

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.

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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SEEKING THE IMPERSONAL

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MAN is the only product of evolution that can apprehend the phenomenal. Through this faculty he has been gathering a vast experience of matter and its various forms. But, as through millennia of practice he acquired facility in working with matter, he at the same time lost the position of a detached observer. He has become ever more attached to the sights and sounds of the external world, until today he rarely finds himself detached from the panorama which he witnesses. So, when the senses bring in impressions from the material world, these are not kept apart from the indwelling self as subjects for grave experiment. They filter through into man's consciousness and lodge therein, so that he may be said to ensoul them with a portion of his being. That particular sensation which has thus imprisoned a part of his consciousness now finds a dwelling in him and becomes a separative part of himself. It tones down his character to a lower key. It forms and feeds his personality. It becomes the rude arouser of *Ahamkara*.

All systems of mysticism, all attempts to reach to divinity must therefore postulate as the basis of progress the withdrawal of consciousness from all objects that attract or form attachments. The desire for comfort and safety, the hunger for growth and possessions, the craving for sense indulgence—all these form attachments; all these bind. They hinder the free play of consciousness and retard the movement onwards. Therefore, as long as the man submerges himself in sensation, so long he needs must remain oblivious of his true inner nature. The slightest mood of elation or depression has the effect of throwing him out of gear and he becomes for the time being a living negation of impersonality. It therefore follows that if one is to reach to the plane of Self, the personal has to be understood as the antithesis of the impersonal. The one state must remain obscured so long as the other is active.

They cannot coexist. The very nature of impersonality forbids it.

All aspects of selfishness and of vice are in the ultimate analysis a perpetuation of the personal. With these must also be classed that personal "impersonality" in which the outer trappings of impersonality are put on to mask a personal desire. But, whatever the form which the personal desire takes, it always implies the attempt to drag down an impersonal power to subserve a personal end.

How, then, does the impersonal move? What are the marks by which its manifestations may be recognized? Since the impersonal remains back of the personal, its movement is always an impelling from within outwards. The motivation comes from a plane where selfishness cannot exist and where it must needs be destroyed by the very essence of impersonal thought. Impersonality, therefore, does not merely imply the abandonment of a position or the assumption of a pose. It implies the pouring forth of the powers of a soul that has become unfettered. When the barrier of desires is passed, we come upon a belt of human consciousness where life is tranquil and where law moves, not through strife to virtue, but rather through its own momentum as does a liquid in finding its own level.

The impersonal man is, therefore, the man of duty, the man whose actions are regulated by moral fitness and essentially the man who is assiduous and controls his heart. The *Gita* describes the impersonal state by a beautiful simile:

And like the ocean, day by day receiving
Floods from all lands, which never overflows;
Its boundary-line not leaping, and not leaving,
Fed by the rivers, but unswelled by those;

So is the perfect one! to his soul's ocean
The world of sense pours streams of witchery,
They leave him as they find, without commotion,
Taking their tribute, but remaining sea.

Usually the student finds the initial difficulty of attaining to impersonality almost unsurmountable. His world is centred round himself. His sufferings and pains have a paramount claim on his attention. He is so centred in himself that he cannot shift the centre to his consciousness to embrace the wider interests of others. His elations and his depressions so ensnare him as to make him forget that beyond the barriers of his personality lie other realms where life follows a different pattern.

How, then, can one steeped in personality seek to understand impersonality? To use an analogy, how can one immersed in darkness understand or

evaluate light? The answer to this lies in the fact that darkness itself—unless total—is but a gradation of shadows. It is because we can distinguish shades in darkness that we can appreciate light. It is because in the heart of the greatest sinner there lurks the aspiration to be better that there is hope for man. Yet this spark of aspiration too often flickers and dies, buried under the ashes of a misspent life. To aspire higher is therefore the first step, yet the achievement of that aspiration may remain as distant to the man as the moon is to the child who wants to pluck it from the mirror in his hands. Aspiration without knowledge is like a windmill without wind—barren of results.

The search for the impersonal which is started by aspiration must therefore be sustained by study. We have to master the science of arcane knowledge before we can hope to practise its art. The Stanzas of the *Book of Dzyan* give the formula in the metaphysical language of science; *The Voice of the Silence* puts it in the great language of the Occult Arts. Both show us that we have to learn to know the supersensuous states in the same manner in which we know the sensuous, namely, through experience.

In order to achieve this, the man has to assume the role of a spectator of his own acts. He has to create within himself a centre to which he can always retire and from which he can look out upon the changing panorama as would a scientist engaged in grave experiment. The creation of this centre demands that the man forget himself, not, as is often supposed, in the stupor of the lotus-eater, but in the active life where the claims of others to one's service are paramount. The personal has to be effaced by the unrelenting effort of immolating it, laying it on the altar of another's advancement. It was this grand idea which was at the basis of all quests, allegorized variously in the quest of the Holy Grail and in the knightly legends of all nations.

When this quest is in part achieved, there appears before the aspirant the possibility of a holier search—the quest for the Eternal Man who resides as of yore in the complex structure that is man.

For the guidance of the student three questions may be formulated to act as reminders on the Path:

How long can I remain impersonal in my daily actions?

How long can I remember that I have to remain impersonal?

Do I rejoice in moments of impersonality with the same intensity as that with which I formerly exulted in being intensely personal?

THE wheel of Life and Time moves on and all the creatures die, but Life, Time, and the Self remain.

—SAGE OF RAJAGRIHA

THEOSOPHICAL STUDIES

[This article by W. Q. Judge appeared originally in *The Occult Word* for February-March 1887.]

Study all scriptures written near and far;
Worship all images and saints of earth;
But if you do not study who and what you are,
All your vast studies are as nothing worth.

THERE are a great many people who are always reading, reading, reading. They read each book that they can get hold of upon theosophical or occult subjects. Yet they do not seem to get on in their studies and so state with an air that seems to amount to an indictment of the thing they are studying.

Then there are others who are not known to read much, yet they seem to have a very complete grasp of the subject. I know two Theosophists, one of whom has read probably more than all the students in the Western Societies. He often refers to some new book just out, asking if we have read it. Yet he is hopelessly, at present, entangled in the vast net he has thrown around himself, composed almost wholly of the different ideas put forth by other minds, and has thus voluntarily placed himself under their domination. The other one has read but few books, just enough to know what theories are brought forward, yet he exhibits an extraordinary knowledge upon most Theosophical propositions and upon things not quite generally known.

What is the reason for this?

The reason is that truth is in fact very simple and quite on the surface, but most people prefer to bury it deep in a well, so that they may have the pleasure of digging for it.

There are a few general axiomatic propositions which should be applied in all directions, and with their aid most difficulties can be cleared away, and there is one great doctrine which overshadows them all, binding them together. This latter is the doctrine of universal brotherhood. It should not be merely accepted as a great and high idea—so great in fact that it cannot be understood—but constant inquiry should be made by all earnest people to find out its actual, logical and scientific basis. For if it has no such basis, then it ought to be abandoned as a mere illusion, a mere juggle with words.

"Of making many books there is no end," has been very well said of old. It is easy to *make* a book, but it is difficult to *write* one. To make one all that has to be done is to read enough of those formerly written and then cast it all into your own language. There are too many books thus made up and cast forth upon theosophical waters, to the confusion of the poor student. Why read all these? There are many of them full of the misconceptions of their authors, who, although sincere, are themselves struggling to get into clear air.

But all this prevalence of authorship has produced in our people a habit of desiring more books, and a resulting disregard for what has been written of

old time. Humanity has not changed much in many ages, and has always been pursuing its investigations, leaving behind it a record. But in the lapse of time the only books which endure are those which contain truth, and are thus *real books*. And we in this age are ceaselessly and needlessly writing and reading as those of the past ages did, with the same inevitable result: that our *real books* will in the end be identical with those now left to us as a heritage from the past. So we ought to turn to those old books and with their aid *look within!* And in order to use them, all we have to do is by a careful preliminary study to come to comprehend the position of their authors, so that what at first appears strange in their writings will soon take on a different meaning, enabling us to see that, "that small, old path leading far away on which the sages walk," has been all found and pointed out to us with infinite care and pains, by the sometimes despised sages of eastern lands.

