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# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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## DURING THIS CYCLE

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, November 1950.—Eds.]

A NEW VOLUME of this magazine begins with this issue. What we have been able to achieve is for our readers to say. What we may achieve in the future is in the womb of the unknown.

Here, on the threshold of a new volume, we must once again recall to our minds the supreme duty of every student of the Esoteric Philosophy: he who aspires to catch the Eye of the Master must kindle in himself the light of sacrifice and serve humanity, now plunged in the darkness of false knowledge—false in its objectives and applications even while accurate at times in its findings and tabulations. Mr. Judge once wrote:

In this age there are great triumphs of science, but they are nearly all directed to *effects* and do not take away the *causes* of the evils. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 121)

The aim of the Esotericist, and therefore of THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, is different from that of the worldly server.

To the Occultist, material advancement is not of the quality of light, and he finds no progress in merely mechanical contrivances that give comfort to a few of the human family while the many are in misery. (*Vernal Blooms*, p. 118)

Service of Humanity is the motto of the Esotericist. But that service is different from what is ordinarily understood as such. That service should be according to the plan of the Great Sacrificers, which plan is clearly outlined in the Message, exoteric and esoteric, of H. P. Blavatsky. Students have to learn so that they may teach.

If learning is confined to self-improvement only, they will not have truly learnt. The reverse is also true: they cannot serve if knowledge is not acquired by the mind and applied in the heart.

This magazine tries to promulgate knowledge in the service of humanity. That knowledge is of the Heart-Doctrine, which alone creates right avenues to service. Its main task is for and with the student-aspirant, to assist him in avoiding pitfalls and in treading the Inner Path of true philanthropy. More than ever we must keep in mind these words of light in editing this magazine; H.P.B. wrote in *The Key to Theosophy*:

Theosophy considers humanity as an emanation from divinity on its return path thereto. At an advanced point upon the path, Adeptship is reached by those who have devoted several incarnations to its achievement. For, remember well, no man has ever reached Adeptship in the Secret Sciences in one life; but many incarnations are necessary for it after the formation of a conscious purpose and the beginning of the needful training. Many may be the men and women in the very midst of our Society who have begun this uphill work toward illumination several incarnations ago, and who yet, owing to the personal illusions of the present life, are either ignorant of the fact, or on the road to losing every chance in this existence of progressing any farther. They feel an irresistible attraction toward occultism and the *Higher Life*, and yet are too personal and self-opinionated, too much in love with the deceptive allurements of mundane life and the world's ephemeral pleasures, to give them up; and so lose their chance in their present birth. (pp. 214-15)

And she sums up:

Many are interested in our doctrines and feel instinctively that they are truer than those of any dogmatic religion. Others have formed a fixed resolve to attain the highest ideal of man's duty. (p. 215)

We must try to help the former to confirm that instinctive feeling and to conform to the task of living and teaching, of learning and serving. As for the latter—THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT must prove a real friend to them and aid them to labour strenuously and practically for the Theosophical Cause. We must assist Theosophists in name to become Theosophists by nature, and help the latter to tread fearlessly but humbly the Path of True Devotion.

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## KARMA-DHARMA

THE WORD KARMA literally means action, and the Universal Law of Cause and Effect operates everywhere and incessantly, manifesting action. All actions are effects flowing from "the mutable radiance of the Immutable Darkness unconscious in Eternity." Or, in the words of the *Gita*, "Karma is the emanation which causes the existence and reproduction of creatures"; and Mr. Judge explains that Karma is "the action of the Supreme which is seen in manifestation throughout the evolution of the objective worlds."

Man, says H.P.B., in his innermost essence is that Supreme; thus there is only One Actor and all else are his actions. That One Actor has hands and feet, eyes and ears, heads and mouths on the plane of matter; He has Divine Buddhis and Thinking Manus, Hearts and Minds, Consciences and Monitors on the plane of Spirit.

Beyond these two worlds is the Actor Himself—unborn and deathless, who out of Compassion Absolute assumes a form from cycle to cycle. He is not man, for He is more than man.

The one power, *Shakti*, of the Supreme is the power to emanate from within Gods, Elementals, Men, and each of them carrying the selfsame power in latency expresses divinity of intelligence in one degree or another. In men that power to emanate has become conscious of itself and manifests as free will. That state of consciousness is reflective, and therefore produces the phenomenon by which man regards himself as independent of his source and his surroundings, and acts as if he were the monarch of all he surveys, whose right there is none to dispute. The power of free will, the power of human consciousness to reflect, producing this illusion of separateness from Nature and Nature's God, makes men forget the unity of the All in and as the One and remember the diversity of the manifold. Thus the spirit of co-operation becomes weak and that of competition strong. One striking result is that the state of the manifold is taken to be a gradation, a series of degrees in rank, merit, etc. The vision of the Real consists in seeing the myriad forms of life as of equal value to the One Supreme Actor. The Yogi in Samadhi sees not a new world, but the same world as all mortals see from a new angle of vision which is, however, in and of his own consciousness.

This metaphysical concept has a very practical bearing on the life of the Theosophical student who wishes to exemplify the pre-

cepts of the Esoteric Philosophy. If Theosophy has to be made practical, its students and promulgators have to endeavour to demonstrate the value of ethical and metaphysical principles by using them in the workaday world. One of the unsolved problems of modern civilization, founded upon wealth and ambition and consequent competition and selfishness, is that of the relation between the employer and the employed, the capital owner and the wage-earner.

The social order in modern civilization is in reality a chaotic mess. It has to be re-formed if peace and harmony and brotherliness are to be its keynotes. The metaphysical concept on which modern society is founded being that of gradation of the many into castes and classes, rank is given according to so-called merit to each nation and race, to groups within a nation, to families, and finally to individuals. High-class, middle-class low-class and other like labels are used to designate the place and the position of individuals, and that mainly according to their bank accounts. A rich rascal is an aristocrat because he is born the son of a Duke or a Raja; a genius is a mere plebeian if he comes of a middle-class family; and so on. In every department of life, distinctions are made according to what a man possesses, irrespective of what he is; if he is a virtuous man, all right; if he is weak and vicious, also all right, provided he can write cheques!

In the business world, the same deceptive principle is applied: money exploits capacity, and capacity weds itself to cunning and amasses wealth. The natural outcome of the false application of the principle of the many without a reference to the One of which the many are aspects, is that ambition and greed assume the form of virtue; promotion of pay and place is eagerly sought for in every shop, in every office, in every bank, even in the charity-organization. The scavenger without whom cleanliness would be impossible forms the pit of the social theatre, while the nauseated drunkard who dirties his surroundings sits in the stalls! And who can blame the scavenger whose ambition and greed is to have money enough to walk into the stalls!

In the India of today the same unfortunate phenomenon is manifest. The correct basis of caste-Varna, according to qualities-Gunas and capacity of action-Karma does not exist; every community is ruled by the false principle spoken of above. Here, too, the scavenger is untouchable, is exploited and kept down; here also

the clerk is ambitious to become manager; and more — young men prefer to be clerks on half the salary that they would earn if they became cooks. The dignity of labour is not recognized and therefore the spiritual principle that scavengers and scholars are of equal value to the One Actor is not even presented to the people for consideration.

In numerous ways the student of Theosophy has to practise brotherhood, always avoiding expressions of partial brotherhoods. The fundamental ever to keep in view is — no distinctions of any kind whatever. On such a basis the Theosophical practitioner has to learn to apply the truth that each profession, each craft, each mode of earning a livelihood is good provided these do not war one against the other. Because the One Actor expresses his powers through each of them, there cannot but be a harmonious relationship between them all. Not Gods but men have caused disharmony and confusion by going counter to the working of the Law which is just to each and so compassionate that all are bound to be benefited by its operation. Equality of the many is impossible from the points of view of the many; but equality of the many is a sublime reality from the point of view of the One.

The first right step in this practice is for the student to learn that whatever his vocation in life, it is his Karma-dharma. Justice has brought about the position in which he finds himself and the compassionate aspect of the Law gives him splendid opportunities to remove defects, to polish off rough edges and to unfold capacities, all of which will steadily improve his status as a Soul. Neither by neglect nor by change will he act Theosophically: by using his vocation not merely as a means of livelihood, but also as a means of self-improvement and of serving others does the student see the spiritual aspect of honest labour. It matters not if one is a lawyer, another a nurse, a third an accountant, a fourth a peon, a fifth a stenographer — all are of equal value to the One Actor and therefore of equal value to the Cause of Theosophy and of Human Brotherhood. The progress of each depends not on attaining some different, so-called "superior" position, but on perfecting himself in his own vocation. A perfect scavenger or a perfect cook is superior as an instrument to a careless nurse or a negligent clerk.

