

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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OUR OWN WAY OF SERVICE

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To live to benefit mankind is the first step. To practise the six glorious virtues is the second.

THIS short piece of instruction brings to every student-server of Theosophy a test. Service of others and self-discipline in day-to-day life are both stressed; the one without the other ends in frustration. The test persists from the beginning to the very end, when the aspirant blossoms into a soul-realized Adept, treading the Paramita Path of Supreme Renunciation.

The temptation to emphasize one of the above-mentioned steps as better than and superior to the other comes often to every neophyte. “Let me help others in whatever way I can and not consider myself and my progress,” says one. This is an error as serious as that of those who say: “There is little to be done for humanity steeped in ignorance, superstition and sensuality; let me grow into holiness and knowledge and then there will be a real chance to serve and benefit mankind.”

Esoteric Philosophy regards service of others and growth of one's own self into holiness as the two wings of the bird of progress, both equally necessary to ascend to the empyrean of Wisdom and also to descend to the region of Myalba to help and serve.

A certain amount of confusion about this always exists in the consciousness of the learner, the aspirant, the neophyte and even the devotee. In all things we are accustomed to the pairs of opposites; rarely do men and women endeavour to sustain themselves at the balance point. We live engrossed in the life of the opposites; we differentiate between night and day, sleeping and waking, and emphasize the difference between

them, overlooking the fact that it is the same person who sleeps in the body and wakes up therein. The ever-swinging pendulum takes us from end to end of existence — sensual, passional, even mental. Therefore, when we come to Theosophy and learn the truth about the ever-moving nature obeying the law of opposites and the Immortal Soul which is the steady and steadfast spectator, we fail to perceive the meaning of the law of motion — that there is a common place where birth and death, knowledge and ignorance are not, that there is a condition transcending and inclusive of both. Thus service of others and discipline of self are not opposing forces but a dual expression of the One, the Indivisible, the Ever-Existing.

In the mundane world where senses and brain are active we sometimes favour the doing of good works to benefit mankind and neglect the practice of the glorious virtues. The result is a chaos in the performance of good works. At other times we are intent on soul-growth and the holy life, and soon become selfish devotees who live to no purpose.

Theosophists are of necessity the friends of all movements in the world, whether intellectual or simply practical, for the amelioration of the condition of mankind. We are the friends of all those who fight against drunkenness, against cruelty to animals, against injustice to women, against corruption in society or in government, although we do not meddle in politics. We are the friends of those who exercise practical charity, who seek to lift a little of the tremendous weight of misery that is crushing down the poor.

This statement in the first of the Five Messages from H.P.B. to the American Theosophists is sometimes quoted by the ardent individual who desires to befriend those good movements which have as their aim the service of humanity. Such also point to the U.L.T. Declaration and even regard social workers as Theosophists, for they “are engaged in the true service of Humanity.” Such overlook what H.P.B. says in the same message, in the very next sentence:

But in our quality of Theosophists, we cannot engage in any one of these great works in particular. As individuals we may do so, but *as Theosophists we have a larger, more important, and much more difficult work to do.* (Italics ours)

Again, we all know that Theosophical ideas have penetrated into the mind of the race and elevated it to some extent. But what H.P.B. said in 1888 remains true in 1955:

Although Theosophical ideas have entered into every development or form which awakening spirituality has assumed, yet *Theosophy pure and simple has still a severe battle to fight for recognition.* (Italics ours)

How will Theosophy gain full recognition? By student-servers of its Cause reforming themselves by the right and persistent practice of Divine Virtues. Are we of the class of which H.P.B. writes:

There are others among us who realize intuitively that the recognition of pure Theosophy — the philosophy of the rational explanation of things and not the tenets — is of the most vital importance in the Society, inasmuch as *it alone can furnish the beacon-light needed to guide humanity on its true path.* (Italics ours)

It is such men of intuition who are truly capable of energizing and enlivening a Lodge of United Theosophists. H.P.B. wrote in her article "Lodges of Magic":

For the extension of the theosophical movement, a useful channel for the irrigation of the dry fields of contemporary thought with the water of life, Branches are needed everywhere; not mere groups of passive sympathisers, such as the slumbering army of church-goers, whose eyes are shut while the "devil" sweeps the field; no, not such. Active, wide-awake, earnest, unselfish Branches are needed, whose members shall not be constantly unmasking their selfishness by asking "What will it profit us to join the Theosophical Society, and how much will it harm us?" but be putting to themselves the question "Can we not do substantial good to mankind by working in this good cause with all our hearts, our minds, and our strength?" (*Raja-Yoga or Occultism*)

For this purpose (*viz.*, the elevation of the status of every U.L.T. centre) individual Associates must see the truth of H.P.B.'s statement in "Let Every Man Prove His Own Work" (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*):

Our declared work is, in reality, more important and more efficacious than work in the every-day plane which bears more evident and immediate fruit, for the direct effect of an appreciation of theosophy is to make those charitable who were not so before. Theosophy creates the charity which afterwards, and of its own accord, makes itself manifest in works.

In this very important and highly practical article there are thoughts which are relevant to the subject under consideration. True service of the race is to be rendered in a way and by a method very different from ways and methods which obtain in the business world of social service.

Theosophy teaches the spirit of "non-separateness," the evanescence and illusion of human creeds and dogma, hence, inculcates *universal love and charity for all mankind "without distinction of race, colour, caste or creed"*; is it not therefore the fittest to alleviate the sufferings of mankind? . . .

Therefore it is that Theosophists cannot pose as a body of philanthropists, though secretly they may adventure on the path of good works. They profess to be a body of learners merely, pledged to help each other and all the rest of humanity, so far as in them lies, to a better understanding of the mystery of life, and to a better knowledge of the peace which lies beyond it.

Let us learn the difference between social and other services which have as their basis organized charity and the method of personal exertion in the service of mankind which the Esoteric Philosophy advocates. Let us meditate on the following words which refer directly to the Theosophical and true method of service which ever and always upholds the principle of Universal Brotherhood, "without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization" as our U.L.T. Declaration points out.

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own — is no Theosophist.

The study of Theosophy is important; the application of the Esoteric Doctrines to our minds and morals is more important; thus alone will we strengthen our wings of sacrificial service and deepening holiness.

In the following words of a great Master we gain a further insight into the way of service and of good works which we must learn to adopt:

In the fields of Theosophy *none is held to weed out a larger plot of ground than his strength and capacity will permit him*. Do not be too severe on the merits or demerits of one who seeks admission among your ranks, as the truth about the actual state of the inner man can only be known to Karma, and can be dealt with justly by that all-seeing LAW alone. Even the simple presence amidst you of a well-intentioned and sympathising individual may help you magnetically.

PROSPECTUS OF "THE THEOSOPHIST"

[The first number of H.P.B.'s magazine, *The Theosophist*, appeared 100 years ago, in October 1879, within less than a year after her arrival in India in February of that year. This was the most important event of her stay in India, so far as the future work of the Theosophical Movement was concerned. This publication became a primary record of Theosophical literature, containing not only H.P.B.'s own valuable articles but also contributions from writers of ability and repute on the various subjects afforded by Eastern philosophy and religion and Western metaphysics and mysticism. *The Theosophist* became the most cosmopolitan philosophical publication of its time, attracting attention from far and wide.

In her opening editorial in Vol. I, No. 1 of *The Theosophist*, entitled "Namastæ!" H.P.B. wrote:

"The foundation of this journal is due to causes which, having been enumerated in the Prospectus, need only be glanced at in this connection. They are — the rapid expansion of the Theosophical Society from America to various European and Asiatic countries; the increasing difficulty and expense in maintaining correspondence by letter with members so widely scattered; the necessity for an organ through which the native scholars of the East could communicate their learning to the Western world, and, especially, through which the sublimity of Aryan, Buddhistic, Parsi, and other religions might be expounded by their own priests or pandits, the only competent interpreters; and finally, the need of a repository for the facts — especially such as relate to Occultism — gathered by the Society's Fellows among different nations...."

(THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, November 1973)

We reprint here the Prospectus of this "monthly journal devoted to Science, Oriental Philosophy, History, Psychology, Literature and Art."—EDS.]

THE RAPID GROWTH of the Theosophical Society — a body which was organized at New York, United States of America, in 1875, to promote the study of universal arcane philosophy, and especially the secret sciences of Oriental nations — and the transfer of its executive offices to Bombay — render necessary the publication of the present journal. While the chief officers of the Society were in America, it was always easy to secure from an enterprising and attentive public press as wide a circulation as could be desired for anything of importance that they

had to say. But in India the case is different; and six months of experience have shown that the best interests of the Society demand the publication of a journal of its own. Besides, the correspondence between the Executive and the Society's branches in various European countries, and with the Aryan, Buddhist, Parsi, and Jain scholars who take a deep interest in its work and are anxious to aid it, has so increased that, without such a journal as *The Theosophist*, it will be extremely difficult to keep the communication unbroken.

