

The Theosophical Movement

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- **A Day of Special Significance**
- **Sacrifice in Soul Life**
- **Preparation for the Journey**
- **The Universal Plan**
- **From Darkness to Light**
- **Motives for Effort**
- **In the Light of Theosophy**

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A Day of Special Significance

All down the ages men have been endeavouring to correct existing conditions, by simply rearranging them. A rearrangement of errors does not make for knowledge; the errors arise because of ignorance; knowledge must be sought as to the causes that produce existing conditions. This, Theosophy teaches by showing what man is, his origin, nature, history, and development so far, as well as his grand destiny. Without this knowledge, all attempts to obtain true and better conditions but plunge mankind deeper in the mire of ignorance and error. Works without knowledge can but lead to more and more ignorant works, piling up all the time a worse and worse future, as history has shown and is showing.

—Robert Crosbie

The 17th of November is a day of special significance. On that day H. P. Blavatsky launched the Theosophical Movement of our era and cycle. On the 17th day of the 11th month, we are told in The Secret Doctrine, falls the "birthday" of a Dhyani.

The most important work of the original Theosophical Movement was "the relief of human suffering under any or every form, moral as well as physical"; and H.P.B. added the consequential clause—"we believe the former to be more important than the latter." She further stated that "Theosophy has to inculcate ethics; it has to purify the Soul, if it would relieve the physical body, whose ailments, save cases of accidents, are all hereditary."

The Theosophical Movement is in the world to reveal to man's sight the real roots of existence and progression of the Soul. This necessitates an enlightened view of duty. To bring man to duty, to its right performance, and to use it as a talisman which protects the mind against ugliness, vulgarity and debasement is an important task. The degradation of love into lust and corruption of marital integrity which shatters home-life is one of the major problems of this civilization, in comparison with which those of regional or national boundaries and international finance pale into insignificance. Commercialism and materialistic views of life have strengthened the possessive aspect of wealth to such an extent that most people today have forgotten that they are trustees of their possessions, and so money is collected and spent on objectionable gratifications. When love and wealth are thus debased, the values of duties, their order of importance and their purpose undergo grave deterioration.

To cleanse and elevate the minds of others and help them acquire healthy and correct points of view, it is essential to intensify the work of self-improvement and to elevate one's own mind-soul. "The process of self-purification is not the work of a moment, nor of a few months, but of years—nay, extending over a series of lives." The acquisition and application of knowledge, is the sure way of self-purification; to pass on the knowledge, to shed its light on other minds, the certain method of lessening the suffering of the race, moral and causal in the first instance.

What was true when H.P.B. wrote is equally true today, that "few are willing to become what is called 'working members' and most prefer to remain the *drones* of Theosophy." The living of the Life, *i.e.*, the practice of Theosophy, depends on one's knowledge. At every stage that knowledge reveals the next step, and provides the necessary strength to take that step. This must not be taken to mean that there are no obstacles. That travail of spiritual birth is difficult; the task of freeing the mind from creed-class-religion-race is hard. Weaknesses and vices of the mind are more formidable and therefore more exhausting than debility and diseases of the body. Our methods of combating and conquering evil are not rooted in true knowledge and often we do not understand the real meaning of these words:

Learn now that there is no cure for desire, no cure for the love of reward, no cure for the misery of longing, save in the fixing of the sight and hearing upon that which is invisible and soundless. Begin even now to practise it, and so a thousand serpents will be kept from your path. Live in the eternal.

Preoccupation with the personality is the root of all our troubles and suffering. For oneself as for humanity, relief from suffering is only obtained when the mind is made to turn within and keep the company of the Divinity in the innermost heart. It is this turning of the mind to the Divine Light within which is recommended by the Master Krishna: "Serve me, fix heart and mind on me, be my servant, my adorer, prostrate thyself before me, and thus, united unto me, at rest, thou shalt go unto me."

In each year of this opening decade of the present cycle, as each one who calls himself a student, a promulgator or a devotee acts true or faithless to the true Teachings of Theosophy, he will help or hinder the work. The egotistic will disfigure, and the selfless worker improve, the Pattern drawn by us all.

In the coming years, then, what is needed is students who are keen, servers who are unselfish, and devotees who are full of zeal and assiduity in living the Teachings and following that which is implicit in H.P.B.'s words, inspiring direct action:

Follow the Path I show, the Masters that are behind—and do not follow me or my Path.

To be a philosopher is not necessary to have subtle thoughts, but so to have wisdom as to live according to its dictates.

—Thoreau

Sacrifice in Soul Life

The concept of sacrifice is an ancient and universal one. In the course of time, however, the grand idea deteriorated and became degraded. It might be said that the degeneration of every religion can be traced through an examination of the change in the attitude of its followers and the practices adopted by them in the matter of sacrifice. The noble and pure idea of sacrifice became degraded in India, and one of the reasons of the coming of Krishna and Buddha was to free the people from that degradation. From the sin of false sacrifice, hardly any religion of today is free; there are misunderstanding and malpractices prevalent everywhere. Ignorance and mental lethargy produce credulity and superstition, and the priest ever and always takes advantage of the situation.

In all religious philosophies, we are taught that at the very dawn of manifestation Ishwara or Ahura Mazda or whatever name the Deity is given, through an act of sacrifice creates the whole universe. The great attributes of compassion and mercy spring from this aspect of sacrifice. And because man is the "son" of Divine Ideation, he is called *Manasa-Putra*, the mind-born son of Brahma. By an act of sacrifice, it is said, man is created. "Man is made in the image of God" is another way of conveying the same truth. It is explained that out of boundless mercy God gave to man his own divine attributes, dispositions and characteristics. This teaching, rightly understood, really conveys a sublime truth—the identity of all souls with the Universal Self; and as that intimate relation of identity is known, recognized and experienced, man fulfils his mission and completes his evolution.

In this metaphysical and philosophical idea is to be found a fundamental for conduct. In every true metaphysical concept an ethical principle is present. This principle of Divine Sacrifice conveys to us the chief method of human progression and perfection. The human soul evolves by reproducing within himself the divine quality of sacrifice. By sacrificing himself for the good of others, he manifests his divinity. What this sacrifice is, and how it can and should be performed, was taught by the sages of old when they incarnated among humans as Teachers and Rulers. This was the stage of purity and knowledge when men and women lived their religion under the direct guidance and tutelage of wise rulers and enlightened teachers.

When the time comes, according to the law of periodicity or cycles, for these Divine Instructors to retire, people find themselves with injunctions left behind for them to attend to. The heritage of the Divine Rulers and Teachers is twofold: First, there is the actual teaching for every man and woman to study and to apply—the exoteric teaching of philosophy and of ethics. Secondly, there are also left behind esoteric or occult instructions for the genuine priest, who in the olden days was a proficient in true magic as in wisdom. The great religious ceremonies represented by such words as *Yajna*, *Yasna* and so forth were real dramatized symbols through which the pure esotericist who was the priest taught general principles to fortify the exoteric knowledge of the people. These two periods, that of the true prophet and that of the true priest, can be traced in the history of every ancient civilization.

