

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

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AHRIMAN'S LAST STAND

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ANITY is regarded by many as, at the worst, a venial sin. Very often it is treated as "an amiable weakness," perhaps because so many share it; and its display may receive more often ridicule than condemnation. Madame Blavatsky's warning, in her translation from the *Book of the Golden Precepts*, is mild in comparison with the strong terms in which she has elsewhere pointed out its very serious dangers. There the Disciple is told that "self-gratulation is like unto a lofty tower, up which a haughty fool has climbed. Thereon he sits in prideful solitude and unperceived by any but himself." The adjurations to humility in the aspirant to Wisdom as well as in him who has attained it are mildly phrased. But she faced to wounded vanity in some form or another almost all defections from the Theosophical Society. Well did she warn that praise should be shunned. "Praise leads to self-delusion."

Some of her most solemn warnings against vanity were given in her article, "The Devil's Own," published in *Lucifer* in March 1891 and reprinted in *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 7* under the title "Thoughts on Ormuzd and Ahriman." Tracing there the deadly strife between Light and Goodness on the one hand and Darkness and Evil on the other back to the period before man had become as selfish and personal as he now is, she declared "selfishness, especially, the love of *Self* above all things in heaven and earth,

helped by human vanity," to be "the begetter of the seven mortal sins." And she named *Mada*, pride or arrogance, as the fifth among the "Indwellers," our "inner enemies" mentioned in the Hindu exoteric teachings.

The Parsi high-priests, she explained in a footnote in the article mentioned above, regard the term Ahriman (Angra Mainyu) as "a symbolical representation of the disturbing elements in Kosmos and of the evil passions and animal instincts in man."

She related an allegorical fable from the old Zoroastrian work in which Angra Mainyu, who had before created only wild beasts and birds of prey, was declared by the holy Yazatas (celestial spirits) to be incapable of producing a beautiful and harmless being. Thus challenged, he was said to have created "the loveliest bird the world had ever seen...a majestic peacock, the emblem of vanity and selfishness, which is self-adulation in deeds."

"'Let it be the King of Birds,' quoth the Dark One, 'and let man worship him and act after his fashion.'"

How many, alas, have done so, who may perhaps have found themselves held back thereby from the victory they may have fancied almost within their grasp!

"Man," H.P.B. wrote, "following the Delphic injunction, has to become acquainted with, and gain the mastery over, every nook and corner of his heterogeneous nature, before he can learn to discriminate between HIMSELF and his *personality*." She named two conditions as absolutely requisite to this achievement: to impress indelibly on soul and heart the noble Zoroastrian precept, "Good thoughts, good words, good deeds," and to have thoroughly realized them in practice. "Above all, one has to crush *personal vanity* beyond resurrection."

"Vanity," Mr. Judge said, "represents in one aspect the illusionary power of Nature; Maya, that which we mistake for the reality. It is nearest always to us and most insidious, just as Nature's illusion is ever present and difficult to overcome." It seemed to him that anger and lust had something of the *Rajasika* quality, but that vanity was wholly of the *Tamogunam*.

"Vanity," he wrote in his article "Culture of Concentration

(*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 18*), “brings up before the soul all sorts of erroneous or evil pictures, or both, and drags the judgment so away that once more anger or envy will enter, or such course be pursued that violent destruction by outside causes falls upon the being.”

He described one case of which he had been told, in which a man who had made considerable progress had at last allowed vanity to rule. He added that

this was followed by the presentation to his inner sight of the most extraordinary images and ideas, which in their turn so affected him that he attracted to his sphere hordes of elementals seldom known to students and quite indescribable in English. These at last, as is their nature, laid siege to him, and one day produced all about the plane of his astral body an effect similar in some respects to that which follows an explosion of the most powerful explosive known to science. The consequence was, his ethereal form was so suddenly fractured that by repercussion the whole nature of the man was altered, and he soon died in a madhouse after having committed the most awful excesses.

And vanity cannot be avoided except by studiously cultivating that selflessness and poverty of heart advised as well by Jesus of Nazareth as by Buddha.

In his article, “Hit the Mark,” reprinted from *The Path* for September 1890 in *Vernal Blooms*, Mr. Judge wrote: “... if we start out to reach the goal of wisdom, the mind and heart must not be permitted to wander, for the path is narrow and the wanderings of a day may cause us years of effort to find the road again.”

Madame Blavatsky's warning in “The Devil's Own” is as serious:

How often does one see strong-hearted men and determined women moved by a strong aspiration towards an ideal they know to be the true one, battling successfully, to all appearance, with Ahriman and conquering him. Their external *Selves* have been the battle-ground of a most terrible, deadly strife between the two opposing Principles; but they have stood firmly—and won. The dark enemy seems conquered; it is crushed in fact, so far as the animal instincts are concerned. Personal selfishness, that

greed for self, and self only, the begetter of most of the evils—has vanished; and every lower instinct, melting like soiled icicles under the beneficent ray of Ahura Mazda, the radiant EGO-SUN, has disappeared, making room for better and holier aspirations. Yet there lurks in them their old but partially destroyed vanity, that spark of personal pride which is the last to die in man. Dormant it is, latent and invisible to all, including their own consciousness; but there it is still. Let it awake but for an instant, and the seemingly crushed-out personality comes back to life at the sound of its voice, arising from its grave like an unclean ghoul at the command of the midnight incantator. Five hours—nay, five minutes even—of life under its fatal sway, may destroy the work of years of self-control and training, and of laborious work in the service of Ahura Mazda, to open wide the door anew to Angra Mainyu. Such is the result of the silent and unspoken but ever-present *worship* of the only beautiful creation of the Spirit of Selfishness and Darkness.

Is it surprising that we find modesty listed by Sri Krishna among the marks of him whose virtues are of a godlike character? Or Paul writing bluntly in his *Epistle to the Galatians*: “...if a man think himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself,” and adding four verses later: “Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap”?

Is it an easy thing even to scotch the snake of self, let alone to throttle it? It is not; but the task must be essayed. Sooner or later we must take the snake of self in a steady grasp and conquer it, so becoming divine, as *Light on the Path* indicates has to be done. The valour required for the conquest is so great that deeds of prowess on the battlefield are not to be compared with it. The ordeal is vividly described in the concluding chapter of *Through the Gates of Gold*, which deals with “The Secret of Strength”:

To put on armour and go forth to war, taking the chances of death in the hurry of the fight, is an easy thing; to stand still amid the jangle of the world, to preserve stillness within the turmoil of the body, to hold silence amid the thousand cries of the senses and desires, and then, stripped of all armour and

without hurry or excitement, take the deadly serpent of self and kill it, is no easy thing. Yet that is what has to be done; and it can only be done in the moment of equilibrium when the enemy is disconcerted by the silence.

But there is needed for this supreme moment a strength such as no hero of the battlefield needs.

Forewarned is forearmed, and wise is he who heeds the warning and binds fast vanity, that slyest of traitors within us, who may at any moment, while free and unrestrained, open the fortress to the enemy.

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PLANES AND STATES OF HUMAN CONSCIOUSNESS

ALL of us dream, but what dreams are, and how to use the dream state to our own benefit, is hardly known. Psychology, in the West, is a comparatively young science, and as it is dominated by the materialistic bias, we have crude and topsy-turvy deductions presented to us. Let us confine ourselves to Eastern Psychology, the basis of which has been proven correct for thousands of years.

