

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

“There is no Religion higher than Truth”

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE TEXTBOOK OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

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This work is written for the instruction of students of Occultism. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 23)

The rejection of these teachings may be expected, and must be accepted beforehand. No one styling himself a “scholar,” in whatever department of exact science, will be permitted to regard these teachings seriously. They will be derided and rejected *a priori* in this century; but only in this one. For in the twentieth century of our era scholars will begin to recognize that the *Secret Doctrine* has neither been invented nor exaggerated, but, on the contrary, simply outlined; and finally, that its teachings antedate the Vedas. This is no pretension to *prophecy*, but simply a statement based on the knowledge of facts. Every century an attempt is being made to show the world that Occultism is no vain superstition. Once the door permitted to be kept a little ajar, it will be opened wider with every new century. The times are ripe for a more serious knowledge than hitherto permitted, though still very limited, so far. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, xxxvii-xxxviii)

The outline of a few fundamental truths from the Secret Doctrine of the Archaic ages is now permitted to see the light, after long millenniums of the most profound silence and secrecy. I say “a few truths,” advisedly, because that which must remain unsaid could not be contained in a hundred such volumes, nor could it be imparted to the present generation of Sadducees. But, even the little that is now given is better than complete silence upon those vital truths. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, xxii)

THE Secret Doctrine of H. P. Blavatsky has been rightly called the textbook of the 20th century. To many this will seem a fantastic claim, to be straightway rejected. To others it will seem

a puzzling statement. A fair familiarity with the two volumes, as originally published in 1888, alone will bring the truth of the statement home to the reflective and studious mind. He who considers the contents of these two volumes dispassionately will evaluate the teachings of *The Secret Doctrine* as profound, will recognize the uniqueness of its method of imparting knowledge to our civilization, and will find its canvas staggeringly large. The picture is as rich in background as in details of the past of this earth and of man's evolution thereon. *The Secret Doctrine* presents arguments which demolish the false in modern knowledge and in modern civilization; its portrayal of the future which awaits humanity on earth is as fascinating as it is logical and inspiring. For over 60 years the two volumes have puzzled and provoked, drawn scorn from some and admiration from others, but they have continuously influenced the *Zeitgeist* of the 19th-20th century.

W. Q. Judge has said that he would use *The Secret Doctrine* and *The Bhagavad-Gita* to educate the young. Both these texts—the former stupendous, the latter concise—may well be called archetypal books; only a very few such are in circulation today. The instruction of the *Gita* seems to be meant for the entire Kali-Yuga; it deals only with fundamental principles of the cosmological and psychological sciences and with practices necessary for men of this Dark Age to make soul-progress. *The Secret Doctrine* not only sketches those principles but also illustrates and amplifies them with innumerable demonstrations and details. To awaken the mind of the century to the false assumptions of modern knowledge, *The Secret Doctrine* offers many arguments, ever drawing the mind towards the truth that the ancients with their glorious civilizations knew in many spheres more and better than the moderns. It also attacks the theological falsehoods of separative and warring creeds and unveils that most inspiring truth that true Religion is ever one and indivisible and that the practice of this Universal Religion leads to the realization of Universal Brotherhood—the goal of human evolution.

The Esoteric philosophy is alone calculated to withstand, in this age of crass and illogical materialism, the repeated attacks on all and everything man holds most dear and sacred, in his inner spiritual life. The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions. Moreover, Esoteric philosophy reconciles all religions, strips every one of its outward, human garments, and shows the

root of each to be identical with that of every other great religion.

(*The Secret Doctrine*, I, xx)

The teachings recorded in the two volumes of *The Secret Doctrine* are not new—and yet are in many cases new to modern minds. The new in them includes arguments and points of view presented which enable the student to see the defects in modern knowledge, how these can be remedied and in what direction the next step must be taken for the correct solution of the problems which confront modern science, from Astronomy to Zoology. Again, what is new offers positive evidence that the warring religions, each with its claim to uniqueness, are enemies of truth inasmuch as they all engender blind belief in dogmas and shut the windows of the mind to universal truths. In advancing what is new in the book, H. P. Blavatsky points to the Real Source of Knowledge. She proves the existence of a Body of Knowledge, tested and verified, which has influenced the mind of humanity not for centuries but for millennia.

The Secret Doctrine was the universally diffused religion of the ancient and prehistoric world. Proofs of its diffusion, authentic records of its history, a complete chain of documents, showing its character and presence in every land, together with the teaching of all its great adepts, exist to this day in the secret crypts of libraries belonging to the Occult Fraternity. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, xxxiv)

Occult Science has its *changeless* traditions from prehistoric times. It may err in particulars; it can never become guilty of a mistake in questions of Universal laws, simply because that Science, justly referred to by philosophy as the “*divine*,” was born on higher planes, and was brought on Earth by beings who were wiser than man will be, even in the seventh Race of his Seventh Round. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 516)

Modern science traces the growth of human mind from savagery. Unable as yet to say definitely where and how human civilization began, or even from which particular species of the animal kingdom man's form evolved, it finds itself entangled in innumerable contradictions. That which specialists in one branch of science teach, their colleagues in another branch contradict. Modern knowledge is analytical and science wars against religion, philosophy now siding with the one, now with the other.

The unifying principle underlying true knowledge is lost in the babel of tongues on every plane of modern life. Wisdom synthesizes—synthesizes not only the branches of science, the schools of philosophy, the creeds of religion; but also synthesizes

science, philosophy and religion themselves, as fields of human thought. These three form the sides of an equilateral triangle—the figure which perfectly symbolizes Wisdom. This synthesizing Wisdom is the foundation of the great book, *The Secret Doctrine*. Because modern knowledge lacks that synthesizing aspect which these volumes offer, it threatens to destroy human mind and engulf modern civilization.

To each fumbling scientist, no less than to each groping philosopher and theologian, *The Secret Doctrine* offers the next step by revealing his error in observation, in deduction or in judgment. Fully recognizing the place in human thought of many sciences, philosophies and religions, *The Secret Doctrine* puts each in its proper position, assigns to each its correct value, enables each to reject that in itself which is false and to progress along its own right path, accepting what is true. These admittedly are tremendous claims, but those who have carefully examined the two volumes have noted hints and suggestions for every sincere researcher. They have also perceived the unifying synthesis which transforms knowledge into Wisdom and are ready to concede the claims put forward here.

The reader must not overlook the fact that we are calling *The Secret Doctrine* the textbook of the 20th century. It has been doing its work indirectly these many years. The number of copies published and sold enables us to determine approximately how many there are in circulation. This is one gauge of its influence on the minds of modern men. It is not a book that he who runs may read and understand. Those who buy it cannot but be educated thinkers, and each of them doubtless uses what he gets out of the copy in his hands. Furthermore, Theosophists who keep in touch with books, periodicals, newspapers—the tremendous output of modern knowledge—and again with sermons, addresses and lectures, from a million pulpits and platforms, are aware of the profound influence that *The Secret Doctrine* has wielded ever since its first publication in 1888. The analytical mind has been exploiting the two volumes to get what it can for its own personal purposes. So far, so good, but the time has come, it seems to devotees of this great work, to bring forward for wider study what its contents offer to mankind. The turn of the cycle brings an opportunity which Theosophists should embrace, endeavouring to popularize the book for the synthetic outlook which it offers. Some have been misled into thinking that *The Secret Doctrine* is a book of reference—a kind of encyclopaedia. *The Secret Doctrine* is encyclopaedic in its scope, but it is not

merely a book of reference. Its Wisdom is one and indivisible—its philosophy is a religious science and a scientific religion.

To perceive the synthetic Wisdom contained in the two volumes, the reader needs a concentrated mind, but he needs more than only the analytic mind of the scientist, more than the logical reasoning mind which functions according to principles and categories; if reason is necessary to evaluate correctly the data gathered by sensuous perception, intuition is necessary to evaluate the work of the modern logician, philosopher and theologian. As sensuous observation needs the light of mind and reason to arrive at truth, so reason in its turn needs illumination by the intuition.

Now, *The Secret Doctrine* is the book *par excellence* for developing intuition in the educated mind today. That is one reason why we call it the textbook of the 20th century. It is sometimes complained that H. P. Blavatsky has not written *The Secret Doctrine* in a straightforward style, giving information, imparting knowledge, proving her propositions after the fashion of the modern scholar and savant. This is true if the book is viewed from the standpoint of the man of reasoning mind; it is not true when *The Secret Doctrine* is viewed from the standpoint of the man of developing intuition. To such a reader almost every page reveals the soul of knowledge. The limbs of knowledge assume a coherent form—vital and vibrant. This does not happen all at once, not even in a year or two, but the book does gradually unfold the faculty of intuition in its devoted student.