But even all this good study if not combined with practice is "nothing worth." It is time thrown away. And that practice does not consist in forming secret or exclusive bodies either in or out of the Theosophical Society. Such so-called "exclusive" bodies are known to exist, but the excluded ones need not have any regret. Those exclusive of others are not practising; they are not finding out anything of real profit; nor will their studies come to much more than dust and ashes in the mouth, for they are ignoring universal Brotherhood, and the great law, that "*the first step in true magic is devotion to the interests of others.*"

So we come to the last words of the first verse, that we must *study ourselves*. To do that we must help others and study them. The great Self, which is the fountain and giver of all knowledge and power, is reflected in every man, and the wise student cannot afford to ignore the plain deduction that our first effort must be to remove from our minds the sense of being separate from any other person, his deeds or his thoughts. This is said to be a difficult task; but that difficulty arises on the one hand from selfishness and on the other from a natural averseness to accepting such a simple solution.

It is in fact not possible for us to gain from others. We cannot be told truths which do not already potentially exist in ourselves. We may hear them but they pass by and leave no trace. This is what Jesus meant when he said: "To him that hath shall be given"; and in the Hermetic philosophy it is stated: "Do not think that I tell you what you know not; I only tell what you knew before."

It is therefore better to take up two or three books such as *Isis Unveiled*, the *Bhagavad-Gita* and *Light on the Path*, study them with care and allow their influence to cause the old knowledge within to revive, and the good seeds left over from past lives to germinate and grow into noble trees.

THE BUDDHA ON RIGHT CONDUCT

THEOSOPHY reiterates that the teachings of all Great Teachers are the same in essence. There is little difference between the teachings of Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and those of the Buddha in the *Dhammapada*, in the *Sutta-Nipata*, in his numerous sermons and sayings, and in *The Voice of the Silence*, which too is a Buddhistic text. The principles of life and conduct and the propositions of philosophy that these texts offer are identical with those of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

An article in the September 1990 issue of this magazine, "The Gita Way of Living," mentioned the fivefold prescription that the *Bhagavad-Gita* offers to each one of us so that we may live out our lives rightly and worthily. These five guides to right conduct are: (1) Do not perform actions that are evil. (2) Duty is that which it is necessary for us to perform; that which is not necessary is not duty. (3) Do not run away from unpleasant duties, nor fancy that to be a duty merely because the doing of it brings pleasure. (4) Do not undertake the duties of another, for that is dangerous. (5) In discharging duties, do not be concerned with the results; do that which has to be done without looking for reward.

Whether in our personal life or in our public life of service, these five principles of action and of conduct provide a firm ground for us to stand upon. They are to be found in the *Bhagavad-Gita* as in all other great scriptures. This article examines them by the light of the teachings of the Master Gautama Buddha.

(1) Do not perform actions that are evil. This is the first proposition that every teacher of soul-science has taught. All of us readily agree that we must desist from evil, but much confusion arises when we ask, "What is evil?" Our standards of judgment, and the values we assign to events and ideas in terms of good and evil, vary considerably. Barring a small minority who deliberately indulge in wrong and evil, and who knowingly follow the path of error and crime, people as a rule do that which they consider to be right. Often they err, so to speak against their will. Most of us are not wicked when we blunder and err; we are foolish and heedless and commit mistakes unconsciously to ourselves. This is because most of us do not have a philosophy of life at our command. We carry on the serious business of life without adequate knowledge. We are navigating on the ocean of life without chart and compass, and so we come to grief; and those who do not, belong to two classes. The first class consists of those who muddle through to life's end without coming to serious wreck and ruin, but they have not learnt what life means. The second class is made up of those who have a philosophy of life, who have a chart and compass and who learn from every experience and use every event as an opportunity

for self-improvement and self-enlightenment.

Theosophy is a gauge to life; it is the standard footrule with which actions can be measured and the correct value assigned to them. Krishna taught Theosophy, so did the Buddha, so did Jesus. Its modern presentation is to be found in the works of H. P. Blavatsky. Let us see what the Theosophy of the Buddha has to say on this proposition of evil, of wrongdoing.

The Buddha says:

Evil swells the debts to pay,
Good delivers and acquits;
Shun evil, follow good; hold sway
Over thyself. This is the Way.

In this short verse from *The Light of Asia*, almost an epigram, we get the whole truth. Why should we shun evil and do good? Because evil forges the fetters of suffering and sorrow, while the doing of good delivers and acquits the human soul from the bondage of suffering. And how is evil to be shunned and good to be followed? Says the verse, "Hold sway over thyself; this is the Way."

But what is good and what is evil? What has the Buddha to say on this? There is a metaphysical or philosophical answer, but if we follow the Buddha's practical manner of presenting his teachings, we should not begin with metaphysics. Each one of us knows now and here what to us is good and evil; the Buddha always began with each aspirant at the very place where the aspirant stood. There are varied views about good and evil, but the Buddha gives a principle which each one of us can apply to what we call evil or good. His prescription is: (1) Do not do that which you consider to be wrong and evil. (2) When you catch yourself doing wrong, stop and do not continue. (3) Develop the longing to do good. (4) Hasten to do good and repeat it. These are the actual verses from *The Dhammapada*:

A man should hasten towards the good; he should restrain his evil thoughts; if he is slack in doing good, his mind inclines to delight in evil.

If a man commits sin, let him not continue in it. Let him not set his heart on it. Painful is the accumulation of evil conduct.

If a man does what is good, let him do it again and again. Let him set his heart on it. Happiness is the outcome of good conduct. (Verses 116, 117, 118)

These are deep psychological truths, but like all profound truths they are simple and self-evident. Who in his senses does not see that evil must be shunned, good must be pursued; that when evil arises it must be checked and countered, and when good arises it must be fostered and nourished? Yet

people do not follow this because there are two unimportant-looking statements in these quotations which are not taken note of. They are not unimportant in fact. In the verse from *The Light of Asia*, we are told: "Hold sway over thyself." An extension of the idea is in one of the verses from *The Dhammapada*, quoted above: "A man...should restrain his evil thoughts." Evil and good arise in the *mind*; they show themselves in speech or action, but the seeds of both good and evil are in the mind. Therefore, if we want to hold sway over ourselves we must begin with the mind. People try to be careful about what they say and what they do; yet they do not succeed because they neglect the right control of their thoughts. The battlefield is not actions nor words; mind is the field and the lower animal in us fights the higher divine in us, and actions and words are but weapons, mere instruments. That is why *The Voice of the Silence* tells us: "The Mind is the great Slayer of the Real. Let the Disciple slay the Slayer." And yet it is said: "Mind is like a mirror; it gathers dust while it reflects. It needs the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions. Seek, O Beginner, to blend thy Mind and Soul." The mind must not be allowed to be conquered by evil; the Soul must annex the battlefield of mind and prove itself the victor.

Most people blunder, not through innate wickedness, but because they act thoughtlessly. They do not pay attention to their conscience, nor calmly consult their Souls. People act because they like to act; and our likes and dislikes are not proper guides. Conscience is the guide; the Soul is the guide. Conscience and Soul, however, are not one and the same. They are two distinct aspects of our human constitution. Conscience gives us a warning against evil, but it is not able to tell us what to do. Conscience is the voice of the accumulated experiences of the earthly individual; the Soul is divine and celestial and has the power to tell us what to do. In doing all actions—and speech, too, is a form of action—we ought to consult our Conscience as also our Soul. We do not do so because we are swayed by our attachments and aversions, by our likes and dislikes, by our loves and hates. We are swayed by our feelings and desires and emotions, and these are rooted in Kama, says the *Gita*; in Tanha, says the Buddha. Kama and Tanha are longings, yearnings of the lower personal self. That lower self has to be checked; we have to hold sway over it and this can only be done by keeping watch and ward over our daily actions. The Buddha, therefore, teaches that a person should not speak before he has consulted his mind; he should not perform any actions without a previous consultation with the mind.

