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“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

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SINCERITY AND PERSEVERANCE ON THE PATH OF CHELASHIP

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SINCERITY is a needed virtue in the aspirant who aims at soul-progress. On the path of discipleship its potencies are many and powerful. Sincerity is resourceful. Without it an aspirant does not see his weaknesses, much less understand them with a view to overcoming them.

It is not an easy virtue-power to develop. In our civilization boastfulness is so common that everyone is able to boast of his sincerity. The diplomat and politician lie, sincerely! the popes and *purohits* humbug their votaries, sincerely! and so on. The result? Sincerity has become more and more rare in our civilization. The Theosophical student suffers from worldly “sincerity” — having come to Theosophy after being educated by worldly wisdom in worldly ways. When he resolves to live righteously, purely, unselfishly, he is often blind to his dishonesties, his falsehoods, his conceits. He would endeavour to overcome his defects were he to discern their existence. He is not insincere in his desire to progress, to seek the Gurus and to follow Them. He is ignorant that he is dishonest in mind, untruthful in speech, selfish in action. It is a strange mixture of sincerity and insincerity! Persistent in treading the path of discipleship as he understands it, sometimes in a bizarre manner, labouring and loving the ideal of the Path and the Life, at long last his perception opens and he sees what he never suspected, that he has been a mass of corruption. Repentance sets in.

What opens his perception? Study and application. Even service may be rendered to the Theosophical cause without inner soul sincerity. When self-examination is intelligently undertaken application is eagerly sought.

From the point of view of true discipleship, application is the apex of the triangle and study and service form the base. Application of knowledge to the mind, of virtue to the heart, of sacredness to deeds is impossible without sincerity.

Repentance for past blunders and perseverance in present effort go together. In fact they are the two wings which enable the aspirant to ascend to the world of the Spirit. The ascent is slow. Many a time the soul-bird is forced to descend by its own Karma and the powers of psychic gravity. Both its wings endeavour to check the descent and gain momentum to ascend once more.

Discipleship is a never-ending conflict, an eternal birth through eternal dying. Dryden translates Virgil, who has put this truth in words with a poet's intuition:

The gates of hell are open night and day,
Smooth the descent, and easy is the way,
But to return and view the cheerful skies,
In this the mighty task and labour lies.

Sincerity and perseverance, then, form the real starting-point of the Inner Life. The Inner Soul exists for and in all men and women. But it does not live and work in all. It is born in the Heart of the mind and this is man's second birth. Knowledge of his past ignorance is fecundated by the sustaining graciousness of Theosophy and thus the death of dark ignorance takes place and the birth of the Soul as Perceiver, as Seeker, as Knower of the Light Supreme. On the path of discipleship this is a continuous process. Reincarnation is not only the return of the soul to the body again and again. It is also the death of various body-powers and birth anew of an equal number of soul-powers.

For he who lives more lives than one
More deaths than one must die.

Repentance is likely to dwindle into emotionalism and sentimentality and then into despondency and despair. Such a process is born of self-pity, a subtle and debasing form of egotism. True repentance quickly points to the practice of sincerity. Let us not mourn that we were inadvertently insincere for months and years. Let us rejoice that at last our eyes are opened. Real repentance is rooted in the strength of the higher nature — the Christos-Buddha nature. The Christ did not call the self-righteous and the cocksure to repentance; he called sinners to repentance. The former are enveloped in ignorance of the foibles of the

lower self, of the strength of the higher. Therefore enlightened repentance will not permit the aspirant to indulge in regrets for what he did in the past; his new-born sincerity will give to his perseverance a new outlook as well as a new insight. True repentance points out to the aspirant the mystery that is in every man, every woman, every child. This because of his deepening sincerity. Contemplation on the process which dispelled ignorance and brought to birth sincerity and also true repentance provokes humility and the spirit of forgiveness.

“Judge not, that ye be not judged” is a profound teaching of the science of Occultism. To judge justly is not to judge by appearances. We resented, and even now resent it, when others thought we were hypocritical, preaching what was not practised. We were ignorant of our insincerity. We did not see that we were dishonest. Therefore, one very tangible effect of our awakening to sincerity is a fresh evaluation of the teaching: “Judge not.” This implies that we should judge not by appearances. We do not know what another man is in reality; we see his surface appearance. The birth of sincerity which is accompanied by the spirit of forgiveness prepares us for the real Inner Life, living according to the Kingly Science, the Royal Knowledge, Raja-Yoga.

The first soul-faculty, which accompanies the birth of sincerity and strengthens the power of perseverance, is not to find fault. When we look at man-made beauty we are able to praise the power of man; it does not reveal the Beauty of Nature which is glorious. So also when we see with the eyes of our lower nature we very naturally find fault; when knowledge enables us to see with the eye of the Higher Nature we see compassion and truth hidden in every heart and every mind. This means Brotherhood — not abstract, but the feeling “I am a brother to the sinner and the saint, the soldier and the sage, the thief and the murderer, the adulterer and the prostitute.” We now discern the mystery that is in everybody. We are learners in a new school of life and we learn by loving not only our brothers and sisters but all creatures in the world, visible and invisible.

Sincerity and perseverance make for progress, through real repentance to enlightened peace.

TODAY is yesterday's pupil.

—BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

THE THREE OBJECTS—SOME REFLECTIONS

It is . . . the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause to benefit by it as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can, which constitutes the true Theosophist.

—“The Great Master’s Letter” (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 33*)

THERE ARE in every nation men who are pure and holy. There are philanthropists and recluses as also those who, casting away possessions, are wedded to poverty. There are others high in development who have devoted their lives to a study in depth of the world’s great scriptures. Yet many of these have left no great mark on contemporary life and thought. Why should this be so? It is necessary that students of Theosophy should probe this anomaly. This same incongruity is discernible in the work of the 20th-century Theosophists. True that “not for himself but for the world he lives” can aptly be said of every sincere Theosophist, yet he, too, is not found in the forefront to guide human thought into beneficent and altruistic channels. This strange phenomenon may occur because the force and fury of the loftiest devotion may find themselves dissipated unless the great powers of the Soul are harnessed and canalized into streams that are potent for good alone.

No student, however brilliant, no volunteer in the great cause, however enthused, can make any appreciable contribution to human progress unless he has breathed the free air of an undiluted Brotherhood and has gathered to himself through moral stature and spiritual attainment those powers that become available to him through kinship with the SELF of all creatures. This, even the merest tyro will admit. It is at the time of the application of this knowledge to practice that the student falters; and in this weakened condition he tends to lose his hold on the universal. It is during such moments that his ideas of brotherhood and morality get diluted and he finds that where he thought he was planting good, he was merrily sowing the seeds of evil.

There are many who labour under the wrong impression that a virtuous life is all that is required to make one rise beyond illusions. *The Voice of the Silence* sounds a note of warning against complacency. It says: “Think not that when the sins of thy gross form are conquered, O Victim of thy Shadows (note that he still remains a victim), thy duty is accomplished by nature and by man. The blessed ones have scorned to do so.” The mission of one’s life is not accomplished by mere observance of

ethics — important and indispensable though these are. Experience has shown that charity and the other virtues are useless if they stand alone. Charity, for instance, may take the man one step onward and invest him with a dignity that it alone has the power to confer. Yet, if in other spheres the man's acts belie his words, if he fails to strike harmonious chords between protestations and performance, then will universality abandon his charitable outlook, and his virtue declines and assumes the colours of the imitative arts.

That this should not be so is evident. And so, there have always existed men who have tried to find the causes that have ruined many a promising effort, and they have tried to devise disciplines that would help prevent a sliding back into mediocrity. The last global effort to point out the way and present the correct approach was made by the Theosophical Movement of 1875. In the three declared objects of the Theosophical Society are to be found the elements of success. The student, if earnest in his desire to learn, has to fathom the implications of these three objects separately as well as in the interrelationship of the one with the others. He will soon discover that the wider aspects of an all-embracing Brotherhood (the first object) cannot be fathomed without the search for and discovery of spiritual powers (third object), and without the very necessary research into ancient religions and philosophies (second object) that would demonstrate that soul-powers were never the exclusive prerogative of a nation, sect or creed. Unfortunately, there have been among the Theosophists those who have believed that they can subscribe to Universal Brotherhood without going through the effort of universalizing their minds. They have failed even before they started and the history of the Movement records the wreckage of their lives and the ruins that their failures have precipitated.

The three objects are important to the student because each of the three finds its anchorage and fulfilment in the infinity and impersonality of the godhead. Men, creatures and atoms are but projections on the screen of time of the one, conscious spiritual essence. In all the multifarious emanations that man encounters has to be discerned but one vital principle that pervades them all. At all times, there have existed men of organized faiths who have staked their exclusive claims to this indivisible, all-pervasive essence and have thus impliedly denied brotherhood and kinship with men and races that bowed not to their gods and accepted not their creeds. Their potency for mischief is great, and yet such is the ignorance that beclouds human minds that they claim votaries

by the thousands.

