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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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SELF-KNOWLEDGE AND SOUL-SERVICE

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Our constant failure to find any permanent satisfaction in life which would meet the wants of our higher nature, shows us plainly that those wants can be met only on their own plane, to wit — the spiritual.—H.P.B.

Arjuna as man in this world of sense and matter is of necessity either always in a battle or about to begin one, and is also ever in need of advice.—W. Q. JUDGE

The recorded teachings of the Masters were put forth in order to find willing, clear-eyed, and noble-hearted men and women.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

WITH this issue we begin the [47th] Volume. THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT is devoted to the promulgation of the Heart Doctrine and endeavours to stress the living of the higher life. It points to the Inner Way which stretches from the brain inwards and upwards to the human Spirit, one with the Supreme Self.

Selfishness is the cause of all human discontent, suffering and sorrow. Pride and egotism are the causal side of all our woes — mental obscurity, moral perversity, bodily ill health. Man seeks peace of mind, contentment of heart and well-being of body, but he takes time to learn that light and peace and joy are not to be obtained by following the impulses and inclinations of our animal nature. Real understanding comes from an increasing recognition of our own immortal soul; real security, from an expanding feeling of brotherliness; kind acts, however small, wean us away from the unconscious practice of cruelty. The light of Theosophy

enables us to discriminate between the partial and the profound nature of both cruelty and kindness. Our comprehension of our own immortal nature, our attempts to be brotherly to others, deepen as we apply the primary divine virtue of dispassion or desirelessness.

The Path of the Soul is marked by the milestones of *Vairagya*. Detachment from worldly yokes creates attachment to Spirit-Powers. The light of detachment springing from the inner Man reveals to what extent our sphere of action is personal, in what measure it has become altruistic.

Mental detachment comes from the study of Theosophy. Its metaphysics free the mind from the thralldom of petty and personal ideas; dwelling on cosmic ultimates liberalizes the mind. Similarly, Theosophical ethics free the heart from the bondage of the narrow and the egoistic. When both metaphysics and ethics are used to elevate the mind to nobility and to saturate the heart with the sense of justice, compassion is felt, the universal is touched and the impersonal is experienced. The power of Compassion Absolute which energizes Nature is ubiquitous. Our mind and heart can invoke and evoke it at any place and at any hour.

The first step in living the Theosophical life is to fight against the injustice, cruelty, irresponsibility and selfishness in one's own nature. This is the soldier state of the soul. The distinction between unrighteous and righteous war has to be seen to become a true *Kshatriya*. The perception that we suffer because of the foes within and never need to blame any man or any thing outside of us is the very first step. The Dharma of the good but worldly man prompts him to discharge his obligations and perform his duties. The *Gita* (II. 31) refers to *Svadharmā* which energizes him to live according to the law of his own being. When purity, unselfishness and detachment are developed, the soul is touching saintliness. As man's saintliness becomes more and more uniform and continuous, his study of the Science of the inner life deepens and he attains sage-like stature.

Seership is discernment; it is discernment based on the light and peace out of which sacrifices arise. The discernment of the soldier reveals the great friend, the Inner Ego. As the enemy is subdued and wisdom-virtues begin to unfold, the discernment of the saint is born — the vision of the unity of humankind leading to the practice of Brotherhood. The discernment of the sage values each constituent of the great diversity and renders aid to each from the standpoint of the whole and the all. The courage of the soldier, the purity of the saint, the wisdom of

the sage, should develop *pari passu*, for the living of the Theosophical life requires an all-round development— an energetic body, a compassionate heart, a wise head. All three are the instruments of the immortal soul engaged in the service of humanity.

The motive for living the higher or Theosophic life is service of all human souls. The one and only method of right service is to endeavour to elevate the Manas and Buddhi of the Race. The United Lodge of Theosophists provides a pure and efficient channel for this noble task. It offers opportunity to its Associates to develop the ability to help others and to aid in the grand work of the restoration of the Theosophical Movement to its original lines. The motive for living the higher life and the motive for serving all human souls are not two different motives; they are two aspects of a single motive.

By promulgating Theosophy according to the principles enshrined in our Declaration, by volunteering to serve according to our own capacity, by ever adhering to the principle of "Thus have I heard," we will grow as we contribute to the growth of the Movement and of the individuals who constitute the Movement.

Each one of us is the Movement— a centre of Light in the company of other centres. Wherever we are, there is or ought to be a Theosophical centre. The small terrain on which we stand immediately becomes for us the centre of a boundless universe. Thus individual and collective progress is a single process because the heart of each is an atom in the great living Heart of the Universe.

THE SPIRIT in thee is a river. Its sacred bathing place is contemplation; its waters are truth; its banks are holiness; its waves are love. Go to that river for purification: thy soul cannot be made pure by mere water.

—*Hitopadesa*

THE WORK OF A THEOSOPHICAL LODGE

[This letter from Damodar K. Mavalankar was printed in *The Theosophist* for July 1932.—EDS.]

SECRETARY'S OFFICE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
Breach Candy, Bombay, India
6th December, 1881.

Lalla Bishen Lall, M.A.,
President, Rohilkhund Theosophical Society.

Dear Brother,

In compliance with the request contained in your favour of the 25th ultimo, I have great pleasure in communicating to you for your consideration what I conceive to be the chief duties of a Branch of the Parent Theosophical Society. I need not, I believe, dwell too long on the subject for I have no doubt but that you yourself know what those duties must be. I should therefore be very happy if the few suggestions I am able to offer meet with your approbation. You need not be here reminded that the chief idea our Society seeks to spread as far and wide as possible is "The Universal Brotherhood." This has been the dream of all good men since time immemorial. But nevertheless it is a sad fact that the dream has remained but a dream. We of the Theosophical Society can therefore point out, with some pride on its behalf, that we have made the dream possible of realization — nay, it has been very fairly realized. And we have succeeded so far because we ever remembered that it should always be our endeavour to extend the Brotherhood to those who were capable of understanding what that term meant, and could appreciate the privilege of having been brought under its influence. You will thus perceive that the Brotherhood has gathered unto itself all those whose intellects have been lofty enough to grasp the immense difficulties which lie between intellectual selfishness and intellectual companionship. This is a position not easy to master, but once mastered, the Theosophical Society finds many units worthy to fill its ranks and to form and lead companies of their own. In this manner has the idea spread, thus have numerous Branches been established, and the more worthily a Branch seeks to spend its energies in that direction, the greater honour it brings to itself and to the central Theosophical Society. This, you need not be told, is the chief duty of any Branch of our Society.

In this century when all things turn upon the order of Nature, it may be well to remember that the Theosophical Brotherhood is based strictly on natural principles — the principles of morals, religions, science and society. The East and the West have diverged far apart, but it is not difficult to trace the fraternity of many ideas. The more studiously the institutions of the world are examined, the more forcibly we are struck with their natural relationship. This relationship our Society not only recognizes but also proclaims loudly to the world and appeals to the foremost men of our day to acknowledge. Our Branches, therefore, do well to devote their special attention to the study, each of some special branch of knowledge which will further the union of the East with the West. It is for you and your Branch to decide what special subject you will select to help on the Cause. That Cause, we are aware, cannot be promoted by any radical changes. We cannot afford to be iconoclasts. And while we regret the superstitions of today and yesterday, we do not repudiate the esoteric germs of those superstitions. The wise, they say, read sermons in stones. And well they may, for where is the most senseless superstition, but had its origin in the perception of some great Truth? Thus we lead our enquiries to the beginning of things. It is the duty of the central Theosophical Society to collate all the results of its several Branches.

I have thus briefly sketched what our Society seeks to perform and what it expects its Branches to combine to perform. I have only to add that it is the duty of every Branch to assist the central Theosophical Society, both by word and deed — to defend its honour when attacked, to see that the Founders have not to fight their uphill work alone, and to present the uncommon spectacle of united intellectual Brotherhood to the laughing skeptical world.

We have, however, one important object in India, and that is the elevation of the Hindus themselves by making them respect themselves and their country and by filling them with awe and reverence for our ancient forefathers — the wise Aryan philosophers of old — who have bequeathed to them such invaluable treasures of knowledge as have satisfied the aspirations of all great men in all ages and climes. The neglect and disrespect of that philosophy has brought about the degeneration of India, and it is our duty as Aryans to help our country in its tottering state. And believe me that when once this feeling of national pride has taken a firm hold of our hearts, all petty distinctions and dissensions will fall off. Then alone shall we be a nation and

a united people. And I need not tell you, "Unity is strength." It might be urged that as we may not perhaps live to see that blessed day when we shall all feel like one people, what is the use of our working? But then it must be remembered that nothing can be accomplished unless a beginning is made. And perhaps if our elders had tried in their own time, the way would have been smoother and easier for us. And if we do it now we shall prepare the ground for future generations, and thus accelerate the regeneration of our unfortunate country.

And now I have to say that it will be your duty as the President of the Branch to see that the Objects of the Society have been carried out as far as possible, and that there is harmony and union among all the Brothers.

Yours fraternally,
DAMODAR K. MAVALANKAR,
Joint Recording Secretary

To WHOM shall we look for the revival of Aryan wisdom, the resuscitation of Aryan nationality, the beginning of a reformation of modern abuses? Not to the middle-aged or the old, for their tendency is towards conservatism and reaction. Much as such persons may intellectually revere the sages of old, it is worse than useless to look to them to set an example of putting away prejudices, customs and notions which those very sages would have abhorred and many of which they actually denounced. The hope of the century is in the young, the ardent, the susceptible, the energetic, who are just stepping upon the stage. It is worth more to fire the heart of one such lad than to rekindle among the ashes of their elders' hopes the flickering semblance of a flame. So let us give the young men a chance to explore old records, question and counsel with their parents and teachers, and then publish the results to the public. . . .