Kama, Tanha, our many desires, constitute the Mara in us, says the Buddha. Mara is the Evil One, the Devil, the Tempter. And the Great Master says that we should be on our guard against Temptation:

Think not lightly of evil, saying, "it will not come unto me." Even a water-pot is filled by the constant falling of drops of water. A fool becomes full of evil if he gathers it little by little. (Verse 121)

How shall we avoid temptation save by consulting Conscience and Soul? We must watch, "with calmness ever present," our own inclinations, our own likes and dislikes, and we must refuse to be swayed by them. As we watch, as we examine ourselves, we will find that we have been indulging in actions that were not our business; that we have not always performed actions that were duties. Our words and actions were not always the results of our duty; we did that which we need not have done. On the other hand, that which we should have done has been neglected. And so we come to the second of our guides to right conduct.

(2) *Duty is that which it is necessary for us to do.* There is a great deal of confusion about duty. A simple definition is: Duty is that which we owe to others, or to ourselves; it is the discharge of a debt; it is that which it is necessary for us to do. That which is not necessary is *not* our duty. The temptation to sin and evildoing begins here; it can be checked by our asking ourselves every time: "Is it *necessary* for me to say this or to do that?" This proposition is simple to understand but difficult to practise. Our whole bringing-up, our education, the tendency of our civilization, is towards the unnecessary. The value of necessity as a virtue of the mind is not recognized, and the function of the mind as a controller of desires and passions is not correctly understood. People do say that mind must be used to control the lower tendencies, but it is not at all recognized that unless the Soul, as a distinct entity, is made to energize the mind, the latter is bound to fall prey to desires and passions. So, to avoid doing evil and committing blunders, let us apply the law of necessity in all that we say or do. That brings us to our third proposition.

(3) *Do not run away from duties.* We often run away from duties that are irksome and unpleasant. The temptation to do that which gives pleasure and to avoid that which is unpleasant is a general phenomenon and all recognize it. But people do not always probe that which they superficially recognize and therefore they are not able to fully comprehend and practise the lesson in daily life. What is this force in our being that produces this phenomenon, and how can it be handled and controlled? The Buddha has gone to the root of this pleasant-unpleasant phenomenon which affects the life of every human being. The *Dhammapada* verse says:

He who gives himself to unbecoming sense-pleasures and not to fitting reflection, gives up his own welfare; going after pleasures, he envies the man who exerts himself in higher knowledge and meditation. (Verse 209)

Once again we find in this verse a full philosophy, a complete set of principles of action. When attractions towards the pleasant arise, when aversion in the performance of duty which is unpleasant arises, our guide is the higher knowledge, our tempter is the sensual pleasure. That which it is necessary to do, be it pleasant or unpleasant, must be done. We can decide what is necessary by consulting the philosophy of life, the science of the Soul. Take counsel with such a text as the *Gita*, or the *Dhammapada*, or *The Voice of the Silence*. It is a mistake to act just according to one's own instincts, impulses, reasoning. Within each one of us is both God and Devil, Christ and Satan, Buddha and Mara. It is foolishness and arrogance to fancy that without light and guidance one can find the Path to that inner peace which passeth all understanding. The Light of the immemorial and ancient East, which is to be found in modern Theosophy, enables us to find the God within, to recognize and defeat the Evil within. "Be ye lamps unto yourselves," said the Buddha—but how? *The Voice of the Silence* gives the steps:

Shun ignorance, and likewise shun illusion. Avert thy face from world deceptions: mistrust thy senses; they are false. But within thy body—the shrine of thy sensations—seek in the Impersonal for the "Eternal Man"; and having sought him out, look inward: thou art Buddha. (pp. 28-29)

Not merely by looking within shall we come upon the Buddha or the Krishna, or the Christ. We have to do some preliminary spade work—with our ignorance and our illusion produced by our senses. We have to look for the Impersonal and the Eternal within ourselves, hemmed in though it is by a hundred lusts and longings. So the pleasant and the unpleasant *duties* have to be discharged and the rest has to be left alone. But something else too has to be left alone, which brings us to our next point.

(4) *Do not undertake the duties of another.* All of us interfere with the tasks and duties of another, for some reason, on some plea. Not just out of mischief, not even out of selfishness do people interfere with the duties of others. There is the itch to meddle with other people's problems when we are not sure of the solution of our own problems, in our own life. The same wise rule of necessity ought to be applied. This point about interference in the lives of others offers a wide field for comment. Family life, social life, national and international life, are all affected adversely because the principle is not recognized that interference in the duty of another is dangerous; that right help and right service of others require knowledge of a high order. That service is right when help and advice is given *impersonally*, and when that help and advice enables the recipient to act correctly by and for himself. Not only right motive but also right method in giving help and rendering service is required.

It is easy to see that evil must be eschewed; it is imperative to define duty as that which it is necessary to perform, neither running away from unpleasant duties nor inventing "duties" rooted in our own sense-longings; it is necessary to avoid interference in the duties of another. But the most important is the way in which our real duties have to be discharged.

(5) *In performing duties, do not be concerned with the results.* Ours is a commercial civilization and calculation in terms of profit or loss is the order of the day. On every occasion, in planning this or doing that, we ask, "What shall I gain? How will it affect me?" Our desire to produce one result or to avoid another blinds us, and if we do not see our own duties it is because our mind loses itself in our longing and yearning to obtain one thing or to avoid another. The important thing in life is not what we gain or lose, but how we gain or lose it. Theosophy teaches that which the *Gita* teaches: Do your duty by every duty. Our business is with the action only, not with its fruits; therefore, having determined our duty, whatever it be, let us perform it and leave the results to themselves. Our worry, our anxiety, our fear—all the excitements of life—fall away and a confidence and peace reign in our minds and hearts when we see the strength of this philosophical proposition. What a different world it would be if a courageous and confident attitude born of this principle of conduct were adopted! But it cannot be adopted because the guiding philosophy is not there.

And so in closing we come to the important point of Right Philosophy. Unless we give our minds true knowledge, we cannot have right principles to live our lives. What shall we do with our own life, if not control the lower, unfold the higher, and let the Spirit shine forth? We need a philosophy of conduct which can be used day by day. We need a code of knowledge which we can use hour by hour to prescribe for every ailment, to develop every soul-muscle. Theosophy is such a body of knowledge, for many who have tried that philosophy have found it practical. And it is not a cold philosophy of life; it is a Living Philosophy with a warm, compassionate heart. The heart of that Living Philosophy is the Living Philosopher. There are Those who have mastered death and have therefore known the secrets of life; and because They have mastered death we call them Masters of Life, who ever and always act with Wisdom. They never control or interfere with human beings, for They labour impersonally, cycle after cycle, loving all so profoundly and so truly that They render service by enabling each soul to unfold its own glory. They are the Fathers and Mothers of the human race which They nourish; They are the Elder Brothers and Friends of us all; They are our real Knowledge and real Wealth; They are our all in all!

BASIC IDEAS

H.P.B. defined Deity as the only eternal and living reality, everything else being finite, conditioned, transitory and therefore illusionary. This Deity is the one ever-existing Root Essence, immutable and unknowable to our physical senses, but manifest and clearly perceptible to our spiritual nature. That basic idea and the further conception that if it is omnipresent, universal, and eternal like abstract Space itself, we must have emanated from it and must some day return into it, helps us in the understanding of all the rest. The impersonality of Deity is so basic an idea that it pervades and underlies the entire system of thought that H.P.B. put before the world.

The concept of God or Deity has undergone a radical change in recent times and there are many who are discarding the traditional ideas of a Personal God who can be prayed to and propitiated. Religions are passing through a very bewildering period and the beliefs and certainties of the past have been openly challenged. In this, as in other spheres, Theosophical ideas which have been circulating in the thought-atmosphere of the world for well-nigh a century have had their effect.

That which divides the sectarian sacerdotal religions from the unifying philosophical Religion is the Personal-God notion. The One Impersonal Reality thus degraded into numerous jealous and competing gods has transformed the one pure Wisdom-Religion into many conflicting creeds, one humanity into various opposing clans. Only by destroying the false notion and substituting the true idea of an impersonal Deity can one restore brotherliness among the clans and unity among the creeds.