It is from this world of ignorance and twilight that come the recruits to Theosophy. Such persons find it extremely difficult to shed their old deeply embedded idea that they and those of their persuasion are the only chosen ones of God. They avoid study of any other religion but their own because they still hold the belief that their religion is the ultimate in all knowledge. They will not undertake a discovery of man's spiritual powers because a fear lurks deep below that this will lead to a revelation that the same if not more wondrous powers have been exercised by men who lived and died long centuries before their own particular prophet and saviour was born. Such recruits to Theosophy do prosecute their studies in Theosophy and come to have a superficial recognition of the ideas of universal unity and causation, the laws of Brotherhood, Karma and Reincarnation. They even learnedly expound them; but they have hidden reservations. Their consciousness takes each tenet and principle and compresses the universality within it into narrow and circumscribed limits. They carry their bigotry with them and transfer its virus to Theosophy.

Now, brotherhood is not based merely on sentiment. It means in one aspect the sharing by the whole of the good and the bad of each unit. Our acts bring to us their own reward and punishment; but since we are indissolubly linked with all, our actions and their reactions are shared by each. Therefore, the responsibility and the opportunity afforded are unique. Each man, be he the vilest and meanest or the most wise and altruistic, is a potential curse or blessing to all mankind. The removal of a misconception and the leading on the right path our neighbour have a potency that adds to the general good. Where no effort is made to correct wrong ideologies (by persuasion and reasoning), where from fear of personal harm the good that is under attack is not supported, there brotherhood is sacrificed and the larger interests of humanity are bypassed to serve an expediency or arrive at a compromise, however temporary, with evil. He who does not live up to his protestations of brotherhood chooses the paths of error; and in the endeavour to live his life according to his belief, he rides roughshod over the lives and destinies of his fellow men. Yet, despite his potentiality for mischief, he cannot be separated from the rest of mankind, so that whatever he does that is selfish and possessive adds to the general decline and debility of the whole and especially of those with whom he forges more intimate links of study, application and promulgation. He cannot, even if he will

dissociate himself from the rest, nor can the rest disown him because of his distorted vision and his idea of a brotherhood that waxes and wanes at each passing fancy.

The degree of one's adherence to the ideal of Universal Brotherhood can be judged by applying to oneself the test of finding out on how many occasions one let slip the opportunity to add to the general sum of human good. Dedication to the task of spreading Brotherhood opens many an otherwise closed door to spiritual service. In direct contrast to this, and on the selfish path, the student will find each one's hand raised against every other and the good of all subordinated to the aggrandisement of one. In times of crisis, or at the approach of the hour when a brother is in peril from the unseen and terrible forces of nature, friends will fall away and many a so-called companion will sneer at his weakness and rejoice at his downfall. And if this is true of the individual, it will apply with greater force to societies, lodges, families and nations. At each opportunity for its exercise and promulgation, the true altruist tries to sow the seeds of Brotherhood. The epistles of Paul are full of advice that can make a man or a nation great; and yet, Christian nations have for centuries invoked the name of the mild Jesus to decimate whole populations for the greater glory of the Lord.

The third object of the Theosophical Society was redefined by H.P.B. as "the study and development of the latent *divine* powers in man."¹ This object excludes by implication the lower psychic powers as a subject either for study or development. The lower *iddhis* (powers) against which the pupil is warned² have to be shunned either for experimentation or rediscovery or even for a superficial contact. Their touch defiles and contaminates and leads to an unhealthy accentuation of the personal in man. The wonder-producing forces are beneficial neither to their owner nor to the one for whose benefit they are exercised. They promote no brotherhood and further no universal beneficence.

The latent divine powers of man are to be studied first as a science and then developed into an art. Their possession and use enriches life. Their flow breaks no harmony and violates no unity, but becomes rather a fulfilment of BEING with the promise of an all-comprehending immortality in Spirit. That the study of the divine powers latent in one's Self is difficult cannot be gainsaid. To demonstrate to oneself the presence of these powers requires the fashioning and fabrication of inner and

¹ *The Theosophical Glossary*, under "Theosophical Society."

² *The Voice of the Silence*,

subtler instruments for the use of the Soul. Those instruments are sensitive and wilt at the touch and even the nearness of the impure. They are therefore unknown to and unapproachable by the man of vice as by the man of selfishness, for, in the realm of the occult, selfishness is sin. Each such divine power would have a sevenfold function in each of the seven states of matter. As each power and sub-power is studied, man has to pause and re-dedicate himself to the cause of Universal Brotherhood. He dare not do less.

To achieve his salvation, the aspirant has to build for himself a fane where impersonality alone sits enthroned. It is in the process of construction of this fane that many a pet illusion has to be broken and many a false crutch cast aside, for impersonality brooks no compromise. The average man of the world is prone to create a god of his own and believes that this god will trouble himself with the business matters of his worshippers, with sons to be born, daughters to be married, rich harvests to be produced and enemies to be slain. The student of a few summers may laugh at this crudity, and yet when the winter of his soul comes with its woes, and his wishes remain unfulfilled, he dares to go through the same propitiatory acts, substituting Masters where once he had erected the effigy of his god. He fails because under stress he forgets that the impersonal and impartite can have no truck or relationship with the personal. The fane of the impersonal Deity is desecrated and ceases to be a fane the moment money-changers enter its precincts and make of it a market-place for barter and sale.

The *Glossary* defines the second object as "the serious study of the ancient world-religions for purposes of comparison and the selection therefrom of universal ethics." Classifying religions prevalent at different times of the world's history, H.P.B. uses the word "archaic" as referring to the eras that preceded Pythagoras; "ancient," to the periods before the time of Mohammed; and "mediaeval," to those between the time of Mohammed and Martin Luther.³ The same definition of "ancient" can be used by the student with advantage. There are students who have the notion that since H.P.B. has quoted profusely from ancient religions in her *Secret Doctrine* and *Isis Unveiled*, they can substitute a study of these two books for the laborious delving into ancient scriptures. Such a notion is erroneous, for they will find it difficult even after a study of these books to collate the universal ethics of the religions of the ancients. Study and research are not vicarious processes and lose their value if

³ *Isis Unveiled*, I. xliv.

effort is directed away from the original towards aids and commentaries. The sifting of material, the delving deep instead of scratching at the surface develop concentration and orientation that only practice can make perfect. It is comparative study individually undertaken that will prove to the student that the hidden meaning of one scripture and the true basis of its ethical formulae may more often be found in another scripture, especially when the two mystic passages are studied in juxtaposition. But the acquiring of such a clarity of vision is not the only goal of the second object. Such a comparative study shatters the bias which some may have developed for a particular religious belief handed down by sect and creed and parent. The study of universals, wherever found, dispels the fogs that becloud the mind and widens the horizon for a better, larger and deeper appreciation of the first object, namely, the Brotherhood of men. This comparative study tends to make the student break away from the fetters that bind him to sect and creed, and releases him from bigotry, superstition and orthodoxy. The value that the second object carries for the student is shown by H.P.B. in her article "Chelas and Lay Chelas." She says:

A Lay Chela is but a man of the world who affirms his desire to become wise in spiritual things. Virtually, every member of the Theosophical Society who subscribes to the second of our three "Declared Objects" is such; for though not of the number of true Chelas, he has yet the possibility of becoming one, for he has stepped across the boundary-line which separated him from the Mahatmas, and has brought himself, as it were, under their notice.

NOTHING in the world can take the place of persistence. Talent will not; nothing is more common than unsuccessful men with talent. Genius will not; unrewarded genius is almost a proverb. Education will not; the world is full of educated derelicts. Persistence and determination alone are omnipotent. The slogan "Press on" has solved and always will solve the problem of the human race.

—CALVIN COOLIDGE

MAGICON, OR THE SECRET SYSTEM OF A SOCIETY OF UNKNOWN PHILOSOPHERS

[Reprinted from *The Theosophist*, April 1884.—EDS.]

SUCH is the title of an old book, printed in the German language in the year A.D. 1784, and published in the city of Leipzig by one who calls himself "An Unknown of the Quadrilateral Light." The book contains many startling and extraordinary ideas, which, although they may not appear new to the modern Theosophist, are nevertheless interesting to the lovers of Occult lore. Notwithstanding the fact that the said book was printed just one hundred years ago, it speaks in an unmistakable manner of the "Fourth Round" (the present Round of the Septenary Evolution spoken of in *Esoteric Buddhism*), mentions clairvoyance, predicts psychometry, and gives a satisfactory explanation of the occult meaning of numbers.

The unknown editors of this work were evidently a number of Theosophists in Paris, and must have been initiates. The public called them "Martinists," and they were looked upon by the ignorant as a mysterious sect, communicating with spirits, and supposed to be in possession of some awful secrets.

They were said to be people of imposing figure and distinguished by superior education, who desired neither fame, nor power, nor riches, but only truth.

They were kind, good-mannered and virtuous, seeking only the way to perfection. For the information of our Eastern Theosophists who may know nothing of the Founder of the Theosophical sect of the Martinists, Martinez Pasqualis, we append a short biographical sketch of himself and his disciple — Louis Claude, Marquis de St. Martin.