We now come to a third epoch, during which mental laziness produces moral flabbiness; ignorance follows and begets vices; superstition and credulity result among the people. Simultaneously, among the priest-class corruption sets in, and the priests and the people acting on each other cause loss of knowledge to both, and increase of moral debility takes place. It is in this third period that evil sacrifices, practices of grey and black magic, arise. Knowledge is not altogether gone, and its remnants are pressed into the service of greed and selfishness. Thus arise malpractices like animal sacrifice, fascination of the minds and hearts of others, and so on.

In the fourth period, our own, the grand symbolic and dramatic ceremonies of old exist only in fragments, and those fragments themselves are corrupted. What we have today in mosques, churches, synagogues and temples are fragments of old rituals, with interpolated corrupt views and wrong practices. Sometimes we are asked why Theosophy, which believes in and teaches the Wisdom of the old Sages, rejects and even opposes rituals and ceremonies. The answer and the explanation is this: present-day rituals are neither complete nor unadulterated. In the course of ages, much has been lost; but that is not all; in what exists, in the fragments of rituals, etc., that have survived, malpractices, impure elements, have been inserted. Old religious rituals as also old religious philosophies suffer from two defects—incompleteness and interpolations.

What we have so far seen applies especially to old faiths like Hinduism and Zoroastrianism. But when we come to Judaism, to Christianity and to Islam, we have an additional difficulty. These later religions began when loss of knowledge and increase of moral weakness generally prevailed. To begin with, look at the oldest of these three religions—Judaism. Examine the tradition of the festival of Passover, which is celebrated by killing the lamb, which is then eaten, in commemoration of the liberation of Israelites from Egyptian bondage. It is regarded as the festival of freedom. Moses, himself an Initiate, and therefore a true reformer, began his work in Egypt in an atmosphere already charged with corruption and superstition. We must not attribute to Moses the evils of Judaism—evils which the people of the time were not able to throw off. This is a point that we must remember in the study of every religious reform. The teacher and the reformer has to work with the limitations of the people whom he wants to help; and invariably, from the very start his mission suffers because of the prevailing customs, manners and beliefs of the people to whom he comes. No real teacher or reformer, and Moses was one, could have taught or encouraged animal sacrifice, and if it has become part of Judaism, it is not because of but in spite of Moses.

We get a further proof of this when we examine the Muslim festival of Bakri-Id. For this festival also there is the practice of animal sacrifice; it is rooted in Jewish influence on Islam. The sacrifice of animals by the pilgrim who goes to Mecca, and even by those who do not undertake the pilgrimage, was originally instituted in commemoration of Abraham's proposed sacrifice of his son Ishmael. It is well to note once again that Muhammad did not institute this animal sacrifice. In the *Koran* it is said: "O ye who believe, kill no wild game while ye are on the pilgrimage. Whoso of you killeth it, he shall pay its forfeit in the equivalent of that which he hath killed." But even his power and influence were not successful in abolishing animal sacrifice, and so it still continues.

It is necessary to note that if Jews and Muslims observe remnants of animal-sacrifice practices, it is not because of Moses and Muhammad. Similarly, if some of the Hindu temples and shrines are polluted and desecrated by animal sacrifice, it is not because Krishna or Buddha taught such cruel and highly objectionable rites. Wherever cruelty and bloodshed take place and for whatever reason, there a spiritual wrong is perpetrated. "Kill not—for Pity's sake," taught the Buddha; and in the Bhagavad-Gita there is no reference whatsoever to animal sacrifice. The offering suggested by Krishna is "a leaf, a flower, or fruit, or water," as also sacrifice of knowledge, of wealth, of all possessions.

Animal sacrifice is more than an act of cruelty; the ritual of animal slaughter is often accompanied with incantations, etc., and Theosophy explains that such acts belong to the province of black magic. Fortunately, knowledge is absent today, but slaughter of animals is evil, and especially so when it is regarded as a religious rite. No religion can regain its pure status till all acts of cruelty and all blood-rites are removed from it.

How did these evil rites come to be introduced? What were they meant to signify?

There are two factors involved: (1) he who performs the sacrifice and (2) the thing sacrificed. One sacrificer may offer his wealth, another his wisdom, a third some other possession. There is the motive behind the act of sacrifice—selfless or selfish motive; sacrifice made with a desire, for the fulfilment of a wish, or made without any longing for recompense and only with the object of doing good to one's fellows. The priests took advantage of the human desire for compensation, and brought about the reign of selfish sacrifices. While some knowledge of magic was still theirs, they introduced the practice of animal and even human sacrifices, and the holy word "sacrifice" was debased. Thus in India arose questionable practices whose evil psychic influence still persists and needs to be purified. Of course nowadays no real magical knowledge exists, but malpractices continue to the detriment of Hinduism and to the great harm of all who participate in that evil.

But there is one kind of "animal sacrifice" which is right and noble: there is an animal within each of us, and in most, a whole menagerie of animals. Who is free from having in his own nature the donkey of foolishness or the peacock of pride? Every vice in us, and for the matter of that every virtue, has a counterpart in the animal kingdom. These "animals," bad and good, in our own nature, deserve a sacrifice. What is needed is not the destruction of all feelings, but learning to control and purify evil passions and to transmute them into beneficent forces to be used in the service of all. It is not the lower nature that has to be sacrificed and destroyed; it is our divine and higher nature, the Immortal Soul, who has to sacrifice himself for the sake of the lower, for purifying and raising that lower. The Soul sacrifices himself for the sake of the personality. This is the Great Sacrifice or *Yajna—Adhiyajna*. "*Adhiyajna* is myself in this body," says Krishna (Gita, viii, 4). When Krishna incarnates and takes a body of flesh and blood, he performs *Adhiyajna*. The Great Sacrifice is the Divine Self of the Superior Man, *Purushottama*, leaving his own native state of Perfect Wisdom and Bliss and donning the robe of flesh out of compassion for suffering humanity, and that act entitles him to be called the "Great Sacrifice."

Christ and Krishna are symbols of a profound spiritual verity. In Gnostic and Christian mythology, the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ are dramatised symbols, and in one of their meanings they signify what is stated above. The Higher or Divine Beings of the human kingdom are the Great Sacrificers—those Immortal Ones who from time to time take bodies of flesh and blood and live among men, teaching them how to live. Jesus and Zoroaster, Moses and Muhammad, Buddha and Shankara, Krishna and Rama, were such Sacrificers. The mighty lesson that they impart by their sacrifice is this: Each one of us, in our own innermost heart, is also divine, and we must willingly and cheerfully, yet knowingly and intelligently, deal with our own carnal and corporeal nature as they deal with us mortals. These Great Ones, when They come in our midst, by their presence purify and elevate us, teach and train us. So also we as Immortal Souls must wisely control and educate our lower personal self and raise it to the level of the higher. The Christ in us dies on the cross of the personal self. This personal self is called the lower quaternary in Theosophical terminology, for it is fourfold. This is the real cross of life on which Christ, the Higher and Divine Nature, dies. The Crucifixion is this earthly pilgrimage during which the higher natures of men and women die on the cross of body and senses and passions and thoughts. That body is nailed to the cross and it suffers—this represents the suffering of men and women who cry in agony, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" And in response, the Divinity within, the Higher Self, comes to our rescue; we are resurrected, and then we cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou glorified me thus!"