The object of our Society will be completely realized when the hundreds of young men who are becoming imbued with the theosophical spirit shall be labouring, with patriotic, religious zeal, in the several localities, for the revival of ancient wisdom and the general study of the records of that far-gone era when their ancestors boasted with sparkling eyes that they were Aryas.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY (*The Theosophist*, June, 1880)

THE ARCHAIC WISDOM

IN *The Theosophical Glossary*, Wisdom-Religion is defined as

the one religion which underlies all the now-existing creeds. That "faith" which, being primordial, and revealed directly to human kind by their *progenitors* and informing Egos (though the Church regards them as the "fallen angels"), required no "grace," nor *blind* faith to believe, for it was *knowledge*.... It is on this Wisdom Religion that *Theosophy* is based.

Ever since man became a thinking being eighteen million years ago, when the great spiritual progenitors of mankind, the Lords of Wisdom, moved by the law of Evolution infused into primitive man the spark of consciousness and the light of wisdom, this Wisdom-Religion or *Theosophia* has been taught and practised by a few elect. Theosophy, therefore, is nothing new, not even in name (the word "Theosophy" was used as far back as the third century of our era by Ammonius Saccas and his disciples), but is simply an unveiling of old, old truths. Its teachings pass from the immemorial past into the unfathomable future. It is, moreover, all-comprehensive in its scope and is the most accurate of teachings. H.P.B. gives her own testimony to her "somewhat intimate acquaintance with Eastern adepts and study of their science. She also states that it is "the last word of possible human knowledge," for Theosophy is based on those infallible truths which were imparted to infant humanity by divine men.

It is not always that the unadulterated message of the Wisdom-Religion is given out to the general public. The ignorance and folly of human kind bit by bit concretizes, then anthropomorphizes and then carnalizes the truth, until finally it is driven for long centuries into the background. But at certain focal points, "whenever there is a decline of virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world," the great Custodians of this archaic wisdom break "the silence of centuries" and give out to the public at large, according to the exigencies of the cycle, but a fragment from the great block of solid truth, emphasizing at some times the metaphysics and at others the ethics of the doctrine. In giving out that which is esoteric and secret, it has often to be clothed in the vestures of exotericism and publicity and veiled in symbolical and allegorical language.

Suited to our era and civilization is the message of H.P.B., and

though it is a mere portion of the mighty whole that is given out, students should realize their privilege, for it is "permitted to see the light after long millenniums of the most profound silence and secrecy."

In view of the strangeness of H.P.B.'s teachings and the wide gulf between them and the current ideas of both scientific materialism and creedal theology, a tremendous opposition was raised from both these sides. But H.P.B. was fully prepared to repel their attacks. It may be noted, however, that whenever there have been attacks, it is personalities who have been attacked. The Wisdom-Religion as such is "so grand, so consistent, so logical, and so all-embracing" that it has ever stood above censure. Says H.P.B.:

The reader can never be too often reminded that, as the abundant quotations from various old Scriptures prove, these teachings are as old as the world; and that the present work is a simple attempt to render, in modern language and in a phraseology with which the scientific and educated student is familiar, archaic Genesis and History as taught in certain Asiatic centres of esoteric learning. They must be accepted or rejected on their own merits, fully or partially; but not before they have been carefully compared with the corresponding theological dogmas and the modern scientific theories and speculations. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II. 449)

The authenticity of the teachings which the above passage claims to be "as old as the world" and which are contained in the writings of H.P.B. might well be questioned by many an inquirer. These doubts were expressed by a correspondent who, in a letter published in the "Correspondence" columns of *Lucifer* for October 1889, stated: "You have the great advantage over us, that you speak with absolute certainty on all these points, in saying: 'this is the esoteric doctrine,' and 'such is the teaching of my masters.'" But, the correspondent goes on to say, what about those who have no such certainty of *their* belief and have to accept the teachings because they have been convinced by the reasons given, or by relying on their intuition? To this H.P.B.'s answer was:

I speak "with absolute certainty" only so far as my own *personal* belief is concerned. Those who have not the *same* warrant for their belief as I have, would be very credulous and foolish to accept it on blind faith. Nor does the writer believe any more than her correspondent and his friends in any "authority," let

alone "divine revelation"! Luckier in this than they are, I need not even rely in this as they do on my *intuition*, as there is no *infallible* intuition. But what I do believe in is (1) the unbroken oral teachings revealed by living *divine* men during the infancy of mankind to the elect among men; (2) that it has reached us *unaltered*; and (3) that the MASTERS are thoroughly versed in the science based on such uninterrupted teaching.

This teaching, called by whatever name — Wisdom-Religion or *Bodhi Dharma*, Ageless and Eternal Doctrine or *Sanatana Dharma*, Divine Wisdom (*Theosophia*) or *Brahma Vidya*, Esoteric Philosophy or *Gupta Vidya*, or "the SECRET DOCTRINE of the East" — "is the common property of all, and belongs neither to the Aryan Fifth Race, nor to any of its numerous Sub-races . . . but really belongs to the Third and Fourth Root-Races, whose descendants we find in the Seed of the Fifth, the earliest Aryans." (*S.D.*, I. 113)

Further on H.P.B. states:

. . . archaic Occultism would remain incomprehensible to all, if it were rendered otherwise than through the more familiar channels of Buddhism and Hinduism. For the former is the emanation of the latter; and both are children of one mother — ancient *Lemuro-Atlantean Wisdom*. (*S.D.*, I. 668)

Since the lighting up of Manas took place in the middle of the Third or Lemurian Race eighteen million years ago, this knowledge has passed through many vicissitudes. After the Fourth-Race Atlanteans had misused it, cataclysms and shifting of continents took place, referred to in the First Item of *The Secret Doctrine* (I. 272-73). The descendants of the Lemuro-Atlanteans who were saved from the cataclysm formed, one million years ago, the first Sub-race of the Fifth, the Aryan Root-Race, and we are indebted to them, for had not these benefactors spent long ages in "learning" we would not have had an unbroken record of the Archaic Wisdom.

Thus the teachings which pass under the name of Theosophy today antedate the Vedas. H.P.B. says in *Isis Unveiled* (II. 123):

We can assert, with entire plausibility, that there is not one of all these sects — Kabalism, Judaism, and our present Christianity included — but sprung from the two main branches of that one mother-trunk, the once universal religion, which antedated the Vedic ages — we speak of that prehistoric Buddhism which merged later into Brahmanism.

The Buddhism that is here referred to is not the religion of Gautama Buddha, but "Bodhism," "the secret philosophy of Sakyamuni, which in its essence is certainly identical with the ancient wisdom-religion of the sanctuary, the pre-Vedic Brahmanism." (*Isis*, II. 142)

It is from this primitive source that the multitudinous religious faiths of mankind have sprung. In fact all knowledge, ancient and modern, which is roughly divided into three departments, *viz.*, religion, science and philosophy, is derived from this ancient source. Because Theosophy is the substratum and basis of these three branches of knowledge, it is referred to as the synthesis of science, religion and philosophy.

The Initiates of every country were alone aware of the existence and importance of this ancient Wisdom-Doctrine underlying all knowledge, for they had studied it.

To ascertain its origin, and the precise age in which it was matured, is now beyond human possibility. A single glance, however, is enough to assure one that it could not have attained the marvellous perfection in which we find it pictured to us in the relics of the various esoteric systems, except after a succession of ages. A philosophy so profound, a moral code so ennobling, and practical results so conclusive and so uniformly demonstrable is not the growth of a generation, or even a single epoch. Fact must have been piled upon fact, deduction upon deduction, science have begotten science, and myriads of the brightest human intellects have reflected upon the laws of nature, before this ancient doctrine had taken concrete shape. (*Isis*, II. 99)

Again, in *The Key to Theosophy* (p. 85) H.P.B. states that it is "the cumulative testimony of an endless series of Seers."

Their spiritual visions, real explorations by, and through, physical and spiritual senses untrammelled by blind flesh, were systematically checked and compared one with the other, and their nature sifted. All that was not corroborated by unanimous and collective experience was rejected, while that only was recorded as established truth which, in various ages, under different climes, and throughout an untold series of incessant observations, was found to agree and receive constantly further corroboration.

Thus this ancient doctrine has been transmitted in unbroken continuity from one generation of Sages and Seers to another. One such pedigree is mentioned at the very opening of the Fourth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, where the Wisdom-Religion is designated as "the

exhaustless doctrine of Yoga." None of these Knowers of Wisdom has claimed to have imparted original teachings or to have revealed new truths, though the form, interpretation and symbolism used by each one varied. They have all humbly declared: "Thus have I heard."