Because *The Secret Doctrine* is not written for the man of mind or even for the man of intuition (as, for example, is the *Bhagavad-Gita* or the *Tao Teh King* or *The Voice of the Silence* or *Light on the Path*) but for the mind on its way to the development of intuition, its manner of presentation sometimes irritates alike the thinker who uses his mind and the mystic who depends on his intuition. But to the earnest student it provides the key—the sure way to develop intuition, namely, by the proper use of the Law of Correspondence and Analogy. That way of getting at the knowledge about any subject or object implies a universal synthesis, the relationship of each subject and object with all others in the Macrocosm.

Man lives and functions in a threefold Universe—Moral, Mental and Sensuous. These are not three separate and distinct universes but One Universe with three aspects—One Triangle of three sides and three angles. The stone has its mind and soul, however different they be from those which manifest, let us say, in a human body. Further, the body not only is a concretization of

mind and soul but also is touched by other bodies, minds and souls. Man is the Microcosm; the Universe, the Macrocosm.

Everything in the Universe follows analogy. "As above, so below"; Man is the microcosm of the Universe. That which takes place on the spiritual plane repeats itself on the Cosmic plane. Concretion follows the lines of abstraction; corresponding to the highest must be the lowest; the material to the spiritual. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 177)

From *Gods to men*, from Worlds to atoms, from a star to a rush-light, from the Sun to the vital heat of the meanest organic being—the world of Form and Existence is an immense chain, whose links are all connected. The law of Analogy is the first key to the world-problem, and these links have to be studied co-ordinately in their occult relations to each other. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 604)

Their interrelationship cannot be fathomed by sense-perception or by mind-perception; only by intuitive soul-perception can the parts of the One be comprehended as such. And this, as already indicated, demands the correct use of the Key of Correspondence and Analogy.

Analogy is the guiding law in Nature, the only true Ariadne's thread that can lead us, through the inextricable paths of her domain, toward her primal and final mysteries. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 153)

Intuition is slowly developing in the most progressed intelligences of our race; that development can be consciously advanced by such as aspire to know more than modern knowledge can teach. Higher than the eye of the mind is the Eye of the Heart; the former imparts partial knowledge; the latter instructs the mind in Wisdom as old as man's soul, and as immortal. Only the immortal aspect in man can know that immortal Wisdom. Logic and Philosophy train the mind for accurate thinking and as it learns to use the Law of Correspondence and Analogy it receives flashes of intuition. Therefore symbols, glyphs, emblems, allegories, myths, etc., become valuable aids to the mind; for this reason, parts of *The Secret Doctrine* are devoted to these.

The untiring researches of Western, and especially German, symbologists, during the last and the present centuries, have brought every Occultist and most unprejudiced persons to see that without the help of symbology (with its seven departments, of which the moderns know nothing) no ancient Scripture can ever be correctly understood. Symbology must be studied from every one of its

aspects, for each nation had its own peculiar methods of expression. In short, no Egyptian papyrus, no Indian *olla*, no Assyrian tile, or Hebrew scroll, should be read and accepted *literally*.

This every scholar now knows. The able lectures of Mr. G. Massey alone are sufficient in themselves to convince any *fair-minded* Christian that to accept the dead-letter of the Bible is equivalent to falling into a grosser error and superstition than any hitherto evolved by the brain of the savage South Sea Islander. But the point to which even the most truth-loving and truth-searching Orientalists—whether Aryanists or Egyptologists—seem to remain blind, is the fact that every symbol in papyrus or *olla* is a many-faced diamond, each of whose facets not merely bears several interpretations, but relates likewise to several sciences. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 305)

It is precisely because the book touches and awakens the now latent or only partially functioning faculty of Intuition that *The Secret Doctrine* has been called the textbook of the century. Intuitive men or mystics will be the true leaders and guides in the coming cycle—not men of mind, but men of intuition. A new era has been opening in the affairs of humanity; the Sun of intuition will follow the Dawn which has been upon us since 1877, the year in which was published *Isis Unveiled*, the precursor of *The Secret Doctrine*.

The Secret Doctrine attacks what is false and confirms what is true in modern knowledge. The rise and fall of a civilization are intimately related to its knowledge. When the parts are held to outweigh the whole, when specialization narrows the understanding of the ALL, the analytical and sensuous way of learning grows, the synthetic vision is first befogged and then lost.

We are at the bottom of a cycle and evidently in a transitory state. Plato divides the intellectual progress of the universe during every cycle into fertile and barren periods. In the sublunary regions, the spheres of the various elements remain eternally in perfect harmony with the divine nature, he says; “but their parts,” owing to a too close proximity to earth, and their commingling with the *earthly* (which is matter, and therefore the realm of evil), “are sometimes according, and sometimes contrary to (divine) nature.” When those circulations—which Eliphas Levi calls “currents of the astral light”—in the universal ether which contains in itself every element, take place in harmony with the divine spirit, our earth and everything pertaining to it enjoys a fertile period. The occult powers of plants, animals, and minerals magically sympathize with the “superior natures,” and the divine soul of man is in perfect

intelligence with these "inferior" ones. But during the barren periods, the latter lose their magic sympathy, and the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit. We are in a barren period: the eighteenth century, during which the malignant fever of scepticism broke out so irrepressibly, has entailed unbelief as an hereditary disease upon the nineteenth. The divine intellect is veiled in man; his animal brain alone *philosophizes*." And philosophizing alone, how can it understand the "SOUL DOCTRINE"? (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 74)

To save the modern global civilization an attempt was made by the Immortal Lovers of the Wisdom and They gave out all that was necessary for the 100-year cycle which dawned in the last quarter of the last century.

THE SECRET DOCTRINE is not a treatise, or a series of vague theories, but contains all that can be given out to the world in this century. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, xxxviii)

Once the sagacious student gets hold of the guiding thread he may find it out for himself. We give *facts* and show landmarks: let the wayfarer follow them. *What is given here is amply sufficient for THIS century.* (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 742)

Not Wisdom in its entirety is to be found in these two monumental volumes, but sufficient for the men of our civilization—be they materialistic scientists, speculative philosophers or dogmatic religionists—to carry forward their research and to sustain and spiritualize the life of humanity. Also, as shown above, these volumes offer a veritable short-cut to the mystic who waits for his intuitive faculty to function. Enough to quicken that faculty into activity has been given in the correspondential links between Man and the Cosmos, each of which acts like a magnet for intuition to flash its message to the mind.

As a closing thought, *The Secret Doctrine* contains seed-ideas and shows their lines of growth. It indicates how ideas can and should unfold in the entire sphere of modern knowledge. To the aesthete and the artist, the ritualist and the religionist, the metaphysician and the mathematician, the scientist and the sociologist, the mystic and the occultist—to all, *The Secret Doctrine* reveals the immediate step of advance and the distant whither. This, among other reasons, justifies the claim we make for *The Secret Doctrine* as the textbook of the 20th century.

HUMANITY'S UPLIFT

Neither for himself nor for others will the wise man crave sons or wealth or position.

—*Dhammapada*, Verse 84

Formerly when you did not acknowledge God, you were the slaves of beings which in their nature are no gods. But now that you do acknowledge God, how can you turn back to the mean and beggarly spirits of the elements?

—*Galatians*, IV, 8-9

WHEREVER communities of men have gathered, there at one time or another an effort towards a common uplift has been attempted. The failures that have attended such attempts in recent years have been caused not by lack of willingness but by the paucity of a clear understanding of the task. In this century, people have drifted away from spiritual ideals, and under the spell of a crass materialism they have sought to bring a pseudo-scientific approach to their problems. When in such efforts success has eluded them, they have fallen back on the easier expedient of applying the law of the jungle. Like ignorant children, they have tried to decide, by the use of brutal strength, which ideology was the best suited for humankind. War and mayhem have still remained the ultimate methods of settling disputes.

Despite all laudable efforts at making man a better and nobler being, humanity in the mass has still remained what it was when Buddha came or Jesus preached. Men caught in the hundred cords of desire have ever leapt at each other's throats in the name of religion and for the greater glory of the Lord! Having failed to enthrone wisdom and justice, they have placed the crown on unworthy brows. Each such failure has ended in the eruption of the combative animal instincts of men. We have thus had Crusades and "Holy" Wars and genocides for the establishment of non-secular states, the mass extermination of Jews to satisfy a national mania for reform, and periodical killings known by the flamboyant name of purges for eliminating all opposition to the prevalent ideology for national reform. Time and again history has produced men gone berserk who openly declare that reform is possible only by the waging of relentless wars and the extermination of all opposition by violent means.