The greatest obstacle in our way, for our good to triumph, is mental laziness. We are not wicked, but we are indolent and will not exert our minds. Economic conditions force us to exert our bodies, for we must earn our livelihood, but the spiritual urge within most is not strong enough for them to exert themselves spiritually. We talk a great deal today of unemployment; but there is another kind of unemployment—spiritual unemployment. No one compels us to be spiritually unemployed, but our starving spiritual bodies do not make sufficient impress on us and so we remain careless and negligent. In some, that impress becomes strong through suffering. Because men and women will not learn in natural joyousness of the Soul, Nature compels them to learn in suffering and sorrow.

Theosophy is the soul awakener; it teaches us first and foremost to recognize our own divinity, then to utilize that Christ-Krishna nature of ours to raise the animal in us. By knowledge we are taught why and how we are divine, and further knowledge reveals whence our passions and how we can control their course. And so the lesson for us—give up mental lethargy and seek knowledge; let us examine and analyze our own beliefs and habits; see if they stand the test of reason. Such knowledge will lead us to the Real Self in us and that Master within alone can guide us on the Path of Purity, on the Path of Sacrifice, and enable us at long last to raise the personality, through Resurrection, to the company of the Great Sacrificers who are called Elder Brothers and Masters in Theosophical literature.

What are really culture and civilization? Dickens' idea that our hearts have benefited as much by macadam as our boots, is more original from a literary, than an aphoristical, standpoint. It is not true in principle, and it is disproved in nature by the very fact that

there are far more good-hearted and noble-minded men and women in muddy country villages than there are in macadamised Paris or London. Real culture is spiritual. It proceeds from within outwards, and unless a person is naturally noble-minded and strives to progress on the spiritual before he does so on the physical or outward plane, such culture and civilization will be no better than whitened sepulchres full of dead men's bones and decay. And how can there be any true spiritual and intellectual culture when dogmatic creeds are the State religion and enforced under the penalty of the opprobrium of large communities of "believers." No dogmatic creed can be progressive. Unless a dogma is the expression of a universal and proven fact in nature, it is no better than mental and intellectual slavery. One who accepts dogmas easily ends by becoming a dogmatist himself. And, as Watts has well said: "A dogmatical spirit inclines a man to be censorious of his neighbours....He is tempted to disdain his correspondents as men of low and dark understanding because they do not believe what he does."

—H. P. Blavatsky

Preparation for the Journey

The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet. The path that leadeth on, is lighted by one fire—the light of daring, burning in the heart. The more one dares, the more he shall obtain. The more he fears, the more that light shall pale—and that alone can guide.

—The Voice of the Silence

He who would set out in quest of the unknown has to equip himself for the journey. Those who have returned from the pilgrimage have said that the road is steep and winds uphill to its rocky top. They say that grey mists will overhang its rough and stony height and all be dark beyond. Preparations must therefore be made for all eventualities. Haphazard planning is not conducive to success. There are no basecamps there for retreat and shelter; nor can the pilgrim tarry long in any one spot. On a precipice, to halt is to invite disaster. To give up the effort is to admit failure—the only failure known in Occultism.

There are things that the ordinary person has gathered round him and that he cherishes, but which must now be abandoned because they would become encumbrances and even hindrances on his pilgrimage. The love and attachment for what he was wont to call the good things of life have to be abandoned. The burden that the pilgrim must himself carry has to be light. One more important consideration must weigh with the pilgrim and that, too, long before he takes one step forward on the solemn journey. He has to realize that he will have to travel on alone. There will be no friend or teacher to hold his hand in his hour of difficulty. The victory must be achieved by him unaided.

On this pilgrimage, the outer senses are no great help and too often will be found to be deceptive. Knowledge that is available through religions or modern science will be of no avail in realms towards which the disciple sets his course. With his moorings cut in the world of the senses, with a sense of negation that marks his rejection of earthly knowledge, he finds himself groping in the darkness like a blind man. It is in this unrelieved darkness that he must find his strength. It is in this gloom that he has to face himself.

If, knowing of these difficulties, the student still hungers for wisdom, then may he prepare in earnest to enter the Path that leadeth on.

The new teachings that will come to him (revealed in the teachings that are his already) are chiefly directed towards the cultivation and development of the inner, luminous life. Until the first step has been taken in this development, the swift knowledge that is called intuition will continue to elude him entirely. Without it, he cannot proceed on the dangerous road, nor yet understand the guidelines that lie hidden in the very words that he has often read upon the printed page.

The initial step towards development of the inner senses and therefore of the inner life requires that the eyes become incapable of tears. This implies that the aspirant must face and conquer his simple human nature and attain an equilibrium and a poise that cannot be shaken by any personal emotion. He has to learn to retain his balance in dangerous places and equally well on level surfaces. Falls are often disastrous and invariably retard the movement forward. The test of his strength comes to the disciple in the circumstances of his life when nature brings to bear upon his trembling soul the keenest enjoyment and the bitterest pain along with the anguish of loss and despair. Until he learns to bear these shocks without loss of equilibrium, the inner senses must remain sealed. This negation is for the good of the disciple lest he get the power without the foresight and the will to control it. There have been those who have violated Nature's laws and have forced entry into forbidden territory. Such pay the penalty for their wrongdoing, losing their physical and psychic health and becoming dangerous derelicts in the process. Such have been "mediums" and "spiritualists" who through ignorance and passivity have, albeit unwittingly, lent themselves as tools for the ruin and dereliction of many.

In all times, visionaries and rare sensitives have left a living testimony to the fact that the inner senses exist. Clairvoyance, clairaudience, telepathy and mind-reading are now acknowledged to be facts demanding investigation. Why then should not the student understand that such super-senses exist in him and that with proper guidance they can be opened as avenues to a higher, a more profound and deeper delving into the essence of things? Only, the way in which he proceeds to acquire the new faculties has to be such as violates no laws in super-nature. Light on the Path explains the position in detail.

If the student wishes to shorten the period of travail, then has he to convince himself beyond even the shadow of a doubt that everything that is perceptible to the ordinary sight has something more important hidden within it. Ordinarily, in the rush of life, he is glamourised by the outer senses and through the force of habit forgets that he has the use of inner organs and senses which alone can give meaning to life. Says Light on the Path: "The microscope has opened a world to us, but within those encasements which the microscope reveals, lies a

mystery that no machinery can probe. The whole world is animated and lit, down to its most material shapes, by a world within it."

It is an axiom in life that for pursuing the path of Occultism the eyes must become incapable of tears. But the equanimity and pose that result from such a state can be obtained only when the tears have ceased to flow because the hold of the emotional nature is loosened and the aspirant stands immunized against the oscillations that the turbulence of pain and pleasure is wont to generate. He has to learn to distinguish this state of an equanimity of vision from those other states where the eyes remain tearless from causes other than the dominance of the Soul. Thus, the same outer appearance of tearlessness may arise when he assumes a callous indifference towards life or when he hardens his heart, steeling it against love and charity and mercy. A similar dryness of the eyes may follow upon an exhaustion that is the result of the deadness that characterizes old age or that comes close upon a period of intense suffering. The eyes may then be incapable of tears, but each such case makes the entrance to the Path impossible.