Belief in a Personal God has so warped our thinking and retarded our moral-spiritual progress that it has been called the "soul of all vices." H.P.B.'s chief aim was to teach us virtue for its own sake, and self-reliance instead of leaning on a theological crutch that for countless ages was the direct cause of nearly all human misery. To believe that God can purge us of our sins is an indolent and selfish weakness that makes us lose the spurs to activity and initiative. The correct view of the human soul as a ray of the spirit, immortal in essence and inseparably linked with all others, depends on the correct view of Deity as the One Life. The false notion of a Personal God hinders us at every turn. Egotism is the manifestation in human nature of the Personal-God notion. Restore to man the correct knowledge about Deity and he will enthrone Soul as an active potency in his own heart.

H.P.B. tells us in *Isis Unveiled* that when she first journeyed to the East two questions kept oppressing her thoughts—"Where, who, what is God?"

and "Who ever saw the immortal Spirit of man, so as to be able to assure himself of man's immortality?" Those who search, find. It was then that she met the Sages of the Orient who taught her that man's own immortal spirit proves God-spirit as one drop of water proves the ocean. When one sees mortal man in possession of vast powers and knowledge, able to control the forces of nature, which open up to view the world of Spirit, one reasons that if man's spiritual Ego can do so much, the capabilities of the Father Spirit must be greater by as much as the ocean surpasses the drop of water. So, "prove the soul of man by its wondrous powers—you have proved God!"

We find certain universal ideas common to all the world's great minds, in all times and races and countries. One of these ideas is the intuition of our own immortality. It is one of the great initial ideas impressed on the plastic minds of early humanity by the Planetary Spirits who guided its childhood, till the age of its responsibility should arrive. This consciousness of our own undyingness is the very central point of our existence.

The personal idea of the human personality is rooted in the idea of a Personal God. Belief in an extra-cosmic, anthropomorphic God deludes a person into regarding himself as separate from all others, which, in its turn, must logically cause him to look upon himself as nothing more than an ephemeral flame that is burning itself out with the life of the body.

The importance to the world of the teaching of the immortality of the soul lies in this that it changes the whole concept of man, his mission on earth, his final destiny. Connected with the idea of immortality is that of life after death and of Reincarnation and Karma. Thinking the limited personality of the present incarnation to be the man himself leads to the mistaking of unrealities for realities in all walks of life. Hence the importance of the study of Theosophy which enables us to see the real Self in us, distinct and apart from its vehicles. Life can then be seen in its true proportions.

The immortality of the soul leads us to accept the fact of its unfoldment. The growth of the soul in turn leads us to the fact of the existence of the Mahatmas, Great Souls, who unveil the glory of Greater Souls in ever-ascending scale—the ladder above, as also the ladder of souls descending which has its base in the lower kingdoms of nature. Masters are essential facts in our soul-evolution, and unless the conviction is born in us that without Their aid and intermediation we as human souls cannot realize our identity with the Universal Soul, we do not make practical effort at hastening our evolution.

The reviving of the ancient teaching about the existence of a Fraternity

of Perfected Souls was perhaps the most important purpose of H.P.B.'s mission. The truth that Mahatmas are Living Men, who by special training and self-purification have evolved those higher faculties and attained that spiritual knowlegde which it will take ordinary humanity many incarnations to acquire, is not merely of academic interest but has an immense practical value for us now and here in our daily existence. For, what man has done, man can do. The existence of Perfected Men endowed with power over space, time, mind and matter, holds out to us the sublime hope that we, too, each one of us, can take our evolution into our own hands and reach the status They have reached.

This truth that H.P.B. gave out calls for a complete reorientation of our thinking, a reversal of the accepted order of evolution from animal savagery to the present "enlightened" era. There were many who doubted and derided her, but it was important for the world to recognize that there are Those who are watching over and helping the progress of humanity in general and of those in particular who are endeavouring earnestly and unselfishly to become Their Companions and to serve Their Cause. There is the inspiring idea of a mighty "Wall of Protection" which the collective efforts of generations of Adepts, Mahatmas and Nirmanakayas have built around humankind and which shields us invisibly "from further and far greater misery and sorrow."

It was also important for the world to know that in the safe custody of these Perfected Men is the "accumulated Wisdom of the Ages." They have kept the Torch of Truth ever burning in the world, and from time to time one among them comes out publicly to give out portions of that Truth according to the requirements of the cycle.

H.P.B. came at a cyclic juncture when the world was ready to receive the further teaching that the institution of Chelaship exists today, as it has existed in the past, and that the Masters are always willing to establish relationship with human souls who are ready, and to make these souls Their chelas.

H.P.B. made it clear that the Master is not to be found outside of us; we must turn within and try to find the image of the Teacher burnt into our own spiritual consciousness. In our higher nature we already know and feel Him. Realization of the fact that there are these inherent ideas within our own souls will lead us to seek the Guru whose very task it is to assist us to unfold those ideas to the full.

LIGHT OF SPIRITUAL PERCEPTION

You will enter the light, but you will never touch the flame.

—*Light on the Path*

WILLIAM Q. Judge, in the very first chapter of his *Notes on the Bhagavad-Gita*, formulates his line of enquiry thus:

What I propose here to myself and to all who may read these papers is, to study the *Bhagavad-Gita* by the light of that spiritual lamp—be it small or great—which the Supreme Soul will feed and increase within us if we attend to its behests and diligently inquire after it. Such at least is the promise by Krishna in the *Bhagavad-Gita*—the Song Celestial.

This Light is called "*Varenyam*" in the *Gayatri* sloka, signifying "most excellent" and, therefore, worthy of being striven after. It is the only Light which frees one from the darkness of ignorance and illusion in which one lives. It is the Light of *Savita*, the Central Spiritual Sun, of which *The Secret Doctrine* writes at length in several passages.

"The Sun is the heart of the Solar World (System) and its brain is hidden behind the (visible) Sun. From thence, sensation is radiated into every nerve-centre of the great body, and the waves of the life-essence flow into each artery and vein....The planets are its limbs and pulses...."(Commentary)

Occult philosophy denies that the Sun is a globe in combustion, but defines it simply as a world, a glowing sphere, the *real* Sun being hidden behind, and the visible being only its reflection, its *shell*....The Sun *in abscondito* is thus the storehouse of our little Kosmos, self-generating its vital fluid, and ever receiving as much as it gives out, and the *visible* Sun only a *window cut into the real* Solar palace and presence, which reflects, however, faithfully the interior work. (I, 541)

Esoteric philosophy maintains that during the *Sandhyas*, the "Central Sun" emits *creative light*—passively so to say. *Causality* is latent. It is only during the active periods of being that it gives rise to a stream of ceaseless energy, whose vibrating currents acquire more activity and potency with every rung of the hebdomadic ladder of Being which they descend. Hence it becomes comprehensible how the process of *creating*, or rather of fashioning, the organic Universe, with all its units of the seven kingdoms, necessitated intelligent beings—who became collectively a Being or creative God—differentiated already from the one absolute Unity, unrelated as the latter is to conditioned creation. (II, 239)

This is *Surya* or *Loka Chakshuh*, the "Eye of the World," which in the Vedas is depicted as the Godhead of Supreme Truth and Knowledge, the

Lord of Light. His two functions are: luminous vision and luminous creation. *The Secret Doctrine* further describes the Central Sun as an unseen point in sidereal space, which constantly attracts our solar system. It is "the centre of Rest; the centre to which all motion was to be ultimately referred" (II, 240). As the earth is attracted to the sun in our solar system, so is our sun attracted to a more remote centre around which it revolves.

Not until we have a knowledge of the sixth state of matter can we have an understanding of the nature of *Savita*, the Central Spiritual Sun. This means that one has to wait till the "*prabodha samaya*," to use Shankara's phrase, or the awakening of Buddhi. To achieve this, let us, on the lines of analogy, work backward from the kamic vehicle to the lighting up of Manas, eighteen million years ago. As *The Secret Doctrine* says, Manas is endowed by the "Host" or Group of Creative Powers who represent "the spirit of our visible sun." Another Group, representing the equatorial Sun, cement Buddhi to Atman and the higher attributes of Manas; and a still higher Group (the polar Sun), together with the Central Spiritual Sun, radiate on man his Atman (II, 241). Pursuing along this vital channel upward within his being, man gradually realizes the *Kshetrajna* within, which we may rightly call "the soul's spiritual sun."