The reasons for the failure of such efforts—national or purely personal—have to be sought by means of the twin doctrines of Karma and Reincarnation. As a man has sown, in the same measure is he bound to reap, and that not only from year to year

but from one life to another till the credits and debits are balanced and his debts discharged in full. Man has not the power to force the slightest deviation in the domain of this law. The sum total of debits cannot be balanced by fictitious entries nor by an ostrich-like refusal to face the inevitable. In each of his numerous incarnations, man epitomizes the history of his past—his failures and successes alike. On earth, each one comes as a reaper of the things he sowed. Because of this, he can be oriented to a higher life only on the basis of his heritage from the past. If his understanding is poor and his vitality low, his progress onwards has to be so planned as to take account of these handicaps. "One man's meat is another man's poison" is a truism that has to be understood lest we rush into precipitate action and do harm to the individual. You do not put sharpened swords in the hands of little children, neither do you practise surgery because you have attended at an operation.

Reform, if it is really meant to be a new formation—a rebuilding, as it were—must be based on the individual's strength or weakness. The impediments that attach themselves to the child at birth are to be faced as hindrances within which lurk the seeds of reform. These impediments have a purpose and a message which has to be spelt out before any real progress can be achieved. At each incarnation, the work for the incoming Soul has been set out by a master hand. The syllabi of learning are outlined in detail for him who would question his own birth. Each human brings his own programme of effort to be worked out in harmony with the programmes of those whom he contacts. When, therefore, men try to mould large masses according to a common pattern, they do not know what they are trying to achieve. The mind of man is a complex piece of machinery which reacts to outside stimuli, and since no two minds are exactly alike, the same stimulus produces a widely diverging variety of reactions. Those only would be competent to change the mass mind who have mastered the intricacies of the higher and the lower mind of man.

The reformer of today fails to understand the individuality of each separate human entity—its hopes, its joys and its fears. He forgets that the average man reacts strongly to the play of his emotions and urges and so shifts his future up or down, high or low. But even that high and that low is only a very small portion of the scale up and down which the human being has to establish his mastery.

If one here or another there has lifted himself from out of the shadow into the shine, he has done so by his own individual

exertions spread over weary and painful years and lives of striving. It is no doubt true that there have been times in human history when large numbers of men have flocked to schools that have taught, not the arts and the sciences as we know them, but the mysteries of nature and of life. But even during those centuries of pious contentment there have existed men of intolerance, deceit and mischief. The sinner and the saint, the savage and the civilized, the unlearned and the wise have lived together on this earth in the same manner that the destitute, the diseased and the derelict are always with us. It is also pertinent to note that just as epidemics of physical disease have swept over continents, even so there are moral and social epidemics that inject their virus in man. When this happens, whole nations lose their moorings and indulge in animal brutality, spreading their scourges over vast areas and continents.

The intelligent portion of mankind should have learnt after devastating global wars that the higher aspects of man—those which yearn after the true, the good and the beautiful—are not capable of being quickened by regimentation or by a dictatorial canalizing of thought into pre-selected channels. That this is so is proved even outside the political field by the utter failure of our prisons and houses of correction. No exercise—physical, mental or moral—can drill an army of men into automatons of virtue. No penalties imposed for divagations can ensure rectitude. The experiments in liquor legislation, for instance, have demonstrated that ethical values cannot be upheld by punitive laws. Even where restraint is self-imposed as in hermitages, cloisters and ashrams, sin and discontent have crept in unasked, and neither physical tortures nor solitary isolation have been able to erase the lower cravings and appetites.

Only when this is recognized will men start paying more than lip homage to the Buddha and the Christ. The work of any teacher is not to proselytize but to instruct. Jesus sent his Apostles out with the following instructions:

As ye go, preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils; freely ye have received, freely give. . . . Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. (*Matthew, X, 7-8, 16*)

The true Reformer instructs and guides. He does not seek to bend the will of another to his own uses. Hypnotism, the use of drugs which break down the will of a man and the application of torture are instruments pertaining to the dark side of life. If the

instructions of the Reformer are not followed, he withdraws himself, leaving the pupil to his own devices. The Chela's soul has to be unfettered, his desires free, for the simple reason that the true instructions and the higher knowledge can only come from within. The Chela has to learn by experience that the inner voice becomes mute if it is disobeyed, or if the mind becomes tainted, or if the desires lean towards the base and the ignoble. There are no outer substitutes for the inner knowledge and the soundless voice. What is true of the Guru and Chela is equally true on lower planes of the teacher and the taught, the Reformer and the *hoi polloi*.

How, then, can a student of Theosophy contribute towards a social reform that shall usher in a century of peace without bloodshed, tyranny or enslavement? If he is well grounded in the philosophy, if he has tasted of its fruits and felt its calm, his bounden duty is to hold this philosophy up for the consideration of others. The causes of misery are set out in the philosophy as also the cures. The steps to higher wisdom are there as are the hints to be followed for the planning of the next incarnation. The student's primary duty, then, is to propagate—first by repeating the message undistorted, and later, as his gratitude releases his tongue and opens the portals of his service, by impassioned speech. But the essential contribution must always be the living of the life. It is not difficult to realize that the Reformer must himself be the living example of the reform that he upholds for emulation. He has no right to instruct who himself has failed to learn. Therefore, in his own life, the Reformer must show the brilliant consummation of the philosophy which he seeks to propagate. If the experience of centuries that is recorded in our history books has taught us aught, then we should be able to segregate the false imitator from the genuine Reformer. No lasting reform can be found which is not based on the three great truths:

- (1) Everything existing, exists from natural causes.
- (2) Virtue brings its own reward, and vice and sin their own punishment.
- (3) The state of man in this world is probationary.

Where sacrifice-charity-austerity abide, there—and there only—lurk the germs of true and lasting reforms.

WHAT is the place of health in the frame of the idea of salvation?
Salvation can be described as the act of "cosmic healing."

—PAUL TILLICH

OVERCOMING DIFFICULTIES

WHY is it that we all say we lack opportunities, whereas we get into difficulties all the time? Why do we lack the "tests" spoken of in Theosophical literature? Is it not because we give the wrong names to things and so misunderstand their real natures?

For instance, what is a test but an opportunity to prove oneself, in doing which we overcome a difficulty? What is an opportunity but a test of our capacity to see it for an opportunity and a difficulty that we must overcome? What is a difficulty but a test of our strength and an opportunity to employ it? Yet we view what we call an opportunity with joy and energy; a "test," if it comes, almost with misgivings; and a difficulty as something to be avoided if possible. And so we miss out on all counts, for we seldom even *see* an opportunity when it is offered to us!

Difficulties we all meet; we cannot avoid them. To view them in the right way for progress is, therefore, to see them as tests and opportunities.

A greater "obstacle" in the effort to live the Higher Life is lack of appreciation of an opportunity, or the non-seeing of it when offered. Herein lies one of the tragedies of the student's career. The missing of an opportunity means a "test" failed and a difficulty sown for the future; we have missed the right point in the cycle of that "Karma," and when in due time it comes up before us again we are in a less favourable position to deal with it, for "there is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune." The next time the opportunity arises, the conditions will be "second-best."

The question arises, how shall we train ourselves to see an opportunity when it comes to us? We shall do so in the same way as we recognize a difficulty or a test, *i.e.*, it will be something presented to us by Karma *which we do not want to do*, or feel that we cannot do because of other obligations, etc., and therefore we often brush it aside without real thought. The difference between what we call difficulties and opportunities is that the former we have to meet whether we will or not, while the latter can be ignored. At least we think they can be ignored, but in all aspects of Nature *inaction* is still *action*. Ignoring, or non-acceptance of, an opportunity is as much action as the recognition or acceptance of it, and bears its own effects in the future.

The practical application of the Law of Karma means that we view *everything* that comes to us an *effect* to be met and dealt with. If "a harsh word uttered in past lives is not destroyed, but

ever comes again," then everything in our life becomes important to us and we need first to cultivate attention to details, and then to find out their right place in the jigsaw puzzle of life.