With no wish to undervalue the services which have been rendered to the world, during the past fifty years, by the eminent men who, through learned societies, and in their individual capacities as travellers, authors, professors, journalists and lecturers, have disclosed so much about ancient Eastern religion, philosophy, science, archaeology and philology, the Theosophical Society, nevertheless, believes that it has found a most important field of exploration hitherto unoccupied. It is that of the secret wisdom concealed under the popular and often repulsive myths of the nations of antiquity; the philosophical origin of much that is now considered as foolish superstitions; the key, in short, to all that appears upon the unattractive surface. One need only glance at the contradictory explanations of the wisest Western scholars as to the literature, inscriptions, monuments and traditions of the East, to perceive that they have been misled by the dead letter of appearances and their inability to discover the hidden spirit which has been covered over—and so long lost, except from the sight of a few privileged souls. It is also evident that many of them have shown a disposition to disparage the knowledge of modern educated natives of their ancestral history and beliefs, and to belittle their capability to assist in the labours of science. The pandits and priests of India, Ceylon, China, and other Eastern countries have been chilled by an assumption of haughty superiority, and, it is said, sometimes exasperated by the mistranslation and misconception of their most revered writings. The charge is also made that precious works entrusted to Western hands as a temporary loan have disappeared, or been mutilated under the pretext of accident; and that in alleged translations, vital passages have been deliberately suppressed through interested motives. One reason for the establishment of *The Theosophist* is that native Oriental scholars may have a channel through which they can claim from an enlightened age a just verdict upon the true merits of the religions, philosophies, sciences, and arts that their ancestors bequeathed to mankind. That there has been very little hearty

co-operation between them and Western Orientalists should cause no surprise when it is remembered that they could not enter the society of many Europeans on those terms of equality to which they felt that their learning and dignity of ancestral lineage entitle them. When their help has been asked it has often been made to appear that they were receiving a favour rather than conferring one; and European professors, set over native pandits to instruct native youth in Sanskrit and the vernacular tongues, have not scrupled to affirm that Europeans alone were competent to explain the meaning of their authors. The organization of the Theosophical Society was a protest against this spirit, and the founders of the present journal declare their veneration for the ancient sages of all religions, and respect and brotherly affection for all their worthy modern representatives.

The key to what is mystical and baffling in ancient philosophy, mythology, psychology, and folklore, is in the possession of men of this class, who, being in sympathy with the objects of the Society and some of them its Fellows, have intimated their willingness to reveal much that under ordinary conditions is inaccessible.

The Theosophist will abstain from all political discussion, such being entirely outside the limits of its plan. The social, mental and moral conditions of the present generation as compared with those of their ancestors offer, however, an ample field for intelligent criticism, and will receive attention. The paper will always cordially support and ask European and American sympathy for every effort by the native governments, as well as European, to spread education, introduce useful arts, and better the condition of the native population. To this end, it will lay before its Eastern subscribers the latest news about important discoveries, improvements and inventions.

For a number of years different Governments have been searching for ancient manuscripts with which to enrich their national libraries and museums, and while many have been found, far more are believed to remain undiscovered.

A recent report of the Royal Asiatic Society, speaking of the collection of Hindu workers, observed that: "Many parts of the Dekkan, however, have up to this time remained completely unexplored, and still promise a plentiful harvest to future investigators; although, in many cases, *it will, no doubt, require the utmost care to overcome the suspicion and superstitions of the Brahmanas.* Of the Namburis in Malabar, for instance, a most interesting, though very retired and secluded class

of Brahmanas, we know next to nothing; yet they are said to be staunch followers of the Vedic religion, *and to have in their possession a great many old Vedic MSS.*" These manuscripts are in the safe keeping of guardians whose fidelity to their trust is beyond the reach of temptation. But there is reason to hope and believe that, from time to time, translations and perhaps facsimiles of them will be given through the pages of this journal.

Among the Western fellows of the Theosophical Society who will contribute to these columns are eminent literary and scientific men, authors, journalists and professors fully competent to treat upon the topics above enumerated.

Among the Eastern, the names of the distinguished Swami, Dayanand Saraswati, Pandit, Founder of the Arya Samaj, and Supreme Chief of the Theosophical Society of the Arya Samaj, our Vedic Branch; of the erudite High Priest of Adam's Peak, Ceylon, and President of the Sanskrit, Pali and Elu College of Colombo, the Rev. H. Sumangala; and the eminent Buddhist controversialist, the Rev. Mohattiwatte Gunananda (both Counsellors of the Society); of the learned High Priest of Sylalinbarana Vihara, at Dodandua, the Rev. Piyaratana Tissa Terunanse; and others of distinction, indicate the very high order of Oriental Scholarship that will contribute to the instruction of the *Theosophist's* subscribers. Translations of important Sanskrit and Pali works, hitherto beyond reach, will form a leading feature of the journal. The attempt of Swami Dayanand Saraswati to revive the pure monotheistic philosophy of the Aryans, and the plan and purposes of the Arya Samaj movement, will receive the attention they deserve; as will, also, the reformatory endeavours of the Brahmo, Prarthana, and other Hindu Society, some of whose most respected leaders will, we hope, contribute.

The Theosophist will be a journal of not less than 20 pages; royal quarto size; double columns; printed in large, clear type, on the best English paper; and will appear at the beginning of every month. The subscription prices will be as follows: To subscribers in any part of India, Rs. 6 per annum; in Ceylon, Rs. 7; in the Straits Settlements, China, Japan, and Australia, Rs. 8; in Europe and the United States Rs. 10. The above rates include postage. No name will be entered in the books or paper sent until the money is remitted; and the paper will be invariably discontinued at the expiration of the term subscribed for. Remittances should be made in Money-orders, Hundis, Bill cheques (or Treasury bills, if in registered letters), and made payable to the Pro-

prietors of *The Theosophist*, 108 Girgaum Back Road, Bombay, India.

As few extra copies will be printed, persons who wish to secure a complete file should forward their subscriptions by the 15th of September at latest.

Correspondence (which may be in Hindi, Guzerati, Marathi, or in any modern European language) will be welcomed from any qualified person who is interested in the work of the journal, and, if suitable, will be carefully translated, edited and published.

HENRY S. OLCOTT,
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OFFICE OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY,
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BOMBAY, *July 1879*

CONFUCIUS visited Lao Tzu and began talking about goodness and duty. "Chaff from the winnower's fan," said Lao Tzu, "can so blear our eyes that we do not know if we are looking north, south, east, or west; at heaven or at the earth. One gnat or mosquito can be more than enough to keep us awake a whole night. All this talk of goodness and duty, these perpetual pin-pricks, unnerve and irritate the hearer; nothing, indeed, could be more destructive of his inner tranquillity. . . . The swan does not need a daily bath in order to remain white; the crow does not need a daily inking in order to remain black. . . . When the pool dries up, fish make room for fish upon the dry land, they moisten one another with damp breath, spray one another with foam from their jaws. But how much better are they off when they can forget one another, in the freedom of river or lake!"

—CHUANG TZU

KARMA—AN INTELLIGENT LAW

The best and most important teacher is one's seventh principle centred in the sixth. The more you divest yourself of the illusionary sense of personal isolation, and the more you are devoted to the service of others, the more Maya disappears and the nearer you approach to Divinity.

—*Letters That Have Helped Me*

THERE ARE some aspects of Karma which are little known and even if known are not given the importance they deserve. Since Karma is an intelligent law, it is but proper that we try to see in its variegated aspects the intelligence that presides over its functions. The mechanics of Karma must continue to remain hidden till such time as man raises himself to the plane where Karma becomes scrutable. Theosophy teaches that beyond the powers of ordinary human intelligence and reason there exist other powers and other instruments of the Soul without the acquisition of which Karma will continue to remain a riddle. Yet, there are other less recondite aspects of Karma which our normal human intellect can grasp, and it is these aspects which it becomes the duty of a Theosophist to rediscover in his own life and then propagate for the general good.

The first important truth is found in *The Secret Doctrine* which states: "Karma-Nemesis is no more than the (spiritual) dynamical effect of causes produced and forces awakened into activity by our own actions."¹ One interpretation of this would be that any act, however gross or physical, arouses a spiritual awareness and a dynamic effect on the occult planes of being. The materialist and the atheist, as also the wicked and the ignorant, may deny the existence of God and Soul and Spirit; but their denials notwithstanding, their slightest act sets in motion the spiritual agencies connected with such actions (the *Gita* calls them the presiding deities) and these can neither be bribed nor propitiated. The Black Magician is as powerless as is the egotist, the drunkard, or the thief in staying the operation of these spiritual potencies. Accountability for actions is born with the man and accompanies him all the way to death and beyond.

The next important idea is contained in the statement: "This system cannot be comprehended if the spiritual action of these periods... is separated from their physical course."² Though this statement is made

¹ I. 644.

² I. 642.

with reference to the great evolutionary cycles, it has its relevance to the smaller cycles and for the cycles that mark out a man's life upon earth. The diurnal rotation of the earth brings on night and day and no human ingenuity can make the sun dawn in the night. So, too with the evolutionary periods. If the man is at the pre-dawn stage of his pilgrimage, the sun of spirituality will be that far removed from its dawning. The physical and psychic coarseness that man invites on himself (and which is abnormal for the time cycle in which he lives) determines the degree of spiritual indolence and inactivity. The refinement and the controlled capacity of the physical aspect is one of the essential conditions that have to be provided before the man can expect spirituality to enter and take abode within himself.

