides selfishness and ambition, that which militates against Brotherhood is the magnetism and invisible results proceeding from erroneous beliefs. Faith in the Gods and God and other superstitions attract millions of foreign influences, living entities and powerful agents whose aim it is to lead the student on to the path of error. Said one of the Great Ones: "Unless a man is prepared to become a thorough Theosophist...give up entirely caste, his old superstitions and show himself a true reformer...he will remain simply a member of the Society with no hope whatever of ever hearing from us...It is useless for a member to argue 'I am one of a pure life, I am a teetotaller and an abstainer from meat and vice. All my aspirations are for good, etc.,' and he, at the same time, building by his acts and deeds an impassable barrier on the road between himself and us."

The task of equipping oneself for service is no light one, for, to wean away one's thinking from bigotry—religious, scientific or social—requires that he himself investigate and gather the proofs of its pernicious tendencies. For this, he must have not only a

specialized knowledge but also a deep conviction based on personal experience. To promulgate the ideal of Brotherhood, the student has to demonstrate the truth of the teaching that the root of everything in nature is ONE, from which all emerge and into which everything returns. The parcelling of humanity into denominations of religions, sects, creeds and colours is man-made and has proved to be the breeding-ground of devious tendencies. It therefore becomes the duty of the student to help to keep alive in man his spiritual intuitions and to promote in every way and in all countries the spread of non-sectarian education.

In a student's life, study and practice have to be blended harmoniously with service. Spending all the time in service and neglecting either study or personal experience (which comes during moments of deep aspiration) is ill-advised. The invocation of nature during the daily hours of silence is as necessary as reviewing the actions of the day in the light of the Paramitas. Service starved of the strength which comes from such spiritual exercise hardly attracts the new-comer or swells audiences. Dissemination of the philosophy of altruism is a must, and if speaking or writing comes not easily to him, then it would be excellent discipline to undergo the necessary training.

The equipment of the student is not complete unless he has acquired the aptitude to accommodate himself to any circumstance arising from the daily contact with students as equally anxious as he to further the cause of human Brotherhood. Injustice may be encountered, criticism and even uncharitableness received at the hands of friends and associates. It is this which is the real training ground for building a character of such strength and flexibility as service in the hostile world outside is likely to demand. Unbrotherliness and lack of charity is very painful to witness in an association of persons who profess to give themselves up to the most solemn questions affecting human interest. The revered Master K.H. gave the following advice: "Let meaner natures wrangle if they will; the wise compound their differences in a mutually forbearing spirit." This advice applies with equal force to individuals, societies and lodges.



## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT IN OTHER AGES

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IN the Conclusion to *The Key to Theosophy*, speaking of the attempt made by the Great Lodge of Adepts during the last quarter of every century to help on the spiritual progress of humanity, H.P.B. says:

Some one or more persons have appeared in the world as their agents, and a greater or less amount of occult knowledge and teaching has been given out. If you care to do so, you can trace these movements back, century by century, as far as our detailed historical records extend.

W. Q. Judge, in Chapter I of *The Ocean of Theosophy*, names some of the extraordinary characters who have appeared in Western civilization—Paracelsus, Jacob Boehme, Saint-Martin, Mesmer, Cagliostro and Saint-Germain—all of whom were connected with the centenary movements that H.P.B. refers to in the above quotation. Mr. Judge writes that, though generally reviled and classed as impostors by people who had no original philosophy of their own, these characters are looked upon by students of Theosophy as members of one single Brotherhood, having a single doctrine.

Chronologically, Paracelsus (the symbolic name adopted by Theophrastus Bombast von Hohenheim) was the first to appear. He was born in 1493 in the canton of Zurich, and was the originator of valuable methods of treatment in medicine that are now gaining recognition. However, if one looks over the qualifications which he declared were needed by a physician, only an Adept would properly qualify. He wrote that a physician must be a Philosopher; possessing true knowledge, he must see the Unity of Nature and recognize man to be a faithful copy of the Universe. He must also know the “law of correspondence,” for the principles of man are connected intimately with the planets; this would require a physician to be an Astronomer. He must, besides, be an Alchemist, that is, he must understand the processes of life before he attempts to heal. Added to this, the healer’s moral nature must be above reproach. We can therefore see how few, if any, of our present-day physicians could come anywhere near fulfilling any of these qualifications.

At the age of 16 Paracelsus entered the University of Basel, where, among other things, he studied alchemy. When he was 20 he left on his travels, which took him to almost every important country in Europe, to Tartary and ultimately to India, where, possibly, he may have met the Mahatmas in Tibet. It was during these travels that he made the acquaintance of an Initiate who instructed him in the secret doctrines of the East.