Apart from missing opportunities there is the non-acceptance of opportunities when seen. Often a false sense of "duty" prevents our acceptance and that is why we must cultivate, by strong effort, the ability to sense the position of the opportunity in relation to our real life and duty. Our sense of duty is largely coloured by our emotional nature, and an opportunity presented to us should not be viewed from the point of view of likes and dislikes but from the viewpoint of the next step forward. Also a *real* opportunity is often viewed unfavourably because it opens up a new line of activity which we do not feel we want to undertake. It opens a door into the future through which we pass to the operation of fresh lines of Karmic reactions, *i.e.*, those not operating unless we grasp the opportunity. So often we are afraid of the future.

It is good to bear in mind that an opportunity unrecognized or not accepted is a test failed and a difficulty created for the future.

STRENGTH does not depend upon hardness. The softest things, when properly controlled and used, can overcome those that appear immovable. Water can shatter granite.

Love is invincible; but it is the tenderness of love, not its fire, that conquers in the end.

Rigidity is the death of progress. Fluidity is essential to growth. But this applies to that part of the nature only which exists in time and space, for the centre of life does not change: it is eternal.

A great general once said that he had won many of his battles by means of retreating at the right time. It often needs more real strength to give way than to push forward.

Therefore, be careless whether you are strong or weak. Do not seek strength; seek wisdom—which is thy Self—and the soul of wisdom which is love.

—H. O. SMITH

THE WAY OF THE MYSTIC

MYSTICISM is of vital importance to the individual, but a great deal of confusion and misunderstanding about it prevails. The mistaken mystics have done serious harm by their vagaries to the study and practice of mysticism; many a so-called mystic-occultist has brought discredit upon genuine mysticism, which is synonymous with true occultism. Fictitious and fanciful expositions, by the thousand, circulate in every country of the world. A forged currency note points to the existence of the true; one must, however, know the true in order to reject the false. But there are expounders who, if they do not write out of the depth of experience, do so from careful book-learning; among such expositions are genuine paper-notes, which are not themselves the gold coins but which represent them.

In the examination of mysticism we are confronted with a double difficulty. First, we have to distinguish between the false and the true types. Secondly, we have to discriminate between the mystic who, emerging from the sectarian's tomb, carries on himself the marks of his erstwhile mouldy beliefs, and the real mystic who, having freed himself from creedal bias, experiences and expounds universal verities which are of the stainless purity of the white light, and which make a direct appeal to the human heart because they are truths which are self-evident. There is talk of Hindu mystics and Muslim mystics and Christian mystics: in reality, they are not mystics if they are sectarians. If they hold to universal values and labour for universal good, then they cannot be Hindus, Muslims, or Christians, but Mystics-Occultists-Theosophists, in the true sense of these terms.

Every human being has two religions—first, the outer, the creed into which he is born or into which he becomes converted; second, the inner, the faith of which he is made—the mind of his heart and the heart of his mind. The first is nominal; the second, real. A man is not what he calls himself, but what he is. There are good and bad Christians as there are good and bad Hindus. The repetition of the Three Refuges and the Five Don't's does not make a man a Buddhist. A man is not a Rationalist because he calls himself a Freethinker. A man's real or inner religion manifests in his character and through his hourly conduct.

The upward advance of the human Ego is a series of progressive awakenings. Through religious sectarianism, through secular education, or in some other way man wakes to the truth that purpose underlies the harmony of Nature—the majestic march

of the heavenly orbs, the rhythmic beating of human hearts. This awaking to the truth that Nature is not a chaos but a cosmos—a movement which is an orderly procession—and that there is a purpose which may be divined, is an initiation into the mysteries; it is the conception of the mystic to be born. In his antenatal life the quickening occurs when the mystic-to-be glimpses another great truth, namely, that man is the microcosm of the macrocosm. Man's face is the Microprosopus, an exact copy of Macroprosopus, the Great Countenance—a name of the Universe. Man cannot sense, feel or know the cosmic harmony except by reference to the corresponding harmony within himself. It is not difficult for an ordinary educated person to sense that Nature is one mighty harmony. It is difficult to sense that a corresponding harmony reigns in man himself and that an indissoluble relation subsists between man and the universe.

The entire cosmos is focused in the retina of the human eye. Human sight does not reach out to the distant moon; the latter reflects itself in the eye. The ordinary man does not recognize the symbolic message of this phenomenon and of kindred ones; but the mystic does. And sensing the implications of the message the mystic concludes that man and god are not two separate beings, but constitute a single state or condition of consciousness. This mental conclusion has to be experienced and realized, and so the mystic attempts the great realization—to become That which he is.

On the path of practice leading to realization the mystic encounters two obstacles. His personal and sectarian biases, prejudices and predilections make one formidable enemy. In freeing himself from the tentacles of this octopus to rise to the plane of Truth, free and independent, he falls in the clutches of the demon called Individualism. Some people fancy licence to be liberty, and similarly, in breaking its fetters, some mystical minds err in evaluating their own experiences. Many a mystic thinks that his own psychic and psychological experiences cannot but be true. Both Revelation (*Shruti*) and Tradition (*Smriti*) have their false and their true aspects. When the fallible revelations of the mundane world which are passed off as infallible are pierced through and through, the Revelations of the World of Immortals are contacted and then heard, thought upon and at last realized. Truth of Wisdom is constant and eternal, one and indivisible, and Wise Ones—long, long generations of Them—have rediscovered it. It is the selfsame truth which, cycle after cycle, the mystic-occultist finds; and attaining the highest peak he exclaims: "I am

verily the Supreme Brahman," "I am the Truth," "I and my Father are One."

Those who opine that Revelation and Tradition are useless, err greatly, perhaps as greatly as those who fix their gaze upon "holy books" made by learners and pupil-teachers. Every true and genuine mystic experiences the same enlightenment and expounds the same truth, however varied the language of parables which each uses to convey that which is unconveyable in the plain language of men.

No ONE has any right to hold me responsible for what anyone may say, but only for that which I myself state orally, or in public print over my signature. And what I say and maintain is this: Save the direct quotations and the many misprints, errors and misquotations, and the general make-up of *Isis Unveiled*, for which I am in no way responsible, (a) every word of information found in this work or in my later writings comes from the teachings of our Eastern Masters; and (b) that many a passage in these works has been written by me *under their dictation*. In saying this no *supernatural* claim is urged, for no *miracle* is performed by such dictation. Any moderately intelligent person, convinced by this time of the many possibilities of hypnotism (now accepted by science and under full scientific investigation), and of the phenomena of *thought-transference*, will easily concede that if a hypnotized subject, a mere irresponsible medium, *hears the unexpressed thought* of his hypnotizer, who can thus transfer his thought to him—even to *repeating the words read by the hypnotizer mentally from a book*—then my claim has nothing impossible in it. Space and distance do not exist for thought and if two persons are in perfect mutual psycho-magnetic *rapport*, and of these two, one is a great Adept in Occult Sciences, then thought-transference and dictation of whole pages become as easy and as comprehensible at the distance of ten thousand miles as the transference of two words across a room.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

CYCLES AND THEIR INFLUENCES

JUST as in a single life a person is under the influence of numerous cycles—daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal, annual and, proceeding further, of larger ones; just as he has his own particular cycles pertaining to his bodily transformation, to his psychic nature, etc.; so also there are cycles which affect the life of every group of men and women—family, community, nation, race, culminating in the largest unit, Humanity.

Each person, therefore, is influenced by his own particular cycles, as well as by those belonging to complex Nature without. He is affected by the seasons of his own domicile, while he has his own incarnational seasons—the spring of youth, the summer of manhood, the autumn of middle age, and the winter of old years. Moreover, he has his own psychological seasons—every year he passes through the repetitive changes in his moral-mental nature which correspond to the seasons of Nature. Further still, as there are changes pertaining to a single day from dawn to twilight, from twilight to dawn, so also with man. One fundamental difference is this: the cycles of Nature are a rhythmical procession; but man's free-will actions make his own cycles erratic, in the sense that they do not coincide with those of Nature, although of course there are exceptions. Human pain and suffering may be described as a result of the personal cycles not synchronizing with those of and in Nature. When we are asked to "help Nature and work on with her," it is implied that we should so transform our own cycles that they are isochronal with those of Mother Nature.

In the life of Nature and of Man certain days have a special significance; *e.g.*, birthday of the body, the day when the Manasic Ego first touches the young corpus, the day of the soul-awakening or Second Birth, and so on. In Nature there are spring and autumn equinoxes, summer and winter solstices, etc. These are conjunctions of cycles—the closing of one cycle when its influences have completed their decline and the opening of another with the rising of its influences. Similarly, there are national and racial cycles; when one nation, or race, is dying, another is being born.

Cycles are hands on the clock of Karma. What is the practical application which students of Theosophy should make, comprehending the teaching about national and racial Karmic cycles?