The methods employed in preserving intact this body of knowledge were unique. When humanity was in its infancy, certain great ideas were burned into the imperishable centre of our consciousness, and these innate ideas, which everyone carries "within the book volume of the brain," can be reawakened with the help of the inner sense of intuition, with the rudiments of which every human being is born. The other way in which this great knowledge was preserved is related to us in the First Item of *The Secret Doctrine*. It was at first orally transmitted until at length in the beginning of the Fourth or Atlantean Race this oral tradition was reduced to a record. This record was in the form of symbols and geometrical signs and glyphs, which became the subject-matter of prolonged study by those "Wise Men" saved from the cataclysm that destroyed the Atlanteans. It was these Fifth-Race Adepts who reduced the record to writing and, further, compiled the commentaries. Where are all those writings and records today? Says H.P.B.:

The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world. Proofs of its diffusion, authentic records of its history, a complete chain of documents, showing its character and presence in every land, together with the teaching of all its great adepts, exist to this day in the secret crypts of libraries belonging to the Occult Fraternity. (*S.D.*, I. xxxiv)

Decay of the original Teachings is bound to take place in course of time, and for their restoration periodic attempts are made by the Great Lodge of Masters in the last quarter of every century. The teachings of H.P.B. constitute the latest attempt to bring the Ageless Wisdom into the world. The claim that H.P.B. has put forward — that "Theosophy is the most serious movement of this age," and that "he who studies Theosophy studies *the highest transcendental philosophy*" — is no idle one. She says:

The Secret Doctrine is the common property of the countless millions of men born under various climates, in times with which History refuses to deal, and to which esoteric teachings assign dates incompatible with the theories of Geology and Anthropology. . . . It is only by bringing before the reader an abundance of proofs all tending to show that in every age, under every con-

dition of civilization and knowledge, the educated classes of every nation made themselves the more or less faithful echoes of one identical system and its fundamental traditions — that he can be made to see that so many streams of the same water must have had a common source from which they started. What was this source? If coming events are said to cast their shadows before, past events cannot fail to leave their impress behind them. It is, then, by those shadows of the hoary Past and their fantastic silhouettes on the external screen of every religion and philosophy, that we can, by checking them as we go along, and comparing them, trace out finally the body that produced them. There must be truth and fact in that which every people of antiquity accepted and made the foundation of its religions and its faith. (*S.D.*, II. 794)

Just as Theosophy has “existed eternally throughout the endless cycles upon cycles of the Past, so it will ever exist throughout the infinitudes of the Future, because Theosophy is synonymous with EVER-LASTING TRUTH.” (*Key*, p. 302)

THE CONCLUSION I have come to is that the *Gita* advocates the performance of action in this world even after the actor has achieved the highest union with the Supreme Deity by *Jnana* (knowledge) or *Bhakti* (Devotion). This action must be done to keep the world going by the right path of evolution which it is destined to follow.

In order that the action may not bind the actor, it must be done with the aim of helping the divine purpose, and without any attachment to the coming result.

This I hold is a lesson of the *Gita*. *Jnana-Yoga* there is, yes. *Bhakti-Yoga* there is, yes. Who says not? But they are both subservient to the *Karma-Yoga* preached in the *Gita*. If the *Gita* was preached to desponding Arjuna to make him ready for the fight — for the Action — how can it be said that the ultimate lesson of the great book is *Bhakti* or *Jnana* alone? In fact, there is a blending of all these *Yogas* in the *Gita*, and as the air is not oxygen or hydrogen, or any other gas alone, but a composition of all these in a certain proportion, so in the *Gita* all these *Yogas* are blended into one.

—BAL GANGADHAR TILAK

THE HOLY OF HOLIES

SOMETIMES one word says wonderful things, as a gate opens to reveal a beautiful vista. Such a word is *chidagnikundam*. It means "the Fire-place of the Heart."

There is in nearly every home a centre around which the family gathers. There is in every individual a centre around which his powers gather. That is the real meaning of concentration — coming to a centre.

In the heart of the full-blown devotee the Fire blazes. Only those in whom the force of devotion is stirring can feel the warmth and the light of that Fire. And devotion stirs in those only who have begun to turn within themselves, having sought in vain for the comfort of the Spirit and the warmth of the Soul in temples of religions, schools of philosophies and academies of arts.

Sometimes Theosophy has been called "cold" by those who have missed a Personal God, a loving Saviour, an interceding Mother. Theosophy's teaching of sterner realities of a universal, impersonal Deity, which cannot be propitiated by any saviour but oneself, nor interceded with but by the performance of deeds according to the Good Law, does not at once appeal to natures nursed on softer foods. But, when Humanity's milk teeth are shed, it is able to digest the stronger food of reason, of justice, of unwavering dispassion in the working out of the law. Then one turns for warmth and for protection to those very beings who, through their apparent "coldness," have been able to pass by the gleaming shows of life and to press on to unrewarded moral peaks. They have been able to forgo the "warmth" of false religions based on comforting hopes which drag the soul into forgetfulness of its true destiny, and that by the very fervour of their love for humanity, by the light in their own souls and the longing to share it and so to save "the great orphan." Is this "cold"?

Before the Fire can blaze it has to be kindled; and ere the kindling is attempted the hearth on which the Fire is to be laid has to be built. All of that work brings the devotee to birth and helps in his growth. His thoughts design the hearth, his efforts build it, his sorrows and his tears cement it, his past Karma will constitute the offerings for its altar. When the Fire is burning, there gather round the hearth his thought-children, his feeling-progeny, his fancy-pictures and his day-dreams, hopes as well as fears. Thither come problems and sins and follies and failures. He has to let them. He may not judge them, nor censure, nor

punish. He has to *look* at them, to let the light of the Fire shine upon them. After a while one by one they fall in the Fire and are consumed, and silence and peace shine forth. Then the devotee becomes a holy of holies, a sanctuary for young strivers after perfection.

To that Living Fire of Peace come people shivering from the cold-blooded sins of the world, seeking refuge. Those that are not worthy of a place there slink away. Those who feel unworthy but who still long to come creep nearer. The fire burns steadily. Let them come. Presently they, too, will be transfigured by the Light.

PHILOSOPHERS have vainly spent much time and written many books to prove or disprove the existence of free will. It is equally vain to attempt to prove, by means of mere reason, the existence or non-existence of the will.

To believe in the will, one must *will* to believe. To know it, one must *use* the will; and to develop the will, one must exercise it constantly, firmly, and with a fixed determination of never permitting it to be conquered.

One of the best rules for the development of the will is, never to thwart it yourself. *Never say, even to yourself, "I will do a certain thing," without DOING it.*

But if our will is frustrated, does not unhappiness follow? Not if we are free from desire. Desire is impotent; it is only the *root* of misery, not the *cause* of it. The will is potent; it is a positive force and is indestructible. It can only be neutralized by an opposing will of equal force, and even though neutralized, its power remains eternal. If our will be enlightened by perfect knowledge, if it be in perfect alignment with the divine will, it must conquer in the end, and we need not be concerned about proximate results. While, if our will be misguided by our ignorance, we need not be concerned, for we know that its effects will ultimately be neutralized when we have attained to knowledge.

If we free ourselves from all desires and entanglements of the material world, if we always strive earnestly, but never anxiously, for perfect wisdom, and if we constantly exercise our will in the light of that wisdom, we shall make as rapid progress towards our final goal as it is possible to make.

—C. D. HILL (*The Theosophist*, April 1887)

SLEEP AND THE STUDENT

As a man exhausted by one state of the life fluid seeks another; as, for example, when exhausted by the hot air he refreshes himself with cool water; so sleep is the shady nook in the sunlit valley of life.

—*Transactions*, p. 71

ANY MAN, even the most unlearned, realizes that his consciousness functions at times on the moral, but oftentimes on the amoral, planes of existence. In the moral man, selfish desire is made dormant, and in consequence actions are performed on basic principles without any regard to results, which may be either painful or pleasant. The pain and the pleasure are incidentals which in the moral consciousness have no part in the making of decisions. The patriot suffers imprisonment and torture so that others may be free. The martyr and the missionary lay down their lives for a cause. So does the man who gives up his life to save another. The cause of human brotherhood outweighs all considerations.

The amoral man may not be immoral as the world calls immorality. Yet is he separated by a wide gulf from the moral and the spiritual man. The amoral man acts with motives that get tainted by his selfishness. Personal, national and sectarian gain is sought at the expense of another person, nation and sect. Calculated suppression of another or harm or loss caused to him is often hidden behind the outward show of intellectual honesty and the desire to preserve order in the home, the family or the nation. In the present times, the terms patriotism, ideology, family honour, etc., are used to hide the desire to justify colonialism, confrontation and pride. Immorality is but a step removed, and is the natural flowering of the amoral thoughts of man. An inclination to satisfy personal vanities and desires leads man to prey on man, to ravage nature and deny the gods. Blinded by presumption and vanity, men deny that there is soul, scoff at its powers and require physical proofs of its existence, even though the proofs they seek are within themselves.

What does sleep do to these divergent and even antagonistic aspects which doubtless exist in each student as they exist in the world outside? Can the states that follow upon sleep be helpful in leading the life? Can these states be controlled? Can man when in sleep reach the Akasic heights and bring the divine knowledge there gathered into waking consciousness? Theosophy has answers for these questions. It has, moreover, definite knowledge of the disciplines that will enable man to reach

the high states that are open to him during the sleep of his physical body. What is required is that he knocks at the right door and that the hand uplifted to knock is cleansed of all impurity.

During his waking hours, man weaves around himself a fabric made of thoughts, desires and feelings that may either be induced by outside influences or be self-generated. It is like so much food which he ingests. Having taken his fill, he rests to allow the essences of that food to be absorbed by the various aspects of his complex make-up. The body, then the desire nature, followed in its turn by the intellectual and moral aspects of himself, each will receive its own nutrition, or — and this is important — go without it if the man has been callous enough not to provide food for any particular sheath. The neglected sinew gets weakened and then atrophied. So is it with the inner make-up of man. Starvation beyond certain limits denudes the part starved of all force and may render it numb beyond all efforts at resuscitation.