This initial duty which the aspirant assumes, namely, that he will not allow himself to be shaken by the emotional part of himself, has to be chosen by himself alone. This duty does not exist for other men. The choice must be his—deliberate, and the result of a free exercise of his will. The imposition of that duty is his also. There are no supervisors to enforce compliance. Swooning pleasure and intense and excruciating pain, both physical and mental, come to the disciple not because of past Karma but because he invokes his great enemy—his own lower self. They arise through the intensity of aspiration or the power of a vow not to abandon the fight against his lower self till the battle is won. When he enters upon this discipline in earnest, then does his internal sight open gradually upon the world that is hidden behind the outer show of things. His study takes on a depth that no scholarly pursuit of texts and scriptures can accomplish. Through the development of inner senses, he qualifies to inquire of the earth, the air and the water of the secrets they hold for him. He has come from out of the multitudes, and the earth and nature make their obeisance to his genius.

To become a Buddha one has to break through the bondage of sense and personality; to acquire a complete perception of the REAL SELF and learn not to separate it from all other selves; to learn by experience the utter unreality of all phenomena of the visible Kosmos foremost of all; to reach a complete detachment from all that is evanescent and finite, and live while yet on Earth in the immortal and everlasting alone, in a supreme state of holiness.

—The Theosophical Glossary

The Universal Plan

The Law of Correlation or Correspondence, as ordinarily understood, indicates the degree of parallelism or identity between two or more objects, measures, categories or sets of observations. For example, one is familiar with the relationship between, say, wages and prices, weather conditions and crop yields, steel production and the price index. But the working of this law on the supraphysical plane is of much greater importance and more unerring than on the physical.

Swedenborg, the 18th-century Swedish mystic, popularized this ancient doctrine in his theological treatise *Heaven and Hell*. He attributes present-day man's ignorance of this law of correspondence to his separation from "heaven" "by the love of self and of the world," and adds:

He who loves himself and the world above everything cares only for worldly things because they soothe the external senses and gratify his lower mind, and he cares nothing for spiritual things which please the internal senses and delight the soul; he therefore rejects these, saying they are too high for man's comprehension. It was otherwise with the ancients, for with them the knowledge of correspondences was the chief of all knowledges. By means of it also they acquired intelligence and wisdom and those who were of the church had communication with heaven...But at this day that knowledge is so entirely lost that it is not known what correspondence is.

Swedenborg points out that the whole natural world corresponds to the spiritual world, "not only in general but also in particular." Being convinced of this law "as of a thing self-evident and beyond all doubt," he treated of this subject at great length in the *Arcana Celestia* under various heads—"Correspondences," "Representations," "The Influence of the Spiritual World Upon the Natural," and "The Intercourse Between the Soul and the Body." To the inquiry why man, who is more enlightened than the lower kingdoms, is ignorant of the law, he answers:

Animals live in conformity with the law of their existence, and have not been able to pervert what they derive from the spiritual world, because they are unable to think for themselves. It is otherwise with man, who possesses from the spiritual world the power of reflection; for he has perverted that power by a life contrary to order, which his reason has favoured. He must therefore be born in a state of absolute ignorance and afterwards be led back by Divine means into conformity with the order of heaven.

This ancient law of correspondence and analogy was once again brought to our attention by Madame Blavatsky, who says that "in Occult Science this law is the first and most important key to the Cosmic physics." Referring to this aspect of law, she says in *The Secret Doctrine*:

If no physical intellect is capable of counting the grains of sand covering a few miles of sea-shore; or to fathom the ultimate nature and essence of those grains,

palpable and visible on the palm of the naturalist, how can any materialist limit the laws changing the conditions and being of the atoms in primordial chaos, or know anything certain about the capabilities and potency of their atoms into molecules before and after their formation into worlds? These changeless and eternal molecules—far thicker in space than the grains on the ocean shore—may differ in their constitution along the line of their planes of existence, as the soul-substance differs from its vehicle, the body. Each atom has seven planes of being or existence, we are taught; and each plane is governed by its specific laws of evolution and absorption. Ignorant of any, even approximate, chronological data from which to start in attempting to decide the age of our planet or the origin of the solar system, astronomers, geologists, and physicists are drifting with each new hypothesis farther and farther away from the shores of fact into the fathomless depths of speculative ontology. (I, 150)

She warns, however, that this occult law has to be studied in its minutest details and provides the key to cosmic physics; but that key has to be turned seven times before one comes to understand it. One turn of the key was given in *Isis Unveiled*, and the key has been turned more times in *The Secret Doctrine*—how many times, three, four or seven, is for the intuitive student to find out. As she herself admits that only a fragment of the occult teachings has been given out by her, it cannot be said that the last word has been recorded on the great sevenfold plan. One wonders whether the last word will ever be said at all; for does not Krishna refer in the *Gita* to the difficult task of complete comprehension by stating: "Among thousands of mortals a single one perhaps strives for perfection, and among those so striving perhaps a single one knows me as I am"? (VII, 3)

There is, however, no need for despair or discouragement on the part of the earnest student, as this verse only pricks the bubble of the boastful claims of many learned men that they have the last word with them. For soon in the next verse is described the eightfold division of Krishna's nature:

Earth, water, fire, air, and akasa. Manas, Buddhi, and Ahankara is the eightfold division of my nature. It is inferior; know that my superior nature is different and is the knower; by it the universe is sustained; learn that the whole of creation springs from this too as from a womb; I am the cause, I am the production and dissolution of the whole universe. (VII, 4-6)

If we are to include the superior nature also, how many divisions do we get? The mind reels in the effort to cut this Gordian knot of cosmic evolution and to correlate it with the Theosophical sevenfold classification. This difficulty has been cleared to some extent by W. Q. Judge in his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, for, commenting on this verse, he remarks:

No particular Theosophical classification for the divisions of nature has been given out. It would, on the one hand, not be understood, and on the other, disputes leading to no good end would follow. He might as well have stated the twenty-fivefold division held by some other school. (p.133)

This not only clears the difficulty but also helps to correlate the Theosophical sevenfold classification with the sixfold one of the Vedantic School and the fourfold classification of the Taraka Raja Yoga School. Further, it is a plea for a living, dynamic understanding of the metaphysical ideas and a caution against any stratification, serving thus to clear off many of the dogmatic attitudes of priestcraft, which have led to the formation of various sects and creeds in every religion. For any rigidity in the interpretation of spiritual truths will result in the promulgation of dogmas, and this has been responsible for the crystallization of the teachings down the ages.

It is refreshing, however, to note that a major breakthrough in the field of thought was made by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Secret Doctrine*, where she has revealed the sevenfold plan of universal evolution. For, on the very first page of the Proem, she describes "the abstract, ever incognizable PRESENCE, and its plane, the Universal Soul," as the one circle which is the divine Unity from which all proceeds and whither all returns, and adds:

It is on this plane that the Manvantaric manifestations begin; for it is in this SOUL that slumbers, during the Pralaya, the Divine Thought, wherein lies concealed the plan of every future Cosmogony and Theogony.