Theosophists have a grave responsibility. Theirs is a many-sided mission; but the most important aspect is that of his own self-elevation by the individual student of the Esoteric Philosophy.

The philosophical principle of the One in the many has its bearing on the subject under consideration. Units make collectivities. From Demiurgos, which is “only the aggregate of the Dhyanchohans and other forces,” down to a simple physical cell which is composed of different constituents, the many make the One, each of the latter forming part of a bigger unit. Man himself is “a compound of the essences of all celestial hierarchies,” and as an individual he is but a member of another hierarchy. On the same principle, a state is composed of its numerous citizens, as humanity is made up of black, brown, white or yellow men and women. Its constituents affect the larger whole. Thus a single house through its architecture affects a street; a slum or a garden affects a city; towns and villages affect a country; a country’s trade affects the economics of the world; its morals, the social order of the world. Every single member of a family, every single citizen of a state, makes or mars the fate of the unit to which he belongs. Therefore, the right application of the Law of Sacrifice and Duty—*Yagna* and *Dharma*—affects not only individual but national, racial and collective Karma. Is there a discerning Theosophist who could doubt that the Theosophical Movement would have had a greater impact on world events in the twentieth century had the majority of those who came into the Movement in H.P.B.’s time been truly loyal to their ideas and ideals, devotedly faithful to their doctrines and teachings, and had studied sufficiently to make adequate applications of what H.P.B. and her Masters set forth?

Every man, every woman, is affected by world events and changes, but how many will endeavour to affect the world, in however humble a manner, by self-induced and self-devised ways and means? Practical students of Theosophy can do this, and they should, always holding to the truth that humanity is greater than country and that good can accrue to all when justice is honoured and wisdom is practised in daily dealings with our fellow men. As we learn to see the Triad in every human being; as we take into account that each person is a reincarnation, fulfilling his own self-made destiny; as we recognize that countries and continents, nations and races, are playgrounds for the growth of the human soul; as we perceive that by sacrifices of the more evolved the less evolved awaken to their own real vocation—we fulfil our mission as men and women to the human hierarchy to which we belong.

What attitude should the aspirant particularly develop? He must acquire, as quickly as possible, the cosmopolitan outlook.

Rising above creedal and communal, national and racial prides and prejudices, he must try to evaluate events and problems from the point of view that the world is one, that humanity is a family. To become a real cosmopolitan he must have discernment to eschew that which is bad or ugly or weak in the habits and customs, manners and methods, of his own people, to adopt better substitutes, learning from those of other lands and other nations. Neither political action nor social reform, neither legislation nor administration, neither science nor religion, neither philosophy nor art, by itself can bring enlightenment. Lopsided development and one-sided consecration will not aid the right unfoldment necessary for the work of the coming cycle. Only mystical feeling or only philosophical reasoning or only artistic expression or only scientific research will not suffice. Every limb of the body, every organ of the whole man must be brought into action.

Similarly, we require a knowledge which synthesizes all branches of learning and all methods by which such learning is acquired. This is impossible if by synthesis we mean a complete collection and collation of all knowledge so far acquired by the researches of men. But in reality synthesis does not mean that. Just as mind is not a collection of the activities of the five senses of knowledge and the five organs of action but is superior to and the controller of them, so also there is that learning which is superior to all knowledge developed by the senses and the emotions. This synthesis is the soul of knowledge, and Theosophy is that synthesis. But the student must acquire the art of applying Theosophy in understanding and expounding all worldly learning. What is true, what is false; what is good, what is bad; what is beautiful, what is ugly—this should be decided with the help of Theosophy. In modern learning there is much that is false as in our humanity there is much that is evil. The building of the new civilization in the new cycle should be according to the level and the plumb-line of the Esoteric Philosophy.

The formation of a nucleus of Universal Brotherhood depends upon the student possessing the cosmopolitan attitude and endeavouring to apply Theosophical principles to all concerns of life.

A THANKFUL heart is not only the greatest virtue, but the parent
of all the other virtues.

—CICERO

THE SEEDS AND THE HARVEST

We are not working merely that people may call themselves *Theosophists*, but that the doctrines we cherish may affect and leaven the whole mind of this century. This alone can be accomplished by a small earnest band of workers, who work for no human reward, no earthly recognition, but who, supported and sustained by a belief in that Universal Brotherhood of which our Masters are a part, work steadily, faithfully, in understanding and putting forth for consideration the doctrines of life and duty that have come down to us from immemorial time. Falter not, so long as a few devoted ones will work to keep the nucleus existing.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

THEOSOPHISTS are apt to feel discouraged when they note the condition of the world and know how few there are to preach and practise the philosophy which is the hope of the world. From a materialistic standpoint the situation is indeed discouraging, but Theosophists have no reason to be downhearted. Our success does not depend on numbers, and the result of our work is never immediately visible. In fact what we achieve may not penetrate to the physical plane until many, many years have passed. As Gandhi once wrote:

If the evolution of form takes aeons, why should we expect wonders in the evolution of thought and conduct? And yet the age of miracles is not gone. As with individuals, so with nations. I hold it to be perfectly possible for masses to be suddenly converted and uplifted. Suddenness is only seeming. For no one can say how far the leaven has worked. The most potent forces are unseen, even unfelt for long. But they are working none the less surely. Religion to me is a living faith in the supreme unseen Force. That Force has confounded mankind before, and it is bound to confound us again.

It may even happen that what we have actually accomplished on the outer plane—little though it be—is destroyed. But the soul of what has disappeared from sight is immortal and will some time seek and find physical expression again. So why be discouraged? That which is accumulating on the inner planes as the result of the efforts of a few will triumph in the long run and burst forth like the sun after a storm and illumine the earth. We are filling a reservoir which will supply refreshment to many, perhaps when those who helped to fill it are dead and gone.

It is not easy always to realize the truth of all this. We wish for results that can be observed by the physical senses. Yet all

down the ages men have proclaimed the power of thought and of the invisible. A beautiful expression of this conviction is found in the Bible in a passage from *Ecclesiastes*:

There was a little city, and few men within it; and there came a great king against it, and besieged it, and built great bulwarks against it. Now there was found in it a poor wise man, and he by his wisdom delivered the city; yet no man remembered that same poor man. Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength: nevertheless the poor man's wisdom is despised, and his words are not heard. The words of wise men are heard in quiet more than the cry of him that ruleth among fools. (ix, 14-17)

We are sowing seeds and "those who know" are confident that in the course of time they will produce a bumper harvest. To encourage those of us who are inclined to waver in our faith, one of the Masters once wrote: "Ah, if your eyes were opened, you might see such a vista of potential blessings to yourselves and mankind lying in the germ of the present hour's effort, as would fire with joy and zeal your souls!"

THE ancient Indian ideal of education subordinates commercial and military values to the human ones. Its aim is *brahmacharya*, initiation into a disciplined life of spirit, the development of the chastity of mind and body. . . .

The purpose of education is to help the free growth of the soul. When the young mind is brought into contact with the noblest classics of art and literature, it absorbs their mellow lights, their sacred enthusiasms, their austere patterns. Buddha's ripeness of spirit, Sankara's magnificence of mind, are a corrective to our youthful immodesty. They reveal to us not only the littleness and transience of things but the exalted dignity of human nature when seen in the perspective of the eternal. The world is a living, breathing one. Time bears the image of eternity, and all mankind is hewn from the same rock.

—S. RADHAKRISHNAN

AN IMPLACABLE LAW

AS we progress through life, our self-induced and self-devised efforts are, at every step, "checked by Karma." In these words taken from the Third Fundamental Proposition of *The Secret Doctrine* we have, perhaps, the greatest deterrent from wrongdoing that can be found in any philosophy. They show that there is some power which is greater than the present will of man, and against which he can pit himself for ever in vain. In the very pivotal doctrine of the whole philosophy he finds himself up against an implacable Law.

The wrong view of this Law has been put forward in various religions, in that it has been made a personal, imposed Law, which demands a personal Lawgiver, and logically, a lawgiver can excuse a breaking of his law. Hence the idea of prayer to the Lawgiver to forgive a breach of the law, or to alter the law on the petitioner's behalf, has taken root in society, and nowadays, when the world is overthrowing the concept of God, the Lawgiver, the idea still remains, showing itself in the phrase "I can get away with it."