Each constitution varies from the others in the quantity of in-puts which it can tolerate. When that limit is reached, exhaustion supervenes. The nerve centres and the ganglia of the brain are tired out. The waking life has become too strong for the physical organism and the time is reached when the force of the life current must be broken by changing the waking for the sleeping state. The food has now to go figuratively to the bones and the sinews, the flesh and the blood.

During the sleep of the man, all volition is suspended. The brain ceases to cerebration, the intellect is dormant and no longer serves as a slave of desires. In this state, the king is a king no more, nor the beggar, a beggar. In this condition, the automotive forces of unspent energies now take over. The brain sinks to sleep in easy stages. As it falls into oblivion, it shoots forth spasmodic flares and occasional flames. It is these emissions of memory pictures — not volitional but automotive — that become the basis of chaotic and unconnected dreams. These may have their base and origin in a physiological reaction or an irritation set up by indigestion or by an idea or event which has impressed itself deeply upon the man during his waking state. Quite a few hours of sleep are thus not put to constructive use if during the day the body and the brain have been ill-used or abused. The more this stage in sleep is lengthened, the less time will there be for the more important stages that lie ahead. With the close of this first chaotic state, the psychic or *swapna* state is reached.

The psychic is the plane of desires which here run rampant, un-

checked by any considerations of conscience or morality. It is the region of the astral light in which are stored the scenes of human iniquities. If the dreaming entity is psychologically attuned to evil, it adds its quota of depravity to the astral records and in turn is vampirised by them. During the sleep of the body the principle of desires, together with that part of the intellectual consciousness which it has subjugated, gets mechanically activated by electrical shocks which it receives from the various nerve-centres. If these centres are charged with desires of the flesh, if they have stored in them memories of ill-deeds and of cravings for wrongdoings, if they have been charged with a sense of pleasure arising from contact with vice, then they are pollutants of the psychic atmosphere. Caught up by the abnormal development of a bloated desire nature, the man spends a major portion of his sleeping time in these unhealthy realms. It is only when the psychic impulses subside during sleep that the real "dream" or "deep sleep" stage can commence.

The dream sequences caused by biological reactions and those caused by the lower desires are now over. The selfish egotist, the unbrotherly person and the combative animal man lie in slumber, their activities neutralized by exhaustion. The unselfish moral nature is now in its element untrammelled by the clogging weight of materiality. It now breathes the atmosphere of *Akasa*. Here, the questing soul may find the object of his search. Altruism, brotherhood, the knowledge of the imperishable is here, and it is from here that the moral and noble part of the man seeks and receives the knowledge which is consubstantial with its nature.

But the time for waking is near. Back goes the consciousness the way it came. From *Akasa* to astral light to earthly atmosphere; from the moral to the psychic to the material comes the soul. Much of that which was touched upon in the stage of deep sleep is lost on the return journey, repelled by the fogs of the plane of emotions and desires. The little that survives the transit may or may not make any impress on the brain, depending on whether the latter has been made porous or impervious to the whisperings of the Soul. The man may wake up completely ignorant of the long journey undertaken through subjective realms unknown to his waking physical brain. He may even say that he has not dreamt at all.

To the man who lives by the senses alone, to the fanatic adherent of modern science who refuses to see the world beyond what his candle-

light reveals, to the man who glories in vice and calls it virtue, there can be neither soul nor spirit. He denies their existence and his denial is confirmed to him by the darkness which envelops him. But for those who do believe, the symbol of the lotus will make many an obscure tenet clear. The lotus has its roots in mire (the physical existence of man). Its stem rises through the refracting medium of water (the astral light) and then at one moment of time, its bud stands clear of the water. It can now open its soul to the air (the Higher Mind of man).

For the man who believes and has faith, certain disciplines are enjoined which would enable him to make a quick transit through the psychic atmosphere of the astral light. Combined with this discipline is the one which will enable him to stay longer in the moral or the *Sushupti* state. Still another discipline must be undertaken to make the brain porous and retentive of the reminiscences of the Soul.

The brain is coarsened and its sensitivity dulled by sin, over-indulgence and an attitude which makes one segregate mankind into opposing camps of sex, caste, colour, creed, nationality and socio-economic status. These impediments colour the man's actions and make them destructive of unity and brotherhood. On the inner planes of being, such a man puts himself in confrontation with the divine will. Violation of basic truths causes a pall of darkness to descend on the brain, which no light from above can penetrate. Figuratively, it is like the fogging of lenses in a viewing instrument. The fogged lenses may render vision hazy and even distorted, and where the fogging is complete they become dull and opaque. Discipline to clear the brain of fogs created by such causes is self-evident. "To overcome a sin, practise the opposite virtue" is a truism doubtless; yet that impersonal truism requires the impersonal in the student to understand it. Truths will not reveal themselves in their intrinsic beauty to the personal aspects of the man. If he desires progress, he *has* to create a new atmosphere and learn to live in it.

The other discipline which borders on asceticism is the deliberate turning of the consciousness to the Spirit in all moments of leisure. Duties done, services rendered, studies completed, must end in a return to the centre. The spiritual centre is the home from which one goes out for specific works, and the duty done, without loitering or going into by-ways one must return to the only haven of refuge — the Self within.

It should be the endeavour of the student to create on this side of sleep a centre fit in major respects to receive the impulses from *Sushupti*, without distortion and with sufficient awareness to interpret their mean-

ing and value. The influences which are thus obtained are received in trust for imparting instruction and help to others. The Divine give. They expect that the student pass on the benefit of that gift to others. Knowledge thus gathered, if used to gain personal stature or to obtain progress for oneself, dries up the channels of communication and the student thwarted in his personal designs gets frustrated and goes back upon the inviolable promises he has made to himself.

To safeguard oneself against the attacks of pride and ambition, one more discipline is enjoined. It is the adoption of a watch-dog attitude towards one's acts vis-à-vis the obligations undertaken. At the end of each day, every day, the court must be constituted. The judge, impartial and impersonal, assumes the dignity of his office. His code of laws are the rules of life and the special laws which the neophyte has agreed to observe. Each act, thought, emotion and word of the day just closing has to be brought forward for the scrutiny of the judge. The court pronounces its judgement based on the code. It is in the form of advice and guidance — not necessarily a down-to-earth solution of problems arising out of the review, but oftentimes it takes the form of an indication as to where the solution may be sought for and found. In later times, the student may realize that the voice of the judge is in no way different from the one that he hears in the silence of the still night — a voice which speaks where there is none to speak, the Voice of the Most High.

A MAGICIAN moves about, comes and goes on an elephant created by his own magic, though there is no elephant nor its driver but the magician alone standing and different from them.

Similarly the Self, devoid of all motion, appears as undergoing conditions such as the undifferentiated, dream and waking states, though they really exist not together with their knower. Magic exists only for the clouded vision and not for the discerning eye nor for the magician himself.

The Self (Brahman) is the wielder of *māya* for the ignorant but not for the seer and the Self Itself.

—SHANKARACHARYA

A FEW THOUGHTS ON SOME WISE WORDS FROM A WISE MAN

[This article by H.P.B. appeared in *The Theosophist* for June 1883.—Eds.]

IN AN ARTICLE in the *Tatwa Bodhini Patrika*, "The Essential Religion," Babu Rajnarain Bose, the well-known Brahmo, prefacing it with a quotation from Rammohun Roy's Trust Deed of the Adi Brahmo Samaj — "which is an injunction with regard to *strengthening the bonds of union between men of all religious persuasions and creeds*" — makes the following wise remarks:

We should regulate our conduct by keeping a constant eye upon the essentials of religion. We are apt to lose sight of them in the mists of sectarian prejudice, partiality and passion. We are apt to forget them in the heat of religious discussion, in the distraction of philosophical speculation, in the excitement of religious delight and in the engrossment of ceremonial observances. . . . We are so bent upon thrusting our own particular opinions on non-essential points of religion on others that we consider them to be essentially necessary for salvation. We are apt to forget that we ourselves are not infallible, that our own opinions on all subjects of human interest were not exactly the same twenty years ago as they are now, nor will they be exactly the same twenty years afterwards as they are now. We are apt to forget that all the members of our own sect or party, if they frankly reveal their whole minds, do not hold exactly the same opinions on all subjects concerning religion as we do. We are apt to forget that the religious opinions of man are subject to progress and they will not be the same a century afterwards as they are now. We, Theists, have as much right to say that men of other religions, less advanced in religious knowledge than we are, will not be saved, as Theists who will live centuries hence will have of saying that we, the present Theists, will not have been saved on account of our errors. Fallible man cannot with good grace be a dogmatist. We should be more mindful of performing our religious and moral duties and drawing men's attention to those duties than dogmatically thrusting our particular opinions on particular points of religious doctrine upon others.

Learned dissertations on theology and controversies on the subject of religion are useful in their own way, but true religion before the Lord does not consist in them. It consists in a man's

“visiting the fatherless and the widow in their affliction and keeping himself unspotted from the world,” that is, from vice. . . . Some people consider processions, festivals and religious music as the be-all and end-all of religion. They are no doubt useful in their own way, but they are not the be-all and end-all of religion. Life is the be-all and end-all of religion. . . .

We should not only regulate our own conduct by an eye to the essentials of religion, but, while propagating the religion we profess, we should draw men’s attention more to love of God and love of man than doctrinal points. We are morally culpable before God if we lay greater stress on the husk instead of the kernel of religion.