This plan involves unfoldment on seven planes, for, as described later on pages 8-9:

There is no difference between the Christian Apostle's "In Him we live and move and have our being," and the Hindu Rishi's "The Universe lives in, proceeds from, and will return to Brahma"; for Brahma (neuter), the unmanifested, is that Universe *in abscondito*, and Brahma, the manifested, is the Logos, made male-female in the symbolical orthodox dogmas. The God of the Apostle-Initiate and of the Rishi being both the Unseen and the Visible SPACE. Space is called in the esoteric symbolism "the Seven-Skinned Eternal Mother-Father." It is composed from its undifferentiated to its differentiated surface of seven layers.

A clearer understanding of this abstruse term "the Seven-Skinned Eternal Mother-Father" is to be found in the Transactions of the Blavatsky Lodge. (pp. 2, 4)

Another important doctrine which Madame Blavatsky affirms is that behind the sevenfold plan there is no *planner* any more than there is a *thinker* behind the Divine Thought. For the plan is the working out of "the absolute universality of that law of periodicity, of flux and reflux, ebb and flow, which physical science has observed and recorded in all departments of nature." (S.D., I, 17)

One of the difficulties which any student of the Esoteric Science meets at the outset is this idea of the plan being without a planner, and thought without a thinker. But as the Stanza from the Book of Dzyan observes: "The causes of existence had been done away with." Explaining this, H.P.B. remarks:

"The Causes of Existence" means not only the physical causes known to science, but the metaphysical causes, the chief of which is the desire to exist, an outcome of

Nidana and Maya. This desire for a sentient life shows itself in everything, from an atom to a sun, and is a reflection of the Divine Thought propelled into objective existence, into a law that the Universe should exist. According to esoteric teaching, the real cause of that supposed desire, and of all existence, remains for ever hidden, and its first emanations are the most complete abstractions mind can conceive. These abstractions must of necessity be postulated as the cause of the material Universe which presents itself to the senses and intellect; and they underlie the secondary and subordinate powers of Nature, which, anthropomorphized, have been worshipped as God and gods by the common herd of every age. It is impossible to conceive anything without a cause; the attempt to do so makes the mind a blank. This is virtually the condition to which the mind must come at last when we try to trace back the chain of causes and effects, but both science and religion jump to this condition of blankness much more quickly than is necessary; for they ignore the metaphysical abstractions which are the only conceivable cause of physical concretions. These abstractions become more and more concrete as they approach our plane of existence, until finally they phenomenize in the form of the material Universe, by a process of conversion of metaphysics into physics, analogous to that by which steam can be condensed into water, and water frozen into ice. (S.D., I, 44-45)

This conversion of metaphysics into physics has been done in all ancient scriptures by the use of numbers and geometrical figures. But here again she writes of the two kinds of numerals to be studied—

the figures, often simple blinds, and the Sacred Numbers, the values of which are all known to the Occultists through Initiation. The former is but a conventional *glyph*, the latter is the basic symbol of all. That is to say, that one is purely physical, the other purely metaphysical, the two standing in relation to each other as matter stands to spirit—the extreme poles of the ONE Substance. (S.D., I, 66)

This will help the student to understand why the study of the Sciences of Arithmetic, Astronomy, Geometry and Music, held as the four divisions of Mathematics, was emphasized in the Pythagorean School.

...this explains why the Pythagoreans asserted that the doctrine of Numbers—the chief of all in Esotericism—had been revealed to man by the celestial deities; that the world had been called forth out of Chaos by Sound or Harmony, and constructed according to the principles of musical proportion; that the seven planets which rule the destiny of mortals have a harmonious motion "and intervals corresponding to musical diastemes, rendering various sounds, so perfectly consonant, that they produce the sweetest melody, which is inaudible to us, only by reason of the greatness of the sound, which our ears are incapable of receiving." (S.D., I, 433)

There are seven colours and sounds, seven Rishis and Hierarchies; the days of the week, the planets, the kingdoms of Nature, the planes of consciousness—all belong to this order of septenaries. This is a universe of thought, ideas underlying forms—the manifested Verbum or Logos being the materialization or objectivization of the Thought Divine. The pattern after which manifestation takes place is sevenfold and it serves as the model for the privative limits of Thought, even as the architect's design depicts the privative limits of the building under project. What the engineers and masons do, as the Great Builders and Dhyan Chohans have done on the Cosmic plane, is to fill them in with "matter." As the Theosophical method of education requires self-effort, individual initiative, patient search and constant inquiry, test and verification, no statement is to be accepted on blind authority. Thus, every student is on his own, and, by the close scrutiny of every observation and experience, he should be able to see the validity of the law of analogy and correspondence.

Spirit is invisible, yet can we think of a place where Spirit is not? Spirit is everywhere, in everything, the cause, the sustainer, of all that was, is, or ever shall be. Spirit is in all; whatever differences we may be able to perceive in any other are not differences of Spirit, but differences in range of perception. All our powers rest upon that One Spiritual Nature. The limitations placed upon the power to express are not made by any external force whatever, but made by ourselves, by the ideas that we hold. These ideas that control our physical lives and our minds are, in fact, the limitations in ourselves; yet, however varied, however high, however low they may be, their very permanency rests on the Spirit itself and every one of them springs from perceptions of Spirit. Truth and error both spring from perceptions of Spirit, and by the very power of Spirit are sustained. Ideas rule actions, and, as ideas have, like actions, their cycle of return, so we create a vicious cycle in which we become involved, from the one single fact that we constantly identify ourselves with this, that, or the other condition. But this very power of self-identification is from Spirit.

—Robert Crosbie

From Darkness to Light

The world has clouded the Light of true knowledge and selfishness will not allow its resurrection, for it excludes and will not recognize the whole fellowship of those who were born under the same immutable natural law.

—A MASTER OF WISDOM

He who lives in one colour of the rainbow is blind to the rest. Live in the Light diffused through the entire arc and you will know it all.

—The Path

It is a fundamental principle of the Occult philosophy, this same homogeneity of matter and immutability of natural laws, which are so much insisted upon by materialism; but that unity rests upon the inseparability of Spirit from matter, and, if the two are once divorced, the whole Kosmos would fall back into chaos and non-being.... There is a purpose in every important act of Nature, whose acts are all cyclic and periodical.

—H. P. Blavatsky: The Secret Doctrine, I, 640

During this month of November will be celebrated Deepavali, the Hindu Festival of Lights, whose higher aspect transcends Hinduism and is of universal import. Also during this month will be celebrated the Anniversary of the present Theosophical Movement, whose aim is to teach men to live as brothers. These anniversaries, when correctly understood, yield their own beneficent influence. For cycles are not only chronological. They have their psychic or causal side.

An understanding of this inner side of great and sacred anniversaries helps the individual to attune himself to mystic Nature with all her magic ways and dynamic properties. More—it leads him to recognize the presence in him of a mighty spiritual power—that living power which is Himself.

To him who studies the secrets of Nature is revealed a truly divine system, an intelligent plan in cosmogony, which results in cosmic divisions of times, seasons, invisible influences, astronomical phenomena, with their actions and reactions on terrestrial and even moral natures.

While there are several accounts as to the origin of Deepavali, if the season of the year is taken into account, it would seem clear that originally this festival was based on an astronomical fact. Surya, the Great Luminary, passes the *tula* (Libra) or the "balance" about this time. Deepavali thus signifies and celebrates the conquest of darkness. From times immemorial Light stands for *Sat*, Truth, while darkness represents *avidya*, ignorance. But what is *avidya* if not ignorance of the oneness of all life? Man, however learned, remains ignorant so long as he persists in trying to divide that which is indivisible. The vision of the One without a second, taught by all the great Teachers, enables us to practise Brotherhood without distinction of sex, caste, creed, colour or race.