Martinez was born about 1700 in Portugal, of a Mussulman mother and a Portuguese father. Proficient in the Kabala and the secret sciences, he travelled far and wide, and getting initiated in the East he came to Paris in 1768, and soon after founded several Masonic Lodges, called Martinistic, and died finally in St. Domingo in 1779. From its very origin Martinism was a sect of mystics, who not only "believed" in sub- and intra- and supra-mundane spirits, but who evoked them, adding to the Elemental Kingdom of apparitions regular necromantic rites. Later on, when De St. Martin had become his disciple and successor, this distinguished French metaphysician reformed the "lodges" and imparted

to them a far more philosophical character. The latter, who went by the name of the "unknown philosopher" (*philosophe inconnu*) was born at Amboise, January 18, 1743, and died in Aunay, near Paris, in 1803. Having become dissatisfied with the necromantic character of Martinism, he infused into it much of the Swedenborgian spirit, and finally becoming enamoured of Jacob Boehme, he worked out a perfect system of mystical masonry. He is the author of several remarkable works — "On Error and Truth" (Lyons, 1775), directed against the sceptical negation of the Encyclopaedists; "The Man of Desire" (1790); "*Ecce Homo!*"; "The New Man," etc., etc. It is, perhaps, erroneous to attribute wholly his conversion to either Swedenborg or Boehme. His mind was first of all strongly influenced by the writings of another, earlier and still more remarkable theosophist, whose works are now very little extant and whose name — hardly known.

John George Gichtel was nevertheless a very famous theosophist and Rosicrucian and the publisher of J. Boehme's works — born at Ratisbon (1638). The son of very wealthy and influential parents, he became hated by the priests, who could never forgive him the disclosures he made about the immoral life led by the clergy in Germany. As he would not recant, the clergy persecuted him, and drove him finally into exile, forcing him to fly to Holland, where he died in 1720 at Amsterdam in great poverty. St. Martin gives enthusiastic accounts of Gichtel. Like Boehme, he says, he was a born theosophist, wedded from birth to death to Sophia, the eternal Bride (Wisdom). He studied diligently the *Three Principles* and *Seven Forms of Nature*, and having fathomed their meaning, found the true philosopher's stone. In a letter to Baron Kirchberger from St. Martin, who tells the story, we gather that the occult and psychological powers of Gichtel were of a far higher order than those of Swedenborg, transcending them in almost every particular. "In 1672, when Louis XIV laid siege to Amsterdam, Gichtel, by the power of his will, is reported by his disciples to have exercised influence enough to cause the raising of the siege, and afterwards the names of the very regiments and squadrons he had seen in his vision were found in the papers. Princes of Germany and even sovereigns consulted him, and ladies of all classes, old and young, rich and poor, fell in love with him, sought his acquaintance and his hand and were rejected by him."

St. Martin tells a very extraordinary anecdote of him. An enormously wealthy widow offered to marry him, but he gave her no hopes and withdrew into solitude, remaining shut in his chamber for over a month.

One day, as he was pacing about his poor abode, he saw a hand appearing as though from heaven, which joined his hand to that of the rejected widow whose form appeared by his side — and a voice said: “You must have her.” Instead of accepting this as an indication of divine will, Gichtel saw at once “that it was only the widow’s *spirit*, which, in the fervency of her prayers, *had penetrated the outward heaven* (Kama loka), *and reached the astral spirit.*” To this St. Martin adds: “From that moment, he gave himself altogether to *Sophia, who would have no divided heart*; he saw that he was called to the priesthood of the highest order.” Gichtel’s marriage to the heavenly Sophia (the Divine Wisdom) is related by St. Martin in the following allegorical terms: “Sophia, his dear Divine Sophia, whom he loved so well and had never seen, came on Christmas day, 1673, and made him her first visit: he, *in the third principle (linga sharira)*, saw this shining, heavenly virgin (was initiated) . . . and the marriage was consummated in ineffable delight. She, in distinct words, promised him conjugal fidelity — that she would never leave him. . . . She gave him to hope for a spiritual progeniture, etc.” — a language which is too likely to lead anyone who knew nothing of Sophia into supposing that Gichtel was really married, but the meaning of which becomes plain to any occultist, especially when one learns further on that “Sophia gave her husband to understand that if he desired to enjoy her favours *without interruption, he must abstain from every earthly enjoyment and desire,*” and Gichtel did so scrupulously. “At the beginning of his union with Sophia, he thought he might rest there . . . but she showed him that this could not be, and that he must fight for his brothers and sisters (humanity); that he ought, as long as he remained under the earthly covering, to employ the time for the deliverance of those *who have not yet obtained their inheritance* and inward repose.” (St. Martin’s *Correspondence*, pp. 99 and 170).

The following is an attempt to extract the substance of St. Martin’s teachings in a compact form.

I. — DEITY

All that our Theosophists teach, in regard to the fountain of all being, is based upon the conception of the divine unity of the sacred “Three.” The highest being, considered as a unity, is the eternal and continuous spring and source of all thinking and immaterial principles, the root of all universal numbers, the first and only cause, the centre from which all life and the powers of all beings continually emanate and to

which they return.

The Trinity are not one in Three, but Three in One; containing in itself Action and Reaction, Christ — which means the divine principle of Wisdom and a pure substance, flowing from God to Man and called in the holy writ the Spirit of God, or the Holy Ghost.

The infinite sum of divine powers and qualities is based upon a number, for which man has no quotient; their expressions are the book of visible and invisible nature. Two of these necessary qualities are Goodness and Freedom. According to the first one he cannot be the cause of the existence of the Bad, and according to the latter it is its own Law, and consequently its own freedom differs entirely from that of the creatures.

The divine action is not creation out of nothing; but an indivisible and continuous Emanation or Eradiation out of itself. Each of these emanations is indestructible, because the Deity emanates only principles and not compounds. All principles emanate from the same source either direct or indirect.

The direct emanations are the thinking, the indirect, the unthinking ones.

The whole activity of Deity consists in revealing its attributes, which are infinite, like numbers or powers. Independent of time, it reveals itself by those who dwell in it; dependent on time, by those who, although emanating from it, are not *itself*.

II. — THE UNIVERSE

The whole system of our Theosophists is based upon a threefold division: the *Divine*, the *Intellectual*, and the *Sensuous*. They speak of three squares of equal signification. The *divine square*, the seat of divinity, the *intellectual square*, encompassing the various orders of spirits, and the *sensual square*, containing all that belongs to the visible world.¹

I. The living chain of Beings which form the Universe, and their interrelations.

From the source of all life to the smallest germ of matter exists an uninterrupted progression, a radiation of primitive light, a chain of potencies, which flow from unity, the basic root of all numbers.

¹ Had they spoken of two triangles and one square which is one, they would be nearer to the real occult classification and Truth.—Ed. [*The Theosophist*]

Beings are generally divided into *thinking* and *non-thinking* beings. The first ones are either only intellectual, that is pure spirits, or also of an animal nature, which means, they are conscious of life and activity; or they may be only active like the principles of sensuality.

1st. THINKING BEINGS are the first and second potentiality of the all-creating universal terminus and possess a common affinity; because thought can only be common to one class of beings, and the whole realm of the Intellectual consists, like the prophetic rainbow around the throne of God, of so many radiations and reflections of the divine light.

They are divided into three classes:

A. Divine Beings, of which man in his primitive condition was one. Their activity suffers no suspension, they are above the laws of time.

B. Pure Spirits without a grossly material covering — formerly, man's servants, now his superiors and benefactors. They govern man by their pure influences, and they suffer suspensions, being subject to the laws of time. They are the second class of being and it is the highest aim of earthly man to become one like them (Dhyan Chohans?). It is difficult for them to approach man, but man can find them at every step he makes in his upward progression.

C. Mixed Beings. Besides man, who is the last link in the chain of intellectual beings, there are still other beings who have a double nature, an intellectual and a sensual one, and who, more than pure spirits, are adapted to approach man in his state of degradation (Elementals?). The author does not consider it advisable to speak of those in detail.

2nd. UNTHINKING BEINGS, whose life and activity is limited to the sensual. They have no intellect, and all their actions tend only to the acquirement of material comfort and well-being. (Animals, plants and minerals.)

II. The Constitution of these Beings.

All bodies are an expression of the three primitive elements, which are earth, water and fire (in their occult meaning).

Each being has a separate principle by which it exists and acts. All principles are inherently indestructible and simple, and after fulfilling their destiny return to the source from whence they came; but the forms, which are only the sensuous representations of the action of these principles, cease to exist after the principle which caused them ceases to act. There remains no original matter.

Each principle is the generator of its corporeal form, and as each

has its peculiarity of character, an individual or species cannot change its nature but must retain the original number, which determines its character.

There are general as well as special principles of matter, for even the smallest particle of matter contains a principle, which is an indivisible homogeneous unity. General principles differ only from special principles according to their quantity and duration of action. Their action is only one.

Each being has the character of its special principle impregnated on its form and action, and moreover each being has a certain inherent number, and all beings, those that are thinking as well as those that are only active, interrelate and correlate according to numeric laws. All their principles are only either higher or lower potencies of the all-creating unity of infinity, and their natural position and time of action depend on their respective proximity to or remoteness from the same.

III. The Constitution of the Universe.

The life and existence of all the beings are dependent on a continuous influx of the infinite, and the Universe is based upon seven invisible primitive motors or primitive forms, amongst which are divided the various divine powers. They are the seven colours of primitive light, or so-called seven stars around the throne of Deity, which will at the re-establishment of Divine unity be reunited and produce a light whose power will be seven times stronger. In the realm of the spiritual everything is good and pure, in the realm of the sensual governs the evil. All evil is caused by one evil principle, but this evil principle is neither infinite nor eternal. It was originally good and emanated from the infinite good. By attempting to establish a unity of its own it became dark, because it deprived itself of the necessary influence of the divine light by a perverted use of its will, and became the cause of sensuality to which its influence is limited. By this principle and its continuous antagonistic action (contraction), the intellectual world becomes purified and the great work of regeneration accomplished. Its power never affects the pillars of creation, and its whole activity consists in combating the pure agents of the divine light inside the orbit of sensuality, like a heavy mist, which impedes the rays of the sun without preventing the projection of his rays.