This spiritual perception is possible, says Patanjali in his Yoga Aphorisms, when the mind is sufficiently purified by righteous living and yogic self-discipline:

Until this perfect discriminative knowledge is attained, there results from these practices which are conducive to concentration, an illumination more or less brilliant which is effective for the removal of impurity. (II, 28)

So the aspirant needs *Viveka* or Buddhist discrimination, until he crosses the threshold of Nirvana. Patanjali calls this light "*Jnanadipta*," which is essentially of the nature of spiritual perception. This enables the aspirant to enter the Path, guides him through the different stages of the long and difficult journey, and guards him against dangers and temptations of all kinds; and it is this light which again enables him to tear off the last veil which hides him from the face of the true Spiritual Sun. This idea is clearly given in the two verses of the *Isa Upanishad*:

The face of Truth (Brahman in the solar orb) is concealed with a golden vessel. Do thou, O Sun, open it so that I, who am devoted to Truth, may behold it.

O thou, who art the nourisher, the solitary traveller, the controller, the acquirer, the son of Prajapati, do spread out and bring together thy rays. May I behold that form of thine which is the most benign! I am the very Person that is yonder in the Sun. (Verses 15, 16)

The golden vessel hiding the Truth is our mind, and *Viveka* or *Buddhi* is an expression of the spiritual consciousness which is hidden behind the mind. If *Viveka* or discrimination is real, it gives a sufficiently strong urge to the aspirant to take to the path of Yoga and adopt its discipline. But, in the majority of mankind, it is not sufficiently definite to lead one on to the light on the path and to provide one with necessary guidance in the mysterious region beyond. The sage Patanjali, in the *sutra* quoted, gives that guidance by instructing the aspirant that the light is within him, the *Jnanadipta*, spiritual illumination. This light of spiritual consciousness, akin to intuition, but more definite in its working, appears only when the impurities of the mind have been destroyed as a result of self-discipline.

There is no single royal road to lead us to that light; for every individual is unique and has his own way of treading the Path. *Light on the Path* puts this beautifully: "Each man is to himself absolutely the way, the truth, and the life." All cannot and should not be forced into the same mould. Nature does not recognize man-made distinctions, such as the different religious codes; for the very purpose of endowing man with the discriminating faculty is to enable him to have a clear and firm grasp of the fundamental principles and develop sufficient intelligence to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. Amidst the encircling gloom of different ideals of life placed before us, amidst the medley of voices which speak to us from the distant past, amidst the conflicting philosophies of the East and the West, and amidst a bewildering variety of techniques for the unfoldment of our spiritual nature, we must learn to tread carefully, to adopt a balanced, sane and dynamic attitude, to pick and choose wisely, and to pursue an undeviating line, without being sidetracked from the right Path.

For, even as we are fixing our attention on the light of spiritual wisdom, we have to be wary of other "lights" as well, of which *The Voice of the Silence* warns:

Beware, Lanoo, lest dazzled by illusive radiance thy Soul should linger and be caught in its deceptive light. This light shines from the jewel of the Great Ensnarer (Mara). The senses it bewitches, blinds the mind, and leaves the unwary an abandoned wreck. The moth attracted to the dazzling flame of thy night-lamp is doomed to perish in the viscid oil....

Thy Soul-gaze centre on the One Pure Light, the Light that is free from affection, and use thy golden Key.

The Path is steep and winds uphill; and grey mists overhang its rough and stony height. But "the path that leadeth on is lighted by one fire—the light of daring, burning in the heart." That alone is our guide to help us on to the Dhyana Path, "the haven of the Yogi, the blessed goal that Srotapattis crave."

This may all sound poetic, but the instructions of *The Voice of the Silence*, dedicated to "the few," are not so easy of practical application by all and sundry. Meditation is required on what is given to us, and one should not expect any easy results but should reconcile oneself to a slow progress commensurate with one's efforts. What is the aim of *Dhyana* or meditation, and how is it realized? In general terms, it may be stated that *Dhyana* is the means to get at the reality or truth hidden behind any form, idea or ideal, conceived on the plane of the intellect. Its essential nature consists, therefore, in going behind the veil of outer appearances and knowing things as they are in truth and reality. The two objectives of *Dhyana* are: to tackle the outer form that embodies an inner reality, and to go behind the form, not by breaking the mirror, which only reflects the image, but by transcending the form. As *The Voice of the Silence* puts it so elegantly:

When to himself his form appears unreal, as do on waking all the forms he sees in dreams...then only, not till then, shall he forsake the region of Asat, the false, to come unto the realm of Sat, the true.

In dreams, things appear by the light of one's own Self, and so it is in our waking state as well. We do not see things rightly merely by our eyes; we need the help of the Self, which is beyond the sleep of delusion, which is beginningless, the unborn, the sleepless, the dreamless, the One without a second. This, in short, is the Dawn of Awakening (*prabodha samaya*), the light of spiritual perception.

PHILOSOPHY (nature) is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes—I mean the universe—but we cannot understand it as we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols in which it is written. The book is written in mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles and other geometrical figures, without whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it; without which one wanders in vain through a dark labyrinth.

—GALILEO GALILEI

THE TRUE PHILOSOPHER

The true philosopher, the student of the Esoteric Wisdom, entirely loses sight of personalities, dogmatic beliefs and special religions.

—S.D., I, xx

THIS sentence from *The Secret Doctrine* is well worth meditating upon. It states, in a few words, the whole basis of true Theosophical understanding. To be attached to any form of conceptual thought is detrimental to any real progress in Occultism. This will also, of course, refer to the dead-letter study of even Theosophical books. We are told time and time again by all the great teachers of the world that book-learning is not enough, yet we often succeed in convincing ourselves that it is. We gain a great deal of satisfaction from a correct mental interpretation of the message given to us by the Theosophical Mahatmas, but this may or may not signify anything in itself. Outer understanding may veil inner sterility. A balance needs to be struck between the "eye" doctrine and the "heart" doctrine. There may be many who imagine that they have mastered the various problems of life, but are in fact only hiding behind a mask formed of their own personal viewpoints on the Path of Occultism.

The true philosopher will strive constantly to master the seeming complexities of the teachings, but will also be fully aware that Truth cannot be captured by words or even by thought. His gratitude towards the Teachers will be unbounded as he will realize the part They have played in awakening his "benumbed" soul to its inherent Oneness with all other apparently separate souls. This realization forms the basis of all genuine attempts to bring to the world in a practical manner a Universal Brotherhood of humanity regardless of race, creed, sex, caste or colour. All attempts without this essential comprehension are destined to end in varying degrees of failure, as they are sure to take on some unnatural "colouring" because of the presence of one or more dominant religious, philosophical or political ideas that necessarily preclude other ideas that may be in conflict with the ideals of the various protagonists.

Therefore strict impersonality is a prerequisite to any serious efforts to reawaken the "Golden Age" in the heart of humanity as a whole.

Vain are the thousand creeds
That move men's hearts: unutterably vain;
Worthless as withered weeds,
Or idlest froth amid the boundless main,
To waken doubt in one
Holding so fast by Thine infinity;

So surely anchor'd on
The steadfast rock of immortality.

This extract from the poem "Last Lines" by Emily Bronte shows that the inward eye of the poet grasps Truths that most intellectuals may miss as a result of their preoccupation with particulars rather than with Universals. It is true that all creeds are vain and can only lead, so far as gaining true insight into Theosophical ideals is concerned, to the inevitable *cul-de-sac*.

We must always try to honour truth by use. We may pore over volumes of works by all the great Initiates of the world, still become not a mite more understanding of our fellow human beings. Do we read these teachings because of a desire to ease the pain of humanity, or do we thirst for knowledge that will set us apart from others and make of us great scholars or orators? An interesting incident in the life of H.P.B. was recorded by one of her pupils, Alice Leighton Cleather, in a book entitled *H. P. Blavatsky As I Knew Her*. This particular extract illustrates the vast difference in consciousness between an intellectual and one having truly spiritual insight into the plight of our fellow men. Mrs. Cleather refers to H.P.B.'s return from a drive in Hyde Park:

Never shall I forget her return from that drive; Mrs. Cooper-Oakley and I were in the double drawing room when she entered, followed by the Countess [Wachtmeister], in what seemed to be almost a passion; but it was a passion of *grief*. She walked up and down the room, the tears streaming down her face, ejaculating from time to time: "Not a Soul among them—not *one*!" It was a heart-cry of grief, a poignant illustration—and *my* first sight—of that "helpless pity for the men of karmic sorrow" (of which I had only just read in *The Voice of the Silence*) felt by those Great Ones who through countless lives have worked for the redemption of humanity.