The very foundations of Asiatic psychology are different from those of Western psychology. The psychology of the Chinese philosophers as of Hindu and Sufi philosophers, and for the matter of that of Egyptian and early Greek philosophers, teaches one fundamental truth, which modern Western psychologists reject. Let us begin by looking at that truth. It is about the nature and origin of soul or human consciousness.

Western psychology teaches that human consciousness with its profound intelligence, its visions, its creative powers, is born of brain, nerves and senses. Soul is the product of brain activities; therefore, when the body dies and the brain perishes, the Soul also is no more. When the candle is exhausted, the flame cannot be. Nowadays, face to face with the results of the psychical researchers and others, the materialistic psychologist has to admit that for some time at least after the death of the body some "effluvium" of consciousness survives, just as when the flame is extinguished some smoke and smell remain for a while. Proceeding on this basis, modern psychologists attempt to explain all phenomena pertaining to consciousness, and among them is the phenomenon of dreams in terms of biological and physiological processes. In every class of phenomena, they fail therefore to give satisfactory explanations and this applies to the subject of dreams.

Indian psychology begins on an altogether opposite premise. It does not regard soul and human consciousness as the products of the brain, but contrariwise gives the soul a primary place. It is the soul who is the cause of the body, brain, senses, organs, nerves,

and muscles. The soul exists before the body is born, and lives after its death. The basic immortality of the soul is the first recognition. This is the very first truth which Krishna puts before his disciple Arjuna; and remember the circumstances in which it was presented—the battlefield where bloodshed and carnage were taking place. What does Krishna say?

It [the Spirit] is not a thing of which a man may say, "It hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter"; for it is without birth and meeteth not death; it is ancient, constant, and eternal, and is not slain when this its mortal frame is destroyed. (II, 20)

So we must begin with that—the Immortal Spirit. Each one of us is a Spirit-Being. We *have* a mind, we *have* feelings, we *have* a body, but we *are* Spirit-Beings; and more, we have mind and feelings and body *because* we are Spirit-Beings. The Spirit is not the result, but the very cause of all we have and are.

This Spirit-Being, our Real Self, has two aspects, transcendent and incarnate. A part or a ray of the Spirit-Being incarnates in the body of flesh and blood; but the major part does not incarnate and broods over the incarnated aspect. The transcendent aspect may be compared to a King, and the incarnate aspect to that King's ambassador. The Spirit-Being is the Divine King who stays in his own spiritual realm, but sends the ambassador to the foreign territory, the world of matter. Between these two aspects of the Spirit-Being there is identity and sameness and also a difference. The ray of the Spirit-Being which incarnates is identical in essence and substance with the parent luminary from which it emanates. Just as the ray of the sun has the light and the warmth and the power of the sun, so also the incarnated ray possesses within itself all the power and enlightenment of the original Spirit-Being. But there is this difference—the ray of the sun falling on earth reflects different colours; falling on a cold object, seems to lose its warmth; falling on a hot object, seems to enhance its heat; falling on one kind of flower, produces one colour; and another colour in contact with another flower. So also the ray of the Spirit-Being incarnated in a body of flesh and blood absorbs, so to speak, the temperature,

the colour, the properties of the world of matter. The transcendent overbrooding aspect we call by the name of the Spirit, while the incarnated aspect we call the soul. The human soul in the body is called *Dehi* in the *Gita*, is a ray of the Spirit, identical in essence and substance, yet different because it is coloured by the material universe.

The next point to grasp is that both the Spirit-Being and the soul are in their own states of consciousness. The transcendent overbrooding Spirit is in a particular state or condition of consciousness. That state is high and difficult to understand; it is a state which is universal, impersonal, profoundly blissful—a state of supreme repose which is ceaseless action. It is very difficult for the human brain to know and even more difficult to describe, what the state of consciousness of the Spirit-Being might be like. Great yogis, in deep meditation called *Samadhi*, experience it in their own incarnated existence. This state of *Samadhi* is called the highest state that can be experienced by human beings and is named *Turiya*. The transcendent Spirit-Being lives ever in *Turiya*; the incarnated soul has not the experience of this condition. It has fallen from that high estate, so to speak. This is one aspect of the Christian theological doctrine of the fall of man. We as Spirit-Beings are in high heaven; but as souls we have fallen. One of the names of Krishna is "*Achyuta*, he who falleth not" (XVIII, 73), because as Divine Incarnation or *Avatara* he continuously experiences the bliss of *Turiya*. Difficult as it is for us to comprehend this high condition of our own Spirit-Being, it is most necessary that we recognize, with the help of our minds, that we are That, the birthless and deathless Spirit-Being. The goal to which all incarnated existence is leading us is to produce in the soul, which is embodied, the knowledge and the power of the Spirit-Being.

Turn to the soul in the body: this incarnated human consciousness has many states or conditions. Dreams are also states of consciousness. We are now in the waking state of consciousness—*Jagrat*. The dream state is different from the waking state. We have to understand this. The easiest way to understand is this: in waking consciousness we are turned outwa

towards the universe. Our senses function and see the universe, hear the sounds, and so on. The soul is turned outwards. In the dream condition the soul is turned inwards, the senses are not active, the brain is passive, the mind is turned upon itself. In waking life our eyes see objects; in dream life our eyes do not see objects, our ears do not hear sounds; we only see and hear images and sounds which are subjective. While the body is awake, the senses are alert and the brain is functioning, the human soul is in the waking state of consciousness. But when the body is asleep, the senses are non-active and the brain has become passive, then the soul is in a subjective condition of consciousness, and all that the consciousness in that state has are the thought-images, the memory-pictures, the desire-forms with which that consciousness has filled itself during the waking state. For example, if we dream of a friend, let us not fancy that we have met that friend and have talked to him; all that has happened is that the images we have in our own consciousness, gathered during waking life, have for one reason or another been activated and we have talked to the image we have made of our friend.

In our waking life we are full of desires, *Tanha*, and we are active, impelled by these desires and the sense of possession. Now, in each one of us there are desirable and undesirable tendencies; there is good and evil; there is selfishness and selflessness; there is egotism and altruism. This in waking life-consciousness or *Jagrat* state. At night, when we go to sleep, this assemblage of desires and tendencies, good and bad, is there, though our senses are closed and our brain is passive. Into that subjective state of dreams, called *Svapna*, we enter when the body goes to sleep. We do not see or hear anything more. We are in the company of our tendencies, desires and thoughts. We have our memory-pictures, thought and desire images. We are so to speak caught up in them.

But man is not wholly selfish and petty and mean and shallow. In each of us there are higher and nobler aspects, which ultimately free themselves from the petty, lower aspects; that is to say, these better aspects become active and the lower ones become passive. That is the experience of all of us, from day to day. Things worry

us, we are troubled, we become agitated and impatient and are unhappy, involved in some kind of a mood. This is in waking consciousness in daily life. Some people's moods last long; with others they are short-lived. Now the moods of our waking consciousness, pleasant or unpleasant, affect us and our work, but also affect those people who contact us. But in the dream state those moods directly affect only ourselves and no one else. Imagine ourselves now and here in a bad mood; often under the pressure of work, having to see people and talk to them, we find ourselves getting over our mood. In the dream state, however, the prevailing mood continues for a long while and it is difficult for a person to extricate himself from it. The force of desires, the power of *Tanha* residing in the waking consciousness, envelops and permeates our consciousness, and unless the power and the force of knowledge or wisdom, of spiritual aspiration arises and proves stronger than the desires, we remain caught up in a state that at its worst is very dangerous and at its best causes fatigue and waste of time.

After the body is asleep, the human soul or consciousness is focused either in its lower natural impulses or in the higher spiritual ideation. Each man, each woman, passes through two stages during the sleep of the body: one stage is called *Svapna*, the other is called *Sushupti*. *Svapna* or dream condition is that state of consciousness where thirsts and desires aroused by the senses and satisfied by the mind are prominent. We are feeling and thinking about personal matters. Of that state *The Voice of the Silence* warns: "Under every flower a serpent coiled." There are no pure flowers in the garden of *Kama*. Just as in our ordinary garden, attracted by the strong scent of some flowers the deadly cobra resides, so in every bush of sense-ensouled thought is a deadly serpent. We have sometimes what are called pleasant dreams, but such are never useful.

The second stage is that in which the human consciousness becomes free from the power of *Tanha* and is plunged in its spiritual ideation or meditation on noble thoughts, lofty aspirations, impersonal truths and unselfish loves. In this condition of *Sushupti*, highly important, the human soul experiences real rest born

peace, enlightenment born of wisdom, strength born of the realization of the power of the Spirit.

Theosophy teaches that we can and should try to cultivate the necessary attitude which would shorten and purify the *Svapna* period of sleep, lengthen and strengthen the *Sushupti* period and make it useful for daily living in waking consciousness. There is one point we should understand at this stage of our study. People sometimes say, "We do not dream." That is not true. Everyone dreams every night, in these two states. What people mean is that they do not remember what they dream. Those occasions when they say they dreamt, are brain phenomena; on those occasions the physical brain retains and remembers what the soul has dreamt, and generally what is remembered is *Svapna*-state dreams, and only very rarely *Sushupti*-state ideations. Remembering our dreams is a process dependent on the physical brain, on its sensitiveness and receptivity. So each one of us dreams or ideates, but the brain remembers only on occasions.

Another point: a person may sleep for seven or eight hours, but gets up not really rested. Another person may sleep three or four hours and is thoroughly refreshed. The *quality* of sleep should be taken into account. If a person sleeps eight hours but is caught up in his desires for seven hours and has only one hour of *Sushupti* sleep, he will not feel rested when he wakes up. But if sleeping for four hours he spends most of the time in *Sushupti*, he will be fully refreshed. Even for the health of the body *Sushupti* sleep is most necessary.

Sushupti state may be described as a spiritual bath; we enter it after the struggles of waking consciousness and of *Svapna* are over. We come out of it having understood the meaning of the struggle; and what is more, having gained a little additional knowledge. Hence it is very necessary that all of us learn how to enter *Sushupti* quickly. The steps to be taken are easily seen and understood; they are difficult to apply.

First of all, in waking life, now and here, it is essential that we know something about the process and stages of sleep and about the nature of *Sushupti*. We can gain some ideas about it by a careful

reading of *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 11* where Mr. Judge describes the three planes of human consciousness.

Secondly, in waking life we should see for ourselves the psychic and psychological processes that are taking place in us. By watching our moods, our thoughts, and especially our thought-tendencies, we will see the great necessity of controlling these as also our sense activities in some measure, in quieting our feelings, agitation and thought-movements. *Inner* silence has to be cultivated in the midst of moods and turmoils of emotions and thoughts.

Thirdly, once again in waking consciousness we have to seek and find the company of our higher and nobler aspects. The soul within each one of us *can* be found, and that soul will befriend us if we invite its aid and blessing by study and meditation. Study means company of holy books; meditation is seeking and securing the company of our Inner Self or Ego. In this way we experience that state in waking consciousness which corresponds to *Sushupti*. This is the best and the most efficacious preparation.

We shall close with what looks to some of us as the most inspiring teaching on the subject of dreams. It is this: In the Hall of Wisdom, *i.e.*, in the *Sushupti* stage, not only do we contact our Higher and Inner Ego, and bathe in the atmosphere of our real Spirit-Being, but also sincere and devoted student-practitioners of Theosophy can attract to themselves the benign influences which radiate forth from the Great Teachers of Theosophy. They are Living Mahatmas who teach humanity the spiritual science, and thus render the highest form of service that can be rendered. We attract that Blessed Influence to ourselves by our earnestness and devotion, but the Way to Them—and this is important—is through our own Inner Ego. “That which is uncreate abides in thee, Disciple, as it abides in that Hall”—the Hall of Wisdom, says *The Voice of the Silence*. Only through the Master within us can we go to the Living Masters, the Immortal Gurus. They live in that state which can be entered by us through the gate of *Sushupti*. May more and more among us find there the dreamers of great dreams, the givers of Wisdom, the openers of the Eye of Divine Vision!

THE CURE OF SUFFERING

AS seen last month, in the article "The Cause of Suffering," a good deal of the suffering that we undergo is the result of selfish thought. Control of the mind is the most difficult task any person can attempt. Actually we should describe it as control of *Kama-Manas* by the higher aspect of *Manas* or Mind; for *Kama-Manas* is the fountain-source of selfish thought, the cause of all our suffering and difficulties. Because tradition, training and environment are likely to obscure our initial efforts, more likely than not we may not recognize most of our feeling-dominated thoughts until some undesirable reaction develops. Then, too, we can easily find some comfort in the easy-going and general acceptance of the motto, "Well, after all we are only human!" Or we console ourselves by saying, "Next incarnation or later"; or, "Eternity is long." Of course, should we find ourselves toying with obvious rationalizations such as these, we might properly conclude that uprooting sorrow's cause is not a project for which we are ready.

Those, however, who are willing to admit the need of improvement will find themselves indulging in rationalizations from time to time to avoid assuming responsibility for some thought or act which might otherwise have to be dealt with as sub-standard from the Theosophical standpoint. Therefore, one of our first lessons is always to remember that "NOT ALL LOGIC IS PRODUCTIVE OF TRUTH, ALTHOUGH TRUTH IS ALWAYS LOGICAL."

All Teachers have recommended self-examination. This is a necessary practice, employed, no doubt, by most students. It seems at times, however, that a review of one's actions does not produce the results that one might hope for. Many practitioners of self-examination could say with St. Paul: "The good that I would I do not; but the evil which I would not, that I do."

Surely there is a reason for this repetition of incorrect action. Maybe our self-examination confines itself to a comparative review of our daily acts. Thus we classify our acts as right or wrong, good or bad, according to standards prescribed by devotional books.

We then resolve not to commit the wrong act again and concentrate on the good actions. All too soon, however, we find ourselves reacting according to the accustomed pattern and go through the same cycle of examine-resolve-commit as heretofore. Our attempts to overcome sorrow-producing thought and action have become largely habitual and operate almost reflexly. If *Kama-Manas* were to respond to “do-better resolutions,” our individual and collective problems would have been solved long ago. Surely the resolutions, petitions and pleadings of large segments of sincerely religious people would have neutralized or redirected *Kama-Manas* ere now.

It must be evident that our acts are but the end-product of a sequence which traces back to our lower nature. It involves *Kama-Manas*; feeling-coloured thought, or self-justification; the astral body and the physical lives. The astral and physical constituents need not concern us in this study, as they play a subservient role in our efforts to take preliminary steps to control our thoughts.

Theosophy gives the means of understanding the problem. How reasonable and conducive to good it would be if we could courageously face the situation, realize that our own thoughts were generally of a selfish nature, and thus come to accept ourselves as we are! This calls for a fundamental mental honesty that is not generally prevalent. We find it exemplified by the Great Teacher. Specifically, a great amount of Madame Blavatsky’s difficulties in her relations with others developed from the fundamental dishonesty of her nature. Her refusal to surrender to cant under adverse circumstances, together with her ability to recognize the conscious machinations of *Kama-Manas* in others, created antagonisms. “Ah,” we might say, “how wonderful it would be to be associated with perfectly honest people!” But think for a moment—could we stand the impartial assessment others might make of us, even with the best of motives, as in the case of H.P.B.? We shall be ready for the company of such honest individuals when we are able to recognize our own self-justifications for what they are, and thus be in a position to neutralize these rationalizations. We must therefore, never underrate the importance of overcoming this universal mental vice of self-centredness; we should also rea-

that to recognize and overcome the habit of self-justification represents a tremendous step forward.

Of course the old pattern would still be there in the lower instruments and would prevent proper expression at all times. But the main step has been accomplished in the ability to recognize the existing condition for what it is.

It is a matter of re-training. The task is to substitute one type of reflex action for another. This is a project which takes much time and requires attention and a definite degree of concentration. But then does not all worth-while accomplishment call for a determination which is undeviating? Consider the close concentration and unremitting practice the gymnast must put in to obtain the required control of the various centres of balance and co-ordination. The same with the artist or the pianist, as examples; many testify to the necessity of several hours of daily practice to obtain the necessary degree of co-ordination between artistic concept, interpretation and mechanical techniques; or, in Theosophical terms, between Spiritual Soul, Human Soul and Animal Soul. How then could any have been led to believe that a project calculated to place us in control of our own natures, thus making possible the attainment of the highest degree of accomplishment possible, could be mastered in a few easy lessons?

But, for those who ever keep at it, the patterns of the lower nature will be changed and will become responsive to the dictates of the Mind, the Human Soul. Then will it be a fitting vehicle for the accomplishment of certain phases of work and no longer be a source of sorrow-producing actions. Then and then only will we experience that peace "which passeth all understanding," and tensions will be reduced to a minimum.

The first step on the Path would be the exercise of sufficient mental honesty and courage to accept oneself exactly as careful evaluation seems to indicate. After all, we are either saints or struggling students; if the latter, then *Kama-Manas* is the culprit that will need close observation. A Theosophist has aptly been described as "a sinner, who is trying to do better." So we need not make the discovery, if it is such, of our self-centred states too

dramatically. We can, if we choose, make our experiments personal psychology an interesting and most profitable exercise. The basic purpose of Theosophy is to teach man the true function and complexity of his nature. It was never intended for mere academic speculations; its understanding has always depended upon the application of its principles.

In presenting Theosophy to the world, the Custodians of the Wisdom-Religion emphasize those aspects of the Philosophy which are representative of the contemporary needs of mankind. In our era, when the West is attempting to emerge from the blind beliefs and stultifying dogmas of the Middle Ages, appeal to the mind of the race is the logical approach. Thus we find H.P.B. laying emphasis in numerous places on mental understanding. Not that the devotional aspects of the Teaching are to be ignored, but these are to be understood through practice. H.P.B. has clearly stated that the proper approach in our age is through the minds of the people. Again, in her *Key to Theosophy* she states: "To the mentally lazy or obtuse, Theosophy must remain a riddle." For the vast majority, tradition and custom, habit and convention, continue to warp the minds; *Kama-Manas* is still the ruler, the fulcrum whereby those opposing the freedom of the mind continue to manipulate and control the emotion-fraught thinking of the vast majority of people. So we see that probably in this area, more than in any other, we need to apply the old maxim: "Come out from among them, and be ye separate."

Generally, then, we might consider that we have three broad categories representing those interested in Theosophy. There are those who approach the subject academically and confine their consideration to that level. There are those who are interested in learning how to manipulate psychic forces before they understand the necessity of controlling their own natures. There are those who appreciate the real purpose of the Philosophy and avail themselves of the impetus it can give to their evolutionary progress, their general development, with a view to helping and serving others.

There are so many ways in which the Fundamental Propositions of Theosophy can be applied in a positive, fruitful manner. T

study of Theosophy really consists in making specific applications of Fundamental Principles. We need to become increasingly and continuously aware of our identity with basic concepts and processes. As an example: consider the word *Mahat*, which we can think of as Universal Intelligence. This is the fountain-source of *Manas*, our thinking principle. Consider the magnificent experience in store for all those who can transform this knowledge into realization. Since *Mahat* is universal, and since it is the producer of our minds, of necessity we have access to the intelligence that permeates the Universe. Such knowledge is part of the Consciousness of the Sages. Such knowledge will be ours eventually, must be ours in order to become true co-workers with Life and effective Companions of Those Masters who were the Teachers of our Teacher, H.P.B. There is but one obstacle to this realization, that which we are attempting to review in this study.

As indicated before, since the "reward," the result of achievement, is so great, the "price" must be equally high, in terms of prevailing attitudes and environment. Consider the implications arising from the prevalent acceptance of the principle of vicarious atonement. This is the basis of Christian Theology. Does the Theosophist believe in this doctrine of the Church? Certainly not. The Theosophist believes in the operation of the Law of just compensation—"as ye sow, so shall ye reap"; "as you think, so shall you become." By not recognizing our vicarious reaction to many incidents, we lose valuable opportunities to practise control over our *Kama-Manas*.

Suppose an action performed by another affects us adversely. The situation developed is annoying, difficult and may be serious, causing considerable pain and suffering. The one precipitating the action may be one whom we have aided; or for some other reason we feel resentment, disappointment, sometimes considerable annoyance with the "guilty party." We say to ourselves that we are not deserving of the treatment and that the other person, to gain some advantage, perhaps to improve his position, has inflicted this pain upon us. Why do we resent? Probably because we feel or believe that we do not deserve such treatment. Therefore we are

suffering vicariously. The other person is the guilty one. *He* should suffer, not we. After calmer consideration we finally realize, rather understand, that, if we "got it," we deserved it, for "my own comes back to me." Now this is precisely the condition we are striving to attain. We want to get to the point where we can calmly and courageously, admit our implication in the act.

So we come to see that there are limitations and gaps existing in our understanding and application. We must learn to recognize the first one which is bounded by our ability to make mental application of Principle; the next is made by our inability to transfer our understanding, based on Principle, into action, because of the reasons indicated above. This is what is meant by application which strikes at the very roots of the personal nature, but if we can learn to classify properly our various experiences, we shall really "be on our way."

As we discontinue interfering with the flow of true *Manas* action in our lives, we shall soon begin to note an increasing ability to see clearly and to think in terms of principles. More and more shall we reason from premises which are universal. We shall also begin to experience conditions and accompanying feelings which were rarely, if ever, experienced before. The Mind, for example, is said to have five basic functions or attributes; these are: Will, Feeling, Imagination, Memory, Thought. The unfortunate fact is that most people go through most of their lives without ever actually experiencing the free functioning of any of these processes. We can readily understand how this can be in the light of the study thus far. The experiences of most are limited by *Kama-Manas*. We have substituted desire for Will; likes and dislikes for Feeling; fancy for Imagination; self-justification for Thought; rote for Memory.

Meanwhile we observe that, as the erratic modifications of the lower nature are cleared and brought under control, the Mind begins its real work on this, our waking plane. Then a whole new world opens before the student, the World of *Manas*. He now begins to function on this new plane. Teachings such as the *Thoughts for Living*, the Fundamentals, the septenary nature of man, after-death states, take on a new dimension. Study is no longer a job but a joy; eventually

the free-flowing Mind is observed to pursue its objectives swiftly, effortlessly and with a Will of its own, which now is propelled by the force of ever increasing understanding giving it facility of action.

This experience brings a feeling of great joy and of gratitude to the Teachers who have pointed the way to this great heritage, whose very possession we had for so many years and centuries ignored, because our attention was confused by the light which shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnarer, Mara.

This is an individual experience, differing in degree with each student, but the source is a common one—the feeling aspect of the Mind; it is the feeling accompanying the action of Mind unhampered by the deadening weight of Kama. We are not implying that this is the action of *Buddhi-Manas*. This study refers to the probable action of *Manas* when freed from the restrictions of the lower nature, from self-justification, and when honesty and courage are the motives for action. This is not an experience which we shall have at some future date, but we shall be able to recognize its action and presence from the beginning of our attempts to resolve the problem of the cause and cure of suffering once and for all.

This experience will occur when first we become deeply, truly, wounded at heart by the terrible trials and ordeals of our “Orphan Humanity.” Who then is to help this helpless one, imposed upon, exploited, driven on by its ignorance and the cunning of those who ever take advantage of those less fit, less capable? Who can help, really help, with measures that are sure, lasting, effective? Only those who have faced the despair of their own sorrow, searched for its cause and fought “the good fight” which entitles them to become “fortune’s favoured soldiers.”

So it is that all those who are capable of functioning, even to some degree, on the plane of *Manas* can testify to the glowing delight, the inward calm, the firm assurance which accompanies the search for and revelation of Truth. Such experience is a new revelation for each, as by one’s understanding one makes the teachings one’s own. Thus, in his turn, he eventually joins hands with Those who are the Embodiments of the Wisdom-Religion.

ERADICATING THE PERSONAL ELEMENT

Self-personality, vanity and conceit harboured in the *higher* principles are enormously more dangerous than the same defects inherent only in the lower physical nature of man. They are the breakers against which the cause of chelaship, in its probationary stage, is sure to be dashed to pieces unless the would-be disciple carries with him the white shield of perfect confidence and trust in those he would seek out through mount and vale to guide him safely toward the light of Knowledge. The world moves and lives under the shadow of the deadly upas-tree of Evil; yet its dripping is dangerous to, and can reach only those whose higher and middle natures are as much susceptible of infection as their lower one. Its venomous seed can germinate but in a willing, well-prepared soil.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

PERSONALITY we all have as incarnated beings, but, Mr. Crosbie points out in *The Friendly Philosopher* (p. 38), “It is not the personality that is in the way, but the personal idea in regard to it.”

“Self-Personality,” however, an expression used by the Mahatma in the words quoted above, seems to imply undue self-identification with what should be but the instrument or faithful vassal of the Soul.

In another place, the Master named as one of the strongest signs of retrogression “when one shows that he expects others to do what he likes and act as he acts”; and added:

You are too many here. With more or less bits of self-personality....In such a great work as this Movement no one should expect to find his associates all congenial, intuitive, prudent or courageous. One of the first proofs of self-mastery is when one shows that he can be kind and forbearing and genial with companions of the most dissimilar characters and temperaments.

Madame Blavatsky reminded the American Theosophists in her first message to their annual convention held in April 1888

that all Theosophists were at best but pupil-teachers, having no right to dogmatize. Does not the boundlessness of Truth, which none but its great Custodians can grasp in its fullness, make it presumptuous for any student of our great philosophy to claim his understanding of any point in the teachings restated by Their messenger to be the correct one and the last word upon the subject? Or to expect acceptance of his views? In the same message, Madame Blavatsky warned that setting up a popery instead of Theosophy would be suicidal, and pronounced “orthodoxy in Theosophy” to be “a thing neither possible nor desirable,” adding that, “were it not, also, for the existence of a large amount of uncertainty in the minds of students of Theosophy, such healthy divergences would be impossible, and the Society would degenerate into a sect, in which a narrow and stereotyped creed would take the place of the living and breathing spirit of Truth and an evergrowing Knowledge.”

While conceding that there were certain limits to diversity of opinion, H.P.B. left open the question as to what those limits were. They would doubtless seem to most students of Theosophy to be transgressed by, for example, giving out in the name of Theosophy the existence of a Personal God, instead of the omnipresent and impersonal Be-ness of the First Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine*. So would they be by seeking to substitute Chance for the unerring Law of the Second Fundamental, or to claim that there were privileges and special gifts not won by self-effort, in prior lives or this one, or by throwing doubt on the antiquity of the once universal Wisdom or the existence of its revered Custodians down the ages.

But, as Mr. Judge wrote, “Essentials are the only things on which true Occultism and Theosophy require an agreement,” and many temporary matters, such as food and other habitual daily things he declared not to be essentials.

Again, he wrote to a correspondent what would seem to apply to divergent interpretations of our teachings no less than to other occasions of personal friction:

Discussion or proofs to show, that you are all right and he wrong avail nothing. We are none of us ever in the right, there is always that in us that causes another to offend. The only discussion should be to the end that you may find out how to present to the world in your district, one simple, solid, united front.

Mr. Crosbie maintained that to “forego and forget personalities” meant “to regard *truth*, only, by whomsoever presented.”

“Personality,” is called by Mr. Crosbie “the last foe to be conquered.” How many, recognizing the foe and admitting the desirability of its conquest, will, however, be prepared to take Mr. Judge’s prescription for eradicating the personal element? The essence of its eradication lay, he once wrote, “in doing the things we dislike to do.”

EVERY monad that is enclosed in a form, and hence limited by matter, becomes conscious on its own plane and in its own degree. Consciousness, therefore, no less than sensitiveness, belongs to plants as well as to animals. Self-consciousness belongs to man, because, while embodied in a *form*, the higher triad of principles, Atma-Buddhi-Manas, is no longer dormant, but active. This activity is, however, far from being fully developed. When this activity has become fully developed, man will already have become conscious on a still higher plane, endowed with the sixth and the opening of the *seventh* sense, and will have become a “God” in the sense given to that term by Plato and his followers.

In thus giving this larger and completer meaning to the law of evolution, the Occult philosophy entirely eliminates the “missing links” of modern science, and, by giving to man a glimpse of his nature and destiny, not only points out the line of the higher evolution, but puts him in possession of the means of achieving it.

—W. Q. JUDGE.

THE QUIET PLACE WITHIN

The true student has ever been a recluse, a man of silence and meditation.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

Silence is part of the spiritual discipline of the votary of Truth.

—GANDHIJI

INDUSTRIALIZATION, mechanization, militarization, have all contributed to the loudness of our civilization. This is the age of science and technology, the Machine Age. But machines, appliances and even gadgets are noisy creatures. They roar and puff; they rattle and screech; and even so-called noiseless appliances are not altogether quiet: they only make less noise than the others.

Silence is assaulted on all sides and the noise of jet-planes has invaded the countryside so that even villages are submitted to their roaring through space. Most mechanisms are vociferous and in large and congested cities the traffic of vehicles, motor-cars, motor-cycles, trucks and jeeps is almost ceaseless. There is hardly a lull long after midnight towards early morning.

The Machine Age is the Age of Noise, loud and discordant noise, which makes for confusion and strain. Man adds his quota and TVs and videos are turned on loudly, loudspeakers used in season and out of season, and every festival made an occasion for crackers and whistles and rattles, and for boisterous behaviour. Under the impact of all this noise men and women cannot hear themselves think and often find it easier not to think at all but to seek oblivion in more and more noise!

Medical doctors, psychologists and psychiatrists, as also plain men and women of good sense, are gravely concerned at the adverse effects of all this noise. Nervous diseases are on the increase. Neurotic patients show peculiar symptoms, and even the so-called normal and healthy are often jumpy and tense. Nerves are jarred; tempers become more and more irritable; and tension and friction increase. Watch an average audience in a large city and you will find how few can sit still and how many are fidgety.

Devices are being sought to protect and defend people from all this clamour. There are ear-plugs to enable those living in crowded cities to have some sleep. There are silence zones in cities wherein drivers are forbidden to use their horns. But in no city can there be a real silence zone.

The only "silence zone" left to us is the quiet place within ourselves. But alas! we have lost the key to that inner citadel of peace and must now find it in the discipline of austerity. From the remotest antiquity silence has formed part of the necessary preparation for the spiritual life.

Indeed, silence is one of the indispensable elements of mental and spiritual austerity. The inner life requires silence. The mind is distracted by noise and that is one reason why modern life is opposed to the life of the mind. Psychologists today speak of surface sleep and sleep at a deeper level, and submit that in noisy places sleep is mostly on the surface and fails to bring the necessary rest and refreshment. Thinking is also at different levels and for most people today thinking has become merely surface thinking. We have to rediscover ourselves and the mortification of speech will help us to enter a deeper level of experience within our own consciousness.

The discipline of silence begins with restraint of speech. Unrestrained and idle talk is injurious. To control speech is essential, but it extends beyond audible words. There is silence of the mouth, but there must also be silence of the feelings and of the mind, and even silence of the will. When we observe silence in mere words, we face the unspoken words of our minds and the inaudible voices of our desires. These too must be silenced, and so in the *sadhana* of the spiritual life silence begins in the mind and the aspirant is instructed: "Silence thy thoughts and fix thy whole attention on thy Master, whom yet thou dost not see, but whom thou feelest."

Silence, then, includes refraining from speech, but is rooted in inward silence, or what is sometimes designated the mystic's silence. It is that inward silence of the spirit which results from aloofness from the clamour of passions.

In fact, silence is listed in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as a mortification of the mind. Sri Krishna says: “Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind.” This confirms the mystic quality of true silence. Silence must envelop the inner consciousness and is therefore a mental exercise. Sri Krishna indicates the austerities of speech and these include “diligence in the reading of the Scriptures” as a preparation for inner reflection and meditation.

The deliberate and regular practice of silence, coupled with the control of speech, will make for greater self-reliance and tend to quiet the mind. Only a mind that is tranquil can reflect the Light of the Spirit. The exercise of silence thus develops that inner receptivity which is not passivity but a positive quality bringing greater awareness of the Real. “When he has ceased to hear the many, he may discern the ONE—the inner Sound which kills the outer.”

Let us then learn to practise the control of speech and through real silence enter the island of solitude wherein alone can the Soul hear that “still, small voice” of the Divine Spirit. By retiring now and then to that quiet place we shall bring up good currents and keep back all evil ones.

THE power of concentration is the only key to the treasure-house of knowledge.

Concentration is the essence of all knowledge.

Along with the development of concentration we must develop the power of detachment.

—SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

THE HEART DOCTRINE

SOUL-WISDOM or Heart Doctrine means much more than just high learning and brilliant academic training. It is profound knowledge arising out of the depth of the heart, indicating vision and foresight. It is an expression of the soul powers of man, of the inner illumination gained through reflection and meditation on universal concepts day after day and life after life. It is the inner experience of the Eternal Pilgrim acquired through contact with the various aspects of the whole cosmos. So it is altogether a different type of knowledge, and can manifest only through those beings who have gone through complete self-purification and self-discipline.

Our civilization is speedily advancing in all branches of knowledge. Young men and women by the thousand go in for higher university education. Scientific research has unveiled some mysteries of Life and Nature. Attempts are made to probe the starry firmament above and the depths of the land and the sea below. This is all to the good; but, side by side with the acquisition of such knowledge, men and women show a lack of true wisdom and of insight in their very behaviour and mode of life. Therefore *The Voice of the Silence* says that even ignorance is preferable to such knowledge with no Soul-Wisdom to illuminate and guide it.

What is the exact difference between this worldly knowledge, better known as head-learning, and Soul-Wisdom? *The Voice of the Silence* names them the Doctrine of the Eye and the Doctrine of the Heart, respectively. The former is gained *via* the senses, the brain and the mind and belongs more or less to the personal consciousness. It may be gained through books or other people, by testimony and inference, by turning without. Soul-Wisdom or the Heart Doctrine is the result of self-realization. When man becomes united to the whole of nature, when he becomes one with the prime Source, all knowledge and powers become his. Tennyson says, referring to worldly knowledge, "She is earthly of the mind, but wisdom heavenly of the soul." The difference is as vast as that between heaven and earth. And note also—one belongs to the mind

and the other to the soul. Another English poet, Cowper, states: "Knowledge dwells in heads replete with thoughts of other men; Wisdom in minds attentive to their own." Like Krishna, he too emphasizes the necessity for the mind to be engaged in the right performance of duties, to be attentive to the work in hand rather than be thinking about and criticizing others and their work.

Cowper brings out another important Theosophical principle when he says: "Knowledge is proud that he has learn'd so much; Wisdom is humble that he knows no more." The virtue of humility shines forth in the man of wisdom, who always says, "Thus have I heard," whereas the one with head-learning proudly exclaims, "Behold, I know!" So humility is essential. *The Voice of the Silence* further advises the practitioner: "Be humble, if thou would'st attain to Wisdom. Be humbler still, when Wisdom thou hast mastered." Krishna says to Arjuna, in the Fourth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*: "Seek this wisdom by doing service, by strong search, by questions, and by humility; the wise who see the truth will communicate it unto thee, and knowing which thou shalt never again fall into error, O son of Bharata." As long as pride lingers, it is an obstacle on the way to Soul-Wisdom.

"The pupil must regain *the child-state he has lost*," according to *The Voice of the Silence*. This implies, not becoming childish, but gaining childlike innocence and purity. What the child does unconsciously, that the pupil has to do deliberately. Then only may arise spontaneously within oneself the knowledge or inner illumination which every mystic strives for. It is only in the Ninth Discourse of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, when Arjuna had accomplished half the journey, that Krishna speaks about the realization of knowledge. Having gained sufficient equanimity of mind, having shown faith and trust in the Law, Arjuna was qualified for the reception of the Kingly Knowledge and the Kingly Mystery.

How essential the preliminary discipline and training are, is well brought out in the *Dhammapada*: "Irrigators lead the waters. Fletchers shape the arrows. Carpenters carve the wood. Wise people discipline themselves." Each one has his own proper duties. Anybody and everybody cannot irrigate the waters or carve the

wood or make an arrow. Training and practice are necessary; so also in the spiritual life self-discipline is of the utmost importance.

Soul-Wisdom is not something to be gained from outside as much as to be brought out from within. Once upon a time, in the far past, it was in man's possession, having been gained through contact with divine and exalted Beings who sacrificed Themselves to come down upon earth to teach mankind the Eternal Verities. That knowledge was subsequently lost through the misuse of powers. In *The Secret Doctrine* it is stated how the Divine Eye or the Third Eye, which was once functioning, became atrophied later on. It is an important lesson for students of Theosophy, for they have to make the best possible use, at the present hour, of the knowledge given out, and not fritter away their time and opportunity in other directions.

Head-learning is constantly changing from year to year and from decade to decade, whereas Soul-Wisdom is ever the same; therefore the latter can be made the basis for thought and action which would never lead anyone astray. It is the safest refuge. Soul-Wisdom brings deeper understanding of life and of human nature, so that one can become more and more appreciative of the work of others. The lower mind becomes an instrument or an obedient servant of the higher mind; therefore life's problems and complexities cease to bother us and inner peace and harmony can be established. It is the constant conflict between the two that creates obstacles on the spiritual path and holds back the aspirant from reaching the goal contemplated.

Madame Blavatsky has stated in *The Secret Doctrine*:

The modern Prometheus has now become *Epi-metheus*, "he who sees only after the event"; because the universal philanthropy of the former has long ago degenerated into selfishness and self-adoration. Man will rebecome the *free* Titan of old, but not before cyclic evolution has re-established the broken harmony between the two natures—the terrestrial and the divine; after which he becomes impermeable to the lower titanic forces, invulnerable in his personality, and immortal in his individuality,

which cannot happen before every animal element is eliminated from his nature. (II, 422)

It was for this particular purpose that the great Theosophical Movement was launched, that men and women might become free from the bondage of their lower nature, gain inner illumination, and become helpful and useful channels for the Work of Theosophy.

EVERYONE entering the [theosophical] society is supposed to sympathize with the theory of essential brotherhood: a kinship which exists on the plane of the higher self, not on that of the racial, social, and mental dissimilarities and antipathies. These elements of discord pertain to the physical man and are the result of unequal development under the law of evolution. We believe the human body to be but the shell, cover, or veil of the real entity; and those who accept the esoteric philosophy and the theory of "Karma" (the universal law of ethical causation) believe that the entity, as it travels around certain major and minor cycles of existence with the whole mass of human beings, takes on a different body at birth, and shells it off at death, under the operation of this Karmic law. Yet though it may thus clothe and reclothe itself a thousand times in a series of reincarnations, the entity is unchanged and unchangeable, being of a divine nature, superior to all environments on the earthly plane. It is the physical body only which has racial type, colour, sex, hatreds, ambitions, and loves. So then, when we postulate the idea of universal brotherhood, we wish it understood that it is held in no Utopian sense, though we do not dream of realizing it at once on the ordinary plane of social or national relations. Most assuredly, if this view of the kinship of all mankind could gain universal acceptance, the improved sense of moral responsibility it would engender would cause most social evils and international asperities to disappear; for a true altruism, instead of the present egoism, would be the rule the world over.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

New Perspectives Quarterly in its Winter 2000 issue presents several contributors' viewpoints on the emergence of the "global mind." The idea has gained momentum with advances in telecommunications, in particular the explosion of the Internet in the last five years. "As the realm of the global mind grows," writes Editor Nathan Gardels, "it will necessarily encroach on all enclosed spaces—political, national, ethnic, linguistic and psychological." The emergent global civil society is our only hope to avert the risk of isolation and failure.

One of the contributors, Peter Sloterdijk, a German writer and philosopher, writes that it is time to move "from agrarian patriotism to the global self":

A globalized world announces the end of a sedentarism and, with it, the concept of a homeland....It is precisely this difference between interior and exterior worlds bounded by place which is today washed away by the effects of globalization....The homeland as a space of the good life is increasingly less easy to find where, by accident of birth, each one is. In this century, therefore, the homeland will be permanently reinvented, no matter where one is, through the art of knowing how to live and through intelligent alliances with others pursuing the same idea of happiness.

David Ronfeldt and John Arquilla present an innovative approach:

The world first evolved a geosphere and next a biosphere. Now that people are communicating on a global scale, the world is giving rise to a noosphere—a globe-spanning realm of "the mind." Before long, a synthesis will occur in which peoples of different nations, races and cultures will develop consciousness and mental activity that are planetary in scope, without losing their personal identities.

Nelson Mandela, former president of South Africa and recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993, refers to the eradication of

inequalities and large-scale poverty, still besetting too many parts of the globe, as the challenge of the century:

Together, we all live in a global neighbourhood and it is not to the long-term benefit of any that there are islands of wealth in a sea of poverty. We need a globalization of responsibility as well. Above all, that is the challenge of the century.

These are welcome trends. The growing awareness of the “global self,” of our responsibility for fellow human beings, in whichever part of the world they be, subserves one of the main objects for the promotion of which the Theosophical Movement was launched into the public world way back in 1875. “Each shall live for all and all for each” is a fundamental Theosophical principle. Says H.P.B.:

In the present state of society, especially in so-called civilized countries, we are continually brought face to face with the fact that large numbers of people are suffering from misery, poverty and disease. Their physical condition is wretched, and their mental and spiritual faculties are often almost dormant. On the other hand, many persons at the opposite end of the social scale are leading lives of careless indifference, material luxury, and selfish indulgence. Neither of these forms of existence is mere chance. Both are the effects of the conditions which surround those who are subject to them, and the neglect of social duty on the one side is most closely connected with the stunted and arrested development on the other. In sociology, as in all branches of true science, the law of universal causation holds good. But this causation necessarily implies, as its logical outcome, that human solidarity on which Theosophy so strongly insists. (*The Key to Theosophy*, pp. 231-32)

In today's world, especially in the so-called “civilized” nations, living together before marriage has gained ground. It is argued that such cohabitation is good preparation for “the real thing.” However, several studies conducted in the past decade have found

that couples who live together first are more likely to separate or divorce than those who wait until they are married to cohabit. (*The Times of India*, August 10)

The latest in the spate of studies is the one directed by Catherine Cohan, an assistant professor of human development at the Pennsylvania State University. She and her colleagues found that couples who lived together for as little as one month before marrying, actually displayed poorer communication and problem-solving skills than those who did not. Cohan believes that the reasons for the couples' negative behaviour might lie in differing levels of commitment that ultimately erode the quality of the union. In other words, cohabitation allows some people to remain relatively uncommitted and enables them to size up other people as potential mates.