The Essential Religion does not admit of church organization. There can be no such sect as the Essential Religionists. The Essential Religion is not the exclusive property of any particular sect or church. It is the common property of all sects and churches. The members of all sects and churches should regulate their conduct according to its dictates. . . . Besides, a number of men, banded together and calling themselves Essential Religionists, must have particular conception of the Deity and future state and follow a particular mode of worship. This particular conception and particular mode of worship would at once determine them as a sect. These particular conceptions of God and future state and modes of worship give rise to religious sects among mankind. Every individual man cannot avoid joining a sect according to his own particular convictions.

Differences of religion must always exist in the world.¹ To quote Parker. . . . “As many men, so many theologies.” As it is impossible to obliterate differences of face and make all faces exactly resemble each other, so it is difficult to obliterate distinctions of religion. Differences of religion have always existed in the world and will exist as long as it lasts. It is impossible to bring over men to one and the same religion. A certain king remarked: “It is impossible to make all watches go exactly alike. How is it possible to bring over all men to my own opinion?” Various flowers would always exist in the garden of religion, each having a peculiar fragrance of its own, Theism being the most fragrant of them all. Bearing this in mind, we should tolerate all religions, though at the same time propagating the religion which we consider to be truth by means of argument and gentle persuasion. We should tolerate even such agnostic religions as Vedantism and

¹ We beg to differ from this opinion of our kind friend.—*Ed. Theos.*

Buddhism as they inculcate the doctrine of the existence of God — though the followers of those religions believe Him to be impersonal — the doctrine of *Yoga* or communion with Him to which men must be impelled by love of God, and the doctrine of love of man or morality. Some people speak of Buddhism as an atheistical religion. Even if it were true that Buddhism is a system of pure atheism, which it is not, the phrase “atheistical religion” is a contradiction in terms. There can be no religion if divorced from God. Later researches have proved that Buddhism is not without the idea of a God as was formerly supposed.² We should tolerate all religions. We should look upon all religions, every one of which contains greater or less truth, as God himself looks upon them, rejoicing in the truth which each contains and attributing its errors to human imperfection. . . .

These are as noble and as conciliating words as were ever pronounced among the Brahmos of India. They would be calculated to do a world of good, but for the common doom of words of wisdom to become the “voice crying in the desert.” Yet even in these kindly uttered sentences, so full of benevolence and good-will to all men, we cannot help discerning (we fervently hope that Babu Rajnarain Bose will pardon our honest sincerity) a ring of a certain sectarian, hence selfish feeling, one against which our Society is forced to fight so desperately.

“We should tolerate all religions, though at the same time, *propagating the religion which we consider to be true*” — we are told. It is our painful duty to analyse these words, and we begin by asking *why* should we? Where is the necessity for imposing our own *personal* views, our beliefs *pro tem*, if we may use the expression, upon other persons who, each and all, must be allowed to possess — until the contrary is shown — as good a faculty of discrimination and judgement as we believe ourselves to be endowed with? We say belief *pro tem*, basing the expression upon the writer’s own confession. “We are apt to forget,” he tells his readers, “that *we ourselves are not infallible*, that our opinions . . . *were not exactly the same twenty years ago as they are now, nor will they be exactly the same twenty years hence*,” and “that all the members of our own sect or party . . . *do not hold exactly the same opinions on all subjects concerning religion as we do*.” Precisely. Then why not leave the mind of our brothers of other religions and creeds to pursue its own

² We believe it’s a great mistake due to the one-sided inferences and precipitate conclusions of some Orientalists like Mr. Lillie, the author of *Buddha and Early Buddhism*. An eternal, all-pervading principle is *not* what is vulgarly called “God.”—ED. *Theos.*

natural course instead of forcibly diverting it — however gentle the persuasion — into a groove we may ourselves abandon twenty years hence? But, we may be perhaps reminded by the esteemed writer that in penning those sentences which we have underlined, he referred but to the “non-essential points” — or sectarian dogmas — and not to what he is pleased to call the “essential” points of religion, *vis.*, belief in God or theism. We answer by enquiring again whether the latter tenet — a tenet being something which has to rest upon its own intrinsic value and undeniable evidence — whether, notwithstanding until very lately its *quasi*-universal acceptance, this tenet is any better proven, or rests upon any firmer foundation, than any of the existing dogmas which are admitted by none but those who accept the authority they proceed from? Are not, in this case, both tenet and dogmas, the “essentials” as the “non-essentials,” simply the respective conclusions and outcome of “fallible minds”? And can it be maintained that theism itself, with its present crude ideas about an intelligent personal deity a little better than a super-humanly conscious big man, will not 20 years hence have reached not only a broader and more noble aspect, but even a decided turning-point which will lead humanity to a far higher ideal in consequence of the scientific truths it acquires daily and almost hourly? It is from a strictly agnostic platform that we are now arguing, basing what we say merely upon the writer’s own words. And we maintain that the major premiss of his general proposition which may be thus formulated — “a personal God *is*, while dogmas may or may not be true” — being simply admitted, never *proven*, since the existence of God in general was, is, and ever will remain an *unprovable* proposition, his conclusions, however correctly derived from the minor or second premiss, do not cover the whole ground. The syllogism is regular and the reasoning valid — only *in the opinion of the theists*. The atheist as the agnostic will protest, having logic as well as reason on his side. He will say: Why not accord to others that which you claim for yourselves? However weighty our arguments and *gentle* our persuasion, no theist would fail to feel hurt were we to try our hand in persuading him to throw away his theism and accept the religion or philosophy “which *we* consider to be true” — namely, “*godless*” Buddhism, or highly philosophical and logical agnosticism. As our esteemed contemporary puts it, “it is impossible to obliterate differences of face and make all faces exactly resemble each other.” Has the idea ever struck him that it is as difficult to entirely obliterate innate differences of mental perceptions and faculties, let alone to reconcile by bringing under one standard the endless varieties of human nature and

thought? The latter may be forced from its natural into an artificial channel. But, like a mask however securely stuck on one's face, and which is liable to be torn off by the first strong gust of wind that blows under, the convictions thus artificially inoculated are liable at any day to resume their natural course, the new cloth put upon the old garment torn out, and — “the rent made worse.”

We are with those who think that as nature has never intended the process known in horticulture as engrafting, so she has never meant that the ideas of *one* man should be inoculated with those of any other man, since, were it so, she would have — if really guided by intelligence — created all the faculties of human mind, as all plants, homogeneous, which is not the case. Hence, as no kind of plant can be induced to grow and thrive artificially upon another plant which does not belong to the same natural order, so no attempt toward engrafting our views and beliefs on individuals whose mental and intellectual capacities differ from ours as one variety or species of plants differs from another variety — will ever be successful. The missionary efforts directed for several hundred years toward Christianizing the natives of India, is a good instance in hand and illustrates the inevitable failure following every such fallacious attempt. Very few among those natives upon whom the process of engrafting succeeded, have any real merit; while the tendency of the great majority is to return to its original specific type, that of a true born pantheistic Hindu, clinging to his forefather's caste and gods as a plant clings to its original genera. “Love of God and love of man is the essence of religion,” says Babu Rajnarain Bose elsewhere, inviting men to withdraw their attention from the husk of religion — “the non-essentials” — and concentrate it upon the kernel — its essentials. We doubt whether we will ever prove our love to man by depriving him of a fundamental and essential prerogative, that of an untrammelled and entire liberty of his thoughts and conscience. Moreover, in saying, as the author does further on —

Nothing has done so much mischief to the world as religious bigotry and dogmatism on non-essential points of religion; nothing has led so much to bloody wars and fiery persecutions as the same . . .

— he turns the weapon of logic and fact against his own argument. What religion, for instance, ever claimed more than Christianity “love of God and love of man” — aye, “love of all men as our brothers”; and yet where is that creed that has ever surpassed it in blood-thirstiness and

cruelty, in intolerance, to the damnation of all other religions! "What crimes has it (Religion in general) not committed?" exclaims Prof. Huxley, quoting from Lucretius, and "what cruelties," he adds, referring to Christianity, "have been perpetrated in the name of Him who said 'Love your enemies; blessed are the peacemakers,' and so many other noble things." Truly this religion of Love and Charity is now built upon the most gigantic holocaust of victims, the fruits of the unlawful, sinful desire to bring over all men to one mode of thinking, at any rate to one "essential" point in their religion — belief in Christ.

We admit and recognize fully that it is the duty of every honest man to try to bring round by "argument and gentle persuasion" every man who errs with respect to the "essentials" of Universal ethics, and the usually recognized standard of morality. But the latter is the common property of *all* religions, as of *all* the honest men, irrespective of their beliefs. The principles of the true moral code, tried by the standard of right and justice, are recognized as fully, and followed just as much by the honest atheist as by the honest theist, religion and piety having, as can be proved by statistics, very little to do with the repression of vice and crime. A broad line has to be drawn between the external practice of one's moral and social duties, and that of the real intrinsic virtue practised but for its own sake. Genuine morality does not rest with the profession of any particular creed or faith, least of all with belief in gods or a God; but it rather depends upon the degree of our own individual perceptions of its direct bearing upon human happiness in general, hence — upon our own personal weal. But even this is surely not all. "So long as man is taught and allowed to believe that he must be just, that the strong hand of law may not punish him, or his neighbour take his revenge"; that he must be enduring because complaint is useless and weakness can only bring contempt; that he must be temperate that *his* health may keep good and all his appetites retain their acuteness; and, he is told that, if he serves *his* friends, his friends may serve him, if he defends his country, he defends himself, and that by serving his God he prepares for himself an eternal life of happiness hereafter — so long, we say, as he acts on such principles, virtue is *no virtue*, but verily the culmination of SELFISHNESS. However sincere and ardent the faith of a theist, unless, while conforming his life to what he pleases to term *divine* laws, he gives precedence in his thoughts to the benefit that accrues from such a moral course of actions *to his brother*, and then only thinks of himself — he will remain, at best, a pious egotist; and we do

claim that belief in, and fear of God in man, is chiefly based upon, develops and grows in exact proportion to his selfishness, his fear of punishment and bad results only for himself, without the least concern for his brother.