• Extension of the supremacy of the infinite, and concentration in unity is the object and aim of all divine, spiritual and physical action. Divinity manifests its perfection to individual beings to withdraw them

from death, by infusing them with life, and all individuals manifest their tendency to unity in the same manner, by exercising their own powers for the good of other beings exterior to themselves, and thereby assisting in the great work of regeneration.

Everything in Nature has a certain *Number, Measure and Weight*. Number appoints activity, Measure determines the same and Weight gives it the impulse for realization. According to these are constituted the unchangeable and characteristic marks of distinction of individual existences with their appropriate organs. The realm of the Intellectual contains not only the original types of everything sensuous, but there is also contained in it (and in it only) the pure, unmixed and unchangeable truth, such as can be comprehended by the reason of man. As the visible and invisible are intimately connected, therefore truth and error in the intellectual plane are necessarily combined with truth and error in the realm of objectivity.

There is no actual procreation in the realm of the Intellectual, no fathers and mothers, which can only be found in the region of the sensuous, and for this reason the physical parent cannot be the father of the intellectual germ of his children. In the intellectual sphere the *Above* always verifies and attracts the *Below*, so that everyone receives each of his good thoughts and aspirations every day directly from the primitive fountain of truth; but in the realm of the physical the opposite law holds good. The earth like Saturn of ancient mythology eats her own children.

There is no other sensuous world than the visible one. Visibility, the periphery of evil, came into existence through the sensualization of the invisible universe by the action of certain germinal principles. This invisible world, which is still hidden in the visible one, could be discovered by man if he were able to draw the veil from visibility and to examine the same. The phenomenon of sensuousness is not based upon a certain basic substance, but upon certain primal elements, which are immediately connected with the higher powers of creation, or upon an invisible and original *fire*, from which are evolved the three *visible elements of Fire, Water and Earth*; but which cannot be derived from one single material essence or be reduced to the same, because the qualities by which they are distinguished from each other are essentially different. Fire belongs especially to the animal, water to the vegetable and earth to the mineral kingdom. There can be only three elements. If there were four, the *visible* world could not perish, because its perishableness is based upon this ternary of sensuousness. Air does not belong to the material elements, but

is a more potent and powerful organ of the originally active fire and its function is to transmit the vital forces to the bodies. From the union and combination of those three elements result *bodies*. The real "*corporification*," however, requires certain means for sensualization, in which consists the link between principles and action, and they are called by the alchemists *Mercury*, *Sulfur* and *Salt*. They are in exact proportion with the three elements and are the vehicles of their principles, and according to the preponderance of one or another element in the process of corporification is it determined whether the resultant body will belong to one kingdom or to another.

There are consequently three things necessary for the process of creation or reproduction in the realm of sensuality.

1. The united activity of two principles, of which one acts from the interior to the exterior and another from the exterior to the interior. These active and reactive impulses must meet together, if something ought to come into existence, and they give us a necessary and universal law for the whole creation, because in the realm of *Intellectuality* as well as Sensuality there is everywhere the same antiphony to be found.

2. The action of an *active* as well as *thinking cause* which governs the above double action. This is to our reason the true "*Principium réale*," and the laws of sensuality are the results of this action, and without a consideration of these laws it is impossible to form a clear conception of Nature. This principle of *Intelligence* does not furnish the germs of the bodies, but vivifies the same; it does not invest man with physical or intellectual powers, but governs and illuminates the same; and whenever this principle ceases to act, dissolution begins. This active and intelligent cause can be known and is realized by everyone who has sufficient purity to perceive the same.

All the changes in the visible universe are determined by the actions and counteractions of its four cardinal points, and the contentions of the elementary principles are directed by the active and intelligent cause which is its centre and circumference.

—A.B.

(*To be continued*)

THE QUICKENING FLAME

Like the light in the sombre valley seen by the mountaineer from his peaks, every bright thought in your mind, my Brother, will sparkle and attract the attention of your distant friend and correspondent. . . . It is our law to approach every such an one if even there be but the feeblest glimmer of the true Tathagata light within him.

—MAHATMA K.H.

It is peculiar to the Tathagata light that it is ever passed from torch to waiting torch. It must be kindled first by contact with the fire in other hearts, through the words, written or spoken, the example, or the briefest touch of the lives of those in whom it burns. Be those who bear the flame Mahatmas Themselves or the humblest of Their followers, however small the gleam or great the light, it has this property of kindling waiting hearts.

Fire does not go in quest of what will burn. Under Nature's law, that in which fire is latent bursts into blaze at contact with the flame. He on the altar of whose heart the Fire of Spirit burns may not blazon forth his deeds; he may dwell in secrecy and silence; but it is a fact that he forms a link between the stir of the market-place and the stillness of the snow-capped Himalayas. He may not choose which men shall light their sacrificial flames from his. Those who have made the altar ready within their hearts will catch fire from contact with him, however casual to all appearances that contact be.

Though it burns in many hearts, it is but One Flame. Those in whom it shines, albeit faintly, bear the proof of closer kinship with the great Masters than the world at large. They have said that the kindling of the light in any heart cannot escape Them. Those who show the gleam become Their special care, not for their own sake, but as potential servants of the race and sharers in Their labours for the common good.

The task of him who awaits the kindling flame is to prepare an altar in his heart and sacrifice thereon his selfish aims and passions, sparing none, lust nor greed nor wrath. His the task also to lay with care the fuel — knowledge of the Teachings, gratitude to Those who place that knowledge within the reach of men, concern for all who tread their hopeless way in darkness. It is the law that when the task is done in appreciable measure, and all made ready for the quickening flame, no man shall wait in vain.

Few men can say what hour the altar fire shall burst into blaze within; by its effects its presence may be known. He in whom it is alight finds his mind-understanding of the Teaching gradually enlightened; his gratitude to Those who guard the Truth down the ages flowers in devotion to Their purposes; his interest in human weal becomes at last a vast and all-embracing love, compassion for the pitiable state of mankind, the Great Orphan, which leaves him no rest but in service.

Not without effort is the prize ours. The fire, if left untended, may, nay must, go out. The murky gloom of materialism will not suffer the Tathagata light to pierce through. Like a candle in the wind, that light flickers in the gusts of emotion. It is quenched by self-seeking like a torch dipped in water. The heart-light must be tended, its flame fed by sacrifice renewed from day to day, and the lower nature purified, until the light within shines forth, as through pellucid air, lighting the way for all and kindling ready hearts to fervent flame.

HE who approaches near to Me one span, I will approach to him one cubit; and he who approaches near to Me one cubit, I will approach near to him one fathom; and whoever approaches Me, walking, I will come to him running; and he who meets Me with sins equivalent to the whole world, I will greet him with forgiveness equal to it.

—*The Sufi Path of Love*

GOOD AND EVIL

Good and evil may seem contradictory, though the difference will depend on the viewpoint from which the subject is considered — philosophical, scientific or ethical.

Philosophically, the ever-changing universe is an illusion compared with the unchanging Absolute. The universal harmony of the All-in-All, the Absolute Good, is disturbed by any change, and, in this sense, all existence is said to be evil. On the other hand, since duality (or, rather, the essential polarity of the two interdependent aspects of life, positive and negative) pervades the whole of manifestation, neither aspect can exist without the other. Light has no meaning without darkness as a contrast, heat without cold, and so on through all the pairs of opposites. Originally, evil was considered simply the opposite of good, its contrast and complement, and it had no moral connotations of maleficence such as we give it today. In this sense there is no such thing as “absolute good” or “absolute evil.” What is good at one time is an evil at another. A thing that is evil compared with another may be good when compared with a third thing. Destruction is not evil in itself. It is the complement of creation, and is essential for regeneration. “Retribution” under Karma is not “evil.” It restores the balance.

From the ethical viewpoint, there was no “evil” before man became a thinking, free-willed being, who could choose to go along with nature and life, or against it. When he does not live up to the best that he knows, to the level of his spiritual development, when he chooses to act like a cancer cell in the body, then, ethically, he may be said to be evil, and he will bring about the annihilation of his separative consciousness that has chosen that left-hand path. The elements of his being will not be destroyed in their essence, since they are part of the whole, but his “ego” will suffer disintegration as they go back to their original undifferentiated state.

As for good, the ordinary, personal good, as most men see it, it can easily become evil, if out of time and place, since extremes meet. There is, however, a Supreme Good, beyond the pairs of opposites, and, to the degree that the human being makes himself “universal man,” he reaches the state of immortality beyond life and death, and thus is able to help the whole.

RANDOM NOTES FROM "THE THEOSOPHIST"

ON ASTROLOGY

[A correspondent having remarked that his faith in astrology had been destroyed as the result of the failure of the astrologers he had consulted to make correct predictions, H.P.B. made the following comment in an editorial note.]