The same principle obtains in the work of the U.L.T. He who prepares the Lodge room and the platform is as good a servant of the Masters as he who expounds the philosophy. Nay, more, a careless or muddle-headed exponent of the great philosophy is a poor servant

of the Great Ones compared to the attentive and conscientious student who puts in order the Lodge room. Not what we do, but why and how we do it, is the important factor. The future Occultist is not made by work executed — begun in a grouch, done in a slipshod fashion and ended with a hope that some other duty is assigned to him in future. He is made by his cheerful performance of whatever he *can* do with a firm position assumed, and that executed with care and concentration and disinterestedly as to results. Small deeds offered by the correct method on the altar of service are transformed into great deeds, from the spiritual point of view.

Many are the employers and many more are the employees in the world of mortals. In the world of Spirit all men are employees of the One Supreme Employer. For the Occultist of the future, all students are employees, earning their spiritual livelihood in the service of the Holy Ones. The remuneration we gain is in the coin of golden Knowledge, the promotion we obtain is that of greater responsibility to humanity, the top of the profession we reach is that we are called upon to serve the world with humility, confidence and love.

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At this present moment of time and space the human intellect as we know it may possibly not be the highest type of intellect in existence. Higher intelligences may exist in other places or may appear in other epochs. And the intellectual level of these beings may be as much above ours as ours is above the protozoa. Then it may well happen that before the penetrating eye of such intelligences even the most fleeting moment of mortal thought, as well as the most delicate vibration in the ganglia of the human brain, could be followed in each case, and that the creative work of our mortal geniuses could be proved by such an intelligence to be subject to unalterable laws, just as the telescope of the astronomer traces the links of the manifold movement of the spheres.

—MAX PLANCK

## A WORD UPON THE OBJECTS OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

[This article by AE (G. W. Russell) is reprinted from *The Irish Theosophist*, November 1892.—Eds.]

1st — To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste or colour.

2nd — To promote the study of Aryan and other literatures, religions, philosophies and sciences, and demonstrate the importance of that study.

3rd — To investigate the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychic powers latent in man.

STARTED in an age grown cold with unbelief and deadened by inexplicable dogmas, the Theosophical Society has found adherents numerous enough to make it widely known, and enthusiastic enough to give it momentum and make it a living force. The proclamation of its triple objects — brotherhood, wisdom and power — acted like a trumpet call, and many came forth to join it, emerging from other conflicts; and out of silence and retirement came many who had grown hopeless but who had still the old feeling at heart.

For the first object no explanation is necessary; but a word or two of comment upon the second and third may help to show how they do not weaken, by turning into other channels, the intellectual energies and will, which might serve to carry out the first. In these old philosophies of the East we find the stimulus to brotherly action which might not be needed in an ideal state, but which is a help to the many, who, born into the world with a coldness of heart as their heritage, still wish to do their duty. Now our duty alters according to our conception of nature, and in the East there has been put forward, by men whom we believe to be the wise and the great of the earth, a noble philosophy, a science of life itself, and this, not as a hypothesis, but as truth which is certain, truth which has been verified by eyes which see deeper than ours, and proclaimed by the voices of those who have become the truth they speak of; for as Krishna teaches in the *Dnyanshwari*: "On this Path to whatever place one would go, that place one's self becomes!" The last word of this wisdom is unity. Underneath all phenomena and surviving all changes, a great principle endures for ever. At the great white dawn of existence, from this principle, stream spirit and primordial mat-

ter; as they flow away further from their divine source, they become broken up, the one life into countless lives, matter into countless forms which enshrine these lives; spirit involves itself into matter and matter evolves, acted upon by this informing fire.

These lives wander on through many a cycle's ebb and flow, in separation and sorrow, with sometimes the joy of a momentary meeting. Only by the recognition of that unity, which spiritually is theirs, can they obtain freedom.

It is true that in the experience of the race, devotion of any life to universal ends brings to that life a strange subtle richness and strength; by our mood we fasten ourselves to the Eternal; hence these historic utterances, declarations of permanence and a spiritual state of consciousness, which have been the foundation of all great religious movements. Christ says, "I and my Father are one." "Before Abraham was, I am." Paul says, "In Him we live and move and have our being."

In the sacred books of India it is the claim of many sages that they have recognized "the ancient, constant and eternal which perishes not though the body be slain," and there are not wanting today men who speak of a similar expansion of their consciousness, out of the gross and material, into more tender, wise and beautiful states of thought and being. Tennyson mentioned that he had at different times experienced such a mood; the idea of death was laughable; it was not thought, but a state, "the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest." It would be easy to go on multiplying instances.

Now in a nature where unity underlies all differences, where soul is bound to soul more than star to star, where if one falters or fails the order of all the rest is changed, the duty of any man who perceives this unity is clear, the call for brotherly action is imperative, selfishness cannot any longer wear the mask of wisdom, for isolation is folly and shuts us out from the eternal verities.

The third object of the Society defined as "the study of the psychic powers latent in man" is pursued only by a portion of the members, those who wish to understand more clearly the working of certain laws of nature and who wish to give themselves up more completely to that life in which they live and move and have their being; the outward expression of the occult life is also Brotherhood.

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## SIGNING THE U.L.T. ASSOCIATE CARD

MOST PEOPLE are accustomed to the usual pattern of organizational membership, and since it has been found that the distinctive character of the United Lodge of Theosophists is not always recognized, it is hoped that the following explanation may be helpful to those asking to become Associates.

Since the Lodge has no connection with any organization and itself has no constitution, officers, rules and regulations, membership fees, etc., there is no membership in the ordinary sense of the world. *Help is given to Associates and non-Associates alike* in their endeavours to understand Theosophy and to apply it in daily life, in order "to be the better able to help and teach others."

The signing of the Associate card is not like signing an application for membership of a society or club that gives the person certain privileges in return for support and obedience to a set of rules. Signing the U.L.T. Associate card implies an important step forward when one has gained enough knowledge of the teaching of Theosophy and of the altruistic aim and purpose of the Theosophical Movement, to be able to affirm truly that one is in sympathy with both. After a beginning is made in the study of the philosophy and in self-energization to become a student-server, the desire naturally arises to put on record one's definite commitment to the role of working partner, deciding for oneself what obligations to take on, according to one's capacities, opportunities and choice.

From the outer point of view, signing the card is a small, simple matter, and for some few applicants it remains, alas, seemingly little more than a transient resolution. Yet its psychological and spiritual value can be very great indeed, being in proportion to the study and devotion (head, heart and hands) brought by the applicant to the Theosophical cause.

All such are truly welcome! The movement needs those who will energize themselves to become helpful and efficient instruments for the great cause of Theosophy with its three fundamental objects:

1. The formation of a nucleus of brotherhood without any of the separative distinctions usually made by people.
2. The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the recognition of their common source, and the demonstration of the importance of such study.

3. The investigation of the inner side of nature, and of the soul and spiritual powers latent in man.

Effort for such a cause transcends any personal ambitions and brings far greater and lasting rewards.

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THE QUESTION as to “how the recent teachings of Occult Science really originated is easily answered. A crisis had arrived in which it was absolutely necessary to bring within reach of our generation the Esoteric Doctrine of the eternal cycles. Religion, both in the West and East, had long been smothering beneath the dust heaps of Sectarianism and enfranchised Science. For lack of any scientific religious concept, Science was giving Religion the *coup-de-grace* with the iron bar of Materialism. To crown the disorder, the phantom-world of Hades, or Kama-loka, had burst in a muddy torrent into ten thousand séance-rooms, and created most misleading notions of man's post-mortem state. Nothing but a few fundamental tenets from the Esoteric philosophy, sketched in broad outlines . . . could snatch mankind from drowning in the sea of ignorance. So, once again the Gates of the Palace of Truth were opened and many willing workers have caught each a ray. But as all the light can only be got by reuniting all the different rays of the spectrum, so the archaic philosophy in its entirety can only be apprehended by combining all the glimpses of light that have passed through the many intellectual prisms of our own and preceding generations.

—Lucifer, October 1888

## THOUGHTS IN SOLITUDE

### I

[Reprinted from *The Path*, January 1887. (102)]

WITHIN the symbols and doctrines of the Christian Church may indeed lie hidden all the truths of the Occult Philosophy, and another and abler pen has already traced the correspondences, but it is necessary to realize differences as well as likenesses, and while Christianity, as a definite system, has embodied for the world many noble ideas, it seems to the writer to have been able to display only one facet of the divine Jewel of Truth—to have been able to trace only a short line of the celestial circle of Wisdom.

Putting aside all such unphilosophical dogmas, as a personal anthropomorphic God, atonement by the vicarious sacrifice of another, eternal damnation and such like, which may be regarded as the outworks of the Creed, and which indeed many of its own professors deny or minimize, and coming to the essential kernel of the system—the inner stronghold of the faith—that which would be regarded as such by all its truest sons throughout these nearly nineteen centuries of its existence, it would yet seem to be but a one-sided statement—a partial view—compared with the all-embracing Catholicity of the Occult Wisdom.