Eventually he returned to Europe at the age of 32 and was appointed a professor of physic, medicine and surgery in the University of Basel. His condemnation of the medical practices of those days aroused the hatred and jealousy of his colleagues, who accused him of being in league with the devil; as a result of their persecution he resigned his position and eventually settled at Salzburg and died there in 1541, at the age of 48, leaving behind him a number of works which are to this day greatly valued by Kabbalists and Occultists, and by some of the medical men.

In *The Theosophical Glossary* H.P.B. calls him the “greatest Occultist of the middle ages.” She further states that he never had a friend, but was surrounded by enemies, the most bitter of whom were the Churchmen; therefore it is not to be wondered at that he was murdered by some unknown foe. In addition to being “the cleverest physician of his age,” one who could cure almost any illness by the power of talismans prepared by himself, he was also, we are told, “a clairvoyant of great powers, one of the most learned and erudite philosophers and mystics, and a distinguished Alchemist.”

Jacob Boehme (1575-1624) comes next in the chronological order. The son of poor German peasants, he was educated only as far as being able to read and write; yet we are told that he was able to write works full of scientific truths. In describing him, H.P.B. says that he was one of those very rare persons “whose material envelope impedes in no way the direct, even if only occasional, intercommunion between the intellectual and the spiritual Ego.” She has called him “a natural clairvoyant of most wonderful powers,” “a thorough-born Mystic,” “a great Theosophist,” “the nursling of the genii (Nirmanakayas) who watched over and guided him.” It has been said that Newton derived his knowledge of gravitation

and its laws from Boehme, who had a thorough view of the universe and could see *inside* of things, while modern physical science is content with looking at the outside. Some of the modern scientific discoveries go to prove his profound and intuitive insight into the most secret workings of nature.

Boehme, too, had his enemies and it is no wonder that after the publication of his *Aurora*, a work symbolically setting forth the fundamental ideas of Cosmogogenesis which are given in Volume I of *The Secret Doctrine*, he was accused of heresy and ordered to refrain from further writing. Seven years were to go by during which he confined himself to his cobbler's trade; but later he again started writing, and about a year before his death some of his devotional works were published. This resulted in his banishment, and he died in Dresden at the age of 49.

We next turn to several famous persons, all of whom lived and worked in the 18th century: Louis Claude de Saint-Martin, Friedrich Anton Mesmer and Alessandro Cagliostro. The Count de Saint-Germain, whose date of birth is unknown, was on the scene at the same time.

Louis Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), who gave up a promising career in the French army to devote himself to his philosophical studies, is called the "unknown philosopher" of the 18th century. He belonged to the same mystic brotherhood, the *Fratres Lucis* or "Brothers of Light," as did Saint-Germain, Cagliostro and Mesmer. All of them were Masons.

Saint-Martin was an ardent disciple of Jacob Boehme and studied under Martinez Pasqualis, whom H.P.B. describes as "a very learned man, a mystic and occultist." It was with Masonry that Saint-Martin was most concerned and he tried to restore it to its original character of Occultism and Theurgy through a mystical semi-Masonic Lodge, the "Rectified Rite of Saint-Martin." From this attempt was born an organization known as the Martinists. Saint-Martin tried to teach the Martinists that *moral* development, and not the development of occult powers, is the true basis of Occultism, and that powers by themselves are dangerous; but the Martinists movement failed.

Saint-Martin's philosophy was based on the time-honoured

propositions of the ancient Wisdom-Religion. There have been attempts to dishonour his name, but he was a true Theosophist who lived and wrote his works with but one aim—to benefit mankind. His one burning desire was to alleviate man's suffering and to help him regenerate himself as also all nature, which he has polluted.

Three names form a triad: Mesmer, Cagliostro and Saint-Germain. Mesmer was an initiated member of two powerful occult Fraternities, the *Fratres Lucis* and the Brotherhood of Luxor. It was the Council of Luxor which selected him, under the orders of the "Great Brotherhood," to act in the 18th century as their messenger and to enlighten a portion of the Western nations in the occult lore. Saint-Germain was appointed to supervise the development of events, and later Cagliostro was commissioned to help.

Mesmer (1734-1815) was keenly interested in the writings of Paracelsus, and this fired him with the determination to become a doctor. After obtaining his medical degree he settled in Vienna and began to use magnetized objects in the curing of diseases; he magnetized his patients' clothing, bedding, the water they drank and bathed in, etc. News of his cures spread. In 1776 he received a visit from the Count de Saint-Germain, and it was the latter who instructed him in the higher aspects of magnetism. After this Mesmer discarded the use of magnetized objects and began to heal by direct vital transmission, which he called "animal magnetism" and which has been known since then as Mesmerism.