Our esteemed Brother and correspondent was unlucky in his astrological researches, and that is all he can say. Because half-educated astronomers in one country may fail to correctly predict an eclipse, is it a reason why its inhabitants should decry astronomy and call it a visionary science? Besides the great neglect into which astrology has fallen during the last two centuries, it is a science far more difficult to master than the highest of mathematics; yet, notwithstanding all, we assert again that, whenever studied conscientiously, it proves the claims of its proficient correct. No more than our correspondent do we believe astrology capable of predicting every *trifling* event in our life, any accidental illness, joy or sorrow. It never claimed as much. The stars can *predict* (?) no more *unforeseen* events than a physician a broken leg to a patient who never stirs from his house. They show a lucky or unlucky life but in general features, and no more. If our friend was unsuccessful with every astrologer he met, we know at least a dozen of well-educated men who were forced to believe in astrology as its predictions came to pass in every case. A large volume would be necessary to explain in detail the understanding of this ancient science, yet a few words may serve to correct one of the most glaring errors concerning it, not only current among the masses, but even among many who understand and practise astrology, namely, *that the planet make us what we are*, their good and evil aspects causing fortunate and unfortunate periods. Says a Professor of Astrology, W. H. Chaney: "Take to the unphilosophical astrologer the horoscope of a boy born with Sagittarius rising, Jupiter in the same, on the ascendant, in exact trine to the Sun and Leo, with other favourable configurations, and instantly he would declare that the boy would become a great man, a Prince, President -- and so would I. But the astrologer might insist that all this good fortune was *caused* by the boy having been born under such fortunate aspects, whereas I should look *beyond* the birth for the *cause*, and should probably discover that, before his conception, his parents had been away from each other for weeks or months, during which both lived a life of

perfect chastity; that they were very harmonious, in excellent bodily health, their intellects clear, their minds cheerful, and their moral natures strong."

The Egyptian episcope ("overseer"; our English word "Episcopal" is derived from the name of this ancient pagan star-gazer) discovered that in the morning, shortly before sunrise, in June, he could see in the east the brightest fixed star in the heavens, and immediately after thus seeing this star the Nile would overflow. Having witnessed the phenomenon for many successive years, he laid it down as an axiom that this star *indicated* the overflow of the Nile, no one thinking of disputing him; for the cause should be traced to the melting of the snow in the mountains of Africa. Now suppose someone — a sceptic — had heard of this idea of a star *causing* the Nile to overflow, what an opportunity it would have afforded for heaping scorn and ridicule upon the poor episcope! Yet the episcope would have continued to observe the same phenomenon year after year; and being called "moon-struck," a "fool," etc., would not have changed his opinion in the least. Now all the hubbub on this point would arise from ignorance on the part of the sceptic just as nine-tenths of all the disputes and quarrels arise. Teach the man that the appearance of that star at a particular time and place in the heavens *indicated*, not *caused* the overflow of the Nile, and he would have ceased to call the episcope an idiot and liar.

The intelligent reader must now see the point at which we aim — namely, that in astrology the stars do not *cause* our good or bad luck, but simply *indicate* the same. A man must be a psychologist and a philosopher before he can become a perfect astrologer, and understand correctly the great Law of *Universal Sympathy*. Not only astrology but magnetism, theosophy and every occult science, especially that of attraction and repulsion, depend upon this law for their existence. Without having thoroughly studied the latter, astrology becomes a *superstition*.

(June 1881)

[Replying to a correspondent, H.P.B. wrote:]

Our answer is short and easy, since our views upon the subject are no secret, and have been expressed a number of times in these columns. We believe in astrology as we do in mesmerism and homeopathy. All the three are facts and truths, when regarded as sciences; but the same may not be said of either all the astrologers, all the mesmerists or every homeopathist. We believe, in short, in astrology as a science; but dis-

believe in most of its professors, who, unless they are trained in it in accordance with the methods known for long ages to adepts and occultists, will, most of them, remain for ever empiricists and often quacks.

The complaint brought forward by our correspondent in reference to the "class of men coming out of schools and colleges," who, having imbibed Western thought and new ideas, declare that a correct prediction by means of astrology is an impossibility, is just in one sense, and as wrong from another standpoint. It is *just* in so far as a blank, *a priori* denial is concerned, and wrong if we attribute the mischief only to "Western thought and *new* ideas." Even in the days of remote antiquity when astrology and horoscopic predictions were universally believed in, owing to that same class of quacks and ignorant charlatans — a class which in every age sought but to make money out of the most sacred truths, were found men of the greatest intelligence, but knowing nothing of Hermetic sciences denouncing the augur and the *abnormis sapiens* whose only aim was a mean desire of, a real lust for, gain. It is more than lucky that the progress of education should have so far enlightened the minds of the rising generations of India as to hinder many from being imposed upon by the numerous and most pernicious and vulgar superstitions, encouraged by the venal Brahmans, and only to serve a mere selfish end of *aura sacra fames* or trading in most sacred things. For, if these superstitions held their more modern forefathers in bondage, the same cannot be said of the old Aryas. Everything in this universe — progress and civilization among the rest — moves in regular cycles. Hence, now as well as then, everything with a pretence to *science* requires a system supported at least by a semblance of argument, if it would entrap the unwary. And this, we must allow, native quackery has produced and supplied freely in astrology and horoscopy. Our native astrologers have made of a sacred science a despicable trade; and their clever baits so well calculated to impose on minds even of a higher calibre than the majority of believers in bazaar *horoscopors* lying in wait on the *maidans*, have a far greater right to pretend to have become a regular science than their modern astrology itself. Unequivocal marks of the consanguinity of the latter with quackery being discovered at every step, why wonder that educated youths coming out of schools and colleges should emphatically declare native modern astrology in India — with some rare exceptions — no better than a humbug? Yet no more Hindus than Europeans have any right to declare astrology and its predictions a fiction. Such a policy was tried with mesmerism, homeopathy and (so-called) spiritual

phenomena; and now the men of science are beginning to feel that they may possibly come out of their affray with *facts* with anything but flying colours and crowns of laurels on their heads.

(January 1883)

[Under the title "Faith in Astrology" was published a reply by a member of the Madura Branch of the Theosophical Society to an inquiry as to whether he had any faith in Astrology and its predictions. After outlining the nature of magnetism and the influences of the sun and the moon on various phases of human, animal and plant life, the Madura student concluded by saying: "Holding these views, you will see that I do not believe in absolute predestination — a doctrine which, if strictly construed, would annul all inducements to exertion and improvement on the part of the individual." The following comment was made in an editorial note.]

As the subject of Astrology is an important one, we invite contributions on the subject, from members studying the same. We do not quite agree with our brother's views on the subject of predestination, unless he means thereby that course of effects, the causes of which were already produced by the individual during his previous "incarnation." We hold that the science of Astrology only determines the *nature of effects*, by a knowledge of the law of magnetic affinities and attractions of the Planetary bodies, but that it is the *Karma* of the individual himself which places him in that particular magnetic relation. However, the claims of the *Science* of Astrology are ably put forward by our brother, and it would be interesting to have good contributions on the science itself.

(February 1885)

[The following appeared under the title "A Remarkable Astrologer."]

In our last number, we published a contribution on the subject of Astrology by one of our brothers of the Madura Branch. We now find in the *Subodh Prakash* of 28th January, a weekly Anglo-Vernacular paper, published in Bombay, an account of a remarkable astrologer, named Kashinath Pandit, who has been staying for some time in Bombay. Not only can he draw horoscopes, but he is also said to be able to write down beforehand the question a visitor desires to put to him, and as soon as the question is put, he throws before the questioner the paper on which both question and answer have been already written by the

astrologer. The result in these cases is arrived at by astrological calculation and must not be confused with what is known as simple clairvoyance.

If all that is said in the article be true, it only confirms what has been stated often in these columns, that although the science of astrology is based upon mathematical calculations, it is impossible that the precise results of each of the innumerable combinations which may occur could be calculated and written down by any mortal man, and that, therefore, in order that his astrological predictions may be correct, the astrologer must be versed not only in the *science* of astrology, but also in its *art*, that is to say, by purity of life, thought and deed he must develop his clairvoyant perceptions so far as to be able to take note of the minutest combinations possible in every individual case, and the effects they produce on one another. . . .

(March 1885)

[The following note was appended by H.P.B. to an extract from *The Pioneer*, treating of the fact that astronomers begin to suspect "some connection, not unlike that dreamed of by the old astrologers, between the position of the planets and the fortunes of our earth."]

The next step will be for the modern astronomers to discover that no mere change in atmospheric temperature accompanying the conjunctions of planets affects human destinies, but a far more important and occult power, the magnetic sympathy between the various planetary orbs. Astrology may have fallen into contempt under the influence of improved modern science, but undoubtedly the time is coming when it will again have the attention it deserves and recover its ancient dignity as a sublime science.

(February 1881)

[The following was appended as a footnote to the article "Replies to Inquiries Suggested by 'Esoteric Buddhism'."]

. . . The ancients connected every terrestrial event with the celestial bodies. They traced the history of their great deified heroes and memorialized it in stellar configurations as often as they personified pure myths, anthropomorphizing objects in Nature. One has to learn the difference between the two modes before attempting to classify them under one nomenclature. . . .

(October 1883)

THE OCCULT WORLD

WHAT IS TRUE of the worlds revealed by the microscope and the telescope is equally true of that of the Occult. Interpenetrating the world of ordinary vision exists the universe of the minute, visible only to the microscope. In the infinitudes of space is a multiplicity of stars, the existence of some of which only the most powerful of the modern telescopes reveals. There is not an Angula, one finger's breadth, of void space in the Boundless Whole, and yet our fleshly eyes see more emptiness than fullness. The atomic and the starry universes are not distinct geographical areas, though such an illusion exists in the untutored mind. Sidereal lords have their microscopic universes and atomic units are surrounded by stellar cosmoses.