Students of Theosophy are not free from this idea; it is a canker which is difficult to remove. Only, the Theosophical aspirant thinks in terms of "It does not matter—provided I attend meetings and give help and think of Theosophy." Yet the words remain: "*Checked by Karma.*"

Karma is threefold, past, present and future. The present becomes the past and it is the seed for the future. That future becomes the past as we pass forward in time, and it is difficult for us to remember, as we meet the checking aspect of Karma, that once that Karma seemed to us to be at some time in the future—or not at all. Perhaps it will not manifest, we say to ourselves, or we say that we shall be more ready to meet it in the future.

Achilles had one, and only one, vulnerable spot—but it caused his destruction. One moment of carelessness or of wilful inattention can cause just such a tiny spot of weakness which may appear at a critical time in our evolution, while one word of anger can turn a would-be friend into a silent onlooker at a moment of crisis. The word of anger, or the tiny spot of weakness, may seem infinitesimal, but it is the effect of the word or the weakness in time and place that makes them important or unimportant. And that we cannot arrange.

There are, then, two aspects to those words, "checked by Karma": (1) the past, and (2) the present that will become the

past of the future. For the former we can take heart by remembering the words of Marcus Aurelius who said that if a grain of incense was meant for the altar it did not matter *when* it was placed on it. Adaptability to conditions of our own making must be learnt so that all conditions can be accepted without remorse or sadness. The second aspect of "checked by Karma" should come not only as a warning but also as an incentive to right action. "Teach to eschew all causes; the ripple of effect, as the great tidal wave, thou shalt let run its course," says the *Book of the Golden Precepts*. It is of little use to be actively concerned with the past, but we must be more actively concerned than we generally are with the present, which is building our future.

One other point may be noted; no outside thing or being checks us. It is *our* Karma that does the checking.

IT is often said that our scientific approach to history debars us from discriminating between good and evil; but the real trouble is not that this method blinds us to crime (which we still continue to recognize in spite of our sophistication) but that it renders us incapable of envisaging folly. And yet it is folly that has made *our* history; follies so vast that they appear almost inexplicable the moment they are recognized as such. Many of these follies are still so widespread, so nobly popular, and so ingrained in our own habits of mind, that their recognition remains difficult, wavering, incomplete. Remember how years ago practically everyone in Britain believed firmly the slogan of "poverty in the midst of plenty"? It was regarded as axiomatic that opulence was at hand for the mere asking. And not only in Britain, but everywhere—in Italy and Greece, in Turkey and Ceylon, in Borneo and the Gran Chaco. Just like that. The Children's Crusades delivering boatloads of boys and girls into the hands of oriental slave-dealers were perhaps less reckless than the enterprises undertaken by modern political movements on the grounds of our latter-day delusions; for now the fate of the entire human race is at stake.

—MICHAEL POLANYI

PRACTICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS OF OCCULTISM

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XII

IDEATION

Everything in the occult universe which embraces all the primal causes is based upon two principles: Cosmic Energy and Cosmic Ideation.

ACCORDING to the usual definition, *Mind* is “the intellectual power in man,” and as by *Man* is meant a person, this definition makes of *Mind* something confined within the physical body, and in fact some of our modern physiologists have stated that in their opinion *Mind* is a function of the brain. But if this narrow definition were true, there could be no transmission of thought to a distance, because there would be nothing to act as a medium for such transmission. No sound can be heard in a space from which the air has been exhausted, and no thought could travel from one individual to another without a corresponding material existing between them to act as a conductor; but it is well known that the tunes produced in a musical instrument do not die within that instrument, but can be heard at distances according to their pitch and their power, and it is now admitted even by the most critical investigators of psychological subjects¹ that thought-transference is not only possible, but of everyday occurrence, and anyone who desires to investigate this matter will easily find ways to make suitable experiments, either by impressing his thoughts silently upon others, or—if he is of a sensitive nature—by letting others impress their thoughts upon him; and he will find that as the tunes emanating from a musical instrument may induce corresponding vibrations in a similarly constructed instrument, so the thought-vibrations emanating from one brain may induce similar thoughts and ideas in similarly constructed brains.

Light travels through the ether with a velocity of over one hundred thousand miles a second; thoughts pass with a similar velocity from one brain to another. A ray of light may be seen to flash through space, and may be intercepted by some non-conducting material. An idea flashes through space and may be seen and intercepted by an adept. Mind is a certain state of the universally active energy of the Cosmos; and as the lungs inhale

¹Report of the Society for Psychical Research, London, 1884.

air and breathe it out again in a changed condition, so the brain receives ideas, transforms them in its laboratory, and sends them out again. A sound may be heard by an indefinite number of persons, and a thought may affect the world. As a pebble thrown into water produces concentric waves, which grow wider and wider but less distinct as distance increases, so a thought may affect a person, a family, or a country; while distant lands may not receive it until the ripple beats again and again upon their shores.

This carrier of intelligence may be rendered active in various degrees of intensity and projected with various degrees of will-power. Intense thought is more powerful than a merely passive play of the imagination. As the rays of a lighted candle are most active around the flame, so this thought-ether (*Akasa*) is most active or concentrated around sensitive centres and the organs of thought, and may there become, so to say, crystallized and rendered objective to the person from whose brain they are evolved. To think of a thing is to form an image in the mind, and the more the thought is intense, well defined and free from vacillation, the more does the image formed become real. The more unselfish the thought, the more it expands; the more selfish, the more will it contract, isolate and destroy, becoming consumed in its own fire. Purity of thought means singleness of purpose without any foreign admixture; pure thoughts alone are powerful. Impure thoughts create fancies and hallucinations; pure thoughts call powerful spirits (states of mind) into existence.

Singleness of purpose being an essential element in all magical operations, it follows that spiritual effects cannot be produced for material purposes. Genuine love, patriotism or benevolence cannot be bought for money. A saint cannot fall into a religious ecstasy for pay, and if a Yogi would exhibit his powers for material gain, he would soon lose them. Imitations can be bought for money; but the genuine article requires a higher motive, and true magical powers can never be obtained by those who wish to employ them for their own selfish interest.

An idea evolved in the laboratory of the brain may be impressed upon the concentrated thought-ether (Astral Light) surrounding and penetrating the brain of another, and if the intensity is strong enough, it may there become objective to that person. In this way a person or a number of persons may see the forms of the ideas of another person in an objective form and become hallucinated or "psychologized" through him.

An idea impressed upon the Astral Light of a person may or

may not come to the consciousness of that person; and such an impression may be clear or it may be distorted; but as the sound of a vibrating string lingers longest around the instrument that produced it, so the thoughts and ideas remain impressed in the memory of those who harboured them. Unwelcome thoughts make usually a merely superficial impression; exalted and spiritual ideas penetrate more deeply into the mind. If a person takes a retrospect of his early life, he will—generally speaking—find pleasing events more deeply engraved upon his memory than disagreeable or painful occurrences, unless the latter should have been of uncommon intensity. All thoughts, once evolved, linger more or less in the Astral Light. To remember a thing is to read it in the Astral Light. It is the book of memory upon whose pages all events are recorded, and the deeper they are engraved, the longer will they last, even when physical consciousness has faded away. Old age or disease may have rendered the physical man unable to run at will through its pages; but to the astral man they will present themselves unasked, neither will they go away at his bidding. Good thoughts and actions make deeper impressions than bad thoughts and bad actions, provided their intensity is the same; because the former are more refined and able to penetrate more deeply. Gross thoughts and emotions remain in the *astral shell* after death and die with that shell. Spiritual recollections go with the higher spiritual elements into the devachanic condition. Evil remembrances cannot be effaced from memory before their effects are exhausted, and to brood over them engraves them only more deeply. Good recollections last longer; but even their energies become gradually exhausted and the spiritual monad will go to sleep, to reawaken in its next objective life on earth.

Not only men and animals have their memory; but each stone, each plant, and every physical substance has its surrounding *Akasa*, in which is stored up its own past history and the history of its surroundings,² so that every single thing—no matter how insignificant it may be—could give an account of its daily life from the beginning of its existence as a form up to the present, to him who is able to read.

Every thought, every word, and every act leaves its impression in the Astral Light, which impression—if conditions are favourable—may become objective and visible even to less sensitive persons who may mistake them for apparitions or ghosts. “Haunted houses” are not a mere fiction. Deeds committed with a great concentration of thought live there as images in the Astral Light

²Professor Denton, *Soul of Things*.

and have a tendency to repeat themselves, and may induce other persons to commit similar acts. Crimes of a certain character may become epidemic in certain localities, and an act committed in a certain place may induce others to commit the same act again. A case is known in which a prisoner hung himself in his cell, and several other persons who were successively shut up in the same cell hung themselves likewise.