The three streams of evolution — the monadic, the intellectual and the physical — of which H.P.B. speaks in *The Secret Doctrine*³ are, to use her own words, "inextricably interwoven and interblended at every point." "These three" (it is to be noted that the monadic is included), she says, "are the finite aspects or the reflections on the field of Cosmic Illusion of ATMA, the seventh, the ONE REALITY." It can be inferred from this that in each man the monad grows and develops *in conjunction with* the intellectual and the physical. It therefore follows that the physical aspect of ourselves should not be allowed to lag behind or outrun the natural progressive evolution of the other two aspects lest there be a paralysing and stunted or lop-sided effect that may obstruct rather than advance the conjoint effort. Each man has to learn how to tailor his life and effort to suit the season and the hour; and this discipline finds its truth and validity in each of the three broad evolutionary departments of which H.P.B. speaks. A consideration of this raises important questions. For instance, does the man know even the elementary laws (not man-made ones) that rule, dominate and fashion his life as a physical being, as an intellectual being and as a monadic pilgrim? This knowledge is doubtless important because in its absence he may do or fail to do acts which the laws require and in consequence the results would become counter-productive of a harmonious interblending of the three.

The next idea that *The Secret Doctrine* emphasizes, is that "Karma-Nemesis is the creator of nations and mortals, but once created, it is they who make of her either a fury or a rewarding Angel."⁴ According to this statement, each student has to realize that whether he likes it or not, he stands closely knit into the fabric of his nation; and the ups and downs

³I. 181.⁴I. 642.

of the one have their repercussions on the other. A man dwelling in a town has to put up with its poor transport system or with the air pollution that infests it. So with the shortcomings of a nation. The citizen cannot suffer them with patience. He would not be in that nation unless karmically he deserved it. Yet is he always free to make useful contributions towards the improvement of his town and nation. He may not have realized it, but it is one of his duties to do so. For this *Secret Doctrine* statement to have any relevance for the student, he has to grasp the fact that the force and fury of Karma-Nemesis have their origin in laws that are essentially spiritual. It is spiritual, not malevolent forces, that draw men and nations into this or the other catastrophe, the man providing the force that pulls the trigger. National calamities such as wars, pestilences, famines and earthquakes are but effects the responsibility for which must rest with men, families, nations and races. It is men singly or in the mass who invite the ill-effects of their mis-shapen deeds and Karma gives it to them under laws as rigid as those that govern the movement of the stars.

For him who accepts the laws of Karma, the real problem facing him is the finding of the appropriate ways and means by which he can so control his own actions and reactions as not to invite the fury of Karma-Nemesis on himself and others. The search for this is neither difficult nor does it require a long-drawn-out effort. *The Secret Doctrine* gives the answer. It says: "For, the only [the word 'only' is important] decree of Karma . . . is absolute Harmony in the world of matter as it is in the world of Spirit."⁵ This Harmony which must be resident in the Atma has to filter through the monadic and the intellectual to reach and suffuse the physical. If at any of the evolutionary stages the flow of Harmony is arrested, the Higher man will not be able to control the brute energy of the lower and the result will be confrontation and strife. Therefore, as a first step towards the Higher Life, the student has to familiarize himself with those Laws on which harmony depends. Study of these laws over a succession of years and lives assumes an importance not easily perceptible to the men of our age. And yet, it is *only* on a study of these that the salvation of mankind depends.

When the student does take himself in hand seriously, he often finds that he is thwarted, pushed off or diverted by the combined ignorance of the many who question the wisdom of his actions and call his attitude foolish. It is then that he begins to realize the great urgency of propagating

⁵ I. 643.

Theosophy. This aspect of promulgation becomes not only expedient. It becomes a part of his duty. This duty which he voluntarily undertakes requires and calls for a technique not familiar to our modern academicians. No compulsion apparent or hidden can be used. No authority can be invoked and no mental pressures exerted. What he is expected to do is to expound his new-found conviction in terms that will be acceptable to the intellectual and intuitive capacities of his audience. Unless he can through his own zeal arouse to enthusiasm those who listen to him, his efforts though they be brilliant will remain sterile and of no lasting effect.

The next important statement that requires deep thought and a somewhat deeper study, instructs us how to match our behaviour to the vagaries of outside stimuli. *The Secret Doctrine* gives the advice: "With a confident conviction that our neighbours will no more work to hurt us than we would think of harming them, the two-thirds of the World's evil would vanish into thin air."⁶ The statement is challenging. It is in direct contrast to the pronouncements of world powers, belligerent and not so belligerent. Nevertheless, what *The Secret Doctrine* states is but an amplification of a law in Nature and for that reason should become the basis of a code of conduct for nations and men. Viewed from a different angle, the statement avers that the misery and sorrow of our earth stem from the wrong and mischievous conviction that the attitude of our neighbour is suspect and that sooner or later actions will be aimed at inflicting a calculated and deliberate injury on us and on our economy, culture and freedom. Another interpretation of the same statement would be that the seeds of distrust planted in the fertile imagination of men will inevitably blossom forth into poisonous and oft-times lethal growths that account for seventy-five per cent of the prevalent evil. It required two world wars and decimation of entire populations for our learned men to realize that wars have their origin in the minds of men. And yet, not a day passes but it records a violent upheaval between nations or between large ethnic groups who are suspicious of each other's intentions.

What is the rationale behind this sage advice? The statement seems to imply that an uncharitable or antagonistic thought allowed to take root in the mind, captivates that mind. From that time onwards that mind is used by the usurping thought to send forth a steady emission of feelings of suspicion, distrust and animosity. Starting with a vague feeling of unfriendliness, it becomes, if not checked in time, an obsession which clings to the man and goads him to violent outbursts. The obsessed

mind creates an image of its unsuspecting adversary and induces in that adversary sympathetic vibrations of hatred and animosity. The adversary who may be totally unaware of the dangerous feelings directed against him, feels the shafts of those feelings wounding him in the secret parts of his nature. Suddenly, he wakes up to the fact that he is developing an altogether irrational dislike for the man whom he had no reason to detest or distrust. Thus do two minds or sets of minds, probably separated by long distances, become the brooders of evil. Deluded into a false sense of insecurity, they as it were make images and stick pins into them in the best traditions of the black arts. The world of today is passing through each of these phases in a mad rush characteristic of the mentally polluted.

What then is the remedy? *The Secret Doctrine* spells it out and at the same time lays down the disciplines which all Theosophists are expected to follow. It states:

And if a Brotherhood or even a number of Brotherhoods may not be able to prevent nations from occasionally cutting each other's throats — still unity in thought and action, and philosophical research into the mysteries of being, will always prevent some . . . from creating additional causes in a world so full of woe and evil.

FOR who could live or breathe if there were not this Delight of existence as the ether in which we dwell?

From Delight all these beings are born, by Delight they exist and grow, to Delight they return.

—*Taittiriya Upanishad*

PARACELSUS

II

[Reprinted from *The Path*, May 1887.—Eds.]

IT IS a notable fact that the life of Paracelsus formed the theme for the first important work of one of the greatest of modern poets, Robert Browning, in whom the mystical tendency forms one of the strongest characteristics of his thought. *Paracelsus* is a wonderful composition; almost marvellous when it is considered that it was written when the poet was but 28 years old. It exhibits a noble maturity of intellect; in the exalted spirituality of its thought it has never been surpassed by any of the poet's subsequent works. It shows that Browning had a true appreciation of the greatness of the Master. In his note he says that he has taken very trifling liberties with his subject and that "the reader may slip the foregoing scenes between the leaves of any memoir of Paracelsus he pleases, by way of commentary." Browning must have studied the writings of Paracelsus closely, and with his inner vision, for throughout the poem there runs a deep vein of occultism. Although he has followed the historical accounts of the Master, and therefore depicts some blemishes upon his character which could hardly have existed in reality, it seems not unlikely that a mind of the lofty spiritual quality of Browning's may, in its aspiration for true knowledge of his theme, have been impressed by that of Paracelsus himself, or of the one formerly known by that name.

The poem has the form of a drama in five acts. The first act has its scene at Würzburg, where Paracelsus is studying under Tritheim, in 1512, a youth of 19 years. With him is Festus, his boyhood's friend, older than he, and Michal, the betrothed of Festus. The three are together in a garden, and Paracelsus is about to enter upon his long wanderings through the world. To these two he confides the secret of his aspirations. Festus, who has a conservative nature, endeavours to dissuade him from his enterprise, and to pursue knowledge in the ordinary channels. Paracelsus then tells something of the extraordinary nature which has distinguished him from his fellowmen. He says:

From childhood I have been possessed
By a fire — by a true fire, or faint or fierce,
As from without some master, so it seemed,
Repressed or urged its current; this but ill

Expresses what I would convey — but rather
 I will believe an angel ruled me thus,
 Than that my soul's own workings, own high nature,
 So became manifest. I knew not then
 What whispered in the evening, and spoke out
 At midnight. If some mortal, born too soon,
 Were laid away in some great trance — the ages
 Coming and going all the while — till dawned
 His true time's advent, and could then record
 The words they spoke who kept watch by his bed —
 Then I might tell more of the breath so light
 Upon my eyelids, and the fingers warm
 Among my hair. Youth is confused; yet never
 So dull was I but, when that spirit passed,
 I turned to him, scarce consciously, as turns
 A water-snake when fairies cross his sleep.