The existence of the minute world was not suspected until Anton van Leeuwenhoek perfected the microscope. Just as this world once existed unsuspected by human beings, so does the Occult World exist unsuspected by the men of our twentieth-century scientific era.

The aspirant for the spiritual life is asked to leave this world and force his entry into the Occult. This is often mistaken for some strange geographical area: on some Himalayan height, in some Saptaparna cave, of some part of Tibet or Tartary is this Occult World conceived. Thus many errors result, involving not only loss of precious time, but also waste of beneficent opportunities.

The Occult World is in coadunition but not in consubstantiality with the human world. It is not somewhere away from the haunts of men; it interpenetrates the market-place, the highways of traffic, where human minds exercise ingenuity, where men and women suffer and enjoy; it is where homes are built and families are reared. We need not go to the desert to use our microscope, and we need not repair to the jungle to contact the Occult World.

The Path that leads to the Occult World is set in this one. Men do not see it either because in their ignorance they are unaware that such a Path and such a World exist, or because superstitions draw them to vain phantasy at the best and to necromancy at the worst. The candidate for the Occult World has to learn to pierce the *maya* that envelops all, including this Path. Ignorance and illusion — *avidya* and *maya* — are twins, and by knowledge alone illusion is overcome. Therefore the candidate should seriously attempt a modification of his mind and acquire an attitude of impersonality. A study of metaphysical and

philosophical principles purifies the mind and sets it free, even for short periods, from gross personal considerations; such study opens the vision to glimpses of universal truths. Further, it aids the candidate to view himself as a part of the universal whole, and this in course of time brings about the intuitive urge to take himself in hand, to kill the man of matter in him, so that the man of Spirit may shine. If he pursues his course sincerely and earnestly he will hear within his own heart some such injunction as this: "Seek in the exoteric knowledge the hidden esoteric wisdom if you would know the heart hidden in the man of mind and moods."

There is no dividing line between the esoteric knowledge and the exoteric. The esoteric doctrines are enshrined in the exoteric. If science-facts form the *body* of knowledge, philosophy is its mind and Theosophy its soul. Within that soul is the hidden Spirit, unrecognized by most but not incognizable. In the pursuit of scientific research we rely chiefly on our senses. Mind predominates over the senses when we shift from the region of science to that of philosophy. The heart takes the place of the mind and the senses when Theosophy is being applied in everyday living. (Let this not be mistaken for the sentimental emotionalism which passes for devotion and brotherliness in certain so-called theosophical and spiritual circles; there, not the heart but the solar-plexus is active!) At last comes to birth the universal and impersonal viewpoint in everything when the exoteric explanations of Theosophy yield place to the esoteric. Then one perceives those facts of the Esoteric Philosophy which flower from a self-examination of the lower self in the light of the Higher Self and the Divine Paramitas.

Every tenet of Theosophy has the dual power to enlighten the thinking mind, to energize the creative will. By the first all problems of life and death, of atoms and universes, are understood because our intellect is aided by the accumulated Wisdom of a very long line of Sages. This is exoteric. By this knowledge we are not able to master the processes of Nature — we recognize the variety of powers in Nature, but we do not know how to wield them. When the creative will in us is aroused, because of the power of the esoteric science, then we are able to master Nature and rise superior to it. This is entering the Occult World. Because we know what Nature does and how she does it, we find ourselves transferred into the Occult World wherein the Immortals wait and watch and bless, always aiding the efforts of mortals.

Therefore has the student of Theosophy to learn to read between

the lines and within the words of the esoteric doctrines. Reincarnation and cycles, *karma* and *yagna*, birth and death, post-mortem states of *Kamaloka* and *Devachan*, of *Avitchi* and *Nirvana*, and all others have more than one meaning. Many are the applications to be made of every teaching. The intelligent and the intuitive student digs deep in the mines of words, phrases and aphorisms, and thus learns the hidden meaning of ordinary truths which are well-nigh incommunicable.

No lily-muffled hum of a summer bee
But finds some coupling with the spinning stars.

We cannot hear the music of the distant spheres by deafening ourselves to the song of birds near-by. Nor will we *live* by giving up our life by suicide. The birth in the Occult World does not imply a death in this, but rather a higher living on this earth which the Occult World carries within its bosom.

Invisible: It cannot be seen.

Inaudible: It cannot be heard.

Inapprehensible: It cannot be grasped.

As we cannot go beyond these three, the three blend into ONE.

Its rising is beyond light; its setting is beyond darkness.

How endless is the procession of things beyond name, returning on their way into the land of nothingness!

These are the forms of the Formless, vague shadows of the Invisible.

Go towards them, and you cannot see their beginning; go after them, you cannot see their end.

—*Tao Te King*, xiv

KARMA

AN ENIGMA FOR THE IGNORANT INTELLECTUAL

The pivotal doctrine of the Esoteric philosophy admits no privileges or special gifts in man, save those won by his own Ego through personal effort and merit throughout a long series of metempsychoses and reincarnations.

—*The Secret Doctrine*, I. 17

IN the popular mind there continue to exist many misconceptions arising from partial knowledge about Karma and its functions. On the negative side, Karma is not fate — a destiny that is imposed on man by an agency extraneous to himself. It is not luck or chance dependent on the hazard of a fickle moment. On the moral and intellectual planes of being, it is not merely the rebounding effect of a cause generated in either body, mind or soul.

The fact of birth, the existence of congenital disabilities and incapacities, the coarseness of the moral fibre, the stifling atmosphere of uncongenial surroundings — all these demand an explanation. If man refuses to take the help of metaphysics to arrive at a solution, he is prone to hide his ignorance, and so he deliberately cuts the Gordian knot by fathering these calamities on God or Devil, or on the hostile and malignant influence of the stars. Actively encouraging these fallacies is a wily priestcraft that seeks all opportunities to inject these ideas as opiates to the tormented soul. Priests of every religion, caste or creed profess to have cures for all ills and aver that life's misfortunes can be mitigated and even reversed by petitions made to God through them (they being the only accredited dispensers of God's favours), or by the offering of litanies where priest and petitioner join in a ceremonial which often borders on black magic. Necromantic practices still continue to wreak their havoc upon man. The ignorant — and among these may be counted not a few graduates from the world's academies — are thus made to tumble through life, derelicts without rudder, and rendered more helpless by those who carry on a lucrative trade in the name of God, the while they recruit souls as materials fit for the Devil's workshop.

Surrounded by superstitions and dogmas, rendered blind by a fanatic adherence to falsity, the man of the world is expected to weed out the poisonous growths that have taken root in his mind. This he has to do before he can plant a foot firmly upon the ladder of that knowledge

which leads to wisdom. Though calling himself learned, the man of our day remains the truly ignorant. Yet, because he is learned and still ignorant, does he by that fact become the more dangerous to those whom he can influence through the power of his head-learning. Such an one subverts ethics and turns a blind eye to immorality, providing for each escapade an excuse and for every indulgence a plausible reason. The Karma for such an one is heavy, but he will remain in blissful ignorance of this till with the maturing of time nature compels him to undo the mischief and the damage and pay the full penalty for his intransigence.

Karma is not only a law that is self-enforcing. It possesses an intelligence that is unique. It looks into the hearts of men and discovers and records even those motives that escape the man's own perception. It discriminates. It can weigh a feather's weight of motive; and, being impersonal, can dispense justice with impartial hand. Its realm extends throughout space, reaching out to any point to perform its duty of re-establishing broken harmony and aiding egos on their upward way. Therefore, he who lives his life breaking every rule and commandment to secure his own pleasure and precedence, mistakes. That which he has sown, he is compelled to reap. He cannot flee from justice. The bailiffs are within himself.

It is a wrong supposition that the tidal wave of Karma can by some means be made to roll back. When one ventures out on the ocean of life, storms of appreciable intensity have to be expected. It is only in land-locked harbours that one is safe, but then the voyage is for the time being halted, and time is fast running out. The wise captain is always prepared for stormy seas and his preparation has been undertaken long before he embarks. Long experiences of countless sailors have gone into the formulation of drills and disciplines best suited to mitigate the effects of wind and water during their hours of turbulence. Similar disciplines and drills exist for the man whose bark is launched by life itself upon uncharted seas — uncharted for him who refuses to believe that others before him have navigated the oceans, weathering storms and leaving behind them guidance to help the unwary.

The first among the lessons to be learnt is that man does not have the power to oppose Karma and subdue it to his will. The suzerainty of Karma over mundane and mortal aspects is total, and since this overlordship is based on impersonal principles, it panders to no personality and accepts no petitions. It is a wise saying this which says: "The ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course."

There is a belief existing among some that confession of wrongdoing

and repentance can undo the effects of wrong causes. That this is erroneous should be clear to most. Any act between two individuals, though seemingly confined to these two, has far-reaching effects. Directly or indirectly it affects the lives of other persons, as where one man of business encompasses the ruin of another. By that act, he may reduce the other's family to penury and thus bring misery and suffering to those of whose existence he may not even be aware. Further, since each thought that precedes and follows the act ensouls an elemental life, that thought during its independent existence as such elemental may under the laws of consubstantiality attach itself to another person and add to his desire to perform similar mischievous acts. Thus, the pebble, carelessly flung into the waters, creates a series of ripples that in ever-widening circles embrace other lives far removed from the original actor and his actions. No confession, penitence and tears, no prayers on bended knees can stop this proliferation of mischief. Both lies and errors have fissiparous tendencies. It is well to remember that a dirt-caked cloth requires a strong detergent and several washings before its original whiteness can be restored. More frightening still is the possibility that the removal of soiling substances may entail a tear or leave a lasting blemish that will withstand all cleansing processes.