We see daily that the theist, although defining morality as the conformity of human actions to *divine* laws, is not a tittle more moral than the average atheist or infidel who regards a moral life simply as the duty of every honest, right-thinking man, without giving a thought to any reward for it in after-life. The apparently discrepant fact that one who disbelieves in his survival after death should, nevertheless, frame in most cases his life in accordance with the highest rules of morality, is not as abnormal as it seems at first. The atheist, knowing of but one existence, is anxious to leave the memory of his life as unsullied as possible in the after-remembrances of his family and posterity, and *in honour even with those yet unborn*. In the words of the Greek Stoic — “though all our fellow-men were swept away, and not a mortal *nor immortal* eye were left to approve or condemn, should we not here, within our breast, have a judge to dread, and a friend to conciliate?” No more than theism is atheism congenite with man. Both grow and develop in him together with his reasoning powers, and become either fortified or weakened by reflection and deduction of evidence from facts. In short, both are entirely due to the degree of his emotional nature, and man is no more responsible for being an atheist than he is for becoming a theist. Both terms are entirely misunderstood.

Many are called impious, not for having a worse but a different religion from their neighbours, says Epicurus. Mohammedans are stronger theists than the Christians, yet they are called “infidels” by the latter, and many theosophists are regarded as atheist, not for the denying of the Deity but for thinking somewhat peculiarly concerning this ever-to-be unknown Principle. As a living contrast to the atheist, stands the theist believing in other lives or a life to come. Taught by his creed that prayer, repentance and offerings are capable of obliterating sin in the sight of the “all-forgiving, loving and merciful Father in Heaven,” he is given every hope — the strength of which grows in proportion to the sincerity of his faith — that his sins will be remitted to him. Thus, the moral obstacle between the believer and sin is very weak, if we view it from the standpoint of human nature. The more a child feels sure of his parents’ love for him, the easier he feels it to break his father’s commands. Who will dare to deny that the chief, if not the

only cause of half the misery with which Christendom is afflicted — especially in Europe, the stronghold of sin and crime — lies not so much with human depravity as with its belief in the goodness and infinite mercy of “our Father in Heaven,” and especially in the vicarious atonement? Why should not men imagine that they can drink of the cup of vice with impunity — at any rate, in its results in the hereafter — when one half of the population is offered to purchase absolution for its sins for a certain paltry sum of money, and the other has but to have faith in, and place reliance upon, Christ to secure a place in paradise — though he be a murderer, starting for it right from the gallows! The public sale of indulgences for the perpetration of crime on the one hand, and the assurance made by the ministers of God that the consequences of the worst of sins may be obliterated by God at his will and pleasure, on the other, are quite sufficient, we believe, to keep crime and sin at the highest figure. He who loves not virtue and good for their own sake and shuns not vice as vice, is sure to court the latter as a direct result of his pernicious belief. One ought to despise that virtue which prudence and fear alone direct.

We firmly believe in the actuality and the philosophical necessity of “Karma,” *i.e.*, in that law of unavoidable retribution, the not-to-be diverted effect of every cause produced by us, reward or punishment, in strict conformity with our actions; and we maintain that since no one can be made responsible for another man’s religious beliefs with whom, and with which, he is not in the least concerned — that perpetual craving for the conversion of all men we meet to our own modes of thinking and respective creeds becomes a highly reprehensible action. With the exception of those above-mentioned cases of the universally recognized code of morality, the furtherance or neglect of which has a direct bearing upon human weal or woe, we have no right to be influencing our neighbours’ opinions upon purely transcendental and unprovable questions with the speculations of our emotional nature. Not because any of these respective beliefs are in any way injurious or bad *per se*; on the contrary, for every ideal that serves us as a point of departure and a guiding star in the path of goodness and purity, is to be eagerly sought for, and as unswervingly followed; but precisely on account of those differences and endless variety of human temperaments, so ably pointed out to us by the respected Brahma gentleman in the lines as above quoted. For if, as he truly points out, none of us is infallible, and “the religious opinions of men are subject to progress” (and change, as he

adds), that progress being endless and quite likely to upset on any day our strongest convictions of the day previous; and if, as historically and daily proved, "nothing has done so much mischief" as the great variety of conflicting creeds and sects which have led but to bloody wars and persecutions, and the slaughter of one portion of mankind by the other — it becomes an evident and undeniable fact that, by adding converts to those sects, we add but so many antagonists to fight and tear themselves to pieces, if not now, then at no distant future. And in this case we do become responsible for their actions.

Propagandism and conversion are the fruitful seeds sown for the perpetration of future crimes, the *odium theologicum* stirring up religious hatreds — which relate as much to the "Essentials" as to the non-essentials of any religion — being the most fruitful as the most dangerous for the peace of mankind. In Christendom, where at each street-corner starvation cries for help, where pauperism, and its direct result, vice and crime, fill the land with desolation — millions upon millions are annually spent upon this unprofitable and sinful work of proselytism. With that charming inconsistency which was ever the characteristic of the Christian churches, the same Bishops who had opposed but a few decades back the building of railways, on the ground that it was an act of rebellion against God who willed that man should not go quite as quick as the wind; and had opposed the introduction of telegraphy, saying that it was a tempting of Providence, and even the application of anaesthetics in obstetrical cases, "under the pretence," Prof. Draper tells us, "that it was an impious attempt to escape from the curse denounced against all women in *Genesis*, iii, 16," those same Bishops do not hesitate to meddle with the work of Providence when the "heathen" are concerned. Surely if Providence hath so decreed that women should be left to suffer for the sin of Eve, then it must have also willed that a man born a heathen should be left one — as pre-ordained. Are the missionaries wiser, they think, than their God, that they should try to correct his mistakes; and do they not also rebel against Providence and its mysterious ways? But, leaving aside things as dark to them as they are to us, and viewing "conversion," so called, but from its practical aspect, we say that he who under the dubious pretext that because something *is truth to him* it must be truth also for everyone else, labours at the conversion of his neighbours, is simply engaged in the unholy work of breeding and raising future Cains.

Indeed, our "love of man" ought to be strong enough and sufficiently

intuitional to stifle in us that spark of selfishness which is the chief motor in our desire to force upon our brother and neighbour our own religious opinions and views which *we* may "consider (for the time being) to be true." It is a grand thing to have a worthy Ideal, but a still greater one to live up to it; and where is that wise and infallible man who can show, without fear of being mistaken, to another man what or who should be his ideal? If, as the theist assures us, "God is all in all," then must he be in every ideal, whatever its nature, if it neither clashes with recognized morality, nor can be shown productive of bad results. Thus, whether this Ideal be God, the pursuit of Truth, humanity collectively, or, as John Stuart Mill has so eloquently proved, simply our own country; and that in the name of that ideal man not only works for it, but becomes better himself, creating thereby an example of morality and goodness for others to follow, what matters it to his neighbour whether this ideal be a chimerical utopia, an abstraction, or even an inanimate object in the shape of an idol or a piece of clay?

Let us not meddle with the natural bent of man's religious or irreligious thought, any more than we should think of meddling with his private thoughts, lest by so doing we should create more mischief than benefit, and deserve thereby his curses. Were religions as harmless and as innocent as the flowers with which the author compares them, we would not have one word to say against them. Let every "gardener" attend but to his own plants without forcing unasked his own variety upon those of other people, and all will remain satisfied. As popularly understood, Theism has, doubtless, its own peculiar beauty, and may well seem "the most fragrant of flowers in the garden of religions" — to the ardent theist. To the atheist, however, it may possibly appear no better than a prickly thistle; and the theist has no more right to take him to task for his opinion, than the atheist has to blame him for his horror of atheism. For all its beauty it is an ungrateful task to seek to engraft the rose upon the thistle, since in nine cases out of ten the rose will lose its fragrance, and both plants their shapes, to become a monstrous hybrid. In the economy of nature everything is in its right place, has its special purpose, and the same potentiality for good as for evil in various degrees — if we will but leave it to its natural course. The most fragrant rose has often the sharpest thorns; and it is the flowers of the thistle when pounded and made up into an ointment that will best cure the wounds made by her cruel thorns.

In our humble opinion, the only "Essentials" in the Religion of

Humanity are — virtue, morality, brotherly love, and kind sympathy with every living creature, whether human or animal. This is the common platform that our Society offers to all to stand upon, the most fundamental differences between religions and sects sinking into insignificance before the mighty problem of reconciling humanity, of gathering all the various races into one family, and of bringing them all to a conviction of the utmost necessity in this world of sorrow to cultivate feelings of brotherly sympathy and tolerance, if not actually of love. Having taken for our motto — “In these Fundamentals — unity; in non-essentials — full liberty; in all things — charity,” we say to all collectively and to every one individually — “keep to your forefathers’ religion, whatever it may be — if you feel attached to it, Brother; think with your own brains — if you have any; be by all means *yourself* — whatever you are, unless you are really a bad man. And remember above all, that a wolf in his own skin is immeasurably more honest than the same animal — under a sheep’s clothing.”