This intense compassion which is cultivated by a lessening of the feeling of separateness between ourselves and others is the only true feeling that is worth striving for in this "world of illusion." It is the only way that we may gain admittance to the Holy Brotherhood of Adepts. It is the sole gateway through which we may pass to find companionship with the Brotherhood of Bodhisattvas. But beware! We must "first deserve, then desire" intimacy with the Masters, and if such an intimacy is our reason for studying Occultism, then we may be sadly disappointed. These exalted beings have so identified themselves with humanity as a whole that nothing but a truly altruistic frame of mind can have any claim on their attention. The true philosopher will have identified this object as the real purpose of his studies and all other ideals will be subservient to that one.

Otherwise the aspirant is, to all intents and purposes, merely playing games, many of them extremely dangerous ones that may result in a fall into the realms of black magic. "Occultism Versus the Occult Arts" (reprinted in *Raja-Yoga or Occultism*) by H.P.B. is the definitive article on this matter and is invaluable to the serious student who wishes to understand the pitfalls that may present themselves to him or her, during the quest of the "Holy Grail," or whatever term one may use for the distant goal. It is well worth reading that article time and time again.

Progress along these lines is marked by a gradual increase in fellow feeling with other human beings. We shall identify more fully with the sufferings and joys of humanity without being consumed by those emotions. We shall find that we can learn from even the humblest person and that even a blade of grass has something to say. Such an attitude of mind may be difficult to achieve and many may be the disappointments on the way; but, in spite of all this, the illumination cast on the darkest corners of the soul will make the task well worth the effort. The true philosopher will be unconcerned with the acquiring of occult knowledge with the intention of developing mystical powers or for the intellectual stimulation it gives. He will have the benefit of humanity at heart and will be keen to ease the suffering of others who are languishing as a result of their ignorance of the true meaning of existence. They struggle through a life that appears to have no real purpose, so they are determined to get what they can out of it before they are snuffed out like a candle, even if it means trampling on others. They are unaware of the workings of karma and the fact of reincarnation and do not realize the complicated web they are weaving. The duty of every Theosophist should be to try to enlighten them as to the correct way in which to live in order to minimize the effects of their own actions.

THE construction of a full and permanent peace must come from the labour of all people of goodwill. I speak of a solid and fertile peace based on truth, justice and the respect of another's rights. Peace, we must remember, consists of harmony between the cultures and the races as well as co-operation between the peoples of the world. And there can be no peace on Earth if we are not in peace *with* Earth.

—RODRIGO CARAZO ODIO

THOUGHTS ON CONSCIOUSNESS

EGO: "Self"; the consciousness in man "I am I"—or the feeling of "I-am-ship." Esoteric philosophy teaches the existence of two *Egos* in man, the mortal or *personal*, and the Higher, the Divine and the Impersonal, calling the former "personality" and the latter "Individuality."

—*The Theosophical Glossary*

THERE is but one Consciousness, one Self. It appears as many because it masquerades as the various forms of sentient beings; but these different forms with their intelligences only mirror fragments of the one Consciousness or Life. Thus in each human being there is *Egoity*, the "I-am-I" or individual consciousness, but there is also a sense of separative *egoism* or selfishness, the characteristic *par excellence* of the personality. The one Consciousness as differentiated in the human being is his Higher Self.

The one Consciousness or Self pierces through all the states of Being. In it inheres the memory (complete or incomplete) of the experience of each state. It is therefore also called *Sutratma*, the Thread-Soul. The one Consciousness is the Witness, the Perceiver of the actions and experiences of every state passed through. It is the Self each feels himself to be; but it does not shine forth equally in each.

In the human being it is the triple Monad, the unified triad—Atma-Buddhi-Manas, eternal, indestructible, the real Ego.

The Universal Mind is differentiated in ordinary human beings, and is vitiated more or less by separative, personal desire. When an individual becomes an Adept, he has become "universal-minded"; he *is* the Higher Mind in all its purity. To reach this state, he must gradually, but firmly, withdraw his consciousness from the separative illusion of the senses and the objective world and place it on an inward, universal vision, thus slowly but surely elevating and expanding the focus of Consciousness in himself. Thus he will come to experience the super-conscious world—the world of realities.

So the individual gains immortality, lives the higher, divine life within himself, recovers the substance and brain memory of all his past; realizing all within himself, he becomes a spiritually self-conscious Being.

On every plane where life takes form and manifests, it is through some vehicle. These vehicles are related and the life-force penetrates them all.

The *practice* of the virtues raises us from the animal plane to the human and then to the divine planes of consciousness. Passions and vices obscure the awareness and the meaning of the "voice" of the true Self, the Ego. They prevent or impede its piercing to the personal consciousness.

The Self is the real Ego, self-existent and unmodifiable. The personal,

false ego is modified by untrue beliefs, thoughts and modes of action and of life. So one may contract or expand, destroy or cultivate forms of Consciousness.

Death, so-called, is a change of focus for the Ego, which is changeless, beyond time, immortal.

What are called "planes of consciousness" correspond to the seven "states of consciousness." Each one must grow in harmony with the higher planes by attuning his human consciousness to divine Wisdom, or Law. Desire, thought and will must be brought, through knowledge and practice, into accord with the Ego, the true Self—thus producing this harmony.

Motive determines the quality of thought. The vibrations of higher, universal and impersonal motive and thought open up the brain to a stronger influence from the Ego, the Self within.

The one Consciousness is focused in the four principles that compose the mask or *persona*, which is the vehicle of matter that has been created by the spiritual entity in its adventure of expressing Itself in a form of substance on the earth. The personal man is, *per se*, a false ego, impermanent, ever changing. Its only reality is derived from the one Consciousness, the real Ego, which is its life and the source of its being, and which shines within it to a greater or lesser extent.

When a person accepts that he *is* the Ego, the Self, the one Consciousness, and turns his attention to this idea, seeking to grasp it with the mind and to realize its truth, the personal consciousness or awareness opens more and more to the ever-present influence of the true, immortal Self, or Ego.

In the great journey of this Ego, called the Eternal Pilgrim, when the lowest, the Earth, plane is reached, the one Consciousness has created for itself mirrors, countless mirrors, in which it is reflected. The personal man provides a mirror which is such that in it the Self is sufficiently self-reflective, to become self-conscious in a form. This self-consciousness is a seed, man on earth, the human ego in a human body, which must become the Universally Self-Conscious Being at the end of the pilgrimage of the Spiritual Ego.

What is consciously *lived*, experienced, is known. That which is not *lived* is not known. Thus each one *becomes*. One must *be* in person on earth what one *is* in reality as Ego. To aspire to, to think and feel and apprehend what impersonal life is, to endeavour to be a conscious unit of Universal Brotherhood, to help to form a nucleus of such a Brotherhood in the world, is the first step in practical Occultism. The last step is the attainment of conscious life in Spirit on earth, Universal Self-Consciousness focused in a Form. It is thus that the Universe grows "I."

A UNIVERSAL SCRIPTURE

Inquirers ought to read the *Bhagavad-Gita*. It will give them food for centuries if they read with spiritual eyes at all. Underneath its shell is the living spirit that will light us all. I read it ten times before I saw things that I did not see at first. In the night the ideas contained in it are digested and returned partly next day to the mind. It is the study of adepts.

—W. Q. JUDGE

THE *Bhagavad-Gita* has been rightly called the Book of Discipline. The word repeatedly used, and like numberless Sanskrit terms translated variously, is—Yoga. This term generally conveys an idea, not only in the West, but in India as well, of some definite practice of meditation in which *asana* (posture), *pranayama* (breathing exercises), etc., play important parts. It is often overlooked that the *Gita* offers a discipline of daily living without insisting on these *means* to meditation with some particular end in view.