Any act of repentance requires the recalling to the mind consciousness of the thoughts, feelings, actions and emotional upsets that accompanied the sinful act. By so doing, the man, without knowing it, treads on dangerous ground; for, by constantly recalling the act, he entangles his mind in it and, as a consequence, generates other etheric lives that accentuate rather than erase the past mischief. Rubbing of festering sores leaves abrasions and these have no soothing effects. Further, this recalling process becomes a focal point of attraction for those lives that carry the messages of hurt and revenge and animosity let loose by those who suffered by the wrongdoing. These create a turbulence in the man's make-up and render him blind to the behests of truth. Sleeping dogs are best left undisturbed. This apart, there is a method of atonement whereby the offender may to a considerable extent discharge his debt to the injured and make reparations to the society whose equilibrium was violated by the inflicting of harm on one of its members. The advice given is to make the best and immediate compensation in direct proportion to the injury inflicted, and at the same time to devote oneself to the good of mankind in the mass with no bias for any sect, person or nation. So can acts of kindness grow from out of the mire of man's inhumanity. The

lotus grows thus from slime, through water, to the air.

It must be understood that Karma does not castigate, but merely affords an opportunity to amend. If harmony is broken, Karma will undoubtedly set it right. But it is also the prerogative of man to halt the wrong effects of his misdemeanours and restore the disturbed equilibrium. By so doing, he begins working with Nature and at the same time learns to become an ally and agent of the Good Law. When man ceases to be hostile to painful readjustments that Karma imposes, when he stops resenting the changes in his circumstances (from affluence to poverty, from fame to oblivion, etc.), he, by that attitude, reorients himself for more serious learning. He pursues his studies in depth where previously he went in for a larger perspective. With such an attitude, he now commences his journey on the thorny road where it will be his task to repress tendencies not pleasing to Ishwara and to eliminate those defects in himself that slow down the progress of his brothers upon the upward way. As corrective measures continue and the danger of abandoning discipline recedes, Karma responds in unmistakable manners to the new circumstances. When the lesson is learnt, the necessity ceases along with the learning.

When man has to some extent grasped the working of Karma in his individual life, he will be ready to glimpse its workings in his corporate life linked to family, nation and race, and then in his universal life through his linkage with all existence — global, stellar and cosmic.

THE CURE, my dear youth, has to be effected by the use of certain charms, and these charms are fair words; and by them temperance is implanted in the soul, and where temperance is, there health is speedily imparted, not only to the head, but to the whole body. And he who taught me the cure and the charm at the same time added a special direction: "Let no one," he said, "persuade you to cure the head, until he has first given you his soul to be cured by the charm. For this," he said, "is the great error of our day in the treatment of the human body, that physicians separate the soul from the body."

—PLATO, *Charmides*

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Do plants have feelings? Can they read one's mind? Do they respond to sound? George V. Hardings' article, "Are Plants Psychic?" (*Mirror*, Bombay, October 1978), raises these among other questions. Outlining what modern research has found out about plant responses, the author writes:

Foremost among the researchers in plant sentience is Cleve Backster, an American polygraph expert whose impulsive experiment with lie-detector equipment attached to a plant started the current trend of scientific investigation into the phenomenon of plant communication. . . . His initial experiments proved, beyond a shadow of doubt, that plants do respond to good and bad treatment. They also respond to human feelings expressed verbally and, surprisingly, telepathically also. . . .

One of the scientists currently working at the Institute of Bioenergetic Analysis in New York is Dr. John Pierrakos. He is delving into the energy fields of men, plants and animals. Dr. Pierrakos' discoveries are even more significant to an understanding of the nature of man than any other mechanistic or biochemical study. His detailed findings, reported in his scientific research paper entitled "The Energy Field in Man and Nature," are a significant contribution to scientific research and analysis of energy fields. He proved that an aura is not a single emanation of energy but contains several layers, each of them different and serving specific purposes.

Using Kirlian photographic techniques he discovered that there are two prominent layers of energy interacting around the surfaces of plants. . . . Dr. Pierrakos also discovered that plants in bloom have a more extensive field of energy emanating from them, with spectacular luminosity around the flowers, and a slow pulsation of energy like a human heartbeat. . . .

Another researcher, Dr. Hans Holzer, in his interesting book *The Psychic World of Plants* cites the case of fellow researcher Patricia Bott, who kept a plant under observation in her kitchen. If she had a fight with her husband, the plant would register disapproval by turning away towards the wall, and the leaves would curl and droop. When she was very angry or mad at anyone and then came close to the plant, it would start vibrating or trembling as if in fear. To placate the plant she would talk soothingly to it, trying to put as much love and meaning into her words, and sure enough after a few minutes the plant would return to normal, as

if it understood that it had a safe home and someone who loved it.

It has also been found that plants do communicate with humans even though we may not be aware of it — a plant can telepathically “read” the human mind and respond to the good and bad, truth and untruth present in human thought. . . .

It is obvious that plants respond dramatically to sounds also. This was confirmed through tests carried out by Dr. Retallack who hit upon the unique idea of testing plant response to sound, particularly music. A set of plants were subjected to acid rock music played at a particular volume for half an hour each day for a week — the plants visibly leaned away from the rock music. But when the same plants were subjected to light classical music, especially the Viennese music of Strauss, they dramatically leaned towards the music as if drawn towards the beautiful sounds of the Viennese orchestra. . . .

Another recorded case of reaction concerned a researcher who deliberately reached out to pluck a tulip flower. To his utter surprise he noticed that as he extended his hand the plant actually drew back! There was no wind to account for this movement. Furthermore, the plant stayed in that position as long as the man considered plucking it, and it seemed as if the tulip was shrinking away from his touch. He then spoke gently to the plant: “Never mind. I won’t pluck you, don’t be afraid!” Wonder of wonders, the plant immediately returned to its former upright position.

There are many similarities between humans, animals and plants — just as men and animals subsist on food, water and air, so do plants. All draw energy from the same energy field existing in the universe; this energy field now referred to as bio-plasma by Russian scientists is a factor common to all. Hence all are mutually connected and interdependent.

We are in a barren period when we have lost that keen sense of oneness with Nature that the ancients possessed. It would be to man’s advantage to make it more widely recognized that plants, like animals, have consciousness and intelligence, that they respond to emotions such as love and hate, and that their growth is affected by the nature of the individual who looks after them. Experiments such as those described above have produced a good result inasmuch as they point to our responsibility towards the lower kingdoms of Nature, for man can influence the growth and development of these “younger brothers” of ours for good or for ill. If used for ill, Nature hits back; if used beneficently, Nature looks on man as one of her creators and makes obeisance.

Today, spurred by growing enthusiasm for psychic phenomena, interest in dowsing has surged. In the March *Science Digest*, under the title "Dowsers Wield Weird Wands: Is It Science, Art, or Magic?" Richard Wolkomir gives instances of the success dowsers have had in locating not only ore, water and oil, but also a miscellany of hidden or lost objects, from booby traps to pirate loot—and this with no more scientific instrument than a "divining rod" or forked twig held in the dowser's hands as he walks over the area he is investigating, and the turning of which shows a "find." Some have even had success in dowsing over a map to locate submarines, or to find underground water, etc.

Other dowsers claim the ability to *move* underground water. When a landowner's well ran dry, Paul Sevigny (who, besides being a dowser, is assistant state supreme court judge in Danville, Vermont, U.S.A., retired Air Force major, former state legislator, and champion international auto racer) located two water "veins" 20 feet from the well, then sledged welding bars into the ground at selected spots to "drive" the veins toward the well. Why it works he does not know, but he has a testimonial from the landowner that, abruptly, his dry well filled with water. He also has testimonials from many other satisfied homeowners, including a Vermont lawyer with a chronically flooded basement. Sevigny "drove away" the troublesome water veins, and the basement has been dry ever since. "Dowsing," he says, "is conditioning your mind to use a sixth sense."

Other dowsing feats are even more remarkable—as, for instance, dowsing for illnesses. In one case, a dowser told a woman she had a mark on her leg that was cancerous. She had thought it to be a beauty mark, but on investigation it did turn out to be cancerous.

In spite of the long record of successes achieved by dowsers and the widespread nature of the practice, many scientists are still skeptical and suggest self-delusion by the operators. Researchers, however, are now taking increasing interest in this ancient art.

Some investigators who are relating dowsing to electricity believe that dowsers are sensitive to changes in electromagnetic fields. Others suggest that they react to changes in terrestrial magnetism caused by underground water. According to Christopher Bird, co-author of *The Secret Life of Plants*, dowsing is no more mysterious than radio waves: "No one could see or feel a radio wave 70 years ago, but within 10 years they were sending music through the air," he says. "And we're right around the corner from explaining dowsing, too."