These words characterize the born Adept and show that the poet really apprehended the nature of the memories of past existences.

Paracelsus confesses how the impulse was ever with him to devote himself to the good of mankind and do some great work in its behalf. In his youth, as he sat under Tritheim's teachings, he felt somehow that a mighty power was brooding, taking shape within him, and this lasted till one night, as he sat revolving it more and more, a still voice from without spoke to him, and then it was that he first discovered his aim's extent,

Which sought to comprehend the works of God,
 And God himself, and all God's intercourse
 With the human mind.

The voice continued:

"There is a way:
 'Tis hard for flesh to tread therein, imbued
 With frailty — hopeless, if indulgence first
 Have ripened inborn germs of sin to strength:
 Wilt thou adventure for my sake and man's,
 Apart from all reward?" And last it breathed —
 "Be happy, my good soldier; I am by thee,
 Be sure, even to the end!" — I answered not,
 Knowing Him. As He spoke, I was endued
 With comprehension and a steadfast will;
 And when He ceased, my brow was sealed His own.

If there took place no special change in me,
 How comes it all things wore a different hue
 Thenceforward? — pregnant with vast consequence,
 Teeming with grand results — loaded with fate?
 So that when quailing at the mighty range
 Of secret truths which yearn for birth, I haste
 To contemplate undazzled some one truth,
 Its bearings and effects alone — at once
 What was a speck expands into a star,
 Asking a life to pass exploring thus,
 Till I near craze.

This voice is that which speaks to all true Mystics. It is the higher Self that speaks; the voice of the Warrior, spoken of in *Light on the Path*, "He is thyself, yet infinitely wiser and stronger than thyself." It may be the voice of a Master, as well. For, at the stage where the bonds of the personality are loosened, the sense of separateness has disappeared, and the higher Self of one is that of all. In this passage, the poet gives beautiful utterance to the fact of the spiritual rebirth, the moment when the lower consciousness becomes united with the higher.

Again, in the following words, the fact of reincarnation is expressed:

At times I almost dream
 I too have spent a life the sages' way,
 And tread once more familiar paths. Perchance
 I perished in an arrogant self-reliance
 Ages ago; and in that act, a prayer
 For one more chance went up so earnest, so
 Instinct with better light let in by death,
 That life was blotted out — not so completely
 But scattered wrecks enough of it remain,
 Dim memories; as now, when seems once more
 The goal in sight again.

This feeling of the truth of reincarnation finds utterance throughout Browning's work. It would be difficult to account for the greatness of a person like Paracelsus except under the theory of pre-existence.

"The dim star that burns within," and the reason for its dimness is gloriously expressed in the following words:

Truth is within ourselves; it takes no rise
 From outward things, whate'er you may believe.
 There is an inmost center in us all,
 Where truth abides in fullness; and around.

Wall upon wall, the gross flesh hems it in,
 This perfect, clear perception — which is truth;
 A baffling and perverting carnal mesh
 Blinds it, and makes all error; and to KNOW
 Rather consists in opening out a way
 Whence the imprisoned splendour may escape,
 Than in effecting entry for a light
 Supposed to be without. Watch narrowly
 The demonstration of a truth, its birth,
 And you trace back the effluence to its spring
 And source within us, where broods radiance vast,
 To be elicited ray by ray, as chance
 Shall favour.

This passage, which is pure mysticism, is too long to quote entire, but the reader will find that it continues in the same exalted strain, showing how the unveiling of the soul, the higher self, may, through various means, be accomplished by what seems chance, or, as it says in *Through the Gates of Gold*, man may “tear the veil that hides him from the eternal at any point where it is easiest for him to do so; the most often this point will be where he least expects to find it.” The poet has seen clearly, with Paracelsus himself, how it is that matter bars in the spirit, and he asks:

May not truth be lodged alike in all,
 The lowest as the highest? Some slight film
 The interposing bar which binds a soul
 And makes the idiot, just as makes the sage
 Some film removed, the happy outlet whence
 Truth issues proudly? See this soul of ours!
 How it strives weakly in the child, is loosed
 In manhood, clogged by sickness, back compelled
 By age and waste, set free at last by death:
 Why is it, flesh enthralls it or enthrones?
 What is this flesh we have to penetrate?
 Oh not alone when life flows still, do truth
 And power emerge, but also when strange chance
 Ruffles its current; in unused conjuncture,
 When sickness breaks the body — hunger, watching,
 Excess or languor — oftenest death's approach —
 Peril, deep joy, or woe.

It was to give clearer hints for this setting free of the soul that *Through the Gates of Gold* was written. In the second act Browning

shows us Paracelsus in Constantinople in the year 1521, where history tells that he was at that time, having spent something like seven years in the Orient, "among the Tartars," a term that permits a wide range for his whereabouts. The Master was accordingly then 28 years old. He is said to have received the "Philosopher's stone," in reality the Great Jewel or Master Stone, described in the beautiful story called "Papyrus" — printed in the *March Path*¹ — from a German Adept, Solomon Trismosinus. Browning, however, lays the scene at "the House of the Greek conjuror." This act, though very beautiful, is of slight value historically, as it was designed to carry out the motive of the poem that Paracelsus failed by seeking to attain his end through knowledge alone, leaving love out of account. In this regard Browning failed to grasp the full greatness of the Master, for Paracelsus could not have held his exalted position in the Rosicrucian brotherhood without being inspired by the most unbounded love for humanity.

To carry out this idea of the necessity of both knowledge and love, Browning introduces an Italian poet, Aprile, who has sought to attain the same end as Paracelsus through love alone. Aprile dies in the arms of Paracelsus and thus teaches him the lesson of love. This passage may be taken as symbolic of the union of the distinctive traits of the individuals and the assimilation of their essences by him who has arrived at the stage of killing out the sense of separateness. This is shown in the words addressed by Paracelsus to Aprile:

Are we not halves of one dissevered world,
Whom this strange chance unites once more? Part? never!
Till thou, the lover, know; and I, the knower,
Love — until both are saved.

In this act are the following glorious words spoken by the dying Aprile:

God is the PERFECT POET,
Who in creation acts his own conceptions.
Shall man refuse to be ought less than God?
Man's weakness is his glory — for the strength
Which raises him to heaven and near God's self,
Came spite of it: God's strength his glory is,
For thence came with our weakness sympathy
Which brought God down to earth, a man like us.

We will pass over the next two acts as comparatively unimportant to

¹ Reprinted in THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1972.—Eds.

our purpose. In the last act we find Paracelsus, in the year 1541, at the age of 48, dying at Salzburg, alone with his faithful friend Festus. He tells Festus of the sensations of his dying moments in a passage in which occur inspired words, depicting the soul in the state of Eternity, where time and space are as nought. He tells Festus, "You are here to be instructed. I will tell God's message"; and he describes his experiences on the threshold of the Eternal as containing his entire past life:

If I select
Some special epoch from the crowd, 'tis but
To will and straight the rest dissolve away,
And only that particular state is present,
With all its long-forgotten circumstance
Distinct and vivid as at first — myself
A careless looker-on, and nothing more!
Indifferent and amused, but nothing more!
And this is death: I understand it all.
New being waits me; new perceptions must
Be born in me before I plunge therein;
Which last is Death's affair, and while I speak,
Minute by minute he is filling me
With power; and while my foot is on the threshold
Of boundless life — the doors unopened yet,
All preparations not complete within —
I turn new knowledge upon old events,
And the effect is — But I must not tell;
It is not lawful.

What follows may be taken, perhaps, in a sense, for a mystic initiation. Mustering superhuman strength Paracelsus stands upon his couch, dons his scarlet cloak lined with fur, puts his chain around his neck, his signet ring is on his finger, and last he takes his good sword, his trusty Azoth, in his grasp for the last time, and says:

This couch shall be my throne: I bid these walls
Be consecrate; this wretched cell become
A shrine, for here God speaks to men through me.

Then he tells the story of his birth to power, and of the wisdom he has attained. He tells how

I stood at first where all aspire at last
To stand; the secret of the world was mine.
I knew, I felt, (perception unexpressed,

Uncomprehended by our narrow thought,
 But somehow felt and known in every shift
 And change in the spirit — nay, in every pore
 Of the body, even) — what God is, what we are,
 What life is — how God tastes an infinite joy
 In infinite ways — one everlasting bliss,
 From whom all being emanates, all power
 Proceeds, in whom is life, forevermore,
 Yet whom existence in its lowest form
 Includes.

It is a long address, and so full of the most spiritual thought that it seems a pity space will not allow it to be quoted entire. There is one passage which corresponds very closely to a passage in Hartmann's work, from one of Paracelsus's writings, describing the union in man of the attributes of this sphere of life which had, here and there

Been scattered o'er the visible world before,
 Asking to be combined — dim fragments meant
 To be united in some wondrous whole —
 Imperfect qualities throughout creation,
 Suggesting some one creature yet to make —
 Some point where all those scattered rays should meet
 Convergent in the faculties of man.

This point of convergence is spoken of in *Through the Gates of Gold* as "that primeval place which is the only throne of God — that place whence forms of life emerge and to which they return. That place is the central point of existence, where there is a permanent spot of life as there is in the midst of the heart of man."

Again we see the same subject treated in the closing part of the *Gates of Gold*, the mighty results to be attained through the subjugation of the animal nature in man to the godly nature, looked forward to by Paracelsus, as Browning makes him speak, with prophetic vision, in the following words:

But when full roused, each giant limb awake,
 Each sinew strung, the great heart pulsing fast,
 He shall start up and stand on his own earth,
 And so begin his long triumphant march,
 And date his being thence — thus wholly roused,
 What he achieves shall be set down to him.
 When all the race is perfected alike
 As Man, that is; all tended to mankind,

And, man produced, all has its end thus far;
 But in completed man begins anew
 A tendency to God.

And it is given significantly, as a trait of completed man, that such

Outgrow all

The narrow creeds of right and wrong, which fade
 Before the unmeasured thirst for good; while peace
 Rises within them ever more and more.
 Such men are even now upon the earth,
 Serene amid the half-formed creatures round,
 Who should be saved by them and joined with them.

These words of Paracelsus are almost the last in the poem:

As yet men cannot do without contempt;
 'Tis for their good, and therefore fit awhile
 That they reject the weak, and scorn the false,
 Rather than praise the strong and true, in me.
 But after, they will know me! If I stoop
 Into a dark tremendous sea of cloud,
 It is but for a time; I press God's lamp
 Close to my breast — its splendour, soon or late,
 Will pierce the gloom: I shall emerge one day!

We believe that the time is not far distant when he will be understood, will be known, and shall emerge.

—S. B.

UNIVERSAL Harmony tends ever to resume its original position like a bough which, bent down too forcibly, rebounds with corresponding vigour.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THE GREAT HERESY

NOT VERY LONG AGO spiritual life was identified in the West with the monastic life, and in the East with idleness, masquerading as asceticism. Other-worldliness meant the vision of a heaven distinct from earth where God existed for the Christian, and *Nirvana-Moksha* for the Easterner. Such was the objective, and traditional belief was the way to it. As a natural concomitant it was held that only the "chosen of God" could know God, or that "the highest caste" alone could realize Atma, Spirit. In the case of the West, all others were damned unless they came into line and acknowledged the supremacy of the Church, while in the East men had to wait until Karma made it possible for them to be born into the caste which alone could truly understand holy writ and practise its doctrines.

For long centuries these views held sway. Let a grateful word be recorded to the memory of those few heroes who in the face of persecution kept the Light of Pure Reason burning. Preaching in secrecy to ready listeners and proclaiming publicly their message whenever opportunity presented itself, these, fortune's favoured soldiers, fought the devil of separateness — blind belief and Luciferian pride. To them, among other potent forces, we owe the breakdown of the falsehood that spiritual life is for the monk, the *vairagi*, and the dervish alone.

We are, however, still in a transition stage. Only one principal cause of ignorance on the subject has been removed — at least for the educated. The heresy of separateness is the original sin which reproduces itself in countless ways. And so we find humanity still surrounded on all sides by this false notion: The worldly man with his cares, the merchant dealing with lucre that is too often filthy, the householder attached to parents, partner and progeny, the artist engrossed in his own creations, the individual absorbed in his profession, craft or even scientific research — all such as have not set themselves apart from the world, the flesh and the devil, cannot possibly live the life of the soul. Although religious and creedal limitations have broken down, and although it is recognized theoretically that any soul anywhere can aspire to spiritual realization and succeed, it is still a general working belief that soul-life has no intimate connection with this world, and therefore it is not for ordinary mortals to tread the strait path and the narrow way.

In this era of specialists it is taken for granted that doctors of the soul form a distinct class, to whom sick souls must repair, even as a

neurasthenic to a psychiatrist. Even among those familiar with the doctrines of Theosophy there are some who hold that the higher soul-life is for the particular few alone and not for the masses for whom religious creeds suffice. Such people have not recognized that in the East and West alike religious corruption is rampant and is the breeder of two-thirds of the evil from which our civilization suffers.

Fortunately the breakdown of such a separative and narrow view is imminent because of the emergence of the idea that a man desirous of living the inner life of the soul need not give up his vocation, should not run away from his duties. It is even granted that an aspirant for soul-illumination will have to leave behind the hard and binding narrowness of *math* and church. Many advanced thinkers and friends of humanity say that soul-life consists in a particular attitude to the world, its ways and vocations, and that this attitude is an inner attitude. Soul-life is a matter of individual effort for which religions and churches are not only unnecessary but are even positive hindrances. Any daring soul can start on the journey.

So far so good. But the original sin has reproduced itself in still another form of separateness. An inner and psychological division of the individual is being made — some emphasize the supremacy of the will to do, others of thought, still others of feeling, as a means of soul-expansion. Confusion and failure result, for Life is an indivisible whole and can only be understood, conquered and absorbed by the whole man, not by any one part or combination of several parts of him.

Theosophy deals with the whole man, defining him as the microcosm, a miniature but an *exact* copy of the great cosmos. There is not a force in nature which is absent in man: every power and potency of matter is inherent in the human body; every law in nature works as an energy in human intellect, thus enabling it to master all natural processes, visible and invisible; universal and impartite Spirit, one with the human being, is emptying Itself in him in the long course of evolution. The Perfect Man, the Initiate, the Mahatma, is one in whom the ocean of life and light has already emptied itself. He is like unto a translucent lake in which the mighty sun casts a perfect reflection.

Unless this ancient view of man as the highest product of evolution is recognized; unless this ideal that each human soul can become not only God-like, but God, is admitted; unless as a resultant from this, *knowledge* is sought as to how one can perceive these facts, practise their lessons and gain first-hand experience like unto those who have preceded

us in the quest — the living of the higher life will remain a fitful adventure full of risks, dangers and failures.

To overcome the sin of separateness between branches of knowledge, the sin which causes religious bigotries, class wars, nationalistic enmities, the sin which started in the human kingdom with the fall of the angels (not a Christian but a universal myth) — to overcome this, man must learn of the Dual Unity. First, there is the unity subsisting within himself, a wholly complete copy of the great Nature; and second, the unity subsisting between himself and the Great Self which is Nature.

Not by devotion alone, not by mind alone, not by sacrificial works alone, but by the effort of the whole man to unfold all his latent powers and to perfect all those which have become partially patent — that is the only correct method to pursue in the spiritual life, because it deals with the complete man. That leads to the goal where truth is fully known; where beauty completely expresses itself; where wisdom radiates forth on all sides; where the glory of the second birth is a realization.

Man and the Universe are one. As long as this basic truth is not made the starting point of the inner life and held to all through the journey, the dire heresy of separateness will assail the aspirant, and in some shape or form will cause his fall.

What can give us the courage and sure confidence to proceed with this stupendous journey of the Soul? The knowledge that in the past souls have attained to the supreme height, and that what men have done, that men can do.

In Brahma-Vidya, Gnosis, Theosophy, is to be found the record of evolution and experience. Such a record, immemorial, constant and consistent, forms the Book of Nature, translated in every era and civilization by illumined minds for the helping of human individuals. Look for the synthesis of science, religion, and philosophy which completely explains the whole of man and the whole of Nature, and the first correct step in Soul-Life will have been taken.

If you do not hope, you will not find what is beyond your hopes.

—CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA

DUTY

THE WORD "Duty" sounds simple and insignificant to most people. It is a much misunderstood word which has come to mean something one has to do in the conditions and circumstances in which one finds oneself, and is very often related to drudgery, something irksome, to be avoided if possible.

But when duty is properly understood as *Dharma*, it assumes a new meaning and significance, with far-reaching implications and applications. W. Q. Judge calls it "the royal talisman." Duty is Selflessness. "Duty persistently followed is the highest yoga," he says, "and is better than mantrams or any posture, or any other thing. If you can do no more than duty it will bring you to the goal."

We must therefore understand what our duty is as human beings, divine and immortal in our essential nature, mortal and fallible in our lower personal nature. As an ancient scripture puts it: "Of all the duties the principal one is to acquire the knowledge of the Supreme Soul (the Spirit); it is the first of all sciences, for it alone confers on man immortality."

The goal of evolution, the aim of our long pilgrimage in this school of earth, is to live a conscious existence in Spirit; to gain direct knowledge or spiritual perception of the Higher Self in us as a ray of the Supreme Spirit, and to think and act from that basis.

The first step in this direction is to turn within and practise meditation, to seek communion with the inmost Self, so that we may centre ourselves in the higher aspect of our being, not only at the time of meditation but throughout the day. Mr. Judge gives us practical advice: "Every day and as often as you can, and on going to sleep and as you wake, think, think, think on the truth that you are not body, brain, or astral man, but that you are THAT, and 'THAT' is the Supreme Soul."

Simultaneously with this practice we must direct our attention to purification and control of the lower self. For, "the man who has not first turned aside from his wickedness, who is not calm and subdued or whose mind is not at rest, he can never obtain the Self even by knowledge." Also, as H.P.B. says in *The Key to Theosophy*, the duty of a Theosophist to himself is "to control and conquer, *through the Higher, the lower self*. To purify himself inwardly and morally; to fear no one, and nought, save the tribunal of his own conscience. Never to do a thing by halves; *i.e.*, if he thinks it the right thing to do, let him do it openly

and boldly, and if wrong, never touch it at all.”