STRANGE is our situation here upon earth. Each of us comes for a short visit, not knowing why, yet sometimes seeming to divine a purpose. From the standpoint of daily life, however, there is one thing we do know; that man is here for the sake of other men — above all for those upon whose smiles and well-being our own happiness depends, and also for the countless unknown souls with whose fate we are connected by a bond of sympathy.

Many times a day I realize how much my own outer and inner life is built upon the labour of my fellow men, both living and dead, and how earnestly I must exert myself in order to give in return as much as I have received.

—ALBERT EINSTEIN

THE PATH OF PHILANTHROPY

THE WORD "philanthropy" is of Greek derivation (from *phileo*, "love," and *anthropos*, "man") and means "love of mankind." The principle implicit in it is that of the brotherhood of humanity.

But what is brotherhood? What is humanity essentially? Bodies? These die and are discarded. Feelings and emotions? These change and fade. Minds, thoughts, imagination? These, too, alter and pass out of our consciousness. What, then, is man? What is humanity, which we are called upon to know, to understand and to love?

Our object is to unfold the higher will and intuition, to build a centre of perception, a focus for the Perceiver — aware, conscious, alive and wise — for whom mind, feeling and body are "environment," are "tools." This is the invisible and undefinable core-centre, the *Real*, the Superior Man. We sense its continuity, its eternity; we seek to know it and to become one with it.

What are its marks, its qualities? Equanimity and calmness, understanding and tolerance, patience and perseverance, wisdom and discrimination, steadfastness and purposive action, generosity and self-control, sincerity and truthfulness, humility and fearlessness — these are some of the characteristics, the garments of the Wisdom-Self within.

But what are they based on? How are they acquired? Generosity, piety and almsgiving; study, mortification and rectitude; freedom from anger, resignation and not speaking of the faults of others; universal compassion, modesty and mildness; discretion, dignity, unvengefulness and freedom from conceit — these are some of the means of control-purification to be applied to the ebullitions of the psychic nature, the feeling-self.

"In a few years this incident will probably be forgotten" — this is a clear, simple idea that may restore a perspective, a balance, a sense of time and purpose to our consciousness involved in situations — that which we loosely call "myself," "my personality" (meaning, in truth, the "mask" that hides the Real Self, the "name-and-form" that lives in the world of men).

The more we turn outside of ourselves, the more the differences that we see between ourselves and others. The deeper we penetrate the core of our own being, the more we sense that others are like unto us, that there is the real Brotherhood of all men, of universal life working through all "masks," all forms.

What, then, drives us to hurt others by our thoughtless or deliberate acts, when we are, in fact, hurting ourselves? What logic seeks justification for vice? Our personality, the mind-feeling self, senses the disadvantages of karmic conditions and situations. We may agree intellectually that these are fair — since “rigid Justice rules the World” and none can escape the “mighty sweep of never-erring action.” But, the personality argues, can we not swing, influence or twist these circumstances to suit *our* purpose, turn them to *our* advantage? Here starts the rot of vice, the concealment of our true motive, the selfish planning that relies on craftiness, injustice, and the unsuspecting nature of others. It aims to *appear* virtuous while taking advantage of the faith that others have in us. Hypocrisy is its disguise, and “authority” is its tool.

What, then, is the defence? It is exposure to the true, to the universal sense of fairness that all possess equally. Whenever we fail to do this, we encourage or connive at the perpetuation of vice and iniquity.

Look at it another way. What do we own? Nothing! All we have is borrowed from Nature. All we can call our own is power-energy — an inner focal point for doing anything we wish, for going anywhere we want to. What binds and limits us? Our self-imposed responsibilities — to family, to friends, to those who depend on us. But, is our perception and execution of these responsibilities accurate, balanced, constructive, compassionate and self-sacrificing?

It is for us to answer. None can lead us by the hand. The path of philanthropy is open equally to all, but it is for us to find it and tread it. It is the path of the true heart, of the compassionate, tolerant understanding — an understanding of ourselves first of all as embodying the same potentials as others have. We need to strengthen the decision to work on *our* nature so that our *persona*-mask may reflect more truly the ray of the Divine Self within.

Let us carry with us for ready use a few seed ideas:

He does good, who *knows* how to do good.

The unprejudiced mind is well motivated and justly actuated.

All beings are the same in kind and differ only in degree.

“To dare, to will, to achieve and keep silent” is the motto of the true Occultist.

ROBERT CROSBIE SPEAKS

I.—ABOUT THEOSOPHY

THEOSOPHY has never been put forth as a Dogma, but as a relation of facts which have been gathered through observation and experience, which anyone can accept or reject without condemnation or praise. . . . THEOSOPHY [is] a presentation of Knowledge gained through aeons of time.

THEOSOPHY points to a fact—one of the utmost importance—namely, that there are Masters—our Elder Brothers—who have under the name of Theosophy given to the world a record of the Laws that govern all the constituents of Man and of Nature.

THEOSOPHY gives the knowledge of the principles that should guide its students in their public and private work. THEOSOPHY points the way clearly how best to serve our fellows.

There is no need to grope, nor stagger, nor stray, for the chart that has led many to the goal is in your hands in the philosophy of THEOSOPHY.

THEOSOPHY is not a religion, and no religion whatever can be THEOSOPHY; although all forms of religion exist because of THEOSOPHY and contain expressions of it.

THEOSOPHY serves to explain the hidden side, the real and inner meaning of all things, for it is a friend to understanding, an aid to knowledge.

THEOSOPHY can be tested out by present knowledge and proves itself with every test.

THEOSOPHY was restored to the world for the sake of those who are looking for light, not for those who are satisfied with things as they are and life as they find it.

One of the greatest helps that THEOSOPHY gives is the power to take a wider survey of the field of action than is otherwise possible: we do not look on this life only, but on many future lives . . . ever seeing further heights toward which the awakening spirit may be directed.

THEOSOPHY is the path of knowledge. It was given out in order, among other things, that good motive and wisdom might go hand in hand.

What is the distinction between THEOSOPHY and anything else? In Fundamental Principles, I should say. Nothing else affords an all-inclusive view of existence.

THEOSOPHY has to be held aloft in such a way as to confront errors of every kind, with their handmaidens of cant and hypocrisy.

One who has gold and has proved it to be so, has a right to say so, but he does not exact belief in his authority; he presents his gold for testing. This is the kind of authority you will find in THEOSOPHY.

THEOSOPHY is not in conflict with any form of religion, any society, any man, any opinion — however much these may be in conflict with THEOSOPHY.

THEOSOPHY was given for “the healing of nations” and must be put out in such form as to make it of practical use in daily life.

THEOSOPHY must be understood to be a gift to mankind by more progressed beings than ourselves. We must learn and *apply* the fundamental principles which underlie that grand philosophy, and understand the operation of law as disclosed therein. Then, and then only can we begin to make THEOSOPHY a living power in our lives.

REFERENCES: *The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 405, 118, 367, 7, 25, 384, 55, 379, 365, 4, 399, 12, 91, 384, 19, 403-404.

DO NOT BELIEVE that Theosophy contradicts or, much less, destroys Christianity. It only destroys the tares, but not the seed of truth: prejudice, blasphemous superstitions, Jesuitical bigotry. . . . We respect men's freedom of conscience and their spiritual yearnings far too much to touch religious philosophies with our propaganda. Every human being who respects himself and thinks has a holy of holies of his own, for which we Theosophists ask respect. Our business concerns philosophy, morals, and science alone. We ask for truth in everything; our object is the realization of the spiritual perfectibility possible to man: the broadening of his knowledge, the exercising of the powers of his soul, of all the psychical sides of his being. Our Theosophical brotherhood must strive after the ideal of general brotherhood throughout all humanity; after the establishment of universal peace and the strengthening of charity and disinterestedness; after the destruction of materialism, of that coarse unbelief and egotism which saps the vitality of our country.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Serious thought has been devoted of late to the consequences of discovering life on Mars, or somewhere else beyond the Earth. What will this mean to us on Earth? Will it topple religions and philosophies, as was once speculated? Will it be an event that all but a few scientists will quickly forget? Or might it, perhaps generations hence, sink into the soul of our culture and gradually but radically change the way we think about ourselves and our position in the universe?

In *Science News* (U.S.A.) for June 5-12, James Christian, philosopher, Santa Ana College, and editor of *Extraterrestrial Intelligence: First Encounter*, writes:

Biochemical evolution already implies that life is all over the universe. It seems to me that we have reached the place where there is no escaping that implication, if the theories are correct, that any time we have a congenial environment and some of the right chemicals are there, including carbon, that given enough time, life will evolve. We just can't avoid that implication any more. Which means to me that we are at the point where we can assume life is there and proceed now to operate on that assumption and try to find it.

In my own mind the ultimate implication is that we will at last have a mirror by which we can look at ourselves as human beings. We'll have a better perspective. And I have the weird feeling that the psychologists would say that we develop our personalities in terms of this mirror-image concept. Individually, we behave in terms of how we see ourselves. I think that holds collectively as well. And this cosmic perspective, or the way we see ourselves in this cosmic perspective, would alter drastically. We could no longer see ourselves as little aristocratic, ethnocentric, chauvinistic, egocentric groups — little national groups. That marvellous view from space I think would more and more permeate the way we think of ourselves. . . . That to me is the most significant implication of the whole thing. . . .