As two researchers into dowsing once put it, in effect dowsers may be quoting Shakespeare to scientists: "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

Theosophy repudiates the supernatural, explaining the power as the susceptibility of the dowser to certain influences. As suggested in *The Theosophist* for April 1885, in an unsigned review of *The Divining Rod* by Charles Latimer:

It may not be amiss here to refer to an Aryan theory. The Vedantic schools teach that man is, among others, composed of the five elements of earth, fire, air, water and *akasa*, meaning, of course, thereby his *Sthula Sarira* (physical body). The combination of the various elements in different proportions, determines the character of the individual. Cannot the phenomenon of the "divining rod" be attributed to physiological causes, on the hypothesis that the preponderance of the watery or the mineral element in particular individual constitutions leads to a more perceptible effect on the "switch" in their hands, the magnetic and electric currents of a large mass of water or mineral so effectively passing through those individuals as to visibly affect the "divining rods" held by them? This would account for the fact that the "rods" are moved in the hands of certain persons only and not in those of others, and also that certain kinds of "rods" are affected, namely, those which are recognized as good conductors of electricity and magnetism.

The faculty of dowsing bears witness to the relation between man and nature, and folk wisdom as well as the teachings of the ancients confirm this.

Meteorologists predict that serious climatic changes may occur in a reasonably near future. The fear is based on a number of weather extremes that have occurred since 1960. These are enumerated in a report in *The Times of India* for October 12:

In 1961, there was extraordinary rain in East Africa and the lakes there rose to record levels.

The 1962-63 winter experienced in England was the coldest since 1740.

1962-65 was the driest four-year period in the eastern United States since 1738.

The winter of 1962 was the driest in England and Wales since 1743. In 1964, the supposedly ice-free port of Murmansk on the south coast of the Barents Sea was blocked by the Arctic pack ice for the first time known.

In 1964, snow covered all the uplands of South Africa and South-West Africa in June, following the heaviest and most widespread snowfall there since 1895.

The Baltic Sea was completely ice-covered in 1965 and ice surrounded Iceland and stopped shipping for the first time since 1888.

In 1975, the Arctic Sea ice returned to Iceland for the first time in the 20th century and the year also saw a heat-wave sweeping across Western Europe.

The heat-wave reappeared in 1976. In July, the temperatures over a 24-day period in England exceeded the highest monthly mean in 300 years.

In short, in the last 15 years the world had experienced the coldest winter since 1740, the driest winter since 1743, the mildest winter since 1834, the greatest drought since 1727 and the hottest month (July 1976) in 300 years.

The commission of European communities has announced the launching of an investigation on climatic change at a cost of £5.4 million and the World Meteorological Organization has called a world climate conference in February 1979 to examine the impact of climatic change on human welfare.

The signs of the "transition age" referred to by Mr. Judge in *The Ocean of Theosophy* — changes in "every system of thought, science, religion, government, and society" — are evident on every hand. Equally evident, and now beginning to be noted, are other changes, the large-scale effects of the same cycle in its relation to the life of the earth. The modifications mentioned by Mr. Judge are distinctively *human* transitions, but since human beings collectively affect all life on earth, it follows that there must be correlates of change in the earth, its atmosphere and its climate.

For students of occult law, the accelerating rate of climatic and other changes is not a coincidence. Man is intimately connected, physically and psychically, with wide ramifications of conscious and semi-conscious powers in nature. There are numerous indications of the close relationship of human affairs with changes in climate.

In an article on "India's Sacred Cow" (*Human Nature*, New York, February 1978), author Marvin Harris, professor of anthropology at Columbia University and author of several books, defends what to Westerners and even to many Indians might appear to be an irrational custom, as in fact vital to the Indian ecosystem. Despite their scrawny appearance, Indian cattle are capable of sustained hard work, and their labour forms the base of the Indian agricultural system, keeping farmers alive and India solvent, argues the author. The role of the "sacred cow" is described by him thus:

By Western standards, spiritual values seem more important to Indians than life itself. Specialists in food habits around the world like Fred Simoons at the University of California at Davis consider Hinduism an irrational ideology that compels people to overlook abundant, nutritious foods for scarcer, less healthful foods.

What seems to be an absurd devotion to the mother cow pervades Indian life. . . . The easy explanation for India's devotion to the cow, the one most Westerners and Indians would offer, is that cow worship is an integral part of Hinduism. . . . But all this ignores history. There is more to be said for cow worship than is immediately apparent. . . . The ox is the Indian peasant's tractor, thresher and family car combined; the cow is the factory that produces the ox. . . .

Because of this dependence on draft animals, loss of the family oxen is devastating. If a beast dies, the farmer must borrow money to buy or rent an ox at interest rates so high that he ultimately loses his land. Every year foreclosures force thousands of poverty-stricken peasants to abandon the countryside for the overcrowded cities. . . .

The prohibition against eating meat applies to the flesh of cows, bulls, and oxen, but the cow is the most sacred because it can produce the other two. . . . The prohibition against beef consumption is a form of disaster insurance for all India. . . .

In addition to plowing the fields and producing milk, the zebus produce dung, which fires the hearths and fertilizes the fields of India. . . . From 40 to 70 per cent of all manure produced by Indian cattle is used as fuel for cooking; the rest is returned to the fields as fertilizer. . . . It is estimated that the dung used for cooking fuel provides the energy-equivalent of 43 million tons of coal. . . .

The sacredness of the cow is not just an ignorant belief that stands in the way of progress. Like all concepts of the sacred and the profane, this one affects the physical world; it defines the relationships that are important for the maintenance of Indian society.

Indians have the sacred cow; we have the "sacred" car and the "sacred" dog. It would not occur to us to propose the elimination of automobiles and dogs from our society without carefully considering the consequences, and we should not propose the elimination of zebu cattle without first understanding their place in the social order of India.

Human society is neither random nor capricious. The regularities of thought and behaviour called culture are the principal mechanisms by which we human beings adapt to the world around us. Practices and beliefs can be rational or irrational, but a society that fails to adapt to its environment is doomed to extinction. Only those societies that draw the necessities of life from their surroundings without destroying those surroundings, inherit the earth. The West has much to learn from the great antiquity of Indian civilization, and the sacred cow is an important part of that lesson.

In this connection, a note on "Cow-worship" in *The Theosophical Glossary* will be of interest to readers:

The idea of any such "worship" is as erroneous as it is unjust. No Egyptian worshipped *the cow*, nor does any Hindu worship this animal now, though it is true that the cow and bull were sacred then as they are today, but only as the natural physical symbol of a metaphysical ideal; even as a church made of bricks and mortar is sacred to the civilized Christian because of its associations and not by reason of its walls. The cow was sacred to Isis, the Universal Mother, Nature, and to the Hathor, the female principle in Nature, the two goddesses being allied to both sun and moon, as the disk and the cow's horns (crescent) prove. In the *Vedas*, the dawn of Creation is represented by a cow. This dawn is Hathor, and the day which follows, or Nature already formed, is Isis, for both are one except in the matter of time. Hathor the elder is "the mistress of the seven mystical cows" and Isis, "the Divine Mother," is the "cow-horned," *the cow of plenty* (or Nature, Earth), and, as the mother of Horus (the physical world)—the "mother of all that lives." The *outa* was the symbolic eye of Horus, the right being the sun, and the left the moon. The right "eye" of Horus was called "the cow of Hathor," and served as a powerful amulet, as the dove in a nest of rays or glory, with or without the cross, is a talisman with Christians, Latins and Greeks. The *Bull* and the *Lion* which we often find in company with Luke and Mark in the frontispiece of their respective Gospels in the Greek and Latin texts, are explained as symbols — which is indeed

the fact. Why not admit the same in the case of the Egyptian sacred Bulls, Cows, Rams, and Birds?

The treatment meted out to Harijans by caste Hindus has always been a blot on Indian culture. In recent months, the plight of the Harijans seems to have worsened. Commenting on the issue under the title "Values of Life," *Folklore* (August 1978) states:

That 90 million people should have to suffer at all is a disgraceful reflection on Indian values. . . . The law as it stands today is by no means inadequate. Even the 1955 Untouchability (Offences) Act might have sufficed to protect Harijans had it ever been seriously implemented. It was amended last year into the protection of Civil Rights Act, which not only enlarged the list of cognizable offences but also provided for deterrent punishment. The Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Tribes was, at the same time, charged with inquiring into abuses, ensuring prosecution and making recommendations to the Centre. In theory, the system was almost flawless. In practice, it never got off the ground. First, Parliament has never really been sufficiently interested in the Commissioner's reports to act on them. Secondly — and this is far more pertinent — the law serves little purpose in a climate of terror and intimidation, where Harijans are too frightened to lay complaints and in which prosecutions more often than not fizzle out because witnesses dare not offend influential oppressors. It is the climate of opinion that needs to be changed; also the power base in the interior, where politicians, landowners and administrators are all bound by the same sectarian interests. It is impossible to tackle the problem by law alone. The people should be educated in honouring people. Everybody's attitude should be to live and let live. Without this value, the problems of religious minorities and of the Scheduled Castes and Tribes may not be solved by commissions.

Untouchability, a veritable crime against the Brotherhood of Man is the dark shadow of vested interests. It arose in India because the profoundly true and immensely practical teachings of the *Gita* were disregarded. The *Gita* teaches that castes, four in number, exist in the human kingdom as groupings of nature, and that they arise from our *gunas* — the tendencies of our own thought, will and feeling — as well as our *karma* — our outward behaviour or actual deeds. Along with constructive legislation, the *Gita* teaching on caste needs to be popularized.