In the Pistis Sophia, when Jesus is entreated by his disciples to reveal to them "the mysteries of the Light of the Father," he es made to answer:

Do ye seek after these mysteries? No mystery is more excellent than they which shall bring your souls unto the Light of Lights, unto the place of Truth and goodness, unto the place where is neither male nor female, nor form, but Light everlasting.

In Esoteric Chronology the seventeenth day of the eleventh month is a special memorial day, a sacred day which marks the birthday of a great Dhyani. Such Lords of Light descend to our earth under cyclic Law to strike the keynote of Truth for a particular period of time, thus becoming patrons of that cycle. Their aim is ever the same: to save mankind from losing sight of its divine destiny. These Mighty Ones assume a visible form, perform their great works of compassion and leave behind them everlasting monuments to commemorate their visit. The anniversary of their appearance within our *mayavic* veil brings back, each year, the benediction of their influence.

Thus it is with the 17th of November, the date chosen by H. P. Blavatsky and her Blessed Gurus for the launching of the Theosophical Movement of our era in the year 1875. History records that in the early centuries of the Christian era the Church Fathers favoured this very date to celebrate the birthday of Jesus, their Master, a certain evidence of their spiritual insight.

1875 to 2001: One hundred twenty six years have passed, bringing annually the return of the sacred day. May this 17th of November shower its silent blessings upon all sincere and devoted workers in the Theosophical field. To work for Theosophy is to work for Universal Brotherhood. May the Light of Truth Eternal, whose echo down the ages has kept alive in man his spiritual intuition, energize our hearts and enlighten our minds!

Let us close with the ancient Upanishadic prayer:

Lead me from the unreal to the Real;
Lead me from darkness to Light;
Lead me from death to Immortality.

So far as the science of occultism is concerned, it is both experimental and analytical, but it acknowledges no "missing links," "impassable gulfs," or "unthinkable gaps," because it finds none. Back of occult science there lies a complete and all-embracing Philosophy. This philosophy is not simply synthetical in its methods, for the simplest as the wildest hypothesis can claim that much; but is *synthesis itself*. It regards Nature as one complete whole, and so the student of occultism may stand at either point of observation. He may from the standpoint of Nature's wholeness and completeness follow the process of segregation and differentiation to the minutest atom conditioned in space and time; or, from the phenomenal display of the atom, he may reach forward and upward till the atom becomes an integral part of cosmos, involved in the universal harmony of creation. The modern scientist may do this incidentally or empirically, but the occultist does it systematically and habitually, and hence philosophically. The modern scientist is confessedly and boastfully *agnostic*. The occultist is reverently and progressively *gnostic*.

—W. Q. Judge

Motives for Effort

The term "Universal Brotherhood" is no idle phrase....It is the only secure foundation for universal morality. If it be a dream, it is at least a noble one for mankind; and it is the aspiration of the *true adept*.

Beware then of an uncharitable spirit, for it will rise up like a hungry wolf in your path, and devour the better qualities of your nature...Broaden instead of narrowing your sympathies; try to identify yourself with your fellows, rather than to contract your circle of affinity.

—A Master of Wisdom

As the inquirer goes on extending his reading of Theosophical literature, he gets a glimpse of the wonderful powers that come to him who advances along the Path of Occultism. Perhaps he has read Isis Unveiled and the Yoga Aphorisms of Patanjali. He gets convinced that phenomenal powers bordering on what he calls miraculous do exist. He desires to acquire some of these powers. Has he not heard of successful experiments in thought-transference and mind-reading? Has he not witnessed the power that the hypnotist wields over his subjects, forcing them into droll antics? Has he not read about mediums who seemingly summon denizens from spookland and secure startling messages from across the threshold? He finds all these and many more powers treated of and explained in Theosophical texts. His curiosity is aroused and he longs to have one or two such powers up his sleeve—if not for gain, then at least for the delectation of some few before whom he may condescend to demonstrate. The aim of such an inquirer is clear enough. He desires something for himself and resolves to get it from Theosophy, even though he is warned that selfish motives will lead to no success.

Then, there is another type, the trend of whose thoughts has always been to escape from the round of births and deaths. Reacting sharply against blind belief in either religion or science, he perceives that the way of life recommended by Theosophy will lead him to liberation and therefore to a forgetting of the woes of the world and of men for ever. His motive for effort is—*himself*. Though he may discourse most convincingly on Universal Brotherhood and even help other human beings, he does so to serve his own purpose. He has chosen a goal other than that presented by Theosophy—Renunciation; and though he may not know it and be indignant if so told, he separates himself from all others. He will help them, but only because by such action he enhances the chances of an early liberation.

Surpassing both these in his ambition is the shrewd inquirer who comes with wits sharpened from the world of Mammon. His ambition is for recognition, precedence and authority over men. He feels that these are easy of attainment in an organization most of whose members are not worldly-wise nor cravers for positions. Any Theosophical administration would suit him admirably—or so he thinks. True, that in joining any such organization he has not only to subscribe to the idea of Universal Brotherhood, but to participate actively with others in forming the nucleus of such a brotherhood. He may recognize himself to be an orthodox religionist or

one who despises the caste or religion of others, and be thus firmly fixed in the path of error. None the less, the vision of fruits to be plucked from the Theosophical tree is too tempting to be laid aside. So he resorts to the old, old game of make-believe. What he says to himself is that with all his leanings towards particular sects and creeds, he can still practice brotherhood among his chosen few. In these times, a glib talk of Brotherhood is always in the air and it would be advantageous even socially to declare oneself a staunch supporter of the principle. Joining in the effort to form a nucleus? Why, dear sir, most certainly. But suppose I postpone it till I have advanced far enough? I will then be in a far better position to volunteer the effort!

Such are the delusions that have gripped and enslaved many an otherwise promising head and heart.

Now, if Theosophy were like any other *ism*, the hidden motive or the lack of moral foundation would hardly make any difference. The person with selfish motive would then have prospered as do many politicians and men of business. But with Theosophy it is different. This is so because as one advances in this philosophy, one arouses into action nature's finer forces and these in colour and vibration reflect the innermost motives and thoughts of the person. They portray his moods and ambitions, his sympathies and antipathies, in a startlingly clear degree. Karma then steps in and surrounds him with such circumstances, temptations and difficulties that the subtlest of masks is torn from the face and the person stands naked and his worldly motives get pushed to the top and become revealed.

Theosophy is not like so many extant religions that, getting hardened after the departure of their respective founders, become fossilized under the rude impact of the materialism of centuries. The fountain-source from which all knowledge emanates remains intact, impartite, unpolluted from the dawn to dusk of humanity. It has its Custodians who, remaining consciously immortal in different bodies, have preserved themselves and their precious treasure from the ravages of time and death. When the receptivity of humanity permits, they send from among themselves one or more Initiates to guide humanity back towards paths of peace and progress. These Great Ones work in our world through accredited messengers as well as through "companions" selectected from out of the great concourse of men that is attracted by their Teachings. Each one who (even though in secret) lays his service at Their feet is known, recognized, and if found worthy, accepted. One who takes up the study of Theosophy in all earnestness, who records his desire to join in the effort to promote Universal Brotherhood, by that resolve projects a part of himself into the atmosphere where the Masters are.