This, however, aroused the criticism of his colleagues, and the Medical Council of Vienna appealed to the Empress of Austria to have Mesmer denounced as an impostor. Forced to leave Vienna, he settled down in Paris. In France he became the friend of Marie Antoinette and many of the nobility supported him. The Academies of Science and Medicine, however, refused to respect his theories, though he was at that time the rage of Paris. The King looked upon his cures with suspicion and ordered an investigation of his methods by a committee chosen from among the members of the Academies of Science and Medicine. In summing up the results of their investigations they concluded that "where nothing is to be seen, felt, tasted or smelled, there nothing can exist." Hence the amazing

cures which they had witnessed must be due entirely to “the imagination of the patients themselves.” The Clergy attributed his cures to the work of the devil, and orthodox physicians denounced him as a charlatan.

Mesmer left for a village near Zurich, refusing to return to Paris or to go to Germany, from both of which places he had invitations. He preferred working among the poor and carrying on his research work, making it permanently useful to those who would follow him. Though his work was denounced during his life, it later gained recognition. H.P.B. says in the *Glossary* that “Mesmer is already vindicated. The justification of the two others [Saint-Germain and Cagliostro] will follow in the next century.” It needs to be recognized that Mesmerism, which effects cures with the help of the magnetic fluid in man, works from within without and involves no interference with the free will of the patient. It is, therefore, quite different from hypnotism, which is a most dangerous practice both physically and morally as it paralyses the free will of the subject and prevents him from receiving any other impressions than those suggested by the operator.

We turn next to perhaps the most tragic figure of that time, Cagliostro. Though H.P.B. calls him in the *Glossary* “a famous Adept,” and further states that his real story has never been told, he apparently failed in his mission, for H.P.B. says that “having made a series of mistakes, more or less fatal, he was *recalled*.” One of those mistakes consisted in breaking his vow of chastity. He married a lady who later turned out to be a tool of the Jesuits, and who eventually brought about his downfall.

As a young lad he studied under and travelled in the company of a mysterious foreigner, of whom little is known. Their travels took them to Egypt, and there he was taken by the temple-priests through palaces never shown to strangers. It was because of his knowledge of Egyptian Mysteries that he later founded an Egyptian Rite in Masonry, the aim of which was the moral and spiritual regeneration of mankind. He had, as had Mesmer, certain occult powers and was a magnetic healer. This led to his being looked upon as a supernatural being on the one hand and denounced as a charlatan on the other.

Though he gave himself up to altruistic service and the healing of the sick, without accepting any compensation for his services, and though he was the friend and adviser of the highest and mightiest of every land that he visited, yet he was, as it were, “stoned to death” by persecutions, lies and infamous accusations.

While in England, he was accused by the French spy, Morande, of being the notorious Giuseppe Balsamo. This accusation Cagliostro refuted in an “Open Letter to the English People.” Morande was forced to retract his statements and to apologize. However, to this day Cagliostro continues to be confounded with Balsamo. He left England and wandered to Rome in 1789, where he made one final effort to revive his Egyptian Rite, but he made the mistake of initiating two men who turned out to be spies of the Inquisition. He was arrested and imprisoned, the sole charge against him being that he was a Mason and therefore engaged in unlawful studies. Everything he possessed was publicly burned. He is believed to have died in 1795, during his confinement, but mystery surrounds his death, and we have H.P.B.’s statement that he was “*recalled*.”

Perhaps the most fascinating and mysterious of all the characters who worked as emissaries of the Masters was the Count de Saint-Germain. In *The Theosophist* of May 1881, H.P.B. wrote that

the treatment this great man, this pupil of Indian and Egyptian hierophants, this proficient in the secret wisdom of the East, has had from Western writers is a stigma upon human nature. And so has the stupid world behaved towards every other person who, like St. Germain, has revisited it after long seclusion devoted to study, with his stores of accumulated esoteric wisdom, in the hope of bettering it, and making it wiser and happier.

And in the *Glossary* H.P.B. says that no one really knew him. “By some he is regarded as an incarnate god, by others as a clever Alsatian Jew.” Not only was he a great linguist, speaking almost all the European and many of the Oriental languages, but he was also a great musician, and in addition an adept in transmuting metals, in

making gold and the most marvellous diamonds, which he gave away as presents. His spiritual powers included the prophesying of futurity, without ever making a mistake. Perhaps he was the best known for his work behind the scenes in the various political events of his time; for, besides being the friend and confidant of kings and princes and other influential men, he predicted the French Revolution long before it actually precipitated itself and tried to change the course of events by inducing Louis XVI to take timely action, but the latter would not listen to him.

We have H.P.B.'s word that he "was certainly the greatest Oriental Adept Europe has seen during the last centuries. But Europe knew him not." He worked in Europe for more than a century, and by some he was believed to have been deathless. Confiding his future plans to his Austrian friend, Franz Graeffler, the Count said in 1790:

Tomorrow night I am off. I am much needed in Constantinople, then in England, there to prepare two new inventions which you will have in the next century—trains and steamboats. Toward the end of this century I shall disappear out of Europe, and betake myself to the region of the Himalayas. I will rest; I must rest. Exactly in 85 years will people set eyes on me. Farewell.

And so we drop the curtain on a few of the characters who played prominent parts in the Theosophical Movement from the 15th to the 18th centuries. It was raised again in the 19th century, 85 years after Saint-Germain left, when H.P.B. launched her Movement in 1875.

The work of the Movement has assumed different phases according to the conditions obtaining at the time and place at which a particular effort was made. H.P.B., coming as she did at a time when thought and religion were free, could speak and write more plainly and definitely than could her predecessors.

## THE HIGHER SPHERES OF THOUGHT

Elevate the mind, and seek sincere faith with firm purpose; transgress not the rules of kingly conduct, and let your happiness depend, not upon external things, but upon your own mind.

—LORD BUDDHA

This "Mind" is *manas*, or rather its lower reflection which whenever it disconnects itself, for the time being, with *kama*, becomes the guide of the highest mental faculties, and is the organ of the free-will in physical man.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

There are innumerable pages of your life record still to be written up, fair and blank they are as yet. Child of your race and of your age, seize the diamond pen and inscribe them with the history of noble deeds, days well spent, years of holy striving. So will you win your way ever upward to the higher planes of spiritual consciousness.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

THE human mind can function at different levels, and spiritual psychology classifies men and women on this basis. In each person one level of mental activity is predominant and while it is possible to reach below or beyond that habitual state, it is the latter that determines the general outlook, the prevailing attitude, and therefore the evaluation of life's experiences and the general mode of behaviour. On the understanding of this fundamental fact depends the right approach to practical psychology and the correct kind of psychotherapy.

To begin with, we must distinguish between two opposite parts: the surface mind and a depth which lies within the superficial aspect. These two opposite poles may be called the physical and the metaphysical. The physical mind is wedded to sensuous perception and therefore constantly distracted, agitated, restless. The metaphysical part is concentrated and steady, calm and quiet. This is the higher or spiritual mind, beyond the conscious brain-mind but not to be confused with the "unconscious" or "subconscious"

of modern psychology. It is, accurately speaking, the “*super-conscious*,” above the threshold of the conscious level, and still unrecognized and unexplored territory for the average person, although everyone enters that state in deep sleep.

The physical mind is inattentive and more or less confused because it is enslaved to the senses and desires and passions and given to discursive and superficial thinking. By determination and strong effort the mind can be withdrawn from all external objects and made to come to its centre, in the innermost depth wherein all is still and peaceful.

Explaining this duality of the mind, H. P. Blavatsky asks:

Why is it that one person sees poetry in a cabbage or pig with her little ones, while another will perceive in the loftiest things only their lowest and most material aspect, will laugh at the “music of the spheres” and ridicule the most sublime conceptions and philosophies?

This difference, she states, depends on the innate power of the mind to think on the higher or on the lower plane. The true nature of man cannot be fathomed unless this duality is accepted. This is the key that will explain all psychological mysteries.

In ancient Indian philosophy different levels of thinking were recognized and correctly understood. The Sanskrit language has a term to indicate this, namely, *manodhatu*. Literally it means the “world of the mind.” This includes not only all our mental faculties, but also one or another of these different levels of thought, one of the divisions of the plane of mind. Each man or woman has his *manodhatu* or plane of thought determined by his degree of unfoldment. All true progress for man consists in reaching the higher planes or spheres of thought.

Since man is an intelligent and moral being, he can strive deliberately to elevate his mind. He is a thinker and a chooser. It is precisely the mind or *manas* that distinguishes him from the mere animal. He can through self-discipline develop the spiritual faculties enshrined within the mind itself. The freeing of the mind from its enslavement to mere objects and its withdrawal into the depth of

the innermost consciousness will transform the lower or physical mind into the higher or metaphysical mind, to which belong intuition, understanding, and compassion. The higher mind is also the channel of the spiritual will, a most dynamic power for good.

Within each one of us there lies a magnetic potency which, directed with deliberate intention and a sincere desire to bring happiness into the lives of our fellow men, can achieve wonders. This potency has rightly been called “the most effective of magic levers placed by Nature in human hands.” But in most people it is inactive because it is ignored if not altogether denied; while by some, alas, it is misused. If only all men of good will could learn to release this power inherent in man’s inner consciousness, they could contribute substantially to making this earth a happier and brighter place for all mankind.

But like the men of Plato’s cave most people turn their gaze away from the light and then complain that all is dark! Let us turn *within* and seek the guidance of the Eternal Presence enshrined in the chamber of our heart. Illuminated and guided by that Divine Light, we shall brighten the atmosphere around us.

This is possible if we have faith and determination and resolve righteously. Man’s future destiny is in his own hands. We are weaving that future now and here, thread by thread. In fact, the future is now! The present is both past and future. We must in the present purify, elevate, and concentrate our thinking and thus redeem the past and prepare for a brighter morrow.

The future then [as W. Q. Judge says], for each, will come from each present moment. As we use the moment so we shift the future up or down for good or ill; for the future being only a word for the present—not yet come—we have to see to the present more than all. If the present is full of doubt or vacillation, so will be the future; if full of confidence, calmness, hope, courage and intelligence, thus also will be the future.

## THE PATTERN OF GOOD CHARACTER

EVERY human being has a particular type of character, good, bad, or indifferent, and he is, or rather should be, anxious to improve it and shape and mould it according to the pattern prescribed in the great Scriptures of the world. Each one of us is becoming something every day and every hour, some deliberately and wisely; others just drift unconsciously to themselves. Theosophy lays great stress on the building of character because our moral nature belongs to the permanent aspect of our being, which, after death, can be assimilated by the Higher and Divine Triad.

All good and evil things in humanity have their roots in human character, and this character is, and has been, conditioned by the endless chain of cause and effect. But this conditioning applies to the future as well as to the present and the past. Selfishness, indifference, and brutality can never be the normal state of the race—to believe so would be to despair of humanity—and that no Theosophist can do. Progress can be attained, and only attained, by the development of the nobler qualities. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 232-33)

This indicates clearly why it is necessary for us to cultivate virtues and build our character. Since human beings alone generate causes because of self-choice, they and they alone are responsible for the present chaos in the world, for the abnormal state in which they live their lives from the cradle to the grave, many times worse than animals. Parents and teachers alike seem to be anxious to see the development of noble traits in the young, but they have not succeeded because of lack of correct knowledge of the Eternal Verities. Madame Blavatsky further points out in the same book:

School training is of the very greatest importance in forming character, especially in its moral bearing. Now, from first to last, your modern system is based on the so-called scientific revelations: “The struggle for existence” and the “survival of the fittest.” (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 264)

It is necessary, therefore, to teach children the basic concepts of life, what it is, how to live it and what the final goal is. Just as it is necessary for a navigator to learn all about longitudes and latitudes, about weather and atmospheric conditions and how to cope with them, about the geography of different countries, etc., to steer his ship safely in stormy waters or calm, so also to cross the ocean of *sansara* and reach the other shore successfully one must have correct knowledge to steer the course of one’s life deliberately. Unfortunately, at the present time, both in homes and in schools this knowledge is not taught. Parents and teachers do not themselves set the example and so children fritter away their time and energy in wrong directions.

Character is not endowed by someone but has to be built little by little, beginning on the plane of the mind, because thoughts are the seeds of Karma. Just as the whole technique of music, whether it is vocal or instrumental, rests on the seven notes or seven sounds, so too character has to be built according to certain rules as given by the great Teachers and not in a haphazard way. It is essential to recognize that each one is born with certain traits and tendencies, desirable or undesirable, full of merit or demerit, in terms of his previous incarnations. So it is the responsibility of each to curb the evil and develop the good in his physical, mental and moral make-up, keeping in mind always the unity and interdependence of all beings and the need for a harmonious development in all aspects of one’s being. Man, the Eternal Pilgrim, has passed through many, many forms of life on different planes; he has lived incarnation after incarnation, was born to different parents, in different countries and climes, under different circumstances; therefore naturally he has developed various characteristics. Each one, now and here, uses them well or misuses them, takes advantage of the opportunities or neglects them, now going through fleeting pleasures and then through passing sorrows, none the wiser.

If children are taught that the purpose of life is to progress towards the goal of perfection in co-operation with our fellow pilgrims, helping and serving them at every turn, understanding the law of our own being, living in harmony with nature, then, naturally, life

would become a song, a melody, instead of a cry as it is at present. "Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect," said Jesus. The wisdom and compassion of the Father in Heaven have to be expressed and manifested in our daily life, and this can be done by building the character from the spiritual point of view. Good character shows forth in every event, in every contact, in every test and trial, and not only on special occasions. Competition in school and college life, home or business life, should always be replaced by co-operation. Then, and not till then, true unity and harmony can be established in every sphere of life.

We have been given the pattern of good character by all the great Teachers, and each can select for himself according to his requirements what he needs to build within himself and what he has to curb and control. The Teachers can but point the way; the effort has to be put forth by oneself. In this connection, the divine and demoniac qualities of the Sixteenth Chapter of the *Gita* need to be understood. Character cannot be built in seclusion, by going away from home and friends and kin. It is through human contact that character can be built and beautified. Nor can character be built overnight. It has to be a constant and continuous process, both on the physical and on the mental plane. Mr. Judge gives valuable advice on the subject:

You can solidify your character by attending to small things. By attacking small faults, and on every small occasion, one by one. This will arouse the inner attitude of attention and caution. The small faults and small occasions being conquered, the character grows strong. (*Letters That Have Helped Me*, p. 134)

Students of Theosophy are responsible in a more direct way for generating good causes, forming good habits and building a good character. In a general way this will affect all in a beneficial manner, but to carry out Theosophical work the student-practitioner has to become a pure channel for the inflow of the Divine Light, for the reflection of Divine and Archetypal Ideas. Masters need companions to carry out Their Work in this world of ignorance and darkness. The purer and the clearer the channel, the easier for the Waters of

Wisdom to flow without obstruction to inspire and instruct other pilgrim-souls.

Moderation should be the underlying thread of the Divine Discipline. As Krishna instructs Arjuna in the Sixth Chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, "The meditation which destroyeth pain is produced in him who is moderate in eating and in recreation, of moderate exertion in his actions, and regulated in sleeping and waking." Thus, the two extremes should be avoided, and, walking the middle path, one can shape and build one's character. Ideas rule the world. If ideas and ideals were kept on the highest plane, appropriate actions would naturally follow. Then the body, mind and spirit would be more and more unified. The head, heart and hands would work in unison, and the individual would become more and more an integrated being. Disintegration seems to be the order of the day. What is needed is an entire transformation of the person through right attitude and right behaviour; then and then only can one establish real harmony within oneself and unity in the outside world.

Not only do we have the teachings to help us in building our character but we also have the glorious example of great figures down the ages, the embodiments of unity, harmony and integration, who, through their own efforts, have reached the summit of Enlightenment, who work with one mind, one will, one feeling, and who wait and watch for those who are clear-eyed enough to see their true destiny, and noble-hearted enough to serve the great orphan, Humanity.

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It is said that a wise man rules over the stars; but this does not mean that he rules over the influences which come from the stars in the sky, but that he rules over the powers which exist in his own constitution.

—PARACELSUS

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Researchers claim that they are making great strides in extending the human life-span. Living past 120 with the aid of medicines is now considered more than a possibility. Such attempts at prolonging life, however, are attracting their fair share of controversy and criticism. The law of science, the critics say, is not the law of the good but the law of the possible, and its loyalty is not to humanity but to its own truth.

Dr. Donald B. Louria of the New Jersey Medical School and director of the Healthful Life Project has this to say (*The Futurist*, January-February 2002):

Common sense would suggest that excessive population growth could have some very unpleasant consequences. At some point, the number of people may become so large that it exceeds the carrying capacity of the planet, making life miserable for the vast majority of humans (and impossible for many other species), even sowing the seeds for our own destruction.

The quality of life for very old people may be severely diminished if changing the boundaries of aging is not accompanied by reasonably good health. Certain tissues and organs may deteriorate even as life-span is markedly prolonged, so people may live 140 years with ever-worsening sight, hearing, mental function, and musculoskeletal function...

We are now more than ever in an era of scientific domination—a period of unfettered technology that has and will produce many stunning discoveries that will benefit humankind, but some that are likely to harm our global society. As philosopher-scientist René Dubos puts it, “We must not ask where science and technology are taking us, but rather how we can manage science and technology so they can help us get where we want to go.” Today, there is no evidence that we are following Dubos’s admonition and first figuring out where we want to go, rather than reacting sometime in the future to the consequences of scientific discoveries that lengthen life-spans profoundly....

Attempts [at changing the boundaries of aging] should be accompanied by rigorous long-term assessment that includes evaluating the quality of life of these very old persons....

The research into aging is spectacular, but the implications and potential consequences are so profound that we cannot afford to leave it solely in the hands of the scientific community.

It is indeed the *quality of life* of the aged that matters more than lengthening the life-span. Aging has many aspects. In a sense, it begins before birth and is more or less predetermined for each one. The occult side of the question is hinted at by Mr. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy* (Chapter IV). The body, he says, is subject to physical, physiological and psychical laws which govern the race of man as a whole. “Hence its period of possible continuance can be calculated just as the limit of tensile strain among the metals used in bridge building can be deduced by the engineer.”

It is a duty we owe to the body which is ours under Karma to keep it in good working condition as long as possible through *natural* means; *e.g.*, through applications of the principle of the “middle way”—moderation in all things pertaining to individual existence, whether it be in eating, or sleeping, or work, or recreation. But clinging to bodily existence so common in our day reflects the failure to understand the purpose of life, the soul’s immortality and the function of the body as a tabernacle of the dweller within. To make of the dwelling a primary entity and to prolong its existence by all manner of means appears to be a reversal of the natural state of things—though of course allowing the body to decay prematurely would imply the neglect of an obligatory duty. If the idea of many lives for the soul is grasped and this life is regarded as only one in a long series of such existences, there is immediately seen a higher purpose than physical survival, or life-at-any-cost.

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While some scientists the world over are pressing ahead with plans to duplicate human beings, there are others who are gravely concerned over the prospect of cloned human embryos becoming



a reality. “It’s inevitable that someone will try, and someone will succeed,” predicts Dolores Lamb, an American infertility expert. Many biotechnologists agree that, within a few years, news will break of the birth of the first human clone.

An article reproduced from *Time* in *Reader’s Digest* (March 2002, Indian ed.) makes some scary predictions:

The meaning of what it is to be human—which until now has involved the mysterious melding of two people’s DNA—will shift forever. And the conversation that has occupied ethicists for years, about how much man should mess with nature when it comes to reproduction, will drop onto every kitchen table, pulpit and politician’s desk.

That has many scientists scared to death. The risk lies not just with potential babies born deformed, as many animal clones are, or with desperate couples whose hopes may be raised and hearts broken. The immediate risk is that a backlash against renegade science might strike at responsible science, impeding the chances of finding cures for ailments like Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s, cancer and heart disease....

In the messy middle are the vast majority of people who view the prospect with a vague alarm, an uneasy sense that science is dragging us into dark woods with no easy way to turn back....At the moment, the public is plainly not ready. In a February 2001 *Time/CNN* poll, 90 percent of respondents thought it was a bad idea....

The risks involved with cloning mammals are so great that Ian Wilmut calls it “criminally irresponsible” for scientists to be experimenting on humans. Even after four years of practice with animal cloning, the failure rate is overwhelming: 98 percent of embryos never implant or they die during gestation or soon after birth....Wilmut believes “it is almost a certainty” that cloned human children would be born with maladies. These kids would probably die prematurely, he adds....

It reportedly took 104 attempts before the first *in vitro* baby, Louise Brown, was born. Imagine, say opponents, how many embryos would be lost in the effort to clone a human. This loss is mass murder, says David Byers, director of the US

Conference of Catholic Bishops’ committee on science and human values. “Each embryo is a human being by dint of its genetic makeup.”

“The short answer to the cloning question,” concludes bioethicist Arthur Caplan, “is that anybody who clones somebody today should be arrested. It would be barbaric human experimentation—killing foetuses and embryos for no purpose except curiosity. But if you can’t agree that that’s wrong to do, and if the media can’t agree to condemn rather than gawk, that’s a condemnation of us all.”

Attention is invited to the item on human cloning in “In the Light of Theosophy” for March 2002. As stated there, the issue of what it is to be human requires primary consideration. Are scientists who recognize no more than the physical mechanics of human reproduction competent to make experiments whose consequences might prove disastrous for us and for future generations? The risks, both immediate and long-term, are mind-boggling.

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From the beginning of time there has been light. In all its forms, visible and invisible, it saturates the universe. Our lives are built around it; our daily existence is continuously shaped by it. But what exactly *is* light? Joel Achenbach writes in *National Geographic* (October 2001):

Light reveals the world to us. Body and soul crave it. Light sets our biological clocks. It triggers in our brains the sensations of colour. Light feeds us, supplying the energy for plants to grow. It inspires us with special effects like rainbows and sunsets. Light gives us life-changing tools, from incandescent bulbs to lasers and fibre optics. Scientists don’t fully understand what light is....A wave? A particle? Yes, the scientists say. Both....Usually, though, we don’t see light, we merely see *with* it.

Light passed through the laboratory of Isaac Newton and never looked the same again. In the 1660s Newton demonstrated

that white light is composed of all the colours of the spectrum....He believed that light was particulate—"multitudes of unimaginable small and swift corpuscles of various sizes springing from shining bodies at great distances one after another."....It was James Clerk Maxwell, a Scot, who in the 1860s made one of the most essential breakthroughs....Light, he concluded, is an "electromagnetic" wave. The particle versus wave debate wound up with a kind of truce, governed by quantum mechanics....

Enter Albert Einstein. It's common knowledge that Einstein, in promulgating the special theory of relativity, destroyed the mechanical, deterministic Newtonian universe....Einstein's answer—that light's speed is constant for all observers regardless of their own velocity—obliterated the classical conception of space and time....Einstein's relativity presents all manner of head-scratching implications....

What's certain is that light is going to remain extremely useful—for industry, science, art, and our daily, mundane comings and goings. Light permeates our reality at every scale of existence. It's an amazing tool, a carrier of beauty, a giver of life.

Light sets in motion and controls all in nature, from the tiniest molecule in space to man—and not just outer light. It was discovered some time back by Russian scientists that all living things glow from within. This faint light is invisible to the eye, but it is there. Scientists are still seeking answers to many questions pertaining to light.

Fire is the father of light, light the parent of heat and air (vital air). If the absolute deity can be referred to as Darkness or the Dark Fire, the light, its first progeny, is truly the first self-conscious god. For what is light in its primordial root but the world-illuminating and life-giving deity? Light is that, which from an abstraction has become a reality. No one has ever seen real or primordial light; what we see is only its broken rays or reflections, which become denser and less luminous as they descend into form and matter. (*Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge*, p. 115)

Light is the first begotten, and the first emanation of the Supreme, and Light is Life, says the evangelist. Both are electricity—the life-principle, the *anima mundi*, pervading the universe, the electric vivifier of all things. Light is the great Protean magician, and under the Divine Will of the architect, its multifarious, omnipresent waves gave birth to every form as well as to every living being. From its swelling, electric bosom, springs *matter* and *spirit*. Within its beams lie the beginnings of all physical and chemical action, and of all cosmic and spiritual phenomena; it vitalizes and disorganizes; it gives life and produces death, and from its primordial point gradually emerged into existence the myriads of worlds, visible and invisible celestial bodies. It was at the ray of this *First* mother, one in three, that God, according to Plato, "lighted a fire, which we now call the sun," and, which is *not* the cause of either light or heat, but merely the focus, or, as we might say, the lens, by which the rays of the primordial light become materialized, are concentrated upon our solar system, and produce all the correlations of forces. (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 258)

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The fears that resulted from the attacks on the World Trade Center on September 11 have proved paralysing for some. For others, the anxiety has led to extreme overreactions. In time, such fears can be put to constructive use if we do not let them defeat us, says Ohio State University's Brad Schmidt, an expert on fear (*Psychology Today*, January/February 2002):

Psychologists study many kinds of fear. There are common phobias, such as the fear of spiders, and post-traumatic stress, the fears that spring from memories of dramatic, sometimes life-threatening events....In particular, psychologists will look for symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder, which creates an exaggerated fear response in people who have been emotionally scarred....

There is nothing wrong with feeling fear: We all do at some point. Fear is one of the most basic emotions and is not, in

itself, dangerous; it is part of a natural alarm system designed to react to or anticipate danger... Yet some fears persist in ways that are not advantageous to the fearful. Those sorts of fears create more problems than they solve, paralyse rather than motivate. Anxiety disorders are a significant mental health problem.

Fear is a psychological inhibition and has to be exorcised by real knowledge. It is an emotion which affects the will, weakens thought and causes emotional upsets. Here in India there are fears of different kinds: the fear of Pakistanis, the fear of the Hindus on the part of the Muslims and *vice versa*, the fear of one State getting hold of the trade and industries of another State, and so on and so forth. Men and women individually are fearful of their own security, their life and possessions.

Yet there is a higher aspect of fear, hinted at in the Old Testament saying: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." But whether we mean by the word "Lord" the Inner Ruler or some outside force or authority makes all the difference in our understanding of this saying. One of the names of Maheshwara, the Great Lord seated in the heart of each, is "the admonisher," according to the *Gita*. This admonisher is the voice of conscience, which in its lower aspect is the accumulated experience or knowledge garnered by the senses and the lower mind, and, in its higher aspect, the voice of intuitive discernment or of Buddhi.

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THE indissoluble unity of the race demands that we should consider every man's troubles as partly due to ourselves, because we have been always units in the race and helped to make the conditions which cause suffering.

—W. Q. JUDGE