As the moon reflects the light of the sun, so does the mind of man reflect the Universal Mind. The human soul is not a musical instrument, which merely plays upon itself; but it may be compared to a harp which is made to sound harmoniously, if touched by the hand of a master. It may be compared to a "smaragdine tablet" upon which the thoughts of the Supreme are engraved in letters of light. The seers and prophets of all ages have heard and understood that language; but they could only reproduce it imperfectly through the imperfect language of their times.

As every form is an expression of a mental state, the mental state which determines the form exists in the Astral Light before it manifests itself on the physical plane. An emotional or moral disease may exist before the physical body becomes affected by it, or a physical disease may induce an emotional or moral disease. A man's morality often depends on the state of his physical health, and the state of his physical health on his morality.³ Two persons may externally look alike; yet the moral atmosphere radiated by one may be pure, and that of the other poisonous; but in the course of time the state of their moral attributes will become expressed in the form of their features. This difference in the invisible mental states often makes itself felt quite independent of external appearance, and intuitive persons may perceive a vast difference in all objects, although these objects may apparently present the same form. The character of one house may be quite different from that of another, although the architecture and furniture of both may be of the same kind; and the more impressible a person is, the more will he perceive such a difference, while a dull person may see no difference at all.

A certain state of mind induces similar states in its surroundings; or, in other words, the conditions of the Astral Light of one form modify those of another form. A lock of hair, a piece of clothing, the handwriting of a person or any article he may have touched, handled or worn, may indicate to an intuitive individual

³W. E. Evans, *Mental Cure*.

that person's state of health, his physical, emotional, intellectual and moral attributes and qualifications. The picture of a murderer may not only be impressed on the retina of his victim and, in some instances, be reproduced by means of photography; but it is surely impressed on all the surroundings of the place where the deed occurred and can there be detected by the psychometer, who may thus come *en rapport* with the criminal, and even follow the events of his life after he has left that locality and hunt him down just as the bloodhound traces the steps of a fugitive slave.⁴

This tendency of the Astral Light to inhere in material bodies gives amulets their powers and invests keepsakes and relics with certain occult properties. A ring, a lock of hair, or a letter from a friend, not only conjures up that friend's picture in a person's memory, but it furthermore brings us *en rapport* with the peculiar mental state of which that person was or is a representation. If you wish to forget a person, or free yourself from his magnetic attraction, part from everything that "reminds" you of him, or select only such articles as call up disagreeable memories or disgusting sights and are therefore repulsive. Articles belonging to a person may bring us in sympathy with that person, although the fact may not come to our consciousness, and this circumstance is sometimes used for purposes of black magic.

As every form is the representation of a certain mental state, every object has such attributes as belong to that state, and this fact may explain why every substance has its sympathies and its antipathies; why the loadstone attracts iron and iron attracts the oxygen of the air; why hydroscopic bodies attract water, why affinities exist between certain bodies, why some substances change their colours under certain coloured rays, while others remain unaffected, etc.

Looked at in this light it does not seem quite so absurd to believe that the ancients should have attributed certain virtues to certain precious stones, and imagined that the Garnet was conducive to joy, the Chalcedony to courage, the Topaz promoting chastity, the Amethyst assisting reason, and the Sapphire intuition. A spiritual force to be effective requires a sensitive object to act upon, and in an age which tends to extreme materialism, spiritual influences may cease to be felt,⁵ but if a person cannot feel the occult influences of nature, it does not necessarily follow that they do not exist and that there may not be others who may be able to perceive them, because their impressional capacities are stronger.

⁴Emma Hardinge-Britten, *Ghost-Land*.

⁵Justinus Kerner, *Seeress of Prevorst*.

Only the ignorant man believes that he knows everything. What is really known is only like a grain of sand on the shore of the ocean in comparison to what is still unknown. Physiologists know that certain plants and chemicals have certain powers, and to a certain extent they explain their secondary effects. They know that *Digitalis* decreases the quickness of the pulse by paralysing the heart; that *Belladonna* dilates the pupil by paralysing the muscular fibres of the Iris, that opium in small doses produces sleep by causing anaemia of the brain, while large doses produce coma by causing congestion; but why these substances have such effects, or why a chemical compound of nitrogen, oxygen, carbon and hydrogen may be exceedingly poisonous in one chemical combination, while the same substances if combined in a different stoichiometrical proportion may be used as food, neither chemistry nor physiology can tell us at present. If we, however, look upon all forms as symbols of mental states, it will not be more difficult to imagine why strychnine is poisonous, than why hate can kill, or fear paralyse the heart.

A mental state is the result of various elements that called it into existence, and a simple idea which is once firmly rooted in the mind is difficult to change. If an idea is complicated, it is less difficult to modify it in its details, so that gradually an entirely different set of ideas may be the result. In physical chemistry the law is analogous. Compound bodies may be easily changed into other combinations; but the so-called single bodies cannot be changed at present. Yet there are indications that even these single bodies are the results of combinations of still more primitive elements. It has been observed that when lightning struck gilded ornaments, they have become blackened; and it has been found on analysing the blackened matter that the presence of sulphur was distinctly indicated. Unless sulphur exists in the lightning, it must have existed in the gold and have been evolved by the action of lightning. We may then fairly assume that gold contains the elements of sulphur, and this is no anomaly in the case of gold, as other metals have also been proved to contain the elements of sulphur, and the dreams of the alchemist may have some foundation⁶ after all. But sulphur is supposed to be related to nitrogen, and the elements of nitrogen are believed to be hydrogen and carbon, and if we go still further we may find that all forms are only modifications of one primordial element.

Corpora non agunt nisi fluida sint. The great solvent in physical chemistry is heat; the great solvent in mental chemistry is the

⁶David Low, F.R.S.E., *Simple Bodies in Chemistry*.

Will. "As it is above, so it is below," and the laws that govern Mind have their corresponding laws in the realm of physical matter. The laws of the Universal Mind may be studied by observing the action of the mind of man. Man's ideation produces certain effects in the small world that surrounds him, and cosmic ideation produces similar effects on a scale which is immeasurably greater. The whole of the human body is alive, the brain is the seat of intelligence and infuses it—so to say—into the various parts of the body, determining their movements and attitudes and the expression of the features. Thoughts come and go; some are invited, others intrude. Good ideas illuminate and lighten the heart, evil ideas render it dark and heavy. As the ideation changes, so changes the expression of form, and that change may be transitory or permanent.

Mental states induce attitudes of the body, and bodily attitudes induce corresponding mental states. An actor who can identify himself fully with the personality whose part he plays, need not study attitudes to appear natural; an angry person who forces himself to smile, will lessen his anger; a person who constantly has a scowl on his face will get a scowl on his soul. It is perhaps for similar reasons that certain attitudes are prescribed in certain religious ceremonies and acts of devotion.

The whole of the Cosmos is alive. The Universal Mind, the aggregate of all minds, acts through the sensorium of the *Akasa* upon the world of effects. It has its centres of intelligence, represented by godlike planetary beings, its currents of thought and its centres of activity and seats of emotions, its currents of electricity and its workshops of elemental forces. Ideas are evolved by the imagination of nature and crystallize into forms of matter.

Man's ideas are not arbitrary creations, but results of previous mental states. No man ever had an original thought; he can only perceive, grasp and modify that which exists. The ideation of the Cosmos is neither new nor original but the result of cosmic evolution. In the beginning of each new "day of creation," Nature springs again from the bosom of the Infinite, and the results of her previous evolution produce effects which cause the existence of forms in a still higher perfection. Seen from the standpoint of our finite minds, progress seems endless and the effects of the past are the causes of the future. Seen from the standpoint of the Eternal, there is neither past nor future, and nothing exists but the ineffable name whose letters are written in Nature.

(Concluded)

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

The century's second-worst earthquake in the country, with its epicentre located on the Bihar-Nepal border, has left a trail of devastation. With thousands dead or injured, and lakhs rendered homeless, the magnitude of the tragedy can be imagined. These were the most powerful tremors to hit the thickly populated Bihar plains since 1934 when 11,000 people were killed.

According to seismologists or those who study earthquakes, what happened in the early hours of August 21 was a quake measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale. Most earthquakes in the northern regions of India are caused, they say, by rock movements deep within the earth's crust under the Himalayan belt, as the floor below the mountain range pushes northward and grinds against the Eurasian plate, prodded by the continental drift. As a result of this push, enormous forces are generated which build up in the rocks over months and years until they become large enough to cause the rock strata deep down to give way, releasing the pent-up energy as a big quake. This is the scientific explanation, which always traces the origin of physical catastrophes to a certain combination of physical factors.