If you define religion in its most general sense as the search for ultimate meaning in life — and that can be one definition of religion — then to find this realistic perspective of ourselves will just give that much more firm ground on which we can build a meaningful religion, if you want to use religion that way. But in its more narrow sense, specific beliefs in various religions — that is, earth-centred beliefs, tribal-centred beliefs, anthropomorphic

beliefs — all of these, I think, will eventually fade away. They'll no longer meet our needs. As human beings have begun to travel and mix all over our globe, they have had to face up to the fact that each religion has been anthropomorphic: black people made their gods black, Indians made theirs look like Indians, and so on. I think we have to face up to the same anthropomorphisms with other creatures — extraterrestrial life. And that should tell us something, if we can learn it. That's the big if.

But I'm optimistic. I think we can learn it. . . . I still love [science fiction writer] Larry Niven's phrase that the trouble with people who live on planets is that they think small. I think that's beautiful. That says the whole thing.

For those who know that life is everywhere, that "there is not one finger's breath (*Angula*) of void Space in the whole Boundless (Universe)" (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 289), all the current speculation whether or not there is life on Mars — or on any other planet — seems futile. In view of the present interest in the subject, the little we have been told in *The Secret Doctrine* about extraterrestrial life should prove of interest as the following excerpts bear out:

The Spheres of Being, or centres of life, which are isolated nuclei breeding their men and their animals, are numberless; not one has any resemblance to its sister-companion or to any other in its own special progeny. (II. 33)

How, then. . . can we hope to speculate with profit on the nature of globes which, in the economy of nature, must needs belong to states of consciousness other and quite different from *any* which man experiences here? . . . Even great adepts (those initiated of course), trained seers though they are, can claim thorough acquaintance with the nature and appearance of planets and their inhabitants belonging to our solar system only. They *know* that almost all the planetary worlds are inhabited, but can have access to — even in spirit — only those of our system. . . . Such knowledge and intercourse are possible to them because they have learned how to penetrate to planes of consciousness which are closed to the perceptions of ordinary men; but were they to communicate their knowledge, the world would be no wiser, because it lacks that experience of other forms of perception which alone could enable them to grasp what was told them. Still the fact remains that most of the planets, as the stars beyond our system, are inhabited. (II. 701)

When, therefore, we find in the Bibles of Humanity "other

worlds" spoken of, we may safely conclude that they not only refer to other states of our planetary chain and Earth, but also to other inhabited globes — stars and planets; withal, that the latter were never speculated upon. The whole of antiquity believed in the Universality of life. But no really initiated seer of any civilized nation has ever taught that life on other stars could be judged by the standard of terrestrial life. (II. 703)

Examining the astronomical conditions of the other planets, it is easy to show that several are far better adapted for the development of life and intelligence — even under the conditions with which men are acquainted — than is our earth. . . . That some forms of life such as we know are *possible* on these planets, has been long since abundantly demonstrated, and it seems perfectly useless to go into detailed questions of the physiology, etc., etc., of these hypothetical inhabitants, since after all the reader can arrive only at an imaginary extension of his familiar surroundings. It is better to rest content with the three conclusions which M. C. Flammarion . . . formulates as rigorous and exact deductions from the known *facts* and laws of science.

I. The various forces which were active in the beginning of evolution gave birth to a great variety of beings on the several worlds; both in the organic and inorganic kingdoms.

II. The animated beings were constituted from the first according to forms and organisms in correlation with the physiological state of each inhabited globe.

III. The humanities of other worlds differ from us, as much in their inner organization as in their external physical type. (II. 706-7)

Writing in *Bhavan's Journal* for September 12, Justice J. N. Gandhi makes a plea for abolition of the death sentence and for a humane and rational approach to the problem. This is a matter of regularly recurring debate as it concerns one of the vital issues of social awareness. The problem involves consideration from different angles, such as the ethical, the sociological and the legal.

On the ethical or moral side, some of the arguments the abolitionists put forward are: (1) Capital punishment militates against human conscience. (2) Life is sacred and man has no right to take away something that he cannot bestow. (3) The death penalty is irrevocable and the sentence, if later discovered to be unjust, cannot be rectified. (4) The

approach to punishment should be to find out the cause of a wrong and to remove it, and not to do away with the doer of the wrong, who should rather be given an opportunity to improve.

On the sociological side, too, there are cogent arguments raised by the abolitionists, and these Mr. Justice Gandhi enumerates thus:

1. It is contended that man is a rational being and that the ultimate penalty is irrational.

2. Reverence for life is worth more than a thousand executions for preventing murder, and it is, in fact, the greatest security of life.

3. . . . the State's taking a life does more to lower the value of human life in the minds of its citizens, than to serve as a deterrent influence.

4. . . . no one is beyond reclamation and the infliction of capital punishment is the denial of the noble principle. . . .

5. To think that life imprisonment as an alternative to capital punishment is rather a more painful and inhuman substitute is wrong.

6. The evolution of human thought as developed from early Greek enlightenment and Roman philosophy shows that the consciousness of the inevitable consequences of one's own actions was regarded as the better antidote to evil propensities and a more effective preserver of social equilibrium than cruel punishment.

7. After careful study, it is revealed that public opinion changes its attitude towards the criminal during the period between the reporting of the murder and the carrying out of the death sentence. . . . The history of emotional reaction shows a gradual tendency towards mercy and forgiveness. To take revenge or retribution is the committing of another crime. . . .

8. The method of execution by means of swinging on the gallows or sleeping for ever on a 1800 volts electric chair leaves a sad spot on civilization and culture.

9. Kant's policy of absolute punishment based on retribution has no place in our civilized human society.

10. It has been rightly observed that the character of punishment is inextricably associated with and dependent on the cultural values of the State that employs this punishment.

11. . . . We have by now developed better ways of preserving social values; so there seems to be no reason for keeping capital punishment as a weapon for protection. . . . With the advance of

civilization and research facilities it seem that the trend is to prevent crime not by severe punishments but by improving social conditions and developing social services.

12. We have to treat our criminals like diseased patients. We treat the latter in sanatoria or isolation wards but never destroy them to prevent the disease from spreading. Similarly, we should treat the murderer. Hanging is not the cure but a ruthless and barbaric way of suppression.

13. The Royal Commission on Capital Punishment (1953) in England made a special study of statistics in different countries of Europe, the United States and the British Commonwealth. The Commission concluded, "there is no clear evidence in any of the figures we have examined that the abolition of capital punishment has led to an increase in the homicide rate or that its reintroduction has led to a fall."

From the Theosophical viewpoint, there are still weightier reasons for abolishing the death penalty. It is an evil arising out of ignorance about man's real nature and faculties and about their action and condition after bodily death. As Mr. Judge puts it:

When a wide and deep knowledge and belief in respect to the occult side of nature and of man shall have become the property of the people then may we expect a great change in the matter of capital punishment. . . . For us such a death is the violent separation of the man from his body, and is a serious matter, of interest to the whole state. It creates in fact a paradox, for such persons are not dead; they remain with us as unseen criminals, able to do harm to the living and to cause damage to the whole of Society. . . .

The Theosophist who believes in the multiple nature of man and in the complexity of his inner nature, and knows that that is governed by law and not by mere chance or by the fancy of those who prate of the need for protecting society when they do not know the right way to do it, relying only on the punitive and retaliatory Mosaic law — will oppose capital punishment. He sees it is unjust to the living, a danger to the state, and that it allows no chance whatever for any reformation of the criminal. (*Vernal Blooms*, pp. 215-19)

Much mystery, ritual and obscurantism has surrounded the ancient practice of chants, and now there is to be an effort to investigate them scientifically. An institute is to be established in Madhya Pradesh to

probe into the "life-supporting effects" of the Vedic mantras. Commenting on this, the "Current Topics" writer in *The Times of India* for September 13 states:

If sound is analysed (somewhat like light) it is seen to consist of vibrations. And vibrations (frequency of energy radiated or transmitted plus resonance effects) can play a crucial role in all bio-systems.

Studied at the macro level, the term "music of the spheres" indicates an ordered manner in which all motion occurs in the universe. Seen at the micro level of organisms, we have biorhythm and cycles, and at the level of atoms we see a pattern, although this largely conforms to the probability theory. A sustained high C note on a violin can smash a wine-glass; music has growth effects on plants and therapeutic effects on man. All these show that chants are not to be dismissed lightly; they do deserve rational investigation.

It is a known fact that plants undergo stress and as a result wither and die. Recently, two researchers at the Ornamental Plants Research Laboratory in Corvallis, Oregon, U.S.A., figured out a way to make plants "tell" about their stress. Stressed plants, the researchers say, release ethylene gas; certain insects apparently sense the gas and attack sick trees that emit it. They have evolved a stress monitor that enables growers to identify the stress factor and correct it at an early stage. (*Science Digest*, August 1976)

What causes plant stress? Air pollution, too much or too little moisture, root pruning and transplanting are among the factors named by modern science. But Occult Science goes further and asserts:

What is called "unconscious Nature" is in reality an aggregate of forces manipulated by semi-intelligent beings (Elementals) guided by High Planetary Spirits (Dhyani Chohans)... Nature taken in its abstract sense *cannot* be "unconscious," as it is the emanation from, and thus an aspect (on the manifested plane) of the ABSOLUTE consciousness. Where is that daring man who would presume to deny to vegetation and even to minerals a *consciousness of their own*? All he can say is, that this consciousness is beyond his comprehension. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 277-78)