In our cycle, marriage has come to be looked upon as a mere secular institution and the dignity and sacredness of the home have been lowered. To the fall of ideals in regard to the home and the marriage tie, must be attributed, as to a mother-cause, the majority of the fast-growing psychological disorders of our modern age. Where else can we look for the breeding-ground of divorces, juvenile delinquency, degraded sex-life and the innumerable types of adult mental disorders in countries with the so-called "high standard of living"?

While the economic and civic aspects of marriage are widely discussed, the spiritual aspect, which is the highest, is hardly considered today. In the absence of true knowledge and soulful idealism, sex has come to be looked upon, spoken about, and debased in a way that makes man lower than the beasts. In *The Key to Theosophy*, under the caption "Theosophy and Marriage," H.P.B. stated: "...save in a few exceptional cases of practical Occultism, marriage is the only remedy against immorality."

F. W. Champion of the Forest Service of India was an early advocate of wildlife conservation. His book, *The Jungle in Sunlight*

and Shadow, has been reprinted recently by Natraj Publishers, Dehradun. Excerpts from the book are reproduced in *WWF India Newsletter* for June 2000.

Every living creature, writes Champion, has some definite place on this earth. The interrelationship between animal and animal, or the “balance of nature,” is the guiding principle on which the whole scheme of life is built up. The numbers of each species of animal must be kept within reasonable limits, and Nature does this by limiting the food supply, by providing most animals with others which prey upon them, by variations in the rate of breeding, etc. The great carnivores and creatures like the cobra, the scorpion and the mosquito may be dreaded by humans, but these and myriads of other creatures are also fellow-inhabitants of this earth along with man, and all serve a useful purpose.

Thus, for instance, the chief food of cobras is rats, who destroy enormous quantities of cereal, spread dreaded diseases like plague, and are really far more serious enemies of man than cobras. In other words, the cobra’s place in the balance of nature is to act as a check on the undue increase in rats. Likewise the scorpion preys upon certain types of insects whose numbers might otherwise become excessive. Nature has her own ways of dealing with excessive numbers of any particular species. The leopard feeds on deer and wild pigs, which if allowed to breed without check would become a serious threat to the vegetable and cereal food supply of man and other creatures. And so with other carnivores; nature arranges a balance between them and the ungulates, which works in an astonishingly efficient manner. Only the short-sighted cannot see this.

We need to increase our knowledge of the purpose served by the infinite variety of flora and fauna that inhabit the earth, instead of dividing them into watertight compartments that we label “useful” and “harmful.” There is not a creature but can serve some useful purpose.

A number of studies show that optimists do better in life than

pessimists. One's outlook can make a startling difference between happiness and health on the one hand, and discontent and stress on the other. Niti Paul Mehta writes about the merits of optimism in *The Times of India* (July 22):

In some persons it is an inborn trait. They are tuned that way by nature and temperament. But in most cases it is an acquired or a carefully cultivated and nurtured habit.

So we find that some people always look at the bright side of things, while there are some others who always see the bad, dark side of things. To an optimist every cloud has a silver lining. A pessimist, on the other hand, misses the silver lining and sees only the cloud. Frederick Langbridge sums it up: "Two men look out through the same bars: One sees the mud, and one the stars."...

If you destroy "hope," you destroy the "future." Hope strengthens our will to survive calamities, so that we never give way to despair. It helps us count our blessings, and hope persistently goads us to "go on." It is rightly said that "an optimist sees an opportunity in every calamity; a pessimist sees a calamity in every opportunity."...

Even when we fall, we should not forget that we have to get up and fight, for, no failure is final. Of course, we have to be practical enough to be realistic in our evaluation. "Perhaps you cannot be a star," wrote J. C. Mitchell, "but you need not be a cloud, either." "Keep your face to the sunshine and you cannot see the shadow," said Helen Keller....

Unlike the pessimist who gives up when he finds one door locked, the optimist believes in looking for other doors which are wide open. Instead of giving way to despair, he tries to find alternatives....Because of a positive frame of mind, an optimist is never without solace and never suffers from poverty of the spirit.

Positive thinking plays a powerful role in our lives. It is crucial however, not to allow optimism to be converted into wishful thinking; that is a setup for disappointment.

Mr. Judge suggests a remedy for coming out of the shadow into the shine:

There are valleys in which the greatest shadows are due to old lives in other bodies, and yet the intensity of universal love and of aspiration will dissipate those in an instant of time.

Ongoing international studies on the paranormal suggest that ghosts, apparitions, spectres—by whatever name one chooses to call them—are not just old wives' tales. "In fact, the subject is almost becoming a science, with increasing number of psychologists and psychoanalysts acknowledging the paranormal in a big way," reports *Sunday Mid-day* (August 13):

Ghost-hunting societies and research bodies can be found all over, from Melbourne to Chicago, Toronto to New Jersey, and Japan to Sussex. They all claim to conduct investigations in haunted locations with the latest technology at their disposal. Some offer impartial accounts, with plausible explanations; others, thrilling, implausible exposé. And then there are those unclear, in-between and undefinable.

Innumerable sites on the Net provide personal experiences, audio, video and photographic evidences sent by people and organizations about ghosts. Some are surely doctored, some part true and others make us wonder....

Why do so many people believe in ghosts? Is there a psychological need to explain the unexplained? Or something actually exists?

As happens in most cases, the apparitions seen are of suicides, or those who died a violent death by accident or at the hands of others.

In *Isis Unveiled* (I, 69), H.P.B. refers to well-attested apparitions of "unrestful 'souls,' hovering about the spots where they were murdered, or coming back for some other mysterious reasons of their own." She reprints the account of a haunted house and says that what was sighted "was doubtless a *genuine* elementary apparition, which made itself visible of its own free will...for aught we can tell it might have been the real personal umbra of the 'spirit,'

persecuted and earth-bound, either by its own remorse and crimes or those of another person or spirit.”

Sceptics seeking “laboratory studies” still scoff, while proofs accumulate of the existence of an inner, unseen realm as also an invisible astral body of man. Eastern Psychology and Theosophy present the explanation, but they cannot give ears to those who will not hear, or force those who prefer to remain blind to see. It needs, however, to be stressed that many difficulties of modern science would be solved if the existence of the astral body becomes an established fact. It is a veritable missing link of modern science.

THE real difficulty with sustaining a useful connection with nature, though, comes from the fact that nature does not seek to make a connection with us. It is a hard truth to swallow, but nature does not care if we live or die. We cannot survive without the oceans, for example, but they can do just fine without us. One might surmise that the natural world exists to test our capacity to care or to preserve ourselves, but even that little fancy is man-made. Nature goes its own way, headless and heartless, and one either responds to it or does not. The incentive to do one or the other is wholly self-generated: information is gathered, proposals are put forward, solutions are devised, Earth Days come and go.

All the while, nature in its monumental autonomy throws us back upon ourselves—not merely our inventive but our moral selves. Humans are the only species able to go everywhere in the world, which also means that we have the capacity to do good or ill everywhere. The hardest case to make for acting on an environmental conscience is that it is the right thing to do. Yet, in the end, it may be the only case worth making. If we do not respect nature, we do not respect ourselves. We tend to forget that, except at those moments when the story of who we are and where we come from rises into our life like a field of wheat and tells itself again.

—ROGER ROSENBLATT

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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 however 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.