Theosophy says that an earthquake or any other natural calamity occurs according to Law—cause producing effect—the effect being wrapped up in, and not succedent to, the cause. It is a natural and legitimate action of the law that “knows not wrath nor pardon.” Its effects are felt by intelligences of many grades—mineral, vegetable, animal and human—and they all have participated in the causes; the causes may be unknown, though some of the effects, like pain and suffering to body and mind, are perceived.

The explanation that the suffering people through their own Karma are responsible for the earthquake may seem fanciful to some; but rigid justice rules the world and the quake is but a channel or an instrument through which Karmic law is adjusting the disturbed harmony, and the original disturbers are now feeling the effects of the disturbance they caused in the past. Theosophy explains the process by which such Karmic precipitations take place:

Karma operates to produce cataclysms of nature by concatenation through the mental and astral planes of being. A cataclysm may be traced to an immediate physical cause such as internal fire and atmospheric disturbance, but these have been brought on by the disturbance created through the dynamic power of human thought.

(“Aphorisms on Karma,” No. 30: *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 21*)

Thus an earthquake has an immediate physical cause, but that cause, in its turn, is rooted in “the dynamic power of human thought.” Furthermore, an earthquake is a means whereby Karma is affording an opportunity to all concerned to learn—each sufferer his own lesson—and there are as many experiences and as many lessons as there are sufferers.

Karma is the adjustment of effects flowing from causes, during which the being upon whom and through whom that adjustment is effected experiences pain or pleasure. (“Aphorisms on Karma,” No. 2)

The paper on “Indian Holistic Experience and Analytical Rationality” presented by Dr. Raja Ramanna, former chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, at the Mind and Nature Congress, Hanover, West Germany, is printed in *Bhavan's Journal*, August 1988. The substance of the paper is a comparison between the old mechanistic view of the universe, the relatively new quantum mechanics view, and the Vedantic view as expounded by the 8th-century Indian philosopher Sankara and others who came after him. Dr. Ramanna said among other things:

We have seen in the last half century how new discoveries in the sciences have altered our thinking. It is now time to examine whether the altered path is turning us back into the past, even if it be only to have a new look at the older deductions in the hope that it could lead to new methods of investigations.

The criticism of the older methods has been on the grounds that they are (1) not based on measured data; (2) based on verbal testimony; and/or (3) mystical. As mentioned earlier, (1) may be the very restriction of science, restraining our understanding of all knowledge. (2) and (3) may be partly true, but such views have come about due to unsympathetic translations and other historic reasons. . . .

The Vedantic interpretation of the Universe implies that there must be an Unchanging Supreme Brahman. It is described as something having a symmetry of symmetries—remote and pure. It is only from the departures from this symmetry that the laws of the observable Universe begin to exhibit themselves. The departures are said to arise from Maya, that which screens us from the

Supreme Reality. Creation is thus considered as a fall from an otherwise perfection, which either “was” or “will be” but never “is.”

Sankara has been criticized over the centuries, not for his logic as for the fact that his perception of Brahman is one that is remote, unresponsive and sterile. If we compare the Supreme-Symmetric Brahman of Sankara with the “Unification” proposals of modern physics, both show similarities. Both claim that it is the departure from symmetry that leads one to the laws of the measurable world. Given the necessary flexibility in interpreting an ancient exposition to compare with modern technical language, the parallel is striking. Both refer to a Supreme Origin of Symmetry, which takes no moral responsibility for what it can create.

The comparison between Sankara and modern physics is made, not because it is the intention to show that everything of modern science had been understood in the past by intuition, but just to indicate that there are other methods of thinking, to arrive at generalities. . . .

The very null type of resolutions to the problems of Quantum Mechanics would indicate that there is a break between knowledge based on measurement and things immeasurable, *i.e.*, life processes and consciousness. While we may never be able to demonstrate the Supreme Symmetry to which all knowledge leads us, that departures from it can lead us to a branch of knowledge known as science is not inconsistent with scientific ideas.

A British housewife, Pauline Shaw, has problems with electricity. She builds up electricity internally to such an extent that whenever she touches something electrical, she overloads it and fuses it. Since 1982, she has blown over £8,000 (Rs. 200,000) worth of electrical equipment, not to mention any number of lightbulbs. Sparks flash from her fingers as she reaches for the light switch and lightbulbs shatter if she tries to change them. Things have become so bad that if she strokes her dog, he yelps in pain. Friends and relations refuse to shake her hand, for fear of getting a shock. Shops fear her presence, as she disrupts their electrical equipment. Pauline's sensitivity to electricity has caused her to lose her job, as her firm was fed up with her trail of destruction. (*Parade*, September 1988)

Dr. Michael Shallis, a lecturer in Physical Sciences at Oxford University, was writing a book about people with electrical

problems when he read about Pauline's case in a newspaper. Dr. Shallis says:

Pauline isn't a freak at all. I have studied more than 60 cases in Britain of people with similar symptoms. In fact, I believe one in ten people have problems with static electricity—Pauline is just a more extreme example. . . .

We are all electrical creatures. We all have electro-magnetic fields surrounding our bodies. There are very complex electrical systems in every nerve and cell of our bodies. In people like Pauline those systems are over-active. . . .

Emotional tension is certainly a common thread that runs through the cases I have investigated. But apart from that we don't know why an attack should occur at a certain time.

According to Dr. Shallis, electricity problems usually develop at times of stress or great emotional upheaval. Pauline's difficulties began shortly after her father died, at a time when she had undergone a major operation.

It is now an established fact that living beings are both magnets and generators and that vital functions of humans, animals and plants involve small currents of electricity. However, "in the systems of certain people," says H.P.B., "the accumulation and secretion of electricity reach, under certain conditions, to a very high degree." Her article "Electric and Magnetic Affinities Between Man and Nature" (*She Being Dead Yet Speaketh*, pp. 176-183) gives instances of electromagnetically charged persons, and comments:

One thing we know, and that is, that the phenomena of electricity as well as those of heat and phosphorescence, within the animal body, depend on chemical actions; and that these take place in the system just as they would in a chemist's laboratory; ever modified by and subjected to this same mysterious Proteus—the Vital Principle, of which science can tell us *nothing*.

Recent research, based on a little known essay by Charles Darwin, would indicate that there is a relation between loneliness and ill-health. The research team at the Institute of Gerontology and Epidemiology at the University of Michigan investigated the links between social relationships and disease and discovered that, on the whole, gregarious people are healthier than those who choose, or are constrained, to live alone. In the West where more

and more people tend to live alone, loneliness has reportedly become a risk factor for life-threatening disease, high blood pressure, obesity, etc. (*The Times of India*, August 26)

These findings may seem to provide a therapeutic endorsement for the traditional Indian-style joint family system. However, it has yet to be established conclusively whether it is the living by oneself that causes illness, or the illness that prevents or inhibits social interaction. Further research and experiments dealing with the physical effects of emotional stress are expected to help evolve a method whereby the link between sociability and sickness can be understood better.

Scientists reported recently the finding of tiny tropical marine fossils more than 700 million years old, near the North Pole—a discovery which, they say, “opens a new window on the evolution of life in the earth’s distant past.” The unusual find of one-celled and multicellular micro-organisms comes from a time when “arctic regions were a landscape of percolating lagoons and warm tropical breezes.” (*Science Express*, August 16)

Harvard University biologist Andrew Knoll says that the fossils “are well-preserved marine deposits that show a wider range of diversity than what might have been expected for the period. What we are seeing is a much greater number of forms and a greater complexity. This gives us a better window on the time and also suggests that much of the evolution of morphological structural complexity, particularly in algae, may have occurred earlier than the fossil record had indicated before.”

Knoll and his colleagues reported their discovery in the British scientific journal *Nature*. The fossils are believed to be between 700 million and 800 million years old.

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

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PHOENIX, ARIZONA 85003, U.S.A.	77 West Encanto Boulevard
SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92105, U.S.A.	3766 El Cajon Boulevard
SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA 94114, U.S.A.	166 Sanchez Street
SANTA BARBARA, CALIFORNIA 93101, U.S.A.	326 West Sola Street
THE HAGUE, HOLLAND	Jacob Catsstraat 80, 2274 GX Voorburg
TORINO 10121, ITALY	Via G Giusti, ..
WASHINGTON, D.C., U.S.A.	8525 Colesville Road, Silver Spring, Maryland 2091
WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA 19380, U.S.A.	118 West Gay Street