The whole philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* revolves round this great concept of duty. There are people in the world who, knowing the working of the law of cause and effect, action and reaction, believe that by completely abstaining from action they can escape from its effects or reactions. Therefore they run away from the world. But constituted as we are, it is not possible to abandon action; act we must, because it is our duty, it is necessary. Therefore Sri Krishna advises Arjuna to engage in necessary action, but from a sense of duty alone, renouncing the fruit of action. “Deeds of sacrifice, of mortification, and of charity are not to be abandoned, for they are proper to be performed, and are the purifiers of the wise.” Sri Krishna affirms that one’s own duty if properly performed will ultimately lead to perfection and liberate one from the bondage of birth and death. In the ninth chapter Sri Krishna says, “Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou sacrificest, whatever thou givest, whatever mortification thou performest, commit each unto me.” A devout Muslim would say “*Bismillah*” (meaning, “in the name of God”) at mealtime or while doing any action. This is the same idea as in the *Gita* teaching, which recommends doing every action with the Divine in view, so that drudgery becomes divine, work becomes worship.

Defining duty in *The Key to Theosophy*, H.P.B. says: “Duty is that which *is due* to Humanity, to our fellow-men, neighbours, family, and especially that which we owe to all those who are poorer and more helpless than we are ourselves. This is a debt which, if left unpaid during life, leaves us spiritually insolvent and moral bankrupts in our next incarnation. Theosophy is the quintessence of *duty*.”

Here duty is given a wider meaning. This arouses the individual to his tremendous responsibilities, changes his whole outlook on life and gives him a higher and nobler aim.

Theosophy being the Science of Life and the Art of Living, is essentially practical and can be applied in daily living. As H.P.B. says, “What is required is action, enforced action instead of mere intention and talk.” She further states: “No Theosophist has the right to this name, unless he is thoroughly imbued with the correctness of Carlyle’s truism: ‘The end of man is an *action* and not a *thought*, though it were the noblest’ — and unless he sets and models his daily life upon this truth.”

Theosophy is the philosophy of common sense. We can prevent much of the avoidable suffering, whether it is physical illness or mental worry or moral lapse, if only we apply the philosophy. We cannot repeat too

often that Theosophy will be judged by what we do or fail to do; by our behaviour, our treatment of others, by the life that we live. What is needed is action based on love and trust and friendship. A great Sufi thinker has pointed out: "The one who has learned friendship has learned religion. The one who has learned friendship has attained spiritual knowledge. The one who has learned friendship need learn very little else."

We can readily understand that one does not have to do something extraordinary, something big, but has to fulfil the small, plain duties of life. It is in the discharge of such duties that real growth and progress takes place. As stated by one of the Great Mahatmas in writing to a chela: "Does it seem to you a small thing that the past year has been spent only in your 'family duties'? Nay, but what better cause for reward, what better discipline, than the daily and hourly performance of duty? Believe me, my 'pupil,' the man or woman who is placed by Karma in the midst of small plain duties and sacrifices and loving-kindnesses, will through these faithfully fulfilled rise to the larger measure of Duty, Sacrifice and Charity to all Humanity."

In answer to a question, "What do you consider as due to humanity at large?" H.P.B. says: "Full recognition of equal rights and privileges for all, and without distinction of race, colour, social position, or birth." Here is a statement which contains the solution to many a burning problem we are facing in the world today. Political, social, economic crises are all of our own making, because there are a handful of people who want to consolidate their wealth, power and position at the expense of and by exploiting the weaker sections of society.

It is not by renouncing the outer world but by living theosophically in it that one gains "a truer realization of the Self, a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood."

Speaking about the fulfilment of our higher Duty, Mr. Judge writes: "There is, first, our own work, in and on ourselves, each one. That has for its object the enlightenment of oneself for the good of others. If that is pursued selfishly some enlightenment comes, but not the amount needed for the whole work. We have to watch ourselves so as to make of each a centre from which, in our measure, may flow out the potentialities for good that from the adept come in large and affluent streams."

From what we have considered we can see that the simple-sounding word "Duty" is not complete without the four-word combination: Duty-Determination-Discipline-Dedication.

RANDOM NOTES FROM "THE THEOSOPHIST"

SPIRITUALISM AND THEOSOPHY (Contd.)

[Under the title "A Novel View of the Theosophists" H.P.B. quoted some extracts from an article by the editor of a Spiritualistic weekly and commented:]

The man must be surely dreaming when he says that we deny our belief in Spiritualism, so called, or rather its phenomena. No one ever denied the genuineness of mediumistic manifestations. But we *do* maintain that most of the physical phenomena attributed to "human spirits" by Spiritualists, are not due to the agency of the latter, but to Forces yet undiscovered. Entirely misunderstanding the teachings of Theosophy, he says: "The only kind of spirits that these weak persons will have anything to do with, are the spirits that had their origin in fire, air, earth and water, and it is in them that these educated persons live and have their being." Just so; though we neither *live* nor "have our being" in them. But suppose that champion of exposed mediums whom we hold to be as honest and sincere as he is credulous and abusive — and that is no mean compliment — before he abuses, would go first to the trouble of learning what the theosophists *do* mean by "elemental spirits." No man who calls alcohol "spirit" of wine would think for a moment that there was a spiritual being at the bottom of the bottle. If they *believe*, it is because they *know*. And what they know is that the most wonderful physical phenomena ever dreamt of by Spiritualists, and attributed by them to the spirits of the dead, can take place through correlations of Forces yet undiscovered, hence unexplained by modern science. If our critic's brain can be impressed with nothing save fraudulent mediums' phosphoric bottle and under-clothing rolled into a turban made to represent "spirit-lights," and Asiatic "spirits" — ours cannot. Were his sentence rewritten and made to say that "the only kind of spirits that they (the Theosophists) will believe in, are the mysterious and occult correlations that have their origin in fire, air, earth and water," *i.e.*, in nature, then would a part, at least, of the truth be told. It is because some of us were *forced* by the evidence of facts of many years' standing to believe in the occurrence of phenomena, and yet disbelieved in the devil, their whole being revolting against the alternative of crediting the spirits of the dead with such acts — most of them idiotic — that they devoted themselves to the task of finding out what was the real cause of these phenomena, and succeeded. We venture, moreover, to say that

even belief, pure and simple, in fairies, goblins, salamanders and the spirits of nature, in all its gross and dead-letter anthropomorphism is no more foolish, on the whole, than belief in the constant presence and agency of human souls in every event of our lives — from the most important down to the most trifling — aye, from the most transcendental apparition of those we loved, whether it be in a dream or a vision, down to the wagging of a dog's tail behind a window curtain, which was once solemnly affirmed in our own presence by an enthusiastic spiritualist to be "spirit rappings." And if, not only "educated persons" but the most eminent and highly learned men believe in the popular, everyday spiritualism — then why should not even educated theosophists believe in vulgar and misunderstood Kabalism, in fairies, goblins and the like? But the latter do nothing of the kind. What they strive after is, to winnow good grain from chaff, to make of spiritualism a progressive science based upon experiment and research, instead of allowing the finger of scorn to be pointed at it owing to the idiotic zeal of some fanatics.

(September 1881)

[The following are extracts from an article "Is It Idle to Argue Further?" answering some criticism by "M.A. (Oxon)" in the journal *Light*.]

What we have and do maintain is that all of the so-called "*physical phenomena*," and the "*materializations*" especially, are produced by something, to which we refuse the name of "*Spirit*." In the words of the President of our Berhampore Branch,¹ "we Hindus" (and along with them go the European disciples of Eastern philosophy) "are trying to *spiritualize* our grosser material *selves* — while the American and European Spiritualists are endeavouring in their séance-rooms to *materialize* Spirits." These words of wisdom well show the opposite tendencies of the Eastern and the Western minds: namely, that while the former are trying to purify *matter*, the latter do their best to degrade *Spirit*. Therefore what we say is, that 99 times out of 100, "*materializations*" so-called, when *genuine* (and wheher they be partial or complete) are produced by what we call "*shells*," and occasionally perhaps by the living medium's *astral* body — but certainly *never* in our humble opinion, by the "*disembodied*" Spirits themselves. . . .

As a rule — to which the rare exceptions but confirm it the more —

¹ Babu Nobin Krishna Banerjee, President of the Adhi Bhoutic Bhratru Theosophical Society.

we find that the so-called "disembodied spirits," instead of having become the wiser for being rid of the physiological impediments and the restraints of their gross material senses, would seem to have become far more stupid, far less perspicacious and, in every respect, worse than they were during their earthly life. Secondly, we have to take note of the frequent contradictions, and absurd blunders; of the false information offered, and the remarkable vulgarity and commonplace exhibited during their interviews with mortals — in materializing *séances* their oral utterances being invariably vulgar commonplace, and their inspirational speeches or second-hand communication through trance and other mediums — frequently so. Adding to this the undeniable fact which shows their teachings reflecting, *most faithfully* the special creed, views, and thoughts of the sensitive or medium used by them, or of a sitter or sitters, we have already sufficient proof to show that our theory that they are "shells" and no disembodied spirits at all, is far more logical and "scientific" than that of the Spiritualists.² Speaking here in general, we need not take into consideration exceptional cases, instances of undeniable spiritual identity with which we are sure to find our arguments met by our spiritual opponents. No one ever thought of calling "Imperator+" a "shell"; but then the latter, whether a living or a disembodied spirit, neither materializes himself *objectively*, nor is it yet proved to the satisfaction of anyone except M.A. (Oxon) himself that "he" *descends* to the medium, instead of the spirit of the latter *ascending* to meet his instructor.

Thus, we maintain that "Spirits" are no more what they claim to be, than the chrysalis shell is the butterfly which left it. That their personations of various individuals, whom they sometimes represent, are mostly due to the accidental contact of an "Elementary" or *eidolon* (attracted by the medium and the intense magnetic desire of the circle present) with the personal aura of that or another individual. The thoughts of the latter, the various acts and scenes in his past life, the familiar and beloved faces of his departed ones, are then all drawn out of the all-containing depths of the Astral Light and utilized. At times this is done successfully, but

² We will not go to the trouble of showing how much or rather how little of "scientific method" is to be generally found in *The Spiritualist*. But while speaking of science and its methods, we may simply remark that though both our theories (theosophical and spiritualistic) are sure to be viewed by the men of science as "speculation-spinning" and metaphysical windmills, yet the hypotheses of Spiritualists—as broadly accepted and whether "scientifically" or unscientifically stated—are certain to be pronounced by the majority of men of real science, not merely unscientific, but very unphilosophical, and illogical as well.

frequently the thing proves a total failure. Only while the former are, as a rule, recorded, the mention of the latter is tacitly avoided — no spiritualistic journal having ever been edited with that special view. So much for materialization and physical phenomena. As for the rest, we are at one with the Spiritualists with but slight variances, more of form than of substance.

(January 1882)

[The following is from a note appended by H.P.B. to some correspondence dealing with alleged misrepresentation of the character of the medium George Spriggs on the part of *The Theosophist*.]

We are delighted to learn, and quite ready to believe, that Mr. Spriggs is a most honest gentleman, worthy of the strongest encomiums. Our strictures were applicable to a large class of mediums who have for years been inflicting upon the world “trance” addresses, articles, pamphlets, books, and schemes of social reform, pretending to emanate from the great dead. Modern Spiritualism is a solemn and a mighty question, an influence which has now permeated the thought of our age, a problem which at no previous time during the past thirty-five years has occupied more able minds than at the present hour. It is, however, weighted down with a mass of false appearances and untenable hypotheses which bring reproach upon it, but which will in time, we believe, yield to more correct views of its phenomena as Asiatic philosophy, and the fruits of occult research upon which it rests, become better known. Among mediums who have uttered alleged communications from the great departed there are two classes, of whom one are deceiving, the other deceived. If there be a third class of mediums who have in fact received their inspiration from great spirits — the group is very small, we are persuaded, in comparison with what the friends of mediums claim. Our Theosophical doctrine is that one is never safe in ascribing mediumistic communications to any foreign source until the wonderful intrinsic capabilities of the human mind incarnate have all been taken into account.

(July 1883)

[Dr. C. W. Rohner, of Benalla, Australia, contributed some facts about people having been found uninjured after falling out of fast-moving trains, or having other “miraculous” escapes from impending dangers. He also cited some cases of unconscious prevision of accidents and illustrated this by two occurrences out of his own life. To this H.P.B. added the following note.]

Let us, for a moment, grant that the facts given above by the estimable doctor point to something that is neither blind chance nor miracle: what are the other explanations that could be suggested? No other possible but the following: it is either "Spirit Guardianship," or — *Divine Providence*. This — to the Spiritualists and believers in a personal God — sets the problem at rest. But how about the dissatisfaction of those who cannot be brought to believe in either the spirits of the dead as concerned with our earthly events, nor in a conscious, personal deity, a telescopic enlargement — true, magnifying millions of times — still but an enlargement of the human *infinitesimal infusoria*? Truth to be heard and get itself recognized as one, must be a self-evident truth to all, not merely to a fraction of humanity. It must satisfy one and all, answer and cover every objection, explain and make away with every hazy spot on its face, destroy every objection placed on its path. And if events of the nature of those given by Dr. Rohner are to be attributed to the protection and guardianship of "Spirit," why is it, that to every such *one* case of *miraculous* escape, there are 10,000 cases where human beings are left to perish brutally and stupidly without any seeming fault on their part, their death being often the starting point of the most disastrous subsequent results, and this with no providence, no spirit interfering to stop the merciless hand of blind fate? Are we to believe that "the sleeping child" and the "miner" were two very important units in humanity, while the many hundreds of unfortunate children who perished a few months ago at Sunderland during the terrible catastrophe in the theatre, and the *hundreds of thousands of human* beings — victims of last year's earthquakes — were useless dross, with no "spirit hand" to protect them? It is pure sentimentality alone, with selfish pride and human conceit to help it, that can evolve such theories to account for every exceptional occurrence.

Karma, and our inner, unconscious (so far as our physical senses go) prevision can alone explain such cases of unexpected escapes. If Dr. Rohner knows of children who fell out of trains and cars running "at the rate of forty miles an hour," who were neither killed nor hurt, the writer knows of two lap dogs who madly chasing each other fell from the terrace of a house over sixty feet high and, with the exception of a stiffness of a few hours duration in their limbs, came to no other grief. And, we have seen but the other day, a young squirrel falling out of its nest, a voracious crow pouncing upon it and actually seizing it, when suddenly as though struck with some thought the hungry carrion-eater

dropped it out of its mouth, flew lazily away, and perching upon a neighbouring branch, gave the mother-squirrel the time to rescue her little one. Had these dogs and squirrel also "guardian-spirits" to protect them, or was it due to *chance* — a word by the bye, pronounced by many, understood by very, very few.

(February 1884)

[H.P.B. translated an extract from the *Diocesan Vyedomosty* of Mohilev (Russia), in which the Venerable Platon, one of the three Metropolitans of the Russian Empire, described a personal experience of what the Spiritualists would call a "spirit visit." He concluded his account by saying, "All this proves to us undeniably the existence of some mysterious connection between us and the souls of the departed." On this H.P.B. made the following comment.]

Quite so, and the word "undeniably" is here properly used. That such a connection exists was proven to the world by thousands upon thousands of well-authenticated cases of the apparitions of the dead making themselves visible to the living. But it can take place only immediately, or very soon, after the separation of the surviving principles from the body. Such visions, when they take place, are serious and full of solemnity to the living. The "Spirit" — a real *Spirit* in such cases, fulfils the last desire of the soul, some praiseworthy craving, beneficent to the survivor in every case, if not to the departed entity. But one has yet to learn that one of such phantoms has ever shouted, "Good evening to you Mr. So and So," performed Japanese juggling feats with flying musical boxes and rapped Yankee doodle on a guitar *à la* "John King" — or any other like worthy of the "Summer Land."

(May 1884)

THE hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.

—ERIC HOFFER

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

What do modern physics and mysticism have in common? Very little, it would appear on the surface, but physicists themselves are now admitting that there are big breakthroughs coming. As observed by a group of scientists at Berkeley, U.S.A., "We started out with very hard science and wandered into philosophy."

Newsweek for August 13 reports on the trend of physics towards mysticism:

Mystics dismiss the products of the intellect as illusions to overcome on the introspective path to personal "enlightenment." Physicists, on the other hand, create mathematical models to explain — and control — the forces of nature. But as modern physicists probe the atom and the ultimate nature of the universe, their conclusions increasingly resemble mystical teachings. And now a new school of theoretical physicists, many based at the University of California's Lawrence Berkeley Laboratory, is using mystical modes of thought to create a unified philosophy of how the universe works. . . .

Already, modern physicists have embraced a concept of duality remarkably similar to the paradoxes of Eastern philosophies. For example, subatomic experiments have shown that mass and energy, once considered separate entities, are actually interchangeable. Thus, when two particles collide they can disappear in a burst of energy; conversely, scientists can use a beam of energy, like an X-ray, to produce thousands of particles. Similarly, light, which was thought to be either particles or waves, is now seen to be both at once.

Many physicists, of course, stoutly reject the meddling of hard science with mysticism. With last year's Nobel Prize winner Arno Penzias, they maintain they are "happily too busy *doing* science to have time to worry about philosophizing about it." Nonetheless . . . "there really is a new world view emerging," insists Esalen's Michael Murphy, who first brought mystics and physicists together in 1976. "Here were physicists, the high priests of science, saying these really far-out things — that space curves, that energy and mass are the same thing. There was a sense that the physicists were revealing a world that corresponds with the mystical vision." . . .

To laymen, the descriptions of reality in modern physics and mystical experience do indeed resemble each other. In both per-

spectives, time, space and causality, individual people, objects and events, dissolve into a single continuum or "eternal now," in which everything is part of all else. . . .