Unfortunately the outworks and exercises above referred to have, during these many centuries, so warped the thoughts and feelings of the populations professing this religion that it is no longer the pure and exalted doctrine as preached by its founder, but something very different. There are, no doubt, here and there good and noble souls, who practise the higher virtues of Christianity, but they are in such a minority that they are quite unable to affect the popular standard.

When one begins to analyse the stupendous outgrowth called Western Civilization, of which steam and electricity, in their practical uses, may be regarded as the types, and to ask how and by what means this vast fabric has arisen, we are informed by those who are able to see below the mere surface of things that the setting of men's minds in a certain direction must have been the factor, and it is only logical that if a man's highest religious duty is put before him as the saving of his own soul from perdition, a tendency of mind which may be characterized as the supremely selfish must

naturally be set in motion. When the converging lines of heredity through many generations have so strengthened this tendency that it has become a potent factor, the development *in excelsis* of the purely intellectual faculties as dissociated from the moral will be seen to be the inevitable result, and from this has naturally evolved the Western Civilization which is spoken of with so much pride. But are not nations, like trees, to be known by their fruits? "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?"

What sins are dwelt on with more emphatic reprobation throughout the whole teachings of Christ than those of hypocrisy and cupidity? And where is hypocrisy deeper than within the Christian fold? So deep indeed, that it has become an integral part of the nature, and is no more recognized as a vice than it was by the Pharisees of old. And where is the worship of mammon more rampant than throughout the length and breadth of Christendom? The preachers of the Churches may utter faint-hearted protests, but the nations nevertheless remain prostrate before their idol, and as steam and electricity extend their sway, and new countries are laid open to modern progress, the more primitive races, to avoid extinction, join in the mad competition for wealth. But whether conspicuously shown in the acts of States lustful to conquer fresh territory, or hidden in the individual character, where it displays itself in the haste to grow rich by fair means or foul, it remains none the less a gnawing canker at the heart of Christendom.

What a gulf there lies between the practice of modern Europe and the divine teachings of the Master!

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon Earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.

And again: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

The teaching of Christ is thoroughly altruistic in its character, and, if it could be literally applied, would exercise a direct and beneficial influence on the human race, but to the impartial student there seems to be none the spirit of whose revelation has been more perverted and degraded by his followers of all denominations, and following the spiritual law whose complement on the physical plane

may be recognized in the axiom that action and reaction are equal, the moral height to which Christ's teachings soared is the measure which decides the depth to which such teaching, when perverted, must inevitably fall, and Christendom may veritably be said to have become Anti-Christian.<sup>1</sup> All the religions of the world have more or less lost the divine afflatus by which they were originally vivified, but it has been reserved for Christianity to mould the life of the nations from the very blackness of the shadows cast by the "Light of the World."

When we ask to what goal or catastrophe this Western Civilization is hurrying, it is still more necessary to have the eyes of those who are able to read the signs of the times. The following is an extract from a letter to which many of the above ideas may be traced, which was signed "Turkish Effendi" (in the absence of any right to suggest the real and more authoritative name), and was published by his correspondent in *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* of January, 1880:

The persistent violation for centuries of the great altruistic laws propounded and enjoined by the great founder of the Christian religion, must inevitably produce a corresponding catastrophe; and the day is not far distant when modern civilization will find that in its great scientific discoveries and inventions, devised for the purpose of ministering to its own extravagant necessities, it has forged the weapons by which it will itself be destroyed. No better evidence of the truth of this can be found than in the fact that Anti-Christendom alone is menaced with the danger of a great class revolution; already in every so-called Christian country we hear the mutterings of the coming storm, when labour and capital will find themselves arrayed against each other, when rich and poor will meet in deadly antagonism, and the spoilers and the spoiled solve, by means of the most recently invented artillery, the economic problems of modern "progress." It is surely a remarkable fact that this struggle between rich and poor is specially reserved for those whose religion inculcates upon them, as the highest law—the love of their neighbour—and most strongly denounces the love of money. No country which does not bear the name of Christian is thus threatened.

But to return from this long digression, take Christianity, I say, in

<sup>1</sup> It is an old declaration of the esoteric doctrine that "the counterfeit religion will last as long as the true one." —[Ed., *The Path*]

its loftiest ideal, as taught and practised by its founder — and it certainly is a very lofty one. Yet were you to analyse the thoughts and feelings of the most ecstatic saint, would they display more than an ardent soul, a devout mind and a holy life?

Those of the Dualist Philosophy might indeed argue that such an one had his feet well planted on the narrow way — but the students of the wider Philosophy of Nature know well that everything on Earth — religion included — is under the governance of natural law. The attainment of perfection is not to be achieved by sentiment alone — *it is a scientific process*, and knowledge is the supreme enlightener.

The devotion of Bhakti is indeed a necessary prelude to progress in the religious life, under the guidance of whichever special cult the neophyte may aspire, but it is as it were the outer court of the Temple, and the Holy of Holies cannot be reached by any save those who have attained knowledge.

Without some previous study of occult writings, this word knowledge will entirely fail to carry home the idea which it is intended to express, and let alone the liability to misinterpretation from this cause, how can anyone pretend to describe it who has himself none of this knowledge, who has not yet trodden one step of the path that leads there, and who can only strain with vague imagination towards the sublime conception of the inmost workings of Nature through her manifold diversity, laid bare before the intuitive vision? However, although it is an act of temerity on the writer's part, these few words may convey some idea to those who are no further on the path than himself.

When the lower states of consciousness have been so welded in the fire of supreme emotion that duty, though involving the most appalling sacrifice, is no longer a thing to strive after with pain and struggle, but is a natural outcome of the life — the absolute expression of unity with nature — when the higher faculties, emotional, ethical and intellectual, whose respective functions may be said to be the perceiving of the Beautiful, the Good, and the True, have been so merged in one that the Buddhi or divine spark which hitherto flickered, becomes a bright, steady, luminous flame — when the "Explosion," as St. Martin called it, has taken place, "by which our natural will is forever dispersed and annihilated by contact with the divine" — then and then only is one fit to begin to tread the path of Knowledge.

That it leads altogether beyond human experience, and entirely transcends what we can conceive, is but too apparent.

The 15th and 16th Rules in the second part of *Light on the Path* may help towards a vague apprehension of what this knowledge means.

15. Inquire of the earth, the air, and the water, of the secrets they hold for you. The development of your inner senses will enable you to do this. >

16. Inquire of the holy ones of the earth of the secrets they hold for you. The conquering of the desires of the outer senses will give you the right to do this.

And the final secret of all may be said to be wrapped up in the mystery of "self." When the knowledge of the individualization of Being is reached, man has learned all that this world can teach him, and in the words "Know thyself" lie folded the ultimate possibilities of Humanity. Knowledge is indeed the supreme enlightener.

There is no purifier like thereto  
In all this world, and he who seeketh it  
Shall find it — being grown perfect — in himself.

Whether any intelligible idea as to the knowledge itself can be evolved from what is here written — it will at least be apparent that a goodness so exalted as to be scarcely imaginable as a human attribute is required as the necessary qualification for the commencement of the search.

Well did Shelley write in his "Prometheus Unbound":

The good want power, but to weep barren tears.  
The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.  
The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;  
And all best things are thus confused to ill.  
Many are strong and rich, and would be just  
But live among their suffering fellow-men  
As if none felt: they know not what to do.

And the current Theologies of the world have not been able to remove the reproach. In the case of Christianity the failure may, to a great extent, be owing to its sentimentality and its failure to realize that to be supremely good it is necessary to be wise — though wise with a higher wisdom than that referred to in the above lines.

But Christianity's greatest fall has probably been its disregard of the facts of Reincarnation. Whatever interpretation may be put

on the great Master's utterance on this subject, and however the early church may have regarded it, it is notorious that Christianity, as interpreted by its mediæval and modern professors alike, has entirely ignored the evolution of the soul progressing through innumerable earthly existences, and has instead adopted the illogical and unphilosophic dogma of a human soul born into the world from nothingness and meriting by its 70 or 80 years of earth-life an Eternity of bliss or an Eternity of misery.

But one does not expect of the child the reason-guided actions of mature manhood—its teachings must be given in the form of dogma, to which it must yield implicit obedience. Nor do we expect the infant school to provide the same training that the University does for the cultured intellect. Similarly the various Religions of the world have been the infant schools for growing Humanity until the complete stature of manhood should be reached.

It has been remarked by some Christians who are much enamoured of the self-devoted love exhibited by the Founder of their faith, and the strong feeling of personal love and attachment thereby called forth from them, that Theosophy is cold because it does not dwell exclusively on that side of the nature, but while each separate Religion that has existed in the world may be regarded as the analysis of one special characteristic of the mind, the occult philosophy gathers into one synthetical whole all its varied characteristics. The different religions accentuating as they do different truths may be regarded at the same time—according as one looks at them from the scientific or religious standpoint—and both views are equally tenable and mutually comprehensive—as natural evolution of the peoples among whom they arose, and as revelations from the unseen universe of partial truths which have to be received and assimilated before mankind can be fitted to comprehend the Supreme Truth in its abstract purity.