The aspirant would avoid many a pitfall if he were to remember that in Occultism true enlightenment can come only when the aim of the candidate coincides with the Aim of the Theosophical Movement. If the two are divergent or even at some variance, then the lesser arm being always the weaker, is brushed aside and its votary is either thwarted or thrown completely off the track by the nemesis that follows upon the violation of the Law of Karma. This is so because the Wisdom that is Theosophy is living and its custodians have to be sure that it will not be defiled by misuse for unworthy ends.

The Theosophical Society was formed with the chief object of inviting men and women to join in the effort to form the nucleus of Universal Brotherhood. The dissemination of hitherto secret teachings about the constitution of the universe and man; of the states after death and of the powers latent in man—all these had the purpose of bringing the world to duty and benefiting mankind. He who sought advancement was expected to spread the truth and provoke others to correct thinking and a correct way of life. Men were wanted, not ceremony-masters, and what was expected was devotion and not mere observances.

Universal unity is a fact because there is only one source from which all spring and into which all must in time get merged. It is this idea that must be made to dominate all thought and action. He who would make reservations about caste, creed or colour sets himself up as something apart and distinct from those belonging to other castes, creeds and colours, and in so doing makes himself antagonistic to their advancement and interests. This antagonism and the feeling of class superiority debar him from the beneficence that ever flows from the planes of Soul and Spirit.

The aims for which the Theosophical Movement was launched into the public world may be gathered from the following extracts from Masters' letters:

1. It is not the individual and determined purpose of attaining Nirvana—the culmination of all knowledge and absolute Wisdom, which is after all only an exalted and glorious selfishness—but the self-sacrificing pursuit of the best means to lead on the right path our neighbour, to cause to benefit by it as many of our fellow creatures as we possibly can, which constitutes the true Theosophist.
2. The true Theosophist is a philanthropist—"not for himself but for the world he lives."
3. Perish rather the Theosophical Society...than that we should permit it to become no better than an academy of magic, and a hall of Occultism!
4. It is he alone who has the love of humanity at heart, who is capable of grasping thoroughly the idea of a regenerating practical Brotherhood who is entitled to the possession of our secrets...A man who places not the good of mankind above his own good is not worthy of becoming our *chela*—he is not worthy of becoming higher in knowledge than his neighbour.
5. We seek to bring men to sacrifice their personality—a passing flash—for the welfare of the whole humanity.
6. Union and co-operation are indispensable. Union does indeed imply a concentration of vital and magnetic force against the hostile currents of prejudice and fanaticism.
7. This is the moment to guide the recurrent impulse which must soon come, and which will push the age towards extreme atheism, or drag it back to extreme sacerdotalism, if it is not led to the primitive soul-satisfying philosophy of the Aryans...You and your colleagues may help to furnish the materials for a needed universal religious philosophy; one impregnable to scientific assault, because itself the finality of absolute science, and a religion that is indeed worthy of the name since it includes the relations of man physical to man psychical, and of the two to all that is above and below them. Is not this worth a little sacrifice?

Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone. If kings and barons can keep it, all things will transform spontaneously. If, after transformation, they should desire to be active, I would restrain them with simplicity, which has no name. Simplicity, which has no name, is free of desire, it is tranquil. And the world will be at peace of its own accord.

—Tao Te King

In the Light of Theosophy

Our universe is only one of an infinite number of universes. Both occult and modern science are agreed about this. But do the same laws that govern our universe rule other universes?

The Sunday Times (London) reports that a group of astronomers and cosmologists recently organized a conference in Cambridge, England, to discuss this issue. The group, which includes celebrities like Professor Stephen Hawking and Sir Martin Rees, the astronomer royal, are of the view that the laws thought to govern the universe, including Albert Einstein's theory of relativity, must be rewritten. Such laws, they say, may only work for our universe but not in others. "It is becoming increasingly likely that the rules we had thought were fundamental through time and space are actually just by-laws for our bit of it," said Rees, whose new book, *Our Cosmic Habitat*, has just been published. The experts agreed that "creation is emerging as even stranger than we thought."

What Rees, Hawking and others are now looking at is the idea that there are different laws of nature operating in each universe. "Some universes would have all their matter clumped together into a few huge black holes, while others would be nothing more than a thin uniform freezing gas." However, Hawking and his colleagues increasingly disagree over how this "multiverse" could work.

Not much can be known to earthly humans about the laws governing other universes and the life evolving there. According to Occult doctrine, every universe has its own Ruler, its own Logos. (The Secret Doctrine, II, 25, 36)

The esoteric meaning of the word *Logos* is the rendering in objective expression, as in a photograph, of the concealed thought. The *Logos* is the mirror reflecting DIVINE MIND, and the Universe is the mirror of the Logos, though the latter is the *esse* of that Universe. (S.D., II, 25)

At the commencement of a great Manvantara, Parabrahm manifests as Mulaprakriti and then as the Logos. This Logos is equivalent to the "Unconscious Universal Mind," etc., of Western Pantheists. It constitutes the Basis of the SUBJECT-side of manifested Being, and is the source of all manifestations of individual consciousness. Mulaprakriti or Primordial Cosmic Substance, is the foundation of the OBJECT-side of things—the basis of all objective evolution and Cosmogogenesis. Force, then, does not emerge with Primordial Substance from Parabrahmic Latency. It is *the transformation into energy of the supra-conscious thought of the Logos*, infused, so to speak, into the objectivation of the latter out of potential latency in the One Reality. Hence spring the wondrous laws of matter. (S.D., II, 24)

How did life begin on earth? An Indo-British team of scientists claims to have "startling proof" of how comets from outer space may have sowed the seeds of life here. This, the researchers say, could have a profound impact and change perceptions about the origins of the world.

At a science conference of astro-biologists at San Diego, U.S.A., held early this August, the researchers presented evidence of the presence of living organisms floating in the earth's very high stratosphere, India Today (August 13) reports:

Using a special upper atmosphere balloon probe built by the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO), the team's analysis of air samples taken at heights between 25 km and 41 km in Hyderabad were startling. It showed a profusion of bacteria-like organisms swarming in a region where the temperature is as cold as in Antarctica and the atmosphere so rarefied that terrestrial life is almost non-existent.

Chandra Wickramasinghe, a professor at the Centre for Astrobiology, Cardiff University, U.K., and a key member of the Indo-British scientific team, says: "our findings have a profound impact on the concept of how life began on earth. It is clear that this invasion from space has had a lot more to do with it." If the team's findings are validated by further experiments, it would provide strong evidence that life was first created in deep space and not on the earth itself as is widely believed. Acting as super sperm distributors of the cosmos, comets passing through the earth's vicinity may have deposited genetically rich cosmic dust on the planet. These are believed to have sowed the seeds of primitive life on earth.

It was known that hundreds of tonnes of cometary material enter the earth's upper atmosphere daily. But the idea of panspermia (or the concept that life on earth was fertilized from interstellar space) involves cometary bombardment containing biological material. Now for the first time they have clear proof of such a phenomenon....

Certainly the team is onto something big. For if they are able to prove that life does have a cosmic origin, then major biological concepts including the mechanistic

theory of the origin of life would have to undergo radical changes. Darwin's theory of naptural selection will now have to take into account the assistance of genes from inter-stellar space....More than anything else the discovery once again leaves wide open the fundamental question of how and where life began. As Wickramasinghe says: "We may all be truly the children of space, the offspring of a higher cosmic system." It is an intriguing possibility.

The Theosophical view, which is the view of Occult Science, is that "there never was a time when the earth was without life upon it. Wherever there is an atom of matter, a particle or a molecule, even in its most gaseous condition, there is life in it, however latent and unconscious" (S.D., I, 258). Occultism thus disposes of the so-called Azoic age of science, the age in which there is supposed to have been no trace of life. Life always was, is and ever shall be; it did not originate, but is the origin of all. It is, therefore, life which caused the earth to come into existence. So the appropriate question is not how life began on earth, but when and how earth came to be.

As for the role of the comets, the ancients believed that "the first living germ had dropped to the earth from some passing comet" (The Secret Doctrine, I, 366 fn.). Mr. Judge explains in "Hidden Hints in the Secret Doctrine":

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. (U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 16, p. 6)

Astrology is deeply embedded in Indian culture and still appears to hold fascination for Indians, no matter how much they modernize. But the recent decision by the University Grants Commission (UGC) to offer Vedic astrology as a university course has stirred up a hornets' nest with those against it calling the step "regressive."

Should astrology be treated as a science? Should the state be encouraging its study? India Today team and its countrywide bureaus explored various aspects of the astrology debate, and their findings are published in the issue for September 17. It is stated editorially: "There remains little doubt in their mind that astrology with its emphasis on individual interpretation can hardly constitute a science." Reporter Suchi Sinha says: "Although astrology has some empirical basis, it also blends subjectivity and mythology."

There is a vast difference between what is practised by present-day astrologers and *true* astrology as a "mathematical science." How many today have enough knowledge of the latter to be able to teach it at the university level, is a questionable point. However, there does exist a psychic relationship between the planets and human beings on earth. The key to the value of a knowledge of astrology lies in the Laws of Karma and Reincarnation. We are self-produced beings. Just as we have produced ourselves in the far past, so now we are producing ourselves.

"We produce CAUSES, and these awaken the corresponding powers in the sidereal world; which powers are magnetically and irresistibly attracted to—and react upon—upon those who produced these causes" (The Secret Doctrine, I, 124). It is this aspect of the age-old teaching which can make knowledge of astrology valuable. It is not the stars and constellations that make us what we are; they are but, as it were, the writing on the wall. And we must see our present acts, thoughts and feelings as the writing on the wall of the future. The Theosophical position was stated thus in The Theosophist for June 1884:

Although a study of this science may enable one to determine what the course of events will be, it cannot necessarily be inferred therefrom that the planets exercise any influence over that course. The clock indicates, it does not influence, the time. And a distant traveller has often to put right his clock so that it may indicate correctly the time of the place he visits. Thus, though the planets may have no hand in changing the destiny of the man, still their position may indicate what that destiny is likely to be. This hypothesis leads us to the question, "What is destiny?" As understood by the Occultist, it is merely the chain of causation producing its correspondential series of effects.

Newsweek Special Issue July-September 2001) is titled "East Meets West." Among other issues dealt with, special attention is given to the rising interest in "spirituality" which is attracting a new wave of Westerners—and Indian themselves—to the East. For centuries, says Sudip Mazumdar, India has been the destination of many a spiritual quest.

But [writes Mazumdar] not since the hippie invasion of the 1960s has the country seen such a flood of foreigners seeking enlightenment—or at least a bit of peace. In the holy town of Rishikesh, nestled in the Himalayan foothills, some 50 ashrams now cater to Western visitors. More than 30 "spiritual tour" operators in northern India say their programs are fully booked, some two years in advance....

The new breed of pilgrims differ markedly from previous ones. They come from all economic backgrounds and age groups, not only the young....They are not iconoclasts. They are seeking some kind of spiritual experience without forsaking their own spiritual or cultural heritage....

As such, this wave of tourism is fueled largely by the rise in nontraditional spirituality in the United States and Europe. No longer do most would-be disciples seek out individual gurus and exotic forms of worship....Interestingly, the boom coincides with a massive surge of faith among Indians themselves. At least 100 Indian religious portals have sprung up on the Net....As their society—and their problems—become more Western, middle-class Indians are discovering what many Westerners have already found: a destination in their own backyard.

There is a good deal of misunderstanding, both in the West and in present-day India, as to what real spirituality implies. Place or country has nothing to do with spirituality, and India today is no more spiritual than any other country. Spirituality may transform and better a place, but the result is a consequence, not a cause. The cause lies in Spirit; the effect, in matter. Both are aspects of Life itself.

Spirituality begins within. It depends upon an awakening from worldly illusions to the reality of spiritual consciousness, the immortal higher nature, "the centre spot" within. The path of spirituality is an inner path; the light we need to tread it is an inner light; the goal it leads to is an inner goal.

In today's competitive world, parents are in a hurry for their children to acquire skills at a very early age. Even toddlers are being trained to turn into superkids. Childhood is viewed as little more than an apprenticeship for adulthood. But, according to experts, if we really want them to thrive, children should be allowed to develop intellectually at their own pace. It is a myth, they say, that a more stimulated brain is a smarter one.

A feature in Time Asia (July 2) debunks some of today's conceptions about child education:

There was a time when kids being kids wasn't a radical notion. In the past few years, however, all that has changed....Kids who once had childhoods now have curriculums; kids who ought to move with the lunatic energy of youth now move with the high purpose of the worker bee.

The engine behind this early striving is, often, the parents, who are increasingly consumed by the idea that if they can't perfect their children, they must at least get them as close to the ideal as possible. And who can blame them? With competition getting ever keener, kids have to do ever more to distinguish themselves....

Child-development experts consider sterile tools inferior to more social and emotional activities such as talking with or reading to children. These specialists agree that the only thing shown to optimize children's intellectual potential is a secure, trusting relationship with their parents. Time spent cuddling, gazing and playing establishes a bond of security, trust and respect on which the entire child-development pyramid is based. "We have given social and emotional development a back seat," says UCLA's Tyler, "and that's doing a great disservice to kids and to our society." "Intelligence is based on emotional adequacy," says child-development expert T. Berry Brazelton. "The concept of emotional intelligence is at the base of all this."

Parents often cause psychological exhaustion in their children by pushing them to perform better. There is no doubt that the first few years of a child's life are of the greatest importance, but is it wise to push children academically at this stage? Is not the growth of intellect a continuous process? Are any of the proponents of early education prepared to accept the fact

that each child is a Divine Ego possessing wonderful powers and potentialities and with an illimitable past and future? Any educational programme that ignores this vital fact can hardly be said to be based on a sound foundation. The process of education, as the word itself suggests, is one of unfoldment. If it is seen as drawing out, then the usual learning from outside would change into an education from inside. The capacity of the very young to learn things faster needs to be availed of by parents to bring out what is innate in the child, instead of burdening it with mere academic training.