The most vital instruction of the *Gita* is not on the subject of mystical exercises; it is *yoga-shastra*, a Scripture of Yoga, in the sense, *par excellence*, of Daily Discipline which endows life with a grand purpose and every event with significance and meaning. It is not merely a philosophical treatise in which metaphysical and abstract categories are discussed. It offers a living philosophy in which the vital issues of pain and joy, action and recreation, duty and renunciation are examined, and ways and methods shown to right living.

In human history, dictators have flourished not only in churches and temples but also in nations; the masses have been enslaved; people have been turned into machines, soulless automata whose thinking is done for them. This is false, non-spiritual discipline. The *Gita* creates the warrior-soul of free-will, of free-thought, but responsive to his own duty and not clamorous for personal rights. The *Gita* teaches self-discipline—the individual has to fight his own weaknesses and unfold his own virtues.

Every educated person aspires to discipline himself. In building his home, in earning his livelihood, in understanding the world around him, in polishing his own character, in training his mind, in formulating his speech, and in numerous other ways he seeks guidance. The *Gita* has proven not only a pleasant companion but an excellent friend, not only a guide on some trying occasion, but a constant and consistent instructor, morning, noon and night. Let all look upon the *Gita* as a book of daily discipline, and consult it every morning to plan their day, and use it every evening to review their deeds and words, their thoughts and feelings.

The *Gita* is the Gospel of the Soul. It is not a Hindu scripture, it is a universal scripture. The Muslims will find their God-intoxicated poets God-illuminated with the help of the *Gita*; the Jews will know the true nature of their Ain-Soph, their Sephirothal Tree, by studying the tenth and eleventh chapters of the *Gita*; the Christians will learn how to practise their Beatitudes by learning from the twelfth discourse of the *Gita*; the Parsis will understand their *Gathas* better by a study of the *Gita*; the Taoists will understand the paradoxes of Lao Tzu by the aid of the pairs of opposites treated of in the *Gita*, and so on. All, all without exception, can find inspiration and true guidance if they turn to the *Gita*.

The Divine Song, the Song of the Lord, the Song Celestial, the Scripture of Devotion, the Treatise on Yoga, expounds *Brahma Vidya*, Theosophy, universal and impersonal. If studied with a pure heart, one will listen in the hollow of the brain, in the chamber of the Heart, to the Song of Songs, the Song of Life. That Song brings courage, brings victory; each finds in it what he needs, not what he wants. Between our needs and our wants lies the bridge of evolution, a very long bridge, and the *Gita* teaches us how to build that bridge. To the sufferer it says, "You are dear to the Lord"; to the aspirant it says, "You will find the Lord"; to the deluded it says, "In the bark of spiritual knowledge you will reach the other shore of Nirvana." To all it says, "He who has rightly resolved should be accounted righteous." Every page, every verse has a message. Let us be true Arjunas, real warriors, intent on human service by self-purification, by self-education, by self-victory, by self-rule—the rule of the Great Self, Krishna, over the rule of the small, petty and evil-minded Duryodhana. Let us seek the Mysterious Lord by silence, by study, by meditation, spreading Light and Peace all around.

THE germs of all things are in every heart, and the greatest criminals as well as the greatest heroes are but different modes of ourselves.

—HENRI FREDERIC AMIEL

INTEMPERANCE IN EATING

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.

—*Bhagavad-Gita*

PROMINENT among deeds of mortification or *tapas* is control of the bodily lusts and appetites. Lust has a wider field than sexual desire, and who is slave to his palate, to his body's hurt, should bear in mind the warning in *The Voice of the Silence*:

Do not believe that lust can ever be killed out if gratified or satiated, for this is an abomination inspired by Mara. It is by feeding vice that it expands and waxes strong, like to the worm that fattens on the blossom's heart.

Each yielding makes the final conquest harder. In an "Editor's Note" in *The Theosophist* for January 1883 (reprinted in *THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT*, February 1978), H.P.B. tells us that "if there is one thing more than another which paralyzes the will-power in man and thereby paves the way to physical and moral degradation, it is intemperance in eating."

There is food for thought also in the Master's statement that "one who becomes a slave to any physical weakness never becomes the master of even the lower powers of nature."

Sometimes our nearest and dearest are unconsciously in league with the enemy, desiring as they do to give us pleasure and little realizing the price of self-indulgence to ourselves in lost self-confidence and weakened will. But the responsibility of overcoming temptation or the guilt of weakly yielding to it is our own. A verse of a Christian hymn with little claim to poetry conveys sound advice:

Yield not to temptation,
For yielding is sin.
Each victory will help you
Some other to win.

What is indulgence of the sense of taste against one's better judgment but a low-plane gratification which yields the sceptre to the body which ought to be the real man's obedient servant? We are told in *Through the Gates of Gold*:

... let the king resolve to change the face of his court and forcibly evict the animal from the chair of state, restoring the god to the place of divinity.

Ah, the profound peace that falls upon the palace!...No longer is there the fever of personal longings or desires, no longer is there any rebellion or distress, no longer any hunger for pleasure or dread of pain.

The subjugation of the lower to the higher nature sometimes takes much longer than it need or should. A clean break with a bad habit or one injurious to the body is quicker, surer and, in the long run, far less painful, though requiring moral stamina. It is the only way, apparently, for a compulsive drinker to break the chains of alcohol addiction. And, in the case of any earnest student of Theosophy who knows that even a small quantity of a particular food is poisonous to his body, giving it up ought surely to be a matter of one deliberate and irrevocable decision. The greater the effort, the more glorious the victory! The opposite course is no more sensible than it would be, in the name of sparing suffering, to make a necessary amputation inch by inch instead of once for all.

Very different from the moral weakness of one who submits to the rule of his palate is the case described by H.P.B. in the "Editor's Note" reprinted in our May 1954 issue from *The Theosophist* for November 1882, of one who *offers* his life in sacrifice to philanthropy and to his duty. He will have to live in *kama loka* his appointed life term, even "the man of science who wastes his life in brain-work and fatigue and *knows* he is so wasting it and yet is offering it day after day and night after night in order to discover some great law of the universe, the discovery of which may bring in its results some great boon to mankind." But he dies honoured and admired by all.

On the other hand, we find in *The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 113, gluttons named as one of the classes, including executed individuals, drunkards and black magicians living in the astral world, who "hold the field of physical mediumship and are liable to invade the sphere of any medium. . . ."

One whose family responsibilities demand that he preserve as fully and as long as possible his life in health and strength, and especially one whose contact with Theosophy has aroused in him enthusiasm and a keen sense of obligation to serve his fellow men by helping spread its teachings, what excuse can he offer to the Masters or to the Higher Self for shortening by self-indulgence the life of his physical body? "My palate tempted me and I did eat"?

There is no need for dejection if we have tried and failed, though there is a great need of strengthening our resolution. *The Voice of the Silence* bids us "lose not courage: fight on, and to the charge return again and yet again," looking for strength to overcome our weakness to our Higher Self, the Divine Spirit, or the God in us, and to our Karma.

...whoso overcomes in this world the fierce craving difficult to subdue, finds his sorrows fall off like water-drops from a lotus leaf.

THEOSOPHICAL MEETINGS

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, September 1953.]

THEOSOPHICAL meetings have an import which is often lost sight of in the consideration of minor details. Thus, a great chance of doing service is too often lost at a time when it is most readily available. For Theosophical meetings are no idle gatherings where gossip goes the rounds. They are not conclaves for the mental satisfaction of highly trained intellects; nor do they provide a platform which can be used for personal glorification. They are certainly not congregations for emotional satisfaction. Their distinctive mark is impersonality; and because these meetings do not feed the lower emotions, they become invested with an atmosphere which is peculiarly their own and which cannot be found in any other association of men.

What, then, is the purpose of Theosophical meetings? To the hasty thinker the immediate answer which suggests itself is: The propagation of Theosophy. This is no doubt correct; but the ostensible—though it be true—often veils the inner vital and motivating aspects and should not on that account be permitted to carry us away from the fundamental principles that govern in such matters.