The new physicists are intrigued by the ways in which ancient mystical teachings seem to anticipate some modern scientific theories. According to Einstein's theory of relativity, says Berkeley physicist Henry Stapp, the world appears "not as a structure built out of independently existing, unanalyzable entities, but rather as a web of relationships among elements whose meanings arise entirely from their relationship to the whole." Similarly, quantum mechanics can lead to the view that physical reality is essentially nonsubstantial — that fields or relationships alone are real. "The new physics proves that what we call objects and events are really patterns in a cosmic process," says Fritjof Capra, a researcher in high-energy physics. "The Eastern mystics know that. They call the separation of objects *maya*, an illusion which comes from our categorizing intellect." . . .

To be sure, the new physicists are not the first scientists to recognize similarities between modern physics and Eastern mysticism. Sir Arthur Eddington, the renowned British astronomer, proclaimed in Buddhistlike fashion that "the stuff of the world is mind-stuff." . . .

Despite criticism, the movement has developed a heady sense of daring plus the taste of eventual triumph. "Theories that would have been considered far out a few years ago are now widely discussed," insists physicist Finkelstein. "We are about to undergo revisions of the concepts of space and time more drastic than those engendered by relativity and quantum physics." . . .

In sum, the new physicists seem to be searching for the skeleton key to the universe — and an appropriate philosophical chain to hang it on.

Albert Einstein once remarked: "The most beautiful and most profound emotion one can experience is the sensation of the mystical. It is the source of all true science."

Theodore Roszak writes of the "Person-Planet Connection in the January-February issue of *Resurgence*, "a voice of new civilization, a journal of new politics, concerned with small nations, small communities, decentralization and ethnic cultures . . . a philosophical, ecological and spiritual forum." The author urges for a "rising sense of personhood" that is wholly incompatible with the mass processing of superscale systems.

"In asserting the human scale we subvert the regime of bigness. In subverting bigness, we save the planet." The author writes:

However we choose to phrase the matter, the strategy of survival is grounded in one simple fact of social life. Both the person and the planet are threatened by the same enemy: *the bigness of things*. The bigness of industrial structures, world markets, financial networks, mass political organization, military establishments, cities, public and private bureaucracies. . . .

It takes our peculiar modern experience with urban-industrial systems to learn this lesson. We now see that, whatever our goal (progress, economic abundance, justice, revolution), vastness of scale can defeat our noblest intentions. The bigness of economic and political structures, *whether under private or socialized auspices*, estranges person from person, private conscience from public responsibility. It dulls our moral sensitivities, forcing us toward impersonal, hierarchical, domineering conduct. Only in this age of Frankensteinian science and technology have we come to see that human beings can create systems that do not understand human beings, and which will not serve their purposes. . . .

We need a political ethic which is not bound to the alienated identities of individualism or collectivism. And this, I believe, is the sense of identity that the Earth brings us now as an ecological corrective: the sense of ourselves as persons, each unique, radically original, possessed of an unpredictable destiny. . . .

No one can say in any detail what kind of world comes of such a shameless celebration of the self. . . . Only of this much am I certain: we are at a juncture in history where personal psychology and planetary ecology — the world of nature Out There and the universe of consciousness In Here — join forces to subvert the urban-industrial dominance. . . .

From the viewpoint of conventional politics, situational networks are a hopeless obstacle to efficient organization; they do not produce serviceable cadres. But I think these profoundly personalistic groupings are part of a larger, unprecedented political task. Through their defiant celebration of diversity, a powerful new ethical principle enters our lives: *that all people are born to be persons, and that persons come first* before all collective fictions, even those of revolutionary movements. And is this not exactly what the planet herself now requires of us? An identity that resists massification, a politics that draws us joyfully toward variety and decentralism?

It is tempting at this point to translate the person/planet con-

nection into the familiar slogan "small is beautiful," since smallness clearly plays a central role in this transformation. But *unless small means personal, unless it embraces the ethos of self-discovery*, it will be no solution to our problem. This is why the search for humanly scaled institutions cannot be construed as "turning back the clock."...

After our long, strenuous industrial adventure, we are being summoned back along new paths to a vital reciprocity with the Earth who mothered us into our strange human vocation. In a sense that blends myth and science, fact and feeling, the Great Goddess is indeed returning. But she returns to us by way of the deep self, out of the underworld of the troubled psyche. And her name this time is *our* name — yours, mine, his, hers, all our names, and for each of us the one name we have freely chosen for ourselves.

To many, "cancer" means terminal illness and a protracted, painful death, with no hope of escaping either the disease or its treatment. In an article reprinted from the *New England Journal of Medicine in Science Digest* for June 1979, Neil Fiore, Ph.D., a psychologist at the Counseling Center of the University of California at Berkeley, U.S.A., asserts that mental image of the disease and of one's self can influence the outcome, and offers guidelines to enlist mind and body in therapy. Dr. Fiore writes of his own experience with cancer and how his psychological need to return to health and strength unimpeded by drugs helped him in his recovery. His is not the only or first call for patient responsibility and change in life-style, yet how often has it remained unheeded!

Fighting cancer [he writes] must come to mean more than excising a tumour and focusing the latest weapons on the metastases. It must include a recognition, by both the medical professionals and the patient, that the patient's mind and body are powerful factors in this fight. Failure to use these potential allies can mean losing them to the "enemy" through patient resistance to treatment, depression, and loss of will to live. Effective cancer therapy must treat the healthy portion of the patient's body and psyche as well as combat the diseased cells.

In his book, *Living With Cancer*, Dr. Ernest Rosenbaum says that "cancer is not a single disease, and how well a patient lives will be determined by the kind of cancer he has as well as his particular psychological makeup and his body's response to

treatment." It is my belief that as physicians necessarily become increasingly specialized, ancillary personnel and team approaches must be used to offer patients comprehensive therapy. . . . These programs offer patients an opportunity to participate actively in their own recovery, to take responsibility for their own health care, and to regain a sense of control over their bodies. Such programs clearly communicate to patients that they need not act like helpless victims. . . .

There is increasing evidence that feelings of helplessness and depression are involved in the cause of cancer. These feelings are likely to be exacerbated by standard cancer therapy and the traditionally passive patient role. . . .

Dr. M. E. Seligman, in his book, *Helplessness: On Depression, Development, and Death*, states, "Learned helplessness is caused by learning that responding is independent of reinforcement." . . . He goes on to say that depression is caused by the belief that one's actions are futile. In Dr. Seligman's view, "the central goal in successful therapy [psychotherapy] should be to have the patient come to believe that his responses produce the gratification he desires — that he is, in short, an effective human being." . . .

Instead of keeping patients compliant and sedated, therapists should be encouraging exuberance, independence, and individual responsibility. Vivacity and direct communication of complaints and fears can be healthy signs that the patient is fighting and wants to get better. . . .

It is my belief that patients with cancer, like those with heart disease, must change their behaviour and life-styles to achieve complete health. I am suggesting that in all likelihood most such patients come from a life-style that has been extremely stressful or one in which their mechanisms for coping with stress have been inadequate and inefficient. Often, however, patients would rather have the doctor cut out or deaden the pain resulting from a stressful life than to change old habits. Patients thereby remove the annoying messenger from their bodies that tells them to slow down and avoid excesses.

Under the title "The 'Psychic Explosion' — Its Current Dangers," *Rosicrucian Digest* (U.S.A.) for May 1979 describes the state of ambivalence existing in the current world of psychic phenomena:

On the one hand there are the trained liberal minds — physicians, psychologists, biologists, psychiatrists, students of mysti-

cism and philosophy. These individuals do not consider psychic phenomena as that which transcends natural law, or that it is a realm of the supernatural. They contend that there is no phenomenon which lies beyond, or which is separate from, the whole spectrum of cosmic reality and law. Therefore, from this premise, they believe that the phenomena can be reduced empirically, that is, to established recognizable laws of nature. . . .

The *other side* of this ambivalence is very disturbing during this psychic explosion because of the confusion it creates by the spread of misconceptions and related commercialism. There are many persons who are not interested in how phenomena occur, but merely in a bombastic and spectacular presentation which purports to be authentic. For these curious and credulous persons many so-called "churches" have been established. Under the guise of religion, they can make any claims that they wish, no matter how unsubstantiated, with impunity. . . . They claim in their literature to have become, through their "psychic development," a clear channel for contact with intelligences on other planets. Also, they purport to receive "messages" from a variety of Oriental deities or messiahs which they convey to their unfortunate followers who accept their authenticity without question. . . .

There are a number of these present-day psychic sects, most all declaring themselves as churches, whose leaders claim to be daily recipients of revealed messages direct from Jesus, Buddha, and Saint-Germain. . . . The credulous individuals who pay fees to these persons, who are generally termed *gurus*, have often become seriously and emotionally disturbed because of their forced dependence upon the "guru" or "Great Master" of the church. . . .

Sincere organizations of long reputable history do not make such claims. They know them to be false; they know that the attainment which the individual seeks must be individually acquired through *personal study* of basic laws and principles. He cannot bring about an advance in his own state of consciousness by listening to the bombastic claims of a guru or one who professes to have an exclusive channel to the whole Cosmos.

The "psychic craze" will eventually result in the general exposure of many of these charlatans who are exploiting the innocent, unaware seeker of knowledge. But in the meantime each individual should check the credibility of some of these psychic "leaders" and their groups and "churches."

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"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"

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