It will be seen from the foregoing that what we call Theosophy is the supreme expression of all Religion, as it is the final synthesis of all Science—for it is faith merged in Knowledge.

When one looks abroad on the world and sees how few even among the Religious, the Cultured and the Intellectual are able to grasp the Truth by intuitive vision—while the masses of mankind are sunk in degradation and semi-barbarity, the mind is lost in the vistas of the future, during which the present Religions or those which may have taken their place will have to continue their work

of teaching.

Education is slow and Evolution is tardy, and the whole circle of wisdom is slow to trace: but the march of Nature has been as it was bound to be — for the best — and the line of Pope,

One truth is clear, whatever is is right,

seems more and more to be borne in upon the mind as an Eternal verity.

Destiny has guided us till now, and has made us what we are, but we who now realize the omnipotence of the divinely guided *Will*, have become potentially the makers—let us take it in our hands and shape our own career, for the sooner we rise to the heights of our Being, the sooner shall we be able to stretch down helping hands to the suffering Humanity of Today.

—PILGRIM

THE EXALTED ONE addressing his disciples said thus:

The ocean, monks, when it swells makes the great rivers swell; the great rivers when they swell make their tributaries swell; these when they swell make the mountain lakes swell; when they swell they make the mountain tarns swell.

Even so, monks, swelling ignorance makes activities swell, swelling activities make consciousness swell, swelling consciousness makes name-and-form swell, swelling name-and-form makes sense swell, swelling sense makes contact swell, swelling contact makes feeling swell, swelling feeling makes craving swell, swelling craving makes grasping swell, swelling grasping makes becoming swell, swelling becoming makes birth swell, swelling birth makes decay-and-death swell.

The ocean, monks, when it ebbs makes the great rivers ebb, these make the tributaries ebb, these make the mountain lakes ebb, these make the mountain tarns ebb.

Even so, monks, ebbing ignorance makes activities ebb, and hence comes ebbing of consciousness, name-and-form, sense, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, becoming, birth, decay-and-death.

## LESSONS OF SUFFERING

The ladder by which the candidate ascends is formed of rungs of suffering and pain; these can be silenced only by the voice of virtue.

—*The Voice of the Silence*

SUFFERING, sorrow and pain are never far away from the ordinary run of humanity. They are at our heels always. No doubt we have our moments of laughter and ease and well-being; but even at such times, the clouds are always there on the horizon with the power to dim or blot out the sunlight from our life. Will the weary and sometimes horrifying aspects of suffering never stop to make our life miserable by visiting us with sorrow and pain in such measure as to make us tired and dejected of life itself? The sceptic and the truly heathen of the Race are apt to say that there is no hope for us till death comes and closes the sad account. But is that really so? Do suffering and woe come to us as uninvited guests to shoot their cruel darts into our mind and body for things done and undone? May it not be that behind that outward manifestation of a pitiless nemesis there is present, though hidden from view, a justice-oriented mercy that opens up an ideal opportunity to make amends for the past and at the same time to immunize us against similar attacks in the future?

That which appears to us as the most repulsive circumstance is abject poverty. Lack of food, clothing and shelter continue to bedevil people even among the so-called rich nations. If you are born to poor parents, if from riches you are suddenly thrown into poverty, what should your reaction be? Philosophy answers in this wise: This poverty is an effect the cause of which has been sown either in this or in a preceding life. That cause has now found its legitimate and timely expression. You cannot wish away this effect. Therefore, even though you may have acquired good qualifications for earning a decent wage, nature seems to marshal such circumstances as thwart your efforts to move out of the poverty line. Why is this so? May it not be that Nature gives you an indication that poverty is *good* for you and that it may in time provide you with valuable opportunities for the acquisition of powers and strength, both of which are at present lacking in you and which when acquired will help you to serve man and nature all the better? Poor in physical possessions, you can ennoble life and by your efforts and example

make a desponding brother take heart again. Poverty had never the power to stop anyone from bringing a smile on the face of another who in the struggle for existence feels that he is forlorn.

Further, it is only the fact of your being poor which will be able to convince the army of the naked and the starving that you are one with them; and feeling this unity in suffering, they will come to you for a solution of their own problems as also for the removal of the great load of pain that gnaws at their vitals. Turn your poverty into riches and the poor will turn away from you. They may respect your riches and even try to secure some of it for themselves, but basically they will now see you as one gone to the opposing camp of exploiters and their love and esteem for you will have wilted at the sight of your wealth. Do you know how it feels not to have one square meal for days? Have you felt the misery of the exploitation to which the poor are always vulnerable? Have you felt the anguish of a mother who sees life ebbing away from her only son because she cannot afford medical aid? Envisaging misery is one thing; it is totally inadequate to help you gauge the depths of despair of those who are plunged in it. And yet, knowing all this, there are only the very few who choose to remain poor, not inviting nor trying to acquire wealth so that they can by the sacrifice of their own ease learn to lift even a little of the great pain to which millions are heir.

Yet another consideration. Take the case of one who is continually beset by ill-health. He suffers intensely not only because of pain and what it does to his outlook on life, but because he is prevented from doing the good that in his enforced idleness he realizes he could have done if he had been free from ill health and the draining of strength. This suffering and the incapacities it inflicts on him may be the result of several causes. He may richly deserve it. He may have abused his own body or that of another; he may have repeatedly violated the laws that govern the bodily functions. Real suffering comes only to the habitual law-breaker who has ignored the warnings that nature always gives as an indication that he is straying away from the correct path. When suffering does at last shake him up into asking himself the reason for his ailment, he goes for relief and advice to his physician. He takes the cure and cares little about the advice that in most cases may be of very little value. For, the physician's knowledge of planes other than the physical is still largely incomplete and he may therefore ad-

minister what he calls curatives but which may only succeed in pushing back the malady instead of throwing it out of the system. It is now recognized that anger, envy, greed and the lower passions play havoc on the bodily organs and that most ailments can be traced to the states of one's chaotic and undisciplined mind.

The bodily illness, the depleted strength, can be made to abate if not vanish, for once that the lesson is learnt the necessity for the ailment ceases. The real question that the patient alone can answer is: Has he learnt the lesson? Will he, in the future, deliberately avoid the mistakes that threw him into the malaise? Did the unpleasant states of ill health induce in his mind an orientation away from the vices and inducements that are ever ready to troop in behind the conquering lures of materiality? Further still, does the suffering and handicapped soul arrange his behaviour and the pattern of his immobilized life to give an example of a suffering patiently borne and an aptitude, however limited by adverse circumstance, to aid and comfort another who is undergoing privation and suffering more than himself? Ill health brings with it the time for introspection, and happy is he who grasps this opportunity.

For him who would understand why suffering comes and who would turn its force to aid progress, a knowledge of the Law of Karma is absolutely essential. Very simply stated, it is the law of cause and effect which in ethical terms means that an undesired circumstance comes to him who either in the past or in this life sowed the causes of the present discord. It is the very few who in practice apply this law to understand what life brings to them either of the pleasant or the unpleasant. There are those, and their number is legion, who strain against and fight that which they call a calamitous fate. He who runs away from the punishment he rightly deserves; he who shies away from the effects of his own past misdeeds and seeks to throw the blame on either god, devil, or men, becomes unfit for promotion to the higher life. The errant school-boy fails in his exam and must perforce repeat his class. When pain and suffering, sorrow and disease and want bedevil the person, has he the courage and the innate honesty to acknowledge that these are of his own making because effects can come only as results of causes sown in the past? Does the unpleasant experience draw him closer in his veneration of Karma and make him seize the occasion for a march onward to a better life and a deeper understanding of the sorrows of other men? If he overcomes his own limitations he

will certainly be in a better position to help others who are afflicted.

It is suffering that pushes the individual into a position in which he begins to ask — Why? And once this phase comes on him, he is open to receive the true knowledge that enables him to understand both the cause and the cure of his pain. And yet the dreadful possibility remains that there is no true server of the truth within his reach to give him hope and help. He then succumbs to the seductive preachings of those who are on the numerous paths of error and thus goes blissfully on to his perdition. Was there a student of Theosophy near at hand who faltered and failed in his duty to help? Let each prove his own work.

Once that a person takes his life into his own hands and refuses to live upon the love of others, he realizes that the only cure for all ills can be found in an orientation of his mind towards a deeper understanding of those unchanging laws that govern life. He now begins to understand that these laws cannot be violated with impunity and that the first law to which he has to make his obeisance is that of Brotherhood. Once he realizes the sanctity of this law, he dare not break the bonds that link man to man and man to Nature. The hurt caused to another or even the mute acquiescence in hurt being inflicted may find its reactions on the planes of body, mind or soul, depending upon the lesson that Karma chooses to impart to the erring human. The killing of animals for sport, the pain and torture visited on animals through vivisection and other atrocities, have their violent repercussions on vast masses of humanity. He who employs himself in an industry which manufactures or supplies armaments that are intended to kill men and other lives, lends his hand to the rude and violent breaking of Nature's harmony and thereby assumes the responsibility of rendering account to a law that is not open to deviation through prayers or petitions.

When a transgressor of the Law meets with his just visitations of pain, sorrow and even torture, he usually raises his hands to high heavens and, blind to the enormities of his own transgressions, asks why suffering comes to him. To such, and it is a vast community of benighted souls, the missionary of the true knowledge has to go out and preach the real philosophy and the ancient doctrine. This is his primary duty, his first act of tribute to the Highest. It is his only acceptable prayer to the One and the Sole.

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## THE GUIDING LIGHT

MEN like to think the "heart" the container and source of good alone, and the word is commonly so used. Yet a passage in *The Voice of the Silence* shows duality in the heart; and we intuitively recognize this when we speak of our "heart of hearts" as the most true, dependable, one-pointed part of our nature. The *Voice* indicates that from the heart itself come the opposites of loyalty and disloyalty, of steadfastness and fear. If the heart fails in surety, if "the heart-light goes out," then also from the heart will come darkness. "A dark and threatening shade will fall from thine own heart upon the path, and root thy feet in terror to the spot."

Coming thus from the depths, this kind of darkness is the worst. It is "lethal," stupefying, arising from the lowest consciousness in man, the "nether soul."

In an animal this low consciousness is unblameworthy; for the higher is only faintly beginning, and the animal lives in its self-inverted and self-confined consciousness without moral perception or moral responsibility. The consciousness of man has of course a far higher degree of intellect. Yet if a man's intellect is busy devising only countless self-gratifications, if his heart is chiefly filled with these, not merely is that intellect itself degraded, but the whole man lives mainly on the animal level. His heart-light is dim. He is nearly as far from using a sense of responsibility as a gorilla is.

The *Voice* gives lesson after lesson in gaining the virtues that are the basis and source of heart-light. Minor degrees of these virtues any true seeker already possesses. They have made him the seeker he now is. But there comes a time when the smaller degrees of virtues flow together into collective or large virtues. Occultism mentions seven such Great Virtues and also ten, corresponding naturally to the seven and ten planes of being. They are distinct, yet always interblended and interdependent. Figuratively they are called Gates or Portals and Paths on the One Path of inherent destiny, of Karma and evolution.

In working for further progress, student sees that as he attains an added degree of a virtue (so passing through a Gate, small or great), he finds before him not only the joy of victory but also further obstacles and "more pitfalls." In fact, inherent in the very joys are special and corresponding difficulties — difficulties he cannot even see without going through that added Virtue-Gate.

For example, beyond the Great Gate *Dana*, "love immortal," lies a joy arising from the particular nature of that Virtue itself. And there also lies his reward of merit, the "sunny glade" of happiness. Yet the joy and the reward offer their corresponding temptations. Is he not tempted by satisfaction in self-attainment, by overconfidence, or by a tendency to settle there in the glade of happiness?

To mention an instance: any religious system, whatever its name, whose follower says in effect: "God is Love and Law. I and my friends have learned to be loving and law-abiding, *therefore God will take care of me and mine*" — does not that system lead its followers into a "sunny glade" and hold them just there? Millions are basking in that glade, through ignorance, and thereby piling up unawares a special Karma. For are we not to become conquerors of our *weal* as well as of our woe?

Indeed, great misconceptions of Love and Law are possible. A Pilgrim who lingers to enjoy his *weal* may easily become encased in a self-righteousness that is legality — and denying love may judge all others to be in hell because they too are not in the glade. Very different is this from that Love which is "Compassion . . . the Law of LAWS . . . Alaya's SELF . . . the light of everlasting right . . . the law of Love eternal."

When, therefore, a Pilgrim, having taken the early happy steps in learning the nature of Love and in obeying Law, finds that his remaining ignorance is holding him in that glade of partial understanding — if he is not to frustrate through this form of temptation the entire purposes of his life — he must arouse his will to progress into higher concepts. Through right action he must gain clearer perception of the great Law that men do not exist for dwelling in pleasant vales, but for struggling in continued achievement up the steep mountain sides.

Rejecting thus false views of the virtue of Love and sensing higher Laws, he grasps more clearly the nature of the next great virtue, Harmony, whose chief Karmic Portal he will some time pass. Hence, though his path may still seem "verdant," his "song of hope" is less confident, because he sees how little reason he has for self-gratulation. He must grow and grow in order to step over the "Karmic pebbles." Now indeed on the long road his heart-light may pale; fear and doubt may attack. Yet through the mere slowness of his advance he may come to perceive his need of an added degree of still another virtue — patience, fortitude, quiet endurance

and control; "plugging on," rewards or none, yet following the Law and permitting no loss of love. With greater clearness he understands that his further way — as his past — could be "lighted only by the light of daring" — perceives that his heart-light must more and more be the steady fire of selflessness and intelligent firm-seated Will.

An earnest Pilgrim, hearing himself called a "candidate for light," for the warm glow of true Compassion, may question how he can intensify his purpose, how become more than only a candidate. His own past gives him the answer. All along his road, from the first conscious recognition and efforts to reach something higher and yet higher, his progress has depended on his feeling of kinship with all other beings. Not self-superiority, not clannishness, not wish for gain, has been his means of growth. So now, even more than ever, when he has begun to approach the Great Gates, the direction of his will must be toward humaneness. If he does not take up his share of "humanity's great pain" by lessening his own and others' burden of ignorance, the doors of the Great Virtues cannot open. His heart-light is still too dim.

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THERE is one notable difference between the Christian Churches and our Society, and it is this: Whereas every baptised child or adult is called a *Christian*, we have always drawn a clear and broad line between a *Theosophist* and a simple member of the T.S. A Theosophist, with us, is *one who makes Theosophy a living power in his life*. We have been often accused of *hating Christianity*. This is as untrue as it is unjust. Some of the teaching ascribed to Christ, teaching which he has in common with other great religious leaders, is admirable. But we would be as untruthful as our accusers, were we to show anything like a friendly feeling or sympathy for dogmas and ritual or that which the late Lawrence Oliphant called *Churchianity*.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## THOUGHTS ON KAMA-LOKA

[This article by "An Eastern F.T.S." was originally published in *The Theosophist*, March 1885.—Eds.]

IN CONSIDERING this subject we must, above all things, take care to realize that the seven principles in man are not several entities or substances that can be separated and each considered as a distinct individuality having definite characteristics peculiar to itself. In Sanskrit the different principles are called *Upadhis*, i.e., the sheaths or seats of the different states of existence of the ONE LIFE.

The seat of consciousness which gives rise to the feeling of individuality and the sense "I am I" is in the fifth principle.

If there is no fifth principle, i.e., if there is no consciousness of individuality, all the other states of existence are non-existent; for, without a percipient ego there can be neither perception nor any object of perception. Hence it is said that without the son (the germ of consciousness in the Logos roused into activity at the time of Cosmic evolution) there is no Father or Mother. The Father and the Holy Ghost come into existence when the Son is born, and this is the true occult explanation of the Trinity in Unity and Unity in Trinity. Perhaps it may be objected that animals can take cognizance of existence although they have no fifth principle; but the reason for this is that although the fifth principle is not *united* to the lower principles of the animals, it yet *overshadows* them. Thus, properly speaking, it is the fifth principle only which plays a prominent part in the various states of man in life and after death. By its association (no matter how, for the present) with the lower principles, it generates earthly and material tendencies which attract it downwards. At the same time, being *overshadowed* by its father, the sixth and seventh principles, it generates higher aspirations which attract it upwards. After physical death, when the entity passes into *Kama-Loka*, the real struggle is confined to the fifth principle alone, that is, to the seat of consciousness together with the affinities generated in it during its earthly incarnation. In *Kama-Loka*, therefore, the fourth principle of *Kama-Rupa*, which is the *Upadhi* or seat of all earthly desires and passions, etc., drags towards itself those affinities of the fifth principle which are of a material nature, while the higher aspirations are attracted towards

the sixth and the seventh principles.

The conception may be made clearer by remembering that the seventh principle is the source of energy, while the sixth principle is merely the energy radiated by the seventh. The states of existence of man may be divided into three which can be again divided into seven. The first three are: physical life, astral life and spiritual life. The seven states are: (1) physical life, (2) the state between physical and astral life, (3) the astral life, (4) the state between the astral life and the spiritual life, and (5, 6, 7) the three states of spiritual life. In physical life, all the physical activities are strong while the astral life is exhibited in the temporary cessation of the functions of physical activities, as takes place in sleep, etc. Each life manifests itself only on those spheres to which its organization is adapted. Thus, for manifestation on this physical world a physical organism is essential, and without its help no activity can be manifested in this sphere. In this life we have as it were brought with us such an accretion of principles as has been produced by the *effects* of the causes generated in a previous incarnation. At the same time we have an organization which enables us to generate new causes. When the physical body is worn out by the activities manifested through it, the cohesive force which held its particles together becomes weaker and weaker until physical death takes place. We do not therefore die at once (except in cases of sudden death caused by accidents, etc.), but are gradually dying every moment of our lives. The vital principle, finding its present *Sthulasarira* unfit for habitation, leaves it, to animate some other *Sthulasarira*. The third principle, which is the agglomeration of the magnetic emanations of the physical body, cannot but die at the death of the latter. The fourth principle, however, by its contact with the third in physical life, has gathered round itself some of its essence. But this essence is like the smell of a rose, which lingers only for a time after the rose has been destroyed.

Hence it is that the so-called astral body is seen at a distance by the friends or relatives of a dying man. The concentrated thought, an intense desire to see a friend, etc., clothes itself in the fourth principle, which, by the essence of the third gathered around itself makes itself objective to the distant friend. And such a manifestation is possible only so long as this essence is still retained. This is the reason for the Hindu custom for burning the dead, for when

the body is once burnt, no more astral essence can be drawn out of it. But a buried body, although in the process of decomposition, still furnishes the aura, however feeble it may be, through which the dead entity finds itself able to manifest itself. In the dying man the struggle between the physical and the astral man goes on till it ends in physical death. This result produces a shock stunning the astral man who passes into a state of unconscious sleep until he reawakens into the *Kama-Loka*. This sleep is the second state of existence. It will thus become apparent why it is that "apparitions" are seen at the time of death. Sometimes it so happens that these "apparitions" are seen some time after the supposed death of the man. But on careful examination it may be found that the man only *appears* to be dead; and although the medical faculty may not be able to detect any signs of life in him, still, in reality, the struggle between the physical and the astral man is not yet ended.

It is because this struggle is silently going on that the ancients enjoined solemn silence in the awful presence of death. When the man awakens into the *Kama-Loka*, he begins his third state of existence. The physical organization, which alone enables *man* to produce causes, is not there, and he is, as it were, concerned only with those affinities which he has already engendered. While this struggle in the fifth principle is going on, it is almost impossible for the entity to manifest itself upon earth. And when a dweller on this earth tries to establish a connection with that entity, he only disturbs its peace. Hence it is that the ancients prohibited these practices, to which they gave the name of necromancy, as deadly sin. The nature of the struggle depends upon the tendencies engendered by the individual in his physical life. If he was too material, too gross, too sensual, and if he had hardly any spiritual aspiration, then the downward attraction of the lower affinities causes an assimilation of the lower consciousness with the fourth principle. The man then becomes a sort of astral animal, and continues in that state until, in process of time, the astral entity is disintegrated. The few spiritual aspirations that he might have had are transferred to the *monad*; but the separate *consciousness* being dragged into the animal soul, dies with it and his *personality* is thus annihilated.

If a man, on the other hand, is tolerably spiritual, as most of our fellowmen are, then the struggle in *Kama-Loka* varies according to the nature of his affinities, until the *consciousness* being linked

to the higher ones is entirely separated from the "astral shell," and is ready to go into *Devachan*. If a person is highly spiritual, his *Kama-Loka* is of a very short duration, for the consciousness is quickly assimilated to the higher principles and passes into *Devachan*. It will thus be seen that in any case intercourse with the *Kama-Loka* entities is detrimental to the progress of those entities and also injurious to the persons indulging in such intercourse. This interruption is just as bad and even far worse than the disturbance in the death-chamber on this physical plane. When it is remembered that the fourth principle by its contact with the fifth has assimilated to itself the *essence* of the latter, it becomes an easy matter to account for those rare phenomena in which a higher degree of intelligence has been exhibited by the *Kama-Loka* entities dragged into mediumistic *séances*. Of course there are cases in which an "astral shell" acts merely as a mirror through which the intelligence of the "medium" is reflected, as there are others in which "elementals" make use of these "astral shells." But in those cases where the *Kama-Loka* entities actually appear and exhibit a rare intelligence, it is on account of the *essence* absorbed by the fourth principle during its connection with the fifth. There are again cases in which the *Kama-Loka* entities of "suicides" and of persons dying unnatural and accidental deaths may appear and exhibit rare intelligence, because those entities have to live in *Kama-Loka* the period they would have passed on earth if those accidents had not carried them away—before the struggle between the astral and spiritual affinities commences. The causes engendered by them during earth-life are not yet ripe for fruition and they must wait their natural time. But to recall these into "mediumistic" circles is equally dangerous as in the above-mentioned cases, and for the very same reasons. It may not be positively injurious in all cases, but at any rate the process is fraught with danger and should not be undertaken by inexperienced persons. . . . The Hindus have a horror of those elementaries and instead of dragging them into *séances* they try by every possible means to release them from the earth's atmosphere.

When the struggle between the lower affinities and the higher aspirations of the man is ended in *Kama-Loka*, astral death takes place in that sphere as does physical death on this earth. The shock of death again throws the entity into a state of unconsciousness before its passage into *Devachan*. The "shell" left behind may

manifest itself until it is disintegrated, but it is not the real spiritual man; and the rare intelligence exhibited by it, occasionally, is the radiation of the aura caught by it during its connection with the spiritual individuality. From its fourth state of existence, it re-awakens in *Devachan*, the conditions of which, according to Hindu books, are, *Salokata*, *Samipata* and *Sayujata*. In the lowest state, i.e., of *Salokata*, the entity is only under the influence of the sixth and the seventh principles, while in the second state, i.e., of *Samipata*, it is fully overshadowed by the latter. It is in the *sayujata* state only that it is fully merged into its *Logos* to be thrown again into reincarnation when it has fully enjoyed the effects of the spiritual aspirations created by it. It is only very highly spiritualized entities that reach this highest state of *Devachan*. Of course, the cases of adepts are here entirely left out of consideration, for as the *Bhagavad-Gita* says, the *Jnani* reaches that state from which there is no rebirth and which is called *Moksha* or *Mukti*. The period of gestation between the *Devachanic* condition and the physical rebirth may be called the eighth state; but in the Hindu books the physical life being the basis of the seven after-states is not included in the category of the *Sapta* higher *Lokas*, just as in the septenary principles, *Parabrahma* is not taken into account for the very same reason. From the subjective standpoint, the *Parabrahma*, and from the objective standpoint the *Sthulararira* are not included in the septenary division, as the former is the basis upon which the whole structure is built.

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NOTHING in life is to be feared. It is to be understood.

—MARIE CURIE

## CHELAS

[This article first appeared in *The Theosophist*, October 1884.—Eds.]

NOTWITHSTANDING the many articles which have appeared in this magazine upon the above subject, much misunderstanding and many false views seem still to prevail.

What are Chelas, and what are their powers? Have they faults, and in what particular are they different from people who are not Chelas? Is every word uttered by a Chela to be taken as gospel truth?

These questions arise because many persons have entertained very absurd views for a time about Chelas, and when it was found that those views should be changed, the reaction has been in several cases quite violent.

The word "Chela" simply means a *disciple*; but it has become crystallized in the literature of Theosophy and has, in different minds, as many different definitions as the word "God" itself. Some persons have gone so far as to say that when a man is a Chela he is at once put on a plane when each word that he may unfortunately utter is taken down as *ex cathedra*, and he is not allowed the poor privilege of talking like an ordinary person. If it be found out that any such utterance was on his own account and responsibility, he is charged with having misled his hearers.

Now this wrong idea must be corrected once for all. There are Chelas and Chelas, just as there are MAHATMAS and MAHATMAS. There are MAHATMAS in fact who are themselves the Chelas of those who are higher yet. But no one, for an instant, would confound a Chela who has just began his troublous journey with that greater Chela who is a MAHATMA.

In fact the Chela is an unfortunate man who has entered upon "a path not manifest," and Krishna says that "that is the most difficult path."

Instead of being the constant mouthpiece of his Guru, he finds himself left more alone in the world than those who are not Chelas, and his path is surrounded by dangers which would appal many an aspirant, were they depicted in natural colours, so that instead of accepting his Guru and passing an entrance examination with a view to becoming Bachelor of Art of Occultism under his master's constant and friendly guidance, he really forces his way into a

guarded enclosure, and has from that moment to fight and conquer — or die. Instead of accepting he has to be worthy of acceptance. Nor must he offer himself. One of the Mahatmas has, within the year, written — “Never thrust yourself upon us for Chelaship; wait until it descends upon you.”

And having been accepted as a Chela, it is not true that he is merely the instrument of his Guru. He speaks as ordinary men then as before, and it is only when the master sends by means of the Chela's Magnetism an actual written letter, that the lookers-on can say that through him a communication came.

It may happen with them, as it does with any author occasionally, that they evolve either true or beautiful utterances, but it must not be therefore concluded that during that utterance the Guru was speaking through the Chela. If there was the germ of a good thought in the mind, the Guru's influence, like the gentle rain upon the seed, may have caused it to spring into sudden life and abnormally blossom, but that is not the master's voice. The cases in fact are rare in which the masters speak through a Chela.

The powers of Chelas vary with their progress; and every one should know that if a Chela has any “powers,” he is not permitted to use them save in rare and exceptional cases, and never may he boast of their possession. So it must follow that those who are only beginners have no more or greater power than an ordinary man. Indeed the goal set before the Chela is to divest himself of that overmastering sense of personality which is the thick veil that hides from sight our immortal part — the real man. So long as he allows this feeling to remain, just so long will he be fixed at the very door of Occultism, unable to proceed further.

Sentimentality, then, is not the equipment for a Chela. His work is hard, his road stony, the end far away. With sentimentality merely he will not advance at all. Is he waiting for the master to bid him show his courage by precipitating himself from a precipice, or by braving the cold Himalayan steep? False hope; they will not call him thus. And so, as he is not to clothe himself in sentiment, the public must not, when they wish to consider him, throw a false veil of sentimentality over all his actions and words.

Let us therefore, henceforth, see a little more discrimination used in looking at Chelas.

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## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

There is accumulating evidence that much of what is known today was also known to the ancients. Robert Patton, an antiquarian by hobby, writing in the September 1982 *Omni*, highlights some surprising clues offered by seemingly out-of-place artifacts, or, as archaeologists have dubbed them, "ooparts." These manifold leads, in his own words, "are certain to challenge the conviction of those who believe our knowledge of the past is complete."

By way of instance: Plastic, thought to be a 20th-century invention, was known to the ancients. So were airplanes, as is borne out by an intriguing model discovered while excavating an Egyptian tomb near Saqqara; when put to the test, it was found to be aerodynamically sound and soared through the air with the ease and grace of a modern-day glider. Electricity was certainly known and used in various ways millennia ago. In the sphere of architecture, the great monuments and megaliths that dot the world's landscape stand as mute witnesses to a mighty past. As for brain surgery, the skill of the old-world doctors surpassed that of their modern counterparts, as revealed by disinterred mummies belonging to pre-Incan cultures dating from 6000 B.C. And these are hardly alone among discoveries that demonstrate the strikingly advanced ingenuity displayed by the ancients.

Indeed [writes Robert Patton], the technical sophistication of certain age-old relics is so impressive that we have only recently come to understand their purposes, prompting some scholars to wonder: Is it possible that the great scientific and technological achievements of the past 500 years were already known to ancient civilizations?

Consider:

- Differential gears, which permit a machine to perform two functions simultaneously, were not used in the West until 1575. Yet this innovation was incorporated into the design of a model planetarium found on a salvaged ship that sank off the coast of Greece in 78 B.C.

- Electrical batteries have been found in Iraq that date from 100 B.C. -- more than 18 centuries before Ben Franklin received credit for discovering electricity.

- A map drawn in 1513 correctly depicts Antarctica's coastline before it was covered by ice -- more than 6,000 years ago. Its

accuracy could not be verified until 1949, when electronic probes were driven into the ice sheet covering the continent. [This map is said to be based on an original source map estimated to have been drawn 10,000 years ago, using plane trigonometry.]

For years, scholars have puzzled over these and other ooparts. . . . Until recently these anachronistic objects were either relegated to the realm of the inexplicable or explained away as the mysterious residues of visiting spacemen. Thanks to new techniques of dating, however, there has been much renewed interest in ooparts. Relics long abandoned to museum basements are being dusted off and their age accurately determined. . . .

Because the so-called time curtain of man's history has been constantly pushed back, advances in chronology have conferred new respectability on the study of ooparts. Today the existence of such anomalies is no longer disputed. In fact, some academics are now suggesting that ooparts could be the key to antiquity's most intractable riddles. . . .

As far as past scientific accomplishments are concerned, the truth is, we just don't know how much of man's accumulated wisdom has been lost through wars, natural disasters, and deliberate wholesale destruction. Isolated pockets of civilization may have flourished for centuries, only to be overrun by barbarians and their former glory lost forever. . . . Other historians however, adhere to the doctrine of diffusion—the fanning out of a culture from a central starting point. The unprecedented explosion of knowledge 5,000 years ago, they believe, may have been foreshadowed by an earlier society whose cultural remnants have long since vanished.

In view of the plentiful evidence for an ancient worldwide civilization, how futile seem all our claims of originality! The hitherto accepted theory that civilization is a step-by-step process marked by a gradual increase in understanding is no longer tenable. Yet, that the foundations of all ancient civilizations, which puzzle so sorely our modern scholars, were laid by Divine Rulers and Instructors of the early races of mankind is difficult for modern men to grasp. So is the fact that all the arts and sciences were taught by them, who thus demonstrated how the immutable laws of Nature could be used to manifest the invisible metaphysical principles in visible works of beauty. Faced with evidences of an advanced civilization in a very remote period, modern-day investigators are baffled and fail to construct from their discoveries and knowledge the

grand panorama of human unfoldment under cyclic law and what it implies, including man's divine origin.

Achievements in the realms of philosophy, arts and sciences bequeathed by India to posterity are among the most impressive. H.P.B. names some of these in *Isis Unveiled* (I. 618-20) and remarks:

What have we to offer for comparison? Beside such majestic achievements of the past, what can we place that will seem so grandiose and sublime as to warrant our boast of superiority over an ignorant ancestry? Beside the discoverers of geometry and algebra, the constructors of human speech, the parents of philosophy, the primal expounders of religion, the adepts in psychological and physical science, how even the greatest of our biologists and theologians seem dwarfed! Name to us any modern discovery, and we venture to say, that Indian history need not long be searched before the prototype will be found of record.

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That "there is not one finger's breath (*Angula*) of void Space in the whole Boundless Universe" was known to the philosophers of old. Some latter-day wiseacres, however, in their ignorance and iconoclastic tendency to destroy every philosophic idea of old, have proclaimed Space "an abstract idea" and a "void."

Modern theories of "the vacuum" reveal that even "empty" space is seething with activity. Paul Davies, professor of theoretical physics at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne and author of several books, writing under the title "Something for Nothing" in *New Scientist* for May 27, posits that our concept of "empty" space needs revision:

Imagine a perfectly impenetrable box. Remove all objects from it, extract every atom of gas. Cool it to absolute zero so that no heat radiates in from the walls. What have you got? Nothing? Well, not quite.

Most people think of empty space as just that—vacuous, devoid of any physical content. Physicists, however, know better. They used to believe that all of space was permeated with a mysterious substance called the ether... Now a sort of ether has re-emerged from advanced studies of the quantum theory applied to electromagnetic and other fields, though its properties differ considerably from the original...

"The vacuum" is not inert, but continually disturbed by

fluctuating quantum fields. Moreover, although the strengths of the electric and magnetic fields average to zero, on account of their random orientations, nevertheless the fluctuations still carry energy. For very brief durations this energy can be powerful enough to create material particles, such as electrons and protons, although they exist only fleetingly, fading away rapidly as the fluctuation dies. But the particles add a further texture to the vacuum, revealing a beehive of frenetic activity, with "ghost" particles and fields coming and going without warning in a complex web of interactions which fills all of space. So even when you thought you had eliminated all conceivable particles of matter, new ones keep popping up out of nowhere only to disappear almost instantly without a trace. There is just no way to clear space of this irreducible, if transient, population. . . .

The closer we scrutinize the vacuum, it seems, the more elaborate is the structure that we perceive. Many physicists believe that if we could examine "empty" space at the ultra-microscopic length scale it would resemble a boiling, frothy foam, seething under the impact of quantum fluctuations. All this would no doubt have appeared baffling to James Clerk Maxwell and his colleagues, who originally postulated an all-pervading medium, the ether, through which electromagnetic waves could propagate in otherwise "empty" space; but they would surely have been gratified to learn that in its modern quantum form, the ether has materialized at last.

There is no void possible and the *fulness* of the universe was once an accepted belief. Says *The Secret Doctrine*:

Locke's idea that "pure Space is capable of neither resistance nor Motion" — is incorrect. Space is neither a "limitless void," nor a "conditioned fulness," but both: being, on the plane of absolute abstraction, the ever-incognizable Deity, which is void only to finite minds and on that of *mayavic* perception, the Plenum, the absolute Container of all that is, whether manifested or unmanifested: it is, therefore, that ABSOLUTE ALL. (I. 8)

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Most people understand service to mean "a contribution to the welfare of others," whether that contribution is made on a large scale by service organizations and groups, or on a necessarily more limited scale by individuals. To be compassionate towards those in need and to give what help one can, even to the extent of personal

inconvenience and sacrifice, is considered socially and spiritually commendable. This is "loving one's neighbour as oneself" and following the golden rule of doing unto others what we wish they would do unto us.

Paralleling this, there is "another idea of service whose time has come," says *World Goodwill Newsletter* for January-February-March 1982:

There is today a growing orientation and commitment to service of the human race which is based not so much on ethical and religious precepts as on simple morality, on doing what is right "simply because it is right." This is the innate urge in men and women of goodwill to establish justice and equality of opportunity in a world which has become polarized into two camps -- the rich and the poor; the privileged and the underprivileged; the powerful and the helpless.

This recognized polarity has emerged simultaneously with a growing realization of the oneness and interdependence of all life within this small planet of ours. . . . Many world service organizations have emerged as a result of human and world need at crisis point; for example, Amnesty International, The Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, the Save the Children Fund, and many of the specialized agencies of the United Nations. These, with many others, are working to correct some aspects of the wrongs to be righted, to restore dignity and security to human lives, and to reduce the dangers and difficulties of confrontation and hostility.

With this growing emphasis on group and organizational service, there is, however, as great a need as ever for the type of service best performed by individuals or small groups of dedicated people. . . . It is from the subjective life of each individual that a genuine service motivation springs. In other words, it is attitudes of mind and heart that determine outer actions. And these inner attitudes, by their radiation, produce an effect on the total environment of each one and also within the atmosphere of human consciousness as a whole. That may sound like an unprovable and improbable claim; but consider the progress being made in the scientific investigation of the human mind and brain. It is now found that thought waves from the mind, impinging on the brain cells of a conscious person, produce an electrical impulse which can be accurately registered, measured and analysed by the correct mechanical equipment. It is not so

very large a step from these discoveries, through continuing research, to the realization that the subjective life — the way we think and feel and respond to stimulation — does at all times emit an electrical current which radiates into the atmosphere of human thought and feeling, creating effects.

This radiation of energy is service of a kind that many today are using to strengthen and inspire whatever form of outer service may be possible. Through prayer, meditation and clear, inclusive, unbiased thought on world and human problems, a current of constructive energy — light and goodwill — finds its way through the confused darkness created by separateness, selfishness and materialism, finding outlets through every open mind and awakening heart attuned to the truth of the one Life en-souling all humanity....

Because of these interlocking subjective and objective aspects of service, all can contribute to the welfare of others — those personally unknown in all parts of the world, as well as those in one's own immediate environment. Right attitudes radiate a compelling force for good, and reveal any neglected opportunities for practical action.

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Over the last two centuries the most familiar figure in Christian lore next to Jesus Christ — the Devil — has been losing his hold on the Christian imagination. This in spite of the problem of evil remaining as mysterious as ever. In recent years, however, Satan is stirring new credulity and curiosity. *States Newsweek* (August 30):

Just why the Devil has returned to haunt our cultural and social psyche is not hard to explain. In times of great social unrest and political instability, observes Northwestern University historian Josef Barton, the individual's feelings of impotence tend to elicit a sense of overwhelming evil at work. "The Devil is an ancient way to symbolize the existence of such evil," Barton argues, "and people are groping about for that suppressed image."

So are scholars. What fascinates them about Satan is how he first crept into — and then apparently out of — Christian consciousness.... The issue is a long way from being settled, for it is only in recent decades that scholars have been able to trace the origin and development of the concept of the Devil — a necessary step, many theologians think, in answering the question of whether the figure of the Devil is still an adequate

symbol for evil. . . .

Today, secularized Western societies find themselves in much the same position as the despairing Israelites who first fashioned the figure of the Devil. Despite the high promise of science, technology and the other tribal gods of the modern era, evil persists on a truly awesome scale. Under such circumstances, observes Peter Williams, a specialist in American religious history at Miami University in Ohio, belief in a menacing personal Devil "is a way of focusng anxiety about a diffuse threat. It's something you can get hold of that explains everything."

For most people, however, the existence of the Devil is an inadequate explanation for such demonic realities as war, poverty, mass starvation and the possibility of nuclear annihilation. Even among otherwise orthodox Christians, his figure has become vestigial: he exists in Scripture and tradition, but he has been trivialized by a thousand superstitions.

Attention is invited to H.P.B.'s articles "The Origin of Evil" and "The Fall or Ideals" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet Nos. 26 and 27*) in which she offers the philosophic explanation of the mystery of evil and considers the hidden meaning behind the symbolism of "Satan."

In reply to a correspondent's objections published in *Lucifer* for October 1888, under the title "The Devil—Who Is He?" H.P.B. wrote:

This idea [that Devil and God are one and the same] is not original. . . . Lactantius, one of the Fathers of the Church, expressed it in no equivocal language, for he states that the "Word" (or Logos), is the *first-born brother of Satan* (*Vide Inst. div. Book ii, c. viii*); for Satan is a "Son of God" (*Vide Job, ii, i*). . . .

The "Supreme," if it is infinite and omnipresent cannot be anything but "good and evil," "light and darkness," etc., for if it is omnipresent it has to be present in a vessel of dishonour as well as in one of honour, in an atom of dirt as in the atom of the purest essence. The whole trouble is that theology and the (even *militant*) clergy are not consistent in their claims; they would force people to believe in an infinite and absolute deity, and dwarf this deity at the same time by making of it a *personal being with attributes*, a double claim mutually destructive, and as absurd philosophically, as it is grotesque and soul-killing.

The fact then that by showing good and evil intermingled in the deity creates "religious difficulty," i.e., "theological confusion,"

is the fault of and rests with the clergy and theology. . . . Let them drop their idea of a personal god with human attributes, and the difficulty will disappear. . . .

If Christians accepted, as seriously as they do the "apple and the rib," the simple and impressive words of their Christ on the Mount, who says: "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute *you*, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake," — then they would abstain from reviling and persecuting and saying all manner of evil against the poor Devil; who, if he is to be regarded as a *personality*, is sure to be "blessed," as no one from the beginning of Christianity has ever been more reviled and falsely persecuted than was that scapegoat for the sins of man!

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The following observations by Alfred Fleishman are excerpted from *Glimpse* (published by the International Society for General Semantics):

We are living in a world in which man seems to have just about reached the peak of his scientific exploits up to now. . . . Yet, with all these "advances," these tremendous developments, we are concerned about the health of our minds. The number of people who are in our mental health institutions is said to be the largest in our history. We are told there are a lot of people who need help but can't get into institutions because there is no room or no money for their care and treatment. That's some kind of reflection on the state of our so-called civilized, modern-day society. . . .

Listen to the words around you, and you can hear it:

"I can't talk to him without getting upset."

"I can't talk about that because it disturbs me."

"It makes me nervous to even think about it."

These are classic examples of what we are talking about here. The fact that most of us have been "nervous" or "scared" or "insecure" about life and its problems, at one time or another, doesn't seem to give any relief to the person who is having the problems or who thinks and talks like that.

People who have some degree of flexibility in their thinking, people who have learned to depend upon their experiences, people who have acquired personal skills have a better chance to cope with unusual situations that floor other people. They are able to adjust to the problems they find in "real" life.

All of us need to remember that neither life nor people nor things are perfect. We need to learn and adjust to many, many different kinds of situations at work, at home, in social gatherings without getting uptight most of the time. We need to be flexible enough in our communication to leave room in our minds for differences of opinion, differences of views, and, for sure, to leave room in our minds for new thoughts and new ideas.

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In *Sunday Telegraph Magazine* for September 12, Dr. John Rae, Headmaster of Westminster School in Britain, expresses himself on what the youth of today need most:

"What we must look for here," wrote Dr. Arnold of Rugby, "is principles; secondly, gentlemanly conduct; thirdly, intellectual ability." That was 150 years ago. What qualities or virtues do public schools stand for today? Judging by the speech-day pronouncements of headmasters and headmistresses the answer would appear to be "good A-level results."

If pressed, they might add "a sense of service and an awareness of the importance of hard work." These things are important in their way, but they hardly have the ring of eternal truth or, even, of useful advice on how to survive in the modern world.

Dr. Rae goes on to extol the virtues of fortitude, which he considers to be important above all others for facing the slings and arrows of life.

Fortitude—the word has an archaic sound, because we use it so little—means moral and physical courage, an unflinching resolution to persevere to the end, firmness in the endurance of pain or adversity. . . . I see it not as a passive virtue, but as an active one. It is not just a question of putting up with adversity, but also of developing the strength of will to transform adversity into triumph—the quality which Gibbon found in Alaric the Goth: "The invincible temper of mind which rises superior to every misfortune and derives resources from adversity."

Without fortitude life is an intolerable and humiliating series of surrenders. It is fortitude which gives man's life dignity, even nobility . . . and makes it more than "a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."

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