The truth of the matter is that, when certain conditions are fulfilled at the meetings, a higher force is drawn upon and the nobler part of the nature of those who attend is quickened and refreshed. It is this influx from on high to which Jesus referred when he said: "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them." This gathering in His Name is not achieved by the mere repetition of "Jesus, Jesus." It is the establishing of an inner condition, the creation of a particular atmosphere that for the time being connects us to spiritual realms. When H.P.B. said: "Where thought can pass they can come," she referred to the particular condition and atmosphere which alone can form the channel for the passing of thought. A thread of glass cannot conduct the electric fluid, but a copper wire can. Each student has to find out for himself those particular wires within him which act as conductors for spiritual influences.

What, then, constitutes the barrier to the passage of thought? What force obstructs the flow of these spiritual influences from on high? Our philosophy teaches that the greatest barrier to their influx is disunity. A group of men that is united by the common bond of "similarity of aim, purpose and teaching" is the chief desideratum. When this unity is attained, a divine atmosphere overspreads the group, and the nobler part of each one's nature is aroused and exercised. The speaker on the occasion may not

be a student learned in the intricacies of abstruse metaphysics. Yet, because a spiritual sympathy prevails, a higher force is drawn upon and the speaker's words convey a meaning which is deeper and wider than is apparent on the surface. The atmosphere created by the common unity of divine purpose transcends the bars of our materialism and allows us to breathe even for a short time the air of a fuller and fresher life.

But this is not all. The impersonal, pure atmosphere thus created is felt by the student on the platform if his mind and heart are open to it and he has not memorized his remarks. He senses this spiritual unity and, inspired by its mounting impact, he finds new ideas crowding for expression—finds, too, that for an appreciable moment he has access to hoards of knowledge from which he can freely give out what best suits his listeners' needs. This bond of sympathy between the speaker and his audience is a very real one. How often has not a student, present as a listener, found that his own wandering mind seems to have impinged on that of the speaker and made the latter stop midway as though stopped or retarded by some palpable obstruction?

It is when the bond between the platform worker and the audience is recognized that we realize the heavy onus cast upon the sincere student-listener. Albeit unknown and unrecognized, his silent yet unremitting efforts contribute to the sustaining of the tone of the meeting. Is he failing in the radiation of a feeling of Brotherhood? Does he feel antagonistic to the speaker? Is he bored? Does he feel that, in the fitness of things, he, or someone else whom he prefers, should have been the speaker? By harbouring such thoughts he may cast a mental cloud upon the whole meeting and turn away all spiritual assistance that would otherwise have streamed in from the higher invisible realms. Though he may not know it, he has obstructed the lines of communication and has not really understood the import of gathering together in a spirit of devotion. If he entertains any such feeling, he not only robs himself but also prevents others from assimilating that which they might otherwise have assimilated.

Yet each student finds that sooner or later some such undesirable feeling does assail him. What, then, is he to do? Shall he cut the Gordian knot by remaining absent so that the harm, if any, will be limited to himself alone? It seems logical to do so. But it is the logic of the lower mind that under the semblance of self-immolation seeks but to feed its own desires. Wherein, then, lies the fallacy of this position? To answer this question we shall have to turn to one more hidden yet profound aspect of Theosophical meetings.

When a student's presence becomes regular, he invests these meetings

with a part of himself—a magnetism that is substantially his. Therefore, it but follows that the magnetism of any meeting is the combined result of the magnetic emanations of all the regular students. They pour—each individually—a part of their life-force into the meetings, so that, if they are absent, the absence produces a magnetic gap which translates itself into a lowering of the tone of the meeting. The absence does not mitigate the ill effect of the student's wrong attitude; it enhances it. But this sharing of magnetism is not one-sided. True, the student gives a portion of himself; but while so doing he also receives a share of that beneficent force which he helps to build up. It resides in him and must remain in his safe-keeping until he brings it to the next meeting either refined or tainted by his thoughts, words and deeds.

The opportunity thus afforded for service is unique; for at all meetings, though he is only a part of the audience, a student may yet be able to contribute impersonally a quota of force which may make all the difference to the tone of the meeting. When he is present as a listener, does he have in the background of his consciousness the thought of Spiritual Brotherhood? If he has, he is an active participant in the meeting. When immersed in conjoint study, does he realize that by dwelling on high ideals he helps to purify the collective mind of the meeting? If he does, he becomes a conscious worker in a noble cause. When sitting among his brothers, does he feel that they have all gathered together in the name of the Great Ones, making it possible for them to shed their beneficent influence? If such be his attitude, he is assisting in an endeavour of a very high order. For him the audience is the world and the speaker but a channel through whom must flow the benign influence of the Great Ones to whose bidding he has devoted his life.

For deeper reflection these two quotations may be suggested:

I can come nearer to you, but you must draw me by a purified heart and a gradually developing will. Like the needle the adept follows his attractions.

Happy the man who lends a helping hand.

EVERY creative act of ours in relation to other people—an act of love, of pity, of help, of peacemaking—not merely has a future but is eternal.

—NICOLAS BERDYAEV

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

What is time? Scholars are debating the question. In *National Geographic* for March 1990, John Boslough tells the story of "a concept that we think we understand until we try to define it."

"We have given more attention to measuring time than to anything in nature," one expert is quoted as saying. The clock, ever since it was first built, has had a profound effect on society, and there are perhaps more timepieces in existence than all other machines combined. Yet time itself remains an abstraction, an enigma. Some scholars believe that people once lived in a state of "timeless present" with little or no sense of past or future. But the way science views time has changed, as these extracts from the *National Geographic* article bear out:

Throughout most of history time was looked upon as a flow like a river. Even for the remarkable English scientist Sir Isaac Newton, the flow of time was absolute. But with the arrival of Albert Einstein's theories of relativity, time was first seen as a dimension—like height and width—giving meaning to events and the order in which they occur. Time, quite literally, was something that keeps everything from happening at once....

"Clocks are very limited devices," says David Allan [a time theorist at the National Institute of Standards and Technology]. He points out that the past does not exist except in our memory. "Nor the future, except in our expectations of it," he says. "The most a clock gives is the time an instant ago—not even the time now."...

To Allan a second is virtually infinite. "We can split a second into as many pieces as our technology allows. There appears to be no limit. Timekeeping is our own invention." The clock instructs us when—maybe even how—to behave. Each hour is a little bucket of time to fill. The clock says when to pour....

But, still, what *is* time?

After all my travels and talking and reading, I believe that Professor John Wheeler's concept of time comes the closest to an actual explanation: that it is a dimension and, like any other dimension, only a secondary quality in nature.

But we humans have internalized it so powerfully that time has taken on a meaning all its own. We run our lives by numbers on clocks and calendars that we ourselves have created. We already anticipate Saturday, January 1, 2000. But in the grand scheme of things, it will be just another day.

Students of Theosophy will be reminded of many passages from the works of H.P.B. Our divisions of time are artificial and relative to the

observer's point of view and depth of interest. In Time there is constant change—it is a process—and yet back of that process there is a continuance. The past is memory—retrospect; the present is experience—momentary; and the future is anticipation—prospect. But the experience of the present merges into the memory of the past, and the anticipation of the future materializes as the experience of the present.

H.P.B. implies that time is but a by-product of our consciousness, that it is an illusion. If we had no consciousness (as on the physical plane when we are asleep), we should not be subject to this time process. Likewise, if we had all-consciousness, there again could not be a time sense. In the experience of the mystic, past, present and future merge in the Eternal Now.

Time is only an illusion produced by the succession of our states of consciousness as we travel through eternal duration, and it does not exist where no consciousness exists in which the illusion can be produced; but "lies asleep." The present is only a mathematical line which divides that part of eternal duration which we call the future, from that part which we call the past. Nothing on earth has real duration, for nothing remains without change—or the same—for the billionth part of a second; and the sensation we have of the actuality of the division of "time" known as the present, comes from the blurring of that momentary glimpse, or succession of glimpses, of things that our senses give us, as those things pass from the region of ideals which we call the future, to the region of memories that we name the past. (*The Secret Doctrine*, I, 37)

Many profound scientific minds have had a religious feeling of their own. