

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (a) To form the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, caste, or colour;
- (b) The study of ancient and modern religions, philosophies and sciences and the demonstration of the importance of such study; and
- (c) The investigation of the unexplained laws of Nature and the psychical powers latent in man.

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE WISDOM-RELIGION

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THE *Theosophical Glossary* equates Theosophia with the Wisdom-Religion. It refers to it as the substratum and basis of all knowledge. The Root-source from which religions, philosophies and sciences have grown, the Wisdom-Religion comprises a body of definite principles. Scholars speculating on these have produced philosophies in which truth is overlaid with errors and fanciful conjectures. Blind believers have made hard and fast dogmas out of them, building religious creeds.

Students of Theosophy sometimes mistake Theosophy to be a conglomeration of the good in all religions and philosophies. Such have a wrong conception of synthesis when H.P.B. describes her *Secret Doctrine* as “the synthesis of Science, Religion and Philosophy.”

The Wisdom-Religion is the primordial knowledge directly imparted to humankind by our progenitors and informing egos. The comprehension of it requires neither blind acceptance of its teachings, nor the gift of grace from on high. It is knowledge, though veiled from the senses and the brain bound in three-dimensional cerebration. It is knowledge, though hidden from minds which speculate with the aid of stern logic and inductive reasoning. It is knowledge, though no blind believers and dogmatic sectarians of any creed are able to fathom its profound reality. Its metaphysics provides a satisfying philosophy of the One Spirit and Its relation to the myriad forms of life. Its science deals with soul, mind and body. It teaches the art of living and provides for each person his religion of service to the entire universe.

This is a tremendous claim. It is, however, repeatedly made by

those ardent students of Theosophy whose aspirations are, if not fully, at least partially realized. To catch a glimpse of this grandiose picture of the Temple of Knowledge the seeker's earnestness must lead him to inquire, not about any particular aspect or problem of the esoteric philosophy, but about what the esoteric philosophy is *per se*. The comprehension of the teachings may, nay will, take him years, but a visit to the edifice called *The Secret Doctrine* by H.P. Blavatsky will put heart into him and the vision will surely dawn that at least he has found what true knowledge is and where it is enshrined.

His future difficulty is described in the same book, in Volume I, p. xlvi:

Every reader will inevitably judge the statements made from the standpoint of his own knowledge, experience and consciousness, based on what he has already learnt.

Our new knowledge is but an extension of our already acquired knowledge. Our experience may lead us to soar in terms of our aspirations and ideals, but it carries within itself its own checks and limitations. Our consciousness contains both our knowledge and our experience and is the fashioner of our attitude to all life, to all the world. A change of attitude is, then, the very first desideratum. Knowledge in amplitude will come to enrich the storehouse of our experience, but the attitude will determine whether we shall use, misuse, or abuse both knowledge and experience. We gain by the right attitude. We lose out by the wrong attitude. The improvement and transmutation of attitude is the very first task. In all this the experienced statement of Robert Crosbie is of vital importance: "Theosophy can be tested out by our present knowledge and proves itself with every test."

So the inquirer should ask first the question, "What is Theosophy?" To secure the correct answer he should learn about the existence of the Wisdom-Religion, constant, consistent, as old as thinking man. This can be done by a quiet study of the books of H. P. Blavatsky, but especially of *The Secret Doctrine*. This will bring him the necessary faith—not blind, but all-seeing. And then he can proceed to acquire the knowledge of principles and the details of the Great Science, *Maha-Vidya*.

THE TATHAGATA LIGHT

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

—MAHATMA K.H.

No one who strives to tread the path is left unhelped: the Great Ones see his "light" and he is given what is needed for his better development. That light is not mere poetical imagery, but is actual, and its character denotes one's spiritual condition; there are no veils on that plane of seeing.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

AN aspirant to the Path is not only a student of Theosophy; he is something more. He is a practitioner of the Theosophical ethics and these are superior to the ethical ideas ordinarily held in the world. Just as Theosophy is the source of all great religions, but all great religions of the world are not wholly Theosophical, so also with ethics. The morality of the world is rooted in Theosophical ethics, but is permeated through and through with wrong concepts. A Master once wrote:

It is not enough that you should set the example of a pure virtuous life and a tolerant spirit; this is but negative goodness—and for chelaship will never do.

Many mentally endowed people understand and even appreciate the doctrines of Theosophy, and reading *The Voice of the Silence* say, "How beautiful, how perfectly inspiring!" It takes time—often a period of more than one life—for such a person to become a true *Abhyasi*—Practitioner. Similarly it takes some time for the practitioner to realize that the Path to the Masters is open to him also. He takes time to perceive this "because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it."

The finding of the Path implies the recognition by the practitioner that the Path is also for his treading. Sometimes his own lack of confidence in himself, his own humility, blinds him, not to the existence of the Path, but to the fact that his feet also can walk the Way. A student recognizes in theory that the Spirit quickens every form of life, but it takes him time to perceive that

the quickening process is at work in his own being; he acts as if it did not function. So also the student reading and hearing and reflecting sees that the Path stretches for all human feet, but he does not take the first necessary step to find himself on it. He somehow feels the Path is not for him.

How shall he enter the "strait gate" to the "narrow way"? The answer is, by kindling the Light referred to in the above extracts. That light is not mere poetical imagery; the Master calls it the "Tathagata" light. It is the Wisdom-Light with which the aspirant has to light his own mind with the aid of study; with which he should chase the demons of vice from his own blood with the aid of practice; while his heart has to radiate Wisdom-Virtue in the sacrificial service of humanity.

Every centre of the United Lodge of Theosophists is an approach to the "strait gate" and the "narrow way." It offers clean opportunities in the safest way practicable. At its gatherings the earnest mind can glimpse the silhouette of the strait gate as if in a dream, as some impalpable radiance of the moon on moving waters. Such a mind will recognize that Mr. Judge was not speaking in parables when he wrote in *The Ocean of Theosophy*:

Some works can only be performed by the Master, while other works require the assistance of the companions. It is the Master's work to preserve the true philosophy, but the help of the companions is needed to rediscover and promulgate it. Once more the elder brothers have indicated where the truth—Theosophy—could be found, and the companions all over the world are engaged in bringing it forth for wider currency and propagation.

The task of every real companion of the Masters is the Theosophical service of humanity. But knowledge and experience are necessary for that task. U.L.T. provides the field in which these are available, and there the aspirant also learns how to join the ranks of the companions. U.L.T. offers help without interfering with the aspirant's perfect freedom of thought and action. To him Robert Crosbie has this to say:

The help will come for the most part in ordinary ways and from one or another of the companions with whom you were possibly connected in other lives, and whom your soul will recognize.

THE THEOSOPHY OF AMMONIUS SACCAS

Founder of the Neo-Platonic School

[The article on the great Philaletheian, Ammonius Saccas, reprinted here from *The Aryan Path* for May 1936, introduces a series of four articles in which the thread of Neo-Platonic teaching is traced from the founder of the school through Iamblichus and Dionysius, called the Areopagite, to the translator of the latter's works, John Scotus Erigena, who formed the bridge between the earlier Neo-Platonists and the mediaeval European mystics.—Eds.]

AMMONIUS SACCAS, the real founder of the Neo-Platonic School, whose teachings given orally (for he himself wrote nothing) were developed and set down in writing by his disciples, entered into an inheritance of ideas and beliefs which could be traced back as far as Socrates. Born in the latter half of the second century A.D., at Alexandria, Ammonius lived both at a period and in an environment which were fully ripe for the reception of the theosophic doctrine characteristic of his teaching. Alexandria had been founded as a meeting place for East and West, and they mingled in its streets, its University, and its temples. At the time when Ammonius Saccas developed his doctrines, it was the residence of Greeks, of native Egyptians, and of considerable numbers of Jews as also of many strangers from the East: in religion, the gods of Hellas and of the Nile, in addition to Christianity, Judaism, Brahminism and Buddhism, asserted their claims. Among the Greeks, the Neo-Pythagoreans not only derived their teachings from Pythagoras, but combined with them Platonic, Aristotelian, Stoic, and Epicurean elements, together with Oriental ideas taken from Persian and Egyptian teachings. Among the immediate precursors of Ammonius Saccas were Plutarch of Cheronea (A.D. 50-120) and Numenius the Syrian, who flourished between A.D. 160 and 180, and who developed the idea of the Neo-Platonic Triad. The Orphic writings also arose about this time, while orthodox Christianity was seeking to link its teachings with Greek philosophy and the Christian Gnostics were developing their distinctive doctrines based upon Persian and Neo-Babylonian Mysticism, influenced by the Hermetic philosophy, the mystery cults of Thrace, Phrygia and Samos, and by Indian and Chinese Theosophy. At the same time Judaism, through the *Kabbala* and the teaching of Philo of Alexandria, was assimilating mystical and philosophical elements.

The Orphics and Pythagoreans held the doctrine of rebirth, associated with the idea that the soul, though immortal, had fallen from its original divine estate and only by a gradual process of purification in a series of lives—a “way” of life, by which it could die to passion and desire—and in an underworld purgatory, could it be freed and once more become divine as it was before. So these Neo-Pythagoreans were ascetics, while teaching the homogeneity of all being, conceiving of God as both transcendent and immanent; the one could be manifested in many; the many could lose themselves in the One. The doctrine of emanation, which Ammonius developed, was found in the *Avesta* as well as in the Jewish *Kabbala*, and in the teaching of the Jew Philo and the Gnostics, who were especially characterized by the claim to teach an esoteric knowledge.

Ammonius Saccas, born in an age which was conscious of a deep religious need and was seeking for release from sensuality through asceticism, and for salvation through an immediate intuition of the Supreme Being, was able to incorporate these elements into a unique system of theosophy, which claimed to be both an absolute philosophy and an absolute religion. Little is known of his early life: he was born probably about 175 A.D., and his biographers are agreed that he was the child of Christian parents and brought up as a Christian, but that, after he came into touch with philosophy, he became independent of any specific religious faith. He was evidently of humble origin, his name Saccas or Saccophoros (Sack-Bearer), indicating that he was a porter, probably engaged in unloading wheat on the Alexandrian quays. Circumstances must have made it possible for him to study at some period of his life, and among his teachers have been mentioned Athenagoras, a Christian Platonist of the second century, and Clement of Alexandria (A.D. 150-217), who both taught a Christian philosophy. It is certain that Ammonius had made a close study of the teaching of Philo, the Hellenic Jew, and of that of Numenius, a follower of Philo, who combined with the teaching of the Greeks the wisdom of the Magians, the Egyptians, the Brahmins, and the Jews. Through these teachers, or through his own independent study, Ammonius derived his knowledge of Plato and Aristotle.

After long study and meditation Ammonius Saccas began to teach. He opened a school of philosophy in Alexandria, where he lived in the University quarter, and became the most famous teacher of philosophy of the age—his methods, Porphyry tells us, being not the blind acceptance of books and authors, but the personal investigation of every problem and formulation of his own

original views. One of his pupils, Longinus, held to be the foremost critic of the period, said of Ammonius that he greatly exceeded his contemporaries in his mental grasp and was one of the most accomplished scholars of his time, unapproached in the breadth of his learning. Ammonius gathered around him a large number of disciples, including many Christians, since these latter were interested in his discussion of the different philosophical systems; and his own Christian upbringing, together with the fact that the Greek philosophy was not at this time committed to polytheism, made it possible for Ammonius to regard Christianity with tolerance and to retain certain Christian ideas. Among these Christian disciples was the famous Origen Adamantius (A.D. 185-254), who for a long time attended the public lectures of Ammonius, and Heracles, who was a student under Ammonius for five years. Other pupils—Hellenists known to have studied under Ammonius—were Longinus (213-273), already referred to, Olympius of Alexandria, and Antonius. These attended only his public lectures, which were probably limited to a critical review of the teaching of the different philosophical schools; but his really original teaching was given as an esoteric doctrine to a few chosen intimate disciples, among whom were Plotinus, Erennius, and a second Origen, who was a pagan. These three chosen followers entered into a compact not to disclose any of the doctrine which Ammonius had revealed to them, either because they were anxious to conserve it for themselves, or possibly in accordance with a wish expressed by their master, not through any jealousy on account of his own fame, but because of the nature of the doctrine which envisaged the possibility of a higher and more direct relation with the Divine Essence than any which the philosophic schools had conceived, and one which could not be discussed before a popular audience.

Of these three, Plotinus was, in all respects, the most outstanding, and also, undoubtedly, the closest to Ammonius in temperament and the one most receptive of his teaching. From the age of twenty Plotinus had been attracted by philosophy; he had gone from one to another of the lecturers in Alexandria, but had found none who could give him what he really wanted. At last a friend, realizing his craving for the best and highest, advised him to go to Ammonius Saccas. and after the first lecture Plotinus exclaimed, "This is the man for whom I was seeking," and with Ammonius he remained continuously for eleven years, until he reached the age of forty. It is related that during this period Plotinus made such progress in philosophy that he became eager to investigate the Persian methods and the system adopted among the Indians—

a proof that Ammonius must have indicated the Oriental origin of certain of his doctrines. Plotinus then settled in Rome—it may be that by this time his master was dead. The date of Ammonius's death is placed by some as early as A.D. 241, by others in A.D. 244 or 245, and by one writer as late as A.D. 250.

For a long time Plotinus kept to his compact and, in his intercourse with his associates, revealed nothing of his master's doctrine, but Erennius broke the agreement and then Origen. After this Plotinus, feeling, perhaps, that his long association with Ammonius fitted him, more than any other, to be his interpreter to others, began to base his discussions with his most intimate group of disciples on what he had learnt from Ammonius, though for ten years still he limited himself to discussion and wrote nothing. After this period he betook himself to writing on the subjects discussed, that is, the doctrine of Ammonius Saccas. Though the form in which we have these teachings is due to Plotinus and his disciple Porphyry, who arranged and systematized them, and though they must certainly owe much to the radiant and original genius of Plotinus himself, yet there is little doubt that their ultimate basis is the original doctrine of Ammonius Saccas, the real founder of the Neo-Platonic School.

It was of Ammonius that Hierocles (living in the fifth century A.D.) wrote that he was the first to attach himself to what was true in the philosophy which preceded him, and, ignoring what was commonplace, to attain to a thorough knowledge of Plato and Aristotle, and to unite them in one and the same spirit, thus bequeathing philosophy "at peace" to his disciples.

Ammonius was no mere eclectic, but a profound and original thinker, who considered the doctrines taught before his day and accepted what was true in them, but otherwise sought for truth, at its source, through his own intuition.

The aim of Ammonius Saccas, then, evidently was to reconcile the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, while combining them with Oriental mysticism and theosophy and the ascetic teachings of the Neo-Pythagoreans, so that all might form a higher, transfigured system, revealing itself especially by the doctrine of the Absolute One, the identification of the Platonic Ideas with the Divine Intelligence, the theory of emanations, and the belief in the return of all to the Supreme Unity. So were evolved the doctrines of Neo-Platonism, mainly Greek in origin, but Oriental in spirit, forming the bridge between the ancient and the modern metaphysics and marking an epoch in the history of religion.

There can be little doubt that the teaching on the Nature of God

which is found in the *Enneads* of Plotinus is derived directly from Ammonius. All forms and phases of existence, he teaches, emanate from the divine and all strive to return thither. The Divine is regarded as a Triad including the One or First-Existent; the Divine Intelligence, the First Thinker and Thought; and the Universal Soul, the First and Only Principle of Life.

Above, yet including, all things is the One-and-All, the Absolute, the Transcendent, Infinite, Unconditioned, Universal essence, Unknowable, Ineffable, nowhere yet everywhere: One, yet manifested in plurality, as the sun by its rays.

There is a principle which transcends Being: this is the One—the One, as transcending Intellect, transcends knowing—thus the One is in truth beyond all statement: the All-transcending possesses, alone of all, true being and is not a thing among things.¹

That One is neither remote from things nor identified with them; there is nothing containing it, but it contains all: it is the Good to the universe, in that all things are dependent upon it, each in its mode.²

From this First Principle—the Source and Ground of all being, transcending all known attributes and even the idea of existence, the One, the Highest Good, the Absolute—the first emanation is the Divine Intelligence, Universal Mind, the World of Ideas, containing all things immortal, the archetypes of all things in the phenomenal world, the Overmind, of which all minds partake. With this Spiritual Universe begins the existence of plurality, complexity, multiplicity. It is a mediator between man and the Unknowable One, for it contemplates ceaselessly, and depends upon the Supreme Being, while it is also the giver of wisdom to the human soul.

The Intellectual stands before the Supreme Beginning in whose forecourt, as it were, it announces in its own being the entire content of the Good, that which precedes all, locked in unity, of which this is the expression already touched by multiplicity.³

The Intellectual Principle is the maker and creator of the All, and when the creature turns itself towards it in contemplation this contemplative intuition is intelligence.

From the Intellectual Principle emanates the All-Soul, which is the creator of the material universe, the sensual world, and from it come forth other souls. On the subject of the Soul and its nature we have not only the evidence of Plotinus, but two direct refer-

¹ *Ennead* V, 3: 12, 13.

² *Ibid.*, 5, 9.

³ *Ibid.*, 9, 2.

ences to the teaching of Ammonius, given by Nemesius, Bishop of Emesa, living at the end of the fourth century, and Gregory of Nyssa (*ob. c. A.D. 395*), which were probably derived from the writings of Erennius, mentioned above as one of those who were entrusted with the esoteric teaching of his master. These deal with the immortality of the Soul, which is proved by the fact that it is the unifying principle of the body and does not suffer change, as the body does; which gives life, and therefore is not corporeal; which is nourished by knowledge—which is not material—and therefore it cannot itself be material. Ammonius had also stated that the soul suffers no change by its union with the body, but remains distinct from it and is able, in its contemplation of the Intellectual, to isolate itself from the body.⁴ The teaching of Plotinus agrees with this.⁵ The human soul is one with the All-Soul and partakes of the Divine Life, but it has its own distinct individuality; and human nature, like the Divine Nature, contains three principles, the first being the Intellectual principle, which is the true self, and by the life of virtue, of “sagehood,” the Divine Image within it is revealed and man is able to attain to contemplation of the One. The second principle is that of the Reasoning Soul, the principle of the normal human life, and the third principle is that of animal life, the irrational soul. When loosed from the body, the soul goes whither it has tended and deserves to go. Those who have not attained to freedom must suffer rebirth, but those who have become emancipated by identifying themselves with the highest within them, awake *from* the body, not *with* it, and enter in to dwell “where is Reality and true Being and the Divine, in God.”⁶

The fall of the soul is due to entering into mortal birth, to the downward drag of the irrational principle, and to self-will. As regards the body and the irrational soul, man is entangled in the chain of physical causation; and so long as he allows himself to be the slave of the senses, he is not free, but in identifying himself with his higher soul, the true self, he can find freedom: he has a master, but he is that which is his master. Free will is shown by right action. By the same way by which it descended, the soul can reascend to its Source.

Since your soul is so exalted a power, so Divine, you may be assured that by its possession, you are already close to God. In the

⁴ Nemesius, *De Nat. Hom.* II, p. 70: III, p. 129 (ed. Mattaei). Gregory, *Opera*, II, pp. 91, 109 (ed. Morellus).

⁵ *Ennead* IV, 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, III, 4, 4.

strength of this power, begin to make your way towards Him: you have not far to go: there is not much between.⁷

The soul must come to itself by the process of purification, by asceticism first, and then by the practice of the virtue which aims at likeness and nearness to God.

If the eye that adventures the vision be dimmed by vice: if it be impure or weak or unable in its cowardly blenching to see the uttermost radiance, then it sees nothing. To any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it has first become sun-like and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty, unless itself be beautiful.⁸

The remedy for the soul is to get rid of desire, to free itself from the claims of the body and the senses. So it may accomplish the first stage of return and, being cleansed from the evil of the senses and desire, may be restored to the unity of the Universal Soul. But the soul must ascend still further, to the Intellectual Principle, after whom, and from whom, Soul is, and it is carried upwards by the love of Beauty and the love of Good. There the soul understands its true unity with the All.

The soul thus cleansed has become all idea and Reason, wholly free of body, intellective, entirely of that Divine order from which the well-spring of Beauty rises and all the race of Beauty. Hence the Soul heightened to the Intellectual Principle is beautiful to its full capacity. And it is just to say that in thus becoming good and beautiful, the soul is becoming like to God, for from the Divine comes all the Beauty and all the Good in beings.⁹

But the soul has not yet attained to the summit, it must ascend still higher to the final Good, the Vision of the One. Plotinus writes:

This is for those that will take the upward path, who will divest themselves of all that has been put on in the descent—until, having renounced all that is other than God, each in the solitude of himself shall behold that solitary dwelling Existence, the Apart, the unmingled, the Pure, on which all things depend, towards which all things look, in which they live and move and know, the Source of Life and Intellection and Being.¹⁰

But this comes not by expectation nor by action, it is an All-pervading Presence, realized by the soul,

⁷ *Ennead*, V, 1, 3.

Ibid., I, 9.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, I, 7.

which has held itself at rest, looking towards the good and the beautiful alone, giving up its entire being to that in a perfect surrender, and now, in tranquillity, filled with power, and taking a new beauty to itself, glowing in the light of that Presence.¹¹

The one who has seen this Vision has passed beyond self-consciousness and has attained to union with the One.

Neo-Platonism, embodying the teachings of Ammonius Saccas, had its rise in Alexandria, but its influence was felt very soon in all the provinces of the Roman Empire, and became the inspiration of philosophers and scientists everywhere. The various tendencies which showed themselves among the successors of Ammonius are seen all to depend upon him, while emphasizing each a particular side of his teaching. In the Neo-Platonism taught in Rome by Plotinus, the Greek elements prevailed, and among these the Platonic was prominent. In the Syrian School of which Iamblichus was the typical representative, the Oriental elements found in Pythagorism were conspicuous, together with an inclination towards theurgic practices. Finally, in the scholastic Neo-Platonism of Athens represented by Proclus, who depended mainly upon Plotinus, and to a less degree upon Iamblichus, the Aristotelian element finds the most prominent place. It was from Proclus that Dionysius, the so-called Areopagite, derived his Neo-Platonism, which he Christianized, and from him, in turn, that Neo-Platonism established its influence in the West.

Thus it was that Ammonius Saccas, the "God-inspired," from being a humble carrier of wheat, became, as if by a miracle, the head of one of the most celebrated schools of philosophy of antiquity and, during more than three centuries, exercised an immense influence over the development of the human spirit, an influence which still has its force and is likely to be maintained so long as men seek for Beauty and Goodness and Truth.¹²

—MARGARET SMITH

¹¹ *Ennead V, 5, 7.*

¹² For the Life of Ammonius Saccas, Cf. Porphyry, *Life of Plotinus*; L. J. Dehaut, *Essai Historique sur la Vie et la Doctrine d'Ammonius Saccas*, Brussels, 1836; E. Vacherot, *Histoire Critique de l'École d'Alexandrie*, Paris, 1846.

For his Teaching, Cf. Plotinus *Enneads* (translated by S. Mackenna); F. Whittaker, *The Neo-Platonists*, Cambridge, 1918; C. Bigg, *Neo-Platonism*, London, 1895; F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy*, London, 1912; and references cited.

RECOURSE TO KRISHNA

IN the sixth chapter of the *Bhagavad-Gita* we find reference to "that boundless bliss which is not connected with objects of the senses." Is it difficult to understand bliss, or even happiness, *not* connected with objects of the senses? For most of us it is. We constantly seek happiness and occasionally experience moments of sensuous bliss, but these are transitory and limited. We delight in the sound of music, a baby's laugh; we are pleased by the form and colour of a painting or the proportions of a building. It may be a sunset or a tree shrouded in fog which delights the sense, a flash of lightning or a crash of thunder which thrills and awes. The march of constellations across the night sky or the millions of stars swinging through space enrich the feeling nature, but do they give "that boundless bliss"?

For many, the possession of home and comfort spells happiness; for others, family and friends. Are not all these "objects of the senses"? Is our happiness in the possession of them unalloyed? For countless incarnations we have followed the path of attachment. What shall we do about it?

Krishna says: "For this my divine illusive power, acting through the natural qualities, is difficult to surmount, and those only can surmount it who have recourse to me alone."

Recourse: "retracing one's course"; "returning to the starting point"; "a source of aid"—are a few of the definitions of this word.

We started on this long journey of evolution as high spiritual beings, but having become enamoured of objects of the senses we now find it difficult to "surmount" this "divine illusive power." We must retrace our course. We must return to the starting point by trying to live as spiritual beings once again. This really begun, we will find Krishna an unfailing source of aid.

"These two, light and darkness, are the world's eternal ways." "No devotee who knoweth these two paths is ever deluded." What are the "two paths"? Seeking for bliss in objects of the senses is the path of darkness. To have recourse to Krishna, the Self of All, is alone the Path of Light, which leads to that boundless bliss not connected with objects of the senses.

For too long we have been in that shadowland where the neophyte finds it easier and more agreeable to apply his philosophy to others. Krishna's magic comes to our aid and exposes this. For, indeed, no one can sincerely call upon the Higher Self for help, for guidance, for illumination, and fail of a response—this wholly regardless of his personal status, good, bad, or indifferent. Once

we have made this appeal to the Divine in us, we cannot go on thinking, feeling, acting, speaking, as we did before. We have ourselves invited the *Mahabharata*, the "Holy War"; the "flying of arrows" has begun—from both sides of our nature.

Then we find, if we take the position of Arjuna-Krishna, between the contending forces, that we must choose: we cannot remain neutral, we cannot compromise, we cannot evade, nor can we avoid the costs of combat. Putting the situation another way, Manas, the true individual Ego or Self, is now in the position of Perceiver, a position in which he sees that the Theosophical life is "without quarter" from either side, above or below. Something is now both awake and active in him which before was merely the "Silent Spectator." All that is best in the man appeals to the Higher Self, all that is lowest or less than the man (Manas) cries out against the ordeal. And it is Manas that must choose, must decide.

This is really the first step in Discipleship. The *Mahabharata* is in eighteen books or divisions, the War lasts eighteen "Days," with no fighting at night, and the *Bhagavad-Gita* is in eighteen chapters or sections of Discourse, *i.e.*, "argumentation" between Arjuna (Manas, the reincarnating Ego) and Krishna (Atma-Buddhi, the Higher Self).

The "pleasure and pain" Theosophist has a "hard time" of it indeed—and it will continue growing harder all the time, perhaps for many lifetimes, until by sufferance, by endurance, by study and by "works" he turns to self-introspection to find out what is the matter with him, not to avoid the struggle, but to learn how to fight that hardest and toughest foeman of all—"himself," as he has hitherto esteemed himself to be. Curious expression that, in the *Gita*: "this glorious unsought fight"!

It is "a rude awakening" indeed, but when we turn to deliberation we shall see that this "crash of onset" is something more than "our Karma" or the sins of others. It is the answer of the Higher Self to our petition. And in that reflection, our "sensitiveness" becomes an Occult Power. We become so sensitive to others' needs and woes that we can *feel* the wise thing to say or do, to refrain from doing or saying. Our "sensitiveness" becomes *responsiveness*.

When this is felt, seen, heard, realized, then "the four senses blend and ready are to pass into the fifth, that of the inner touch."

What may be this "inner touch"? Perhaps it is sympathy, forgiveness, charity, love, consideration for others in every sense—firsthand consideration, the seed of Compassion.

THE INSTRUMENT OF APPLICATION

He who teaches Theosophy preaches the gospel of good-will; and the converse of this is true also—he who preaches the gospel of good-will, teaches Theosophy.

—H.P.B.

THIS much-needed philosophy of life offers basic principles that can be acted upon. Good-will becomes the keynote of our character and behaviour, but we forget the gospel that we owe good-will to all when we are agitated by the animal-force which is in our blood.

There is good-will in the all-merciful and just law of Karma, which never overpowers the weak or tottering soul, because it always gives opportunity to seek knowledge of the True. Karma restores broken harmony. Disharmony in the human kingdom is the result of the separative tendency in man, metaphysically called *Attavada* (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 4). Real evil proceeds from the human mind; when the beast in the blood gets informed by the mind of a god the greatest tragedy of evolution is enacted. But in this cycle the godly mind need not lend itself to the beast. And the very general desire for self-improvement is a sign of the cycle. The task of the student of Theosophy is specific, unlike that of the ordinary person who hopes to act up to the gospel of good-will. No one becomes a real student without becoming a practitioner of Theosophy. Many fall away after reading Theosophical books because they do not use the instrument of application and begin to preach the gospel of good-will.

But how to practise good-will towards the human scourge, or the pig wallowing in the dirt of lust, or the boa who kills by compression of greed? It is easy to show good-will to a beaten jail-bird, to a lame duck or to a hungry dog.

The practice of good-will without adequate knowledge often leads into a quagmire. To show personal good-will to all and sundry is most difficult. Therefore Theosophy puts forward as the true ideal the service of human beings as souls. It is by constant effort that perfection can be reached, in any art; if effort is slackened then perfection cannot flower. Soul-service becomes the art of practising good-will towards all; but first the aspirant has to impersonalize himself and this can best be done by an effort to serve not a man here and a man there but a group of them from the Soul point of view.

It is necessary to seek an avenue for rendering impersonal

service to human souls, so that one may learn to practise the gospel of good-will on a wide scale and ultimately be able to help as an individual other individuals. Such an avenue is the United Lodge of Theosophists. Besides giving right information and knowledge, it is a worthy channel for impersonally practising the gospel of good-will by spreading broadcast currents of Divine Wisdom and Universal Love. It can be looked upon as the true temple from which emanates the Light of Truth which brings contentment and inner strength.

Theosophy teaches four basic principles, the application of which could bind humanity into one family. These are—Universal Unity and Causation; Human Solidarity; the Law of Karma; Reincarnation. These are food for the starving mind and the thirsty heart. When they will be broadcast far and wide the message of good-will will spread and in its turn create many new channels—men and women who are active practitioners of that gospel.

IF we look at a pine tree growing in the valley we will notice that it grows differently from one on top of a mountain. It is the same kind of a tree, but there are two distinct styles of life. Its style on top of the mountain is different from its style when growing in the valley. The style of life of a tree is the individuality of a tree expressing itself and moulding itself in an environment. We recognize a style when we see it against a background of an environment different from what we expect, for then we realize that every tree has a life pattern and is not merely mechanical reaction to the environment.

It is much the same with human beings. We see the style of life under certain conditions of environment, and it is our task to analyze its relation to the existing circumstances, since our mind changes with alteration of the environment. As long as a person is in a favourable situation we cannot see his style of life clearly. In new situations, however, where he is confronted with difficulties, the style of life appears clearly and distinctly. . . . The style of life is a unity because it has grown out of the difficulties of early life and out of the striving for a goal.

—ALFRED ADLER

KARMIC PROCESSES

Unless we mistake the signs, the day is approaching when the world will receive the proofs that only ancient religions were in harmony with nature, and ancient science embraced all that can be known.

—*Isis Unveiled*, I, 38

THE twin laws of Karma and Reincarnation, and other important philosophical propositions ridiculed when H.P.B. brought them to the notice of the Occident, are being gradually accepted by its thinking minds. This is due in no small measure to the spread of spiritual ideas set in motion by H.P.B. and kept circulating by her students.

It is now widely believed that life has a purpose. All life is attempting to achieve awareness and, with that awareness, cooperation with all other life. "Every atom in the Universe has the potentiality of self-consciousness in it." (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 107)

The purpose fulfils itself through the process of unfoldment or evolution. This process takes place, not fortuitously, but lawfully—inherent effect growing out of the seed of cause. This is the Law of Karma—which the *Gita* (VIII, 3) describes as "the emanation which causes the existence and reproduction of creatures." Mr. Judge explains: "Karma here is, so to say, the action of the Supreme which is seen in manifestation throughout the evolution of the objective worlds." Metaphysically considered, this idea is thus explained by H.P.B.:

At the first flutter of renascent life, Svabhavat, "the mutable radiance of the Immutable Darkness unconscious in Eternity," passes, at every new rebirth of Kosmos, from an inactive state into one of intense activity; it differentiates, and then begins its work through that differentiation. This work is KARMA. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 634-35)

Therefore Karma is not an individual Law. It has a wider sweep of action when the sum-total of individual Karma becomes that of the family, the nation and the race. This is the natural corollary of human interdependence. We earn for each other both evil and good. Our thought and feeling are not solely ours, but are influenced by others, and likewise we can influence them. The higher, then, can raise the lower; the richer pay the poorer's debt. As we are all tied together, perhaps none of us may attain supreme enlightenment until all the rest have arrived. In the end we shall

all be equal, attaining our common fulfilment.

If Interdependence be a reality, every tendency towards separateness is an evil from the universal standpoint. "We Theosophists," H.P.B. wrote, "say that 'Good' and 'Harmony,' and 'Evil' and 'Disharmony,' are synonymous. Further we maintain that all pain and suffering are results of want of Harmony, and that the one terrible and only cause of the disturbance of Harmony is *selfishness* in some form or another." (*The Key to Theosophy*, p. 204)

In *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. calls Karma *the* most difficult tenet, but adds that though itself unknowable, its action is perceivable. Some aspects of its working are given us in *The Ocean of Theosophy* and in H.P.B.'s and W.Q.J.'s articles. Karma is Universal, but it operates in many ways, since it always "adjusts wisely, intelligently and equitably each effect to its cause." Below man, Karma operates as the simple Law of Cause and Effect. In the human kingdom, it becomes the Moral Law of Compensation. Each receives the effect of his actions in terms of his mental and moral unfoldment. From the spiritual point of view, thought is more potent and powerful than physical action; nay more, the effect of the former is more intense than the result of the latter. "It is a law of occult dynamics that 'a given amount of energy expended on the spiritual or astral plane is productive of far greater results than the same amount expended on the physical objective plane of existence'."

The unerring justice of Karma is more easily recognized than its equally important aspect of mercy. To the average person, justice and mercy seem contradictory; not so in reality. "Mercy and Justice are only opposite poles of a single whole; and Mercy without Justice is not possible in the operations of Karma. That which man calls Mercy and Justice is defective, errant and impure." (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*, Aphorism 21)

Nor is individual unhappiness always punishment for evil, but is sometimes discipline undertaken by the Ego for eliminating defects and acquiring fortitude and sympathy. In both cases Karma presents an opportunity for growth. Lack of material possessions is not always a handicap; it can be our opportunity. Those who have physical gifts may too easily be overweighted by them. These gifts can themselves be opportunities, but only to those who know how to use them as such. The Soul may have chosen insignificance, poverty, and even disease because, so freed from the dangers of addictiveness, possessiveness, and pretentiousness it might healthily outgrow its present limiting person-

ality and self-love.

This recalls the ancient definition of good and bad Karma. "Good Karma is that which is pleasing to Ishwara, and bad that which is displeasing to Ishwara." Theosophy explains this by stating that any effect, pleasant or unpleasant, which forwards the evolution of the Soul is good Karma and *vice versa*.

The freedom of the will is a most important Theosophical proposition. Exertion is greater than destiny. The doctrine of predestination has played havoc in the life of many and has ever acted as a barrier to self-examination, self-energization, self-improvement leading to Self-Knowledge.

Past Karma cannot be wiped out, for the effect is within the cause; Karma merely brings to fruition what already exists. But past Karma can be counteracted. "The effects may be counteracted or mitigated by the thoughts and acts of oneself or of another" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21, Aphorism 13*). Karma from previous incarnations manifests in the present life till the Soul begins to reason and choose for itself. From that time onward the Soul generates fresh Karma which becomes so interblended with the past that it is impossible to disentangle them. Thus no condition in later life can be attributed wholly to the Karma of a preceding incarnation.

Present responsibility is one important ethical application which emerges. To place the blame for present wrongs on some distant past shows irresponsibility and cowardice.

Receiving any Karmic harvest with the right inner attitude is another important lesson. If it is possible to magnify a minor ill, a philosophical attitude towards any form of suffering decreases its intensity. To understand that suffering for the personality is a needed lesson for the Soul, is difficult, but often dispassionate reflection brings home this truth to ourselves. More difficult is it to perceive its working in the lives of those dear to us. Their suffering affects us—their anguish maddens us—anxiety and fear for their welfare ruffles the quiet of our heart. Such is the blinding power even of good feeling. To receive not only our own Karma but the pain which proceeds from the suffering of others in the right way is another practical lesson. The sufferer before us is also a Soul—and advancing through his pain. Why grudge him that lesson? Not hardness of heart but understanding sympathy is the outcome of that attitude.

The transmutation of Karma is perhaps the least understood Karmic proposition. Says Mr. Judge: "An entity enters incarnation with Karmic energy from past existences. . . . This Karmic

energy passes into manifestation in harmony with the basic nature of the act" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*, p. 7). This implies that nothing we receive is preordained—be it bodily suffering, mental pain, moral anguish, or unpleasant circumstances. These are the four fields of Karma. When and how past actions will unfold on any of these depends on us now and here. "For any particular line of Karma to exert itself it is necessary that there should be the basis of the act engendering that Karma in which it can inhere and operate. . . . Karma is, therefore, as dependent upon the present personality for its fulfilment, as it was upon the former for the first initial act" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 6*, pp. 6, 4). Karma consists of a definite amount of Energy, our heirloom from the past, which will manifest on whatever plane a "fire" or centre of attraction is set up. Thus a sensualist will experience Karma on the bodily plane, while the man who has to any extent raised his consciousness above the bodily level may experience mental pain, though these should not be taken as hard and fast divisions.

Further, Karma enables the Soul to acquire whatever knowledge or capacity it lacks. If an individual has misused his brain he may be born mentally defective in order that the Soul may learn the value of such an important instrument. An angry individual will be surrounded by irritating conditions through which he can obtain the quality of patience. Thus kind Mother Nature provides us with opportunities of perceiving and overcoming weaknesses.

Knowledge and capacity are, however, not two separate processes. We develop the one as we acquire the other. By concentrating our minds and centring our hearts on the highest within, we can draw the necessary energy for fulfilling our highest aspiration.

For every weakness Nature provides the resistance of her strength; for every vice, the attraction of her virtue.

Man opposes Nature to conquer her; Nature responds with Love and achieves final conquest.

THE poet can reach where the sun cannot.

—INDIAN PROVERB

COMETS

[With Comet Halley due to appear this month, it is appropriate to reprint here an article by W. Q. Judge, published originally in *The Path* for April 1895.—Eds.]

THE probable genesis, the constitution, the movements, and the functions of comets have engaged the greatest attention of astronomers. They very often appear to defy laws which apply to other celestial bodies. That the laws governing the heavenly bodies are not all known must be admitted upon very little reflection. Two things alone would raise doubt as to whether modern astronomers are acquainted with all those laws. The first is that although the great fixed stars are known to be moving at enormous rates—for instance, that Sirius is receding from us with great velocity every moment—yet for ages they all appear to stand in the same relative positions, and are therefore called “fixed” stars in comparison with the planetary bodies nearer to us, which move with apparently greater rapidity. The other is that some of the planets having one moon seem to have a different law prevailing over them, in that one of the moons will move in a direction opposite to the others. There are, in the first volume of the *Secret Doctrine* (first ed., pp. 203-204), two paragraphs which indicate some of the views of the Adepts in respect to comets:

Born in the unfathomable depths of Space, out of the homogeneous Element called the World-Soul, every nucleus of Cosmic matter, suddenly launched into being, begins life under the most hostile circumstances. Through a series of countless ages, it has to conquer for itself a place in the infinitudes. It circles round and round between denser and already fixed bodies, moving by jerks, and pulling towards some given point or centre that attracts it, trying to avoid, like a ship drawn into a channel dotted with reefs and sunken rocks, other bodies that draw and repel it in turn; many perish, their mass disintegrating through stronger masses, and, when born within a system, chiefly within the insatiable stomachs of various Suns. Those which move slower and are propelled into an elliptic course are doomed to annihilation sooner or later. Others moving in parabolic curves generally escape destruction, owing to their velocity.

Some very critical readers will perhaps imagine that this teaching, as to the cometary stage passed through by all heavenly bodies, is in contradiction with the statements just made as to the moon being the mother of the earth. They will perhaps fancy that

intuition is needed to harmonize the two. But no intuition is in truth required. What does Science know of Comets, their genesis, growth, and ultimate behaviour? Nothing—absolutely nothing! And what is there so impossible that a laya centre—a lump of cosmic protoplasm, homogeneous and latent, when suddenly animated or fired up—should rush from its bed in Space and whirl throughout the abysmal depths in order to strengthen its homogeneous organism by an accumulation and addition of differentiated elements? And why should not such a comet settle in life, live, and become an inhabited globe?

It is to be observed here that the same war which we see going on upon this plane goes on upon the cosmic planes also, it being stated that when a nucleus of matter begins life it does so under the most hostile circumstances. On this plane, the moment the soul leaves the body the never-ceasing life-energy begins to tear the particles apart and separate them into smaller lives. And it is known that the theory is held by the Adepts that during life one set of cells or points of life wars against another set, and that what we call death results from the balance being destroyed, so that the mass of cells which work for destruction, of any composition in nature, gaining the upper hand, immediately begin to devour the other, and, at last, turn upon themselves for their own destruction as composite masses. That is to say, not that there is one distinct quantity of cells which are destroyers, opposed by another distinct quantity which are conservers, but that the negative and positive forces in nature are constantly acting and reacting against each other. The equilibrium, or natural state, is due to the balancing of these two opposite forces. The positive is destructive, and if that force gains the upper hand it converts all those cells over which it has control for the moment into destroyers of the other, negative cells. Hence a negative cell might at some time become a positive cell, and *vice versa*. After the balance is destroyed, then the positive forces accumulate to themselves more cells under their influence, and then again a division of the two forces takes place, so that a portion of the positive become negative, and in that way, continually dividing and subdividing, so-called death, as known to us, takes place.

It has not been understood what comets are, but these paragraphs indicate that the opinion of the Adepts is that they are the beginnings of worlds, *i.e.*, that we see in comets the possible beginnings of worlds. The sentence beginning the quotation—“Born in the unfathomable depths of Space,” etc.—means that, a laya centre being formed, the homogeneous mass of matter is con-

densed at that point, and, the energy of nature being thrown into it, it starts up, a fiery mass, to become a comet. It will then either pursue its course in evolution, if it is accumulating to its matter from other masses, or will be drawn into them for their aggrandizement. The hint is thrown out that the parabolic moving masses, owing to their velocity, escape destruction because they are able to evade the attraction from greater masses.

In the second paragraph quoted a clue is given to those who would be likely to think that this theory could not be consistent with the other, *viz.*, that the moon is the mother of the earth. It is intended to be shown in the paragraph that the starting up, as before suggested, of a mass of matter from the laya centre is due to the energy propelled into that centre from a dying globe, such as the moon is. This having been begun, no matter what may be the wanderings of the fast-moving mass, it will at last come back to the place from which it started, when it shall have grown to a greater maturity. And this is indicated in the last statement—“Why should not such a comet settle in life, live, and become an inhabited globe?”

This theory is as useful, consistent, and reasonable as any that materialistic science has invented in respect of comets or any other heavenly bodies, and, being perfectly in accord with the rest of the theories given out by the Adepts, there can be no objection raised to it, that it violates the general system which they have outlined.

—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE

No one is born a new being. He bears in his psyche the imprint of past generations. He is a combination of ancestral units from which a new being must be fused, yet he also bears within him an essential germ, a potential of unique individual value. The discovery of this unique essence and its development is the quest of consciousness.

—FRANCES G. WICKES

THE WHEELS OF LIFE

And when the Great King of Glory saw the Heavenly Treasure of the Wheel, he sprinkled it with water and said: "Roll onward, O my Lord, the Wheel! O my Lord, go forth and overcome!"

—Notes on the *Bhagavad-Gita*

THE Wheel is an ancient and mighty symbol of many meanings, from the Zoroastrian Boundless Circle of Time and the *Chakra* of Vishnu to the wheels of Ezekiel's vision and the "Winged Wheels" who guard Mount Meru from the approach of sinful men. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 126-7)

A striking use of the symbol occurs early in the Stanzas of Dzyan, on which *The Secret Doctrine* is based:

Darkness alone filled the boundless all, for Father, Mother and Son were once more one, and the Son had not awakened yet for the new Wheel, and his pilgrimage thereon. (Stanza I, 5)

Madame Blavatsky explains in a footnote that the use of the symbol of the Wheel for a world or globe shows that the ancients knew that our Earth was a revolving globe. She adds:

The "Great Wheel" is the whole duration of our Cycle of being, or Maha Kalpa, *i.e.*, the whole revolution of our special chain of seven planets or Spheres from beginning to end; the "Small Wheels" meaning the Rounds, of which there are also Seven. (*S.D.*, I, 40 fn.)

Elsewhere she explains that "by 'Wheels' the various spheres and centres of forces are generally meant," but that the reference in Stanza VI, 3 to "seven small wheels revolving, one giving birth to the other," is to our septenary ring. (*S.D.*, I, 140, 144)

The idea of purposeful motion is inseparable from our mental concept of the wheel, whether as the symbol of a revolving globe, or of a cycle of time, or as the mover of a chariot or a modern vehicle, or as part of a machine. The ceasing of the turning of the factory wheels, for example, is in our day an expression for economic disaster.

But the turning of the wheel has also its ethical applications. Krishna says in the *Bhagavad-Gita* (III, 16):

He who, sinfully delighting in the gratification of his passions, doth not cause this wheel thus already set in motion to continue revolving, liveth in vain. . . .

Commenting on this, Mr. Judge suggests another meaning of the "revolution of the wheel" than those specifically indicated in

the passage. These references are to nourishing the “gods” that they may nourish us, offering to them a portion of their bounty, and to the cycle suggested by the following sentence:

Beings are nourished by food, food is produced by rain, rain comes from sacrifice, and sacrifice is performed by action. (III, 14)

Krishna, he says, “makes it very clear that he refers to the principle of reciprocity or Brotherhood.”

And this he declares must be kept revolving; that is, each being must live according to that rule, or else he lives a life of sin to no purpose. . . . The Theosophical Society was founded with the object of inducing men to once more revolve this wheel of Brotherly Love. . . . (*Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, p. 92)

This important aspect of the symbol of the Wheel was dealt with in the article, “Human Brotherhood,” in *The Theosophical Movement* for October 1985.

The Buddha called his first sermon “the setting in motion of the Wheel of *Dharma*.”

The wheel of the Good Law moves swiftly on. It grinds by night and day. The worthless husks it drives from out the golden grain, the refuse from the flour. The hand of Karma guides the wheel; the revolutions mark the beatings of the karmic heart. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 30)

The universal wheel of time revolves and, by the magic power of the Logos in every creature’s heart, all things and creatures, mounted on that mighty wheel, must revolve also. As it is put in *Light on the Path*:

. . . the wheel turns, and on it are bound the rich and the poor, the great and the small—each has his moment of good fortune when the wheel brings him uppermost—the King rises and falls, the poet is *feted* and forgotten, the slave is happy and afterwards discarded. Each in his turn is crushed as the wheel turns on. . . . All alike. . . are but learning a lesson. (pp. 76-7)

Let us symbolize man himself, as the microcosm of the Universal Whole, as endowed with the power to turn his own small wheel, to move it forward and upward or backward and downward as he will, checked by his Karma. He can use its revolutions to generate power to help on the motion of the Great Wheel, or he may retard that movement of the Whole. Every man of good will desires to turn his wheel in the same direction as the Great Wheel of evolutionary progress, but the average man fails to contribute

all he could to the latter's advance. That maximum contribution involves placing the nave of his small wheel upon that of the Universal Wheel, making its centre his.

Concentric circles may be large or small, but, however greatly they may differ in circumference, their central point in common makes them one. The very word "concentration" means "to bring or come to a common centre." When we get off centre" we fall into personal and selfish thoughts; moods, good or bad; and often into regrettable words and acts. What but the endeavour to realign ourselves with our true centre can get us so quickly and surely out of the mood or other weakness into which we may have slipped?

And when the small wheel's hub is in the right position, set as it were to turn in perfect rhythm with the Universal Wheel, shall it not share its power and peace, helped on immeasurably by the general will of Nature and adding to the momentum by the force of the individual's awakened Spiritual Will? What danger is there then of deviation from the true Path, of which the Buddha wrote in the *Samyutta-Nikaya*:

That road is called Straight. That direction is called Without-Fear. The name of the Chariot is Not-going-crooked. It is fitted with *Dharma*-wheels. Shame is its brake and Truth its surrounding guard. . . .

EVERY ONE of our physical or mental movements is the fruit of causes deriving from the whole universe, and has reprecussions in the whole universe.

—ALEXANDRA DAVID NEEL

TOLERANCE AND POISE

DISRAELI'S slogan, "Never explain; never complain," epitomizes not only the dignified course for statesmen to follow, but is the wisest plan for the ordinary person as well. Giving too much attention to our adversaries encourages them to continue their attacks, and, more serious still, refutation and defence waste our time and take our attention from the more important work we should be doing.

Why spend time arguing when it can be spent in constructing? If the work done is really useful, what more eloquent answer can there be to our critics? Assuredly, by our indifference we will not disarm those who criticize, but we will have lived surrounded by the joys of creative work and not by the anguish of controversy. "Life," said Disraeli again, "is too short to be petty."

Any irresponsible person can criticize, but to ignore hostile criticism, to overlook personal affronts—that calls for tolerance and poise. Refusing a petty and heated reaction to attacks strikes at the very root of personality and selfishness. It recognizes, in the light of Karma, that the hands that strike us are our own; and it makes it possible to honestly profit by criticism, through self-examination in its light. Was it not Confucius who told his followers, when criticism was just to mend their ways; when it was baseless to laugh at it? Whoever gave it, the advice is sound.

Dwelling upon resentment, however just, involves dwelling upon the personality and putting one's peace of mind at the mercy of every faultfinder.

"He reviled me, he beat me and conquered and then plundered me," who express such thoughts tie their mind with the intention of retaliation. In them hatred will not cease.

"He reviled me, he beat me and conquered and then plundered me," who do not express such thoughts, in them hatred will cease.
(*The Dhammapada*, verses 3-4)

Both H.P.B. and W.Q.J. set the example in their lives. Like all who try unselfishly to serve the race, they were cruelly misunderstood and maligned. Lions in the defence of Theosophy whenever its good name was attacked, when the offence was against themselves, when it injured only themselves, they always let it go. In *Letters That Have Helped Me*, the lines are clearly laid down for students of Theosophy:

Let us all be as silent as we may be, and work, work; for as the enemy rages, they waste time, while work shines forth after

all is over, and we will see that as they fought we were building. Let that be our watchword. . . . Now we have to ignore everything, and just work on, be good and kind and, like St. Paul's charity, overlook all things. Retire into your own silence and let all others be in the hands of Karma, as we all are.

But there are times when students of Theosophy have fearlessly to defend the Philosophy, those to whom they owe it, their fellow-students, or others unjustly attacked. The principles of such replies to criticism are given in the article "Defence of Theosophy" in the book *Living the Life*.

KNOWLEDGE comes in visions, first in dreams and then in pictures presented to the inner eye during meditation. Thus have I been taught the whole system of evolution, the laws of being and all else that I know—the mysteries of life and death, the workings of karma. Not a word was spoken to me of all this in the ordinary way, except, perhaps, by way of confirmation of what was thus given me—nothing taught me in writing. And knowledge so obtained is so clear, so convincing, so indelible in the impression it makes upon the mind, that all other sources of information, all other methods of teaching with which we are familiar dwindle into insignificance of comparison with this. One of the reasons why I hesitate to answer offhand some questions put to me is the difficulty of expressing in sufficiently accurate language things given to me in pictures, and comprehended by me by the pure Reason, as Kant would call it.

Theirs is a synthetic method of teaching: the most general outlines are given first, then an insight into the method of working, next the broad principles and notions are brought into view, and lastly begins the revelation of the minuter points.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

Halley's Comet, last seen in 1910, is due to reappear after about 75 years this November, and will be visible well into 1986. The comet, seen by man since before the Christian era, follows an elliptical orbit that takes it out past Neptune and brings it back for a close spin around the sun. With the equipment and facilities now available to astronomers, the return of Halley is expected to unravel many an astronomical mystery.

This once-in-a-lifetime experience has captured the imagination of people around the world and the media characteristically have magnified the "Halley mania." *The Sunday Observer* (Bombay) for October 13 comments:

Once again, the Halley fever is on. The delirium gathers momentum with the approach of November when Halley will start streaking the skies with its 30 million to 70 million mile tail of radiant splendour. . . .

The comet that presided over the destinies of nations, has fascinated astronomers for centuries. Before his invention of the reflecting telescope, Newton spent many sleepless nights searching the sky for comets. He studied their moves and arrived at the conclusion that comets, like planets, move in ellipses. The theory of regular cometary orbits became the basis of study for Edmund Halley, Newton's friend. In 1707, his calculations revealed the fact that the comets of 1531, 1607 and 1682 were apparitions at 76-year intervals of the same comet. He predicted its return in 1759. The comet arrived on schedule and was posthumously named after him.

In November 1985, the comet Halley, with a nucleus of about 20 kilometres across, will be more than just a resplendent vision in the sky. It will perhaps unfold the mysteries of the universe to a passionately inquisitive people for whom knowledge is a prerequisite for survival. For the first time in the history of mankind, astronomers will observe Halley from space through the three space probes launched since last year by Europe, Japan and the Soviet Union. The European craft will be within 300 miles of the comet's nucleus. When the cameras and electronic equipment go into operation, the pictures that will be flashed back to earth will perhaps hold clues to the origin of the universe and answer the question: "Are we born of the stars?"

Comets are the wanderers who, in the great struggle and rush of matter in any place where a system of worlds is to come into

existence, act as aggregators or collectors of the cosmic matter until at last sufficient collections are made to cause the beginning of globes. H.P.B. calls comets "the long-haired radicals of the solar system." Astronomically, comets seem to be set apart from all other heavenly bodies by certain peculiar characteristics. Study of their peculiarities would open out an avenue of undreamed-of knowledge, provided the Universe is looked upon as living, intelligent, and operated from within and behind like the human body. Comets—such of them as are fated to survive—are incipient planets, each the progeny of its predecessor, like the endless string of personalities inhabited by the human ego, and they are undergoing the necessary stage of ingurgitating diffuse and heterogeneous cosmic matter before falling into regular orbits and beginning a round of orderly evolution.

Readers are referred to H.P.B.'s hints upon comets:

As the Occult teaching expresses it: "The Central Sun causes Fohat to collect primordial dust in the form of balls, to impel them to move in converging lines and finally to approach each other and aggregate" (*Book of Dzyan*) . . . "Being scattered in Space, without order or system, the world-germs come into frequent collision until their final aggregation, after which they become wanderers (Comets). Then the battles and struggles begin. The older (bodies) attract the younger, while others repel them. Many perish, devoured by their stronger companions. Those that escape become worlds." (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 201)

The law of Analogy holds good for the worlds, as it does for man; and as "The ONE (Deity) becomes *Two* (Deva or Angel) and *Two* becomes *Three* (or man)," etc., etc., so we are taught that the *Curds* (world-stuff) become wanderers (Comets), these become stars, and the stars (the centres of vortices) *our sun and planets*—to put it briefly. (*Ibid.*, I, 206)

"*The essence of cometary matter and of that which composes the stars is totally different from any of the chemical or physical characteristics with which Western Science is now acquainted. While the spectroscope has shown the probable similarity (owing to the chemical action of terrestrial light upon the intercepted rays) of earthly and sidereal substance, the chemical actions, peculiar to the variously progressed orbs of space, have not been detected, nor proven to be identical with those observed on our own planet*"—say the Teachers. (*Ibid.*, I, 597)

Esoteric doctrine recognizes the comets as forms of cosmic existence *co-ordinated with earlier stages of nebular evolution*; and

it actually assigns *to them chiefly* the formation of all worlds.
(*Ibid.*, I, 599)

Attention is also invited to Mr. Judge's article, "Comets," reprinted in this issue.

United Nations sponsored International Years, in which a worldwide focus is held on one or another major issue in the life of humanity, have proved successful in generating action and raising public consciousness. This year's international focus on youth aims to place young people, their problems and their potential, at the centre of global concern. It is admitted that effective solutions to the issues facing young people will not be quick, and many countries and organizations are planning special long-term projects.

World Goodwill Newsletter No. 3 (1985) is devoted to the problems of youth and the objectives of the International Youth Year (IYY):

The youth of the world are inevitably subject to the forces of crisis and tension which so strongly characterize our times. Young people today are better educated and healthier than they have ever been in the past. They carry within them those special qualities of idealism, enthusiasm, and daring which have always been the hallmark of youth and they also have the modern sense of internationalism. As such the generation of 15 to 24-year-olds represents a tremendous potential for goodwill in the world. This youthful energy has never been more needed than it is today. If we are to move through the crisis of these latter years of the twentieth century and if we are to build a future world of justice and sharing it is essential that the dreams, the hopes and the fresh creative energy of youth be involved in the struggle to create that new society

The youth of today stand in a sort of "no man's land," for they are not part of the old materialistic order, and the new emerging world with which they will have a natural affinity is not yet sufficiently strongly developed for them to identify with it

International Youth Year has been designed as a concerted local, national and international effort to do two things: to focus attention on solving the problems faced by youth; and to stimulate, awaken and mobilize the energy of goodwill in young people. It was the intention of the governments of the world, meeting to-

gether in the General Assembly of the United Nations, that 1985 should be a year when youth are encouraged, and given, opportunities to participate in a wide range of activities, enabling them to contribute to the resolution of their own problems and the problems facing society at large. With this in mind three themes for the year were adopted: participation, development and peace.

The transition from childhood to adulthood can be a traumatic experience. It is a time for experimenting, a time of risk-taking, and a time for breaking away from the protective environment of the family. In today's world, the pain and vulnerability of this growing-up process is accentuated by the fact that society as a whole is going through a similar process of "growing up." The support of a stable culture and of widely accepted moral values is no longer there. Youth must find their way forward at a time of uncertainty and upheaval, a time when they feel the threat posed by nuclear weapons as a deeply personal and frightening issue. It is precisely because young people are so vitally interested in humanity's crisis that they represent hope and faith in the future. There is always a positive side to crisis. It implies opportunity and a way forward.

The latest discoveries of science, psychology and philosophy and the changes brought about by developing technology compel us to take a new look at the world, and particularly at education, because education is the foundation of all civilization, culture and true, evolving change.

World Goodwill Newsletter No. 3 contains reflections on "Education for Life":

Youth today thirst for education. It is seen as the way to liberation from ignorance and poverty and to a better way of life. But while education should be a universal passport to creative, fulfilling work, it so often falls short of the ideal, providing instead a competitive training for earning a living in a competitive society.

Rather than for making a living, education should be for making a life. Therefore, it should seek to nourish the whole person through the careful development and progressive integration of the instinct, the intellect and the intuition.

Education, in this holistic sense, calls for the educators—who are the parents, the teachers and all who work with the young—to educate themselves. They too must learn to balance the elements of their nature, to grow in self-knowledge and discover who

they truly are and what is their real responsibility towards the young if they are to become educators in this fuller sense of the word.

Education will then be seen to be a process which begins at the youngest age and, extending further than school or university, becomes lifelong, having for its purpose the progressive unfolding of the essential being of the individual and the consequent realization of the higher potential of the individual in creative everyday living. . . .

Where education awakens the capacity for true communication between people it opens the way to a progressive establishment of right human relations and to a life of service. We need an education which asks real questions and seeks to create a spirit of unity, a planetary consciousness, a belief in human potential and a belief in the future we all share on planet Earth.

Topic (issue No. 158) publishes Daniel J. Boorstin's reflections on "Science as Mythology." Just as early societies had their myths, so has our scientific society, the author contends; but though there are parallels, there are also differences:

The past and the future have much in common. Nearly all the past was a time when we were not there, and nearly all the future is a time when we will not be there. Therefore both have the appeal of mystery and romance. And—most important for our purpose—both have their mythologies. Some societies have myths to frame their past; we have myths to frame our future.

In recent years we have learned a great deal about the myths of early peoples. Scholars of comparative religion are now generally agreed that for these peoples of the past and some still present, myths are not mere fanciful tales and random flights of the imagination. Quite the contrary. The brilliant historian of mythology Mircea Eliade explains, "Myth is always an account of a creation; it relates how something was produced, began to *be*. Myths tell only of that which *really happened*."

Since myths tell of all beginnings, they are the framework and the vocabulary of all ancient reality. They provide the archetypes governing present and future. . . . Myths become the easiest, most vivid, most persuasive ways of generalizing about the world.

Our modern scientific mythology takes a quite different form, so we may not recognize it as mythology. It performs a similar function, but also limits our thinking and our imagination. While

the myths of early peoples are about their past, ours are about our future. While theirs occurred in a distant sacred time, and their actors are supernatural human beings cast in the familiar heroic mould, ours occur in the scientific time to come. The actors in our myths are also forces and entities cast in the mould of our recent past and our present, and our myths also dominate our ways of talking about the present and the future.

Our myths of the future, instead of being dominated by a sky god and an Earth god, are governed by large generalizing abstractions inherited from the science of the past two centuries. One comes from the biological sciences, and its name is Evolution; the other, from mathematics and the physical and social sciences, is Extrapolation. Just as some societies can imagine no reality unless it is encompassed in the mythical origins of everything, so we find it hard to imagine a future that is not encompassed in these ways of extending experience into the scientific future.

The ancient myths of origin and creation were personal dramas of the gods. Our scientific myths of destiny and futurity are a drama of impersonal forces—natural selection, struggle for survival, adaptation, acceleration, deceleration. This crucial distinction grows naturally out of the differences between hindsight and foresight. . . .

The ancient Greeks did finally escape from their mythology—their way of explaining the creation and the origins of things—into a universe of abstractions, into a world of forces and elements. By doing this they made possible the beginnings of modern Western philosophy and science. We seem now to have come full circle, for we have boxed ourselves into a world of abstractions and forces, and so committed ourselves to a mythology of destiny and futurity. . . .

It is too much to hope that we will liberate ourselves from our confident mythology. But self-awareness is itself a kind of liberation. To know the prison of our thoughts may help us leap over the walls, or at least remind us that there is a greater, freer world outside.

The perfection of social organization among ants and other insects can well excite our admiration. Scientists studying the social behaviour of ants are struck especially by their altruistic trait of sharing food and water with other members of their clan. Biologist E. O. Wilson, writing on "Altruism and the Ants" in the August *Discover*, considers such sharing a more important com-

ponent of advanced social behaviour than dominance, leadership, or any other kind of interaction. It tightens social bonds and leads to the evolution of some of the most complex forms of communication in the animal kingdom.

The vast majority of the 10,000 or more species of ants living in the world today have evolved ways of carrying food and water to their nests to share with others. Drop-carrying with the help of mandibles is common among groups of primitive ants. A cleverer mode of transport is to store it inside the body of the ant, and when it returns home, it passes it to other members of the colony by mouth-to-mouth regurgitation. The species of ants whose workers hunt in groups, in a pattern paralleling that of mammals, are also by and large the ones that possess the most complex societies and modes of communication. A few go so far as to organize formidable raiding parties that overwhelm colonies of termites and other kinds of ants.

The author comments:

The elaboration of liquid and food sharing in ants, from drop-carrying to regurgitation, is important in binding the colony members together and co-ordinating their activities. Yet despite all our efforts over many years of research, those of us who study social insects have never been able to find a command centre. No individual—not even the queen, an oversized creature concerned mainly with reproduction—lays plans for the colony as a whole. Instead, the activity of an ant colony or beehive is the summation of a vast number of personal decisions by individual ants. When everyone has roughly the same stomach content, individual decisions become similar and a more harmonious form of mass action is possible.

Each worker ant has a brain consisting of about a million nerve cells. The average human being, who is ten million times as heavy as an ant, has a brain of approximately 100 billion nerve cells. Insects are therefore constitutionally not very bright, and they must rely on automatic guidance systems such as uniform food sharing to keep their colonies running. This is the reason why most kinds of ants, although very impressive in their social attainments, have apparently changed little since the age of the dinosaurs. It's also why they may outlast our own fractious, impatient species.

The whole problem of insect societies raises interesting questions about the apparent "individuality" of single members of animal species. Is an ant a complete unit, or should it be regarded as simply a part, an organ, a limited function, within the total

organization of the community? Scientists study ants to learn the secrets of organic differentiation and social process, while Theosophists see in these facts a field for the observation of states of *consciousness*. The Theosophical classification of animals is by hierarchies of intelligence, unlike the scientific divisions in terms of external form and function. H.P.B. writes in *Isis Unveiled*:

Nothing is more demonstrable than the proposition that the perfection of matter is reached at the expense of instinct. . . . The ant, with its wonderful architectural, social, and political abilities, is inexpressibly higher in the scale than the subtile royal tiger watching its prey. "With awe and wonder," exclaims du Bois-Raymond, "must the student of nature regard that microscopic molecule of nervous substance which is the seat of the laborious, constructive, orderly, loyal, dauntless soul of the ant!" (I, 433-4)

The Secret Doctrine (II, 120) speaks of the ant's intelligence as "animal consciousness of a superior kind."

Discoveries that trees can "talk" chemically with each other have drawn a lot of attention lately. According to *International Wildlife*, there is evidence of plant communication that may explain how trees fight off insects. Trees with torn leaves not only alter their own chemistry to ward off further defoliation, they "cue" undamaged neighbouring trees to produce similar changes in their leaves.

Biologists Ian Baldwin and Jack Schultz of Pennsylvania State University placed healthy poplar plants in a gaslight enclosure along with damaged trees. Within three days, both the damaged and undamaged trees displayed changes in the chemistry of their leaves. These changes in leaf quality ruin the appetite of insects and discourage them from laying eggs. During the same time, the scientists placed a group of healthy trees in a second enclosure. These trees showed no sign of change.

Trees and vegetation, like all else in Nature, have a consciousness of their own. All evidence points to this fact. Botanists have even found the "nerves" of plants; not that they suppose that plants can feel or think as animals do, but because they believe that some structure, bearing the same relation functionally to plant life that nerves bear to animal life, is necessary to explain vegetable growth and nutrition.

THEOSOPHICAL PUBLICATIONS

By H. P. Blavatsky:

ISIS UNVEILED. A photographic facsimile of the original edition of 1877.
THE SECRET DOCTRINE. A facsimile of the original edition of 1888.
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THE THEOSOPHICAL GLOSSARY
TRANSACTIONS OF THE BLAVATSKY LODGE
THE KEY TO THEOSOPHY
THE VOICE OF THE SILENCE
FIVE MESSAGES TO THE AMERICAN THEOSOPHISTS
RAJA-YOGA OR OCCULTISM
SHE BEING DEAD YET SPEAKETH
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LETTERS THAT HAVE HELPED ME
THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
NOTES ON THE BHAGAVAD-GITA
THE YOGA APHORISMS OF PATANJALI
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TEXTS FOR THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS
SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE STUDY OF "THE SECRET DOCTRINE"
U.L.T. PAMPHLET SERIES, Nos. 1-36
H. P. BLAVATSKY AND WILLIAM Q. JUDGE PAMPHLET SERIES

Magazines:

THE ARYAN PATH (BOMBAY)
THEOSOPHY (LOS ANGELES)

The United Lodge of Theosophists

DECLARATION

THE policy of this Lodge is independent devotion to the cause of Theosophy, without professing attachment to any Theosophical organization. It is loyal to the great founders of the Theosophical Movement, but does not concern itself with dissensions or differences of individual opinion.

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

It holds that the unassailable *Basis for Union* among Theosophists, wherever and whenever situated, is "*similarity of aim, purpose and teaching*," and therefore has neither Constitution, By-Laws nor Officers, the sole bond between its Associates being that *basis*. And it aims to disseminate this idea among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."

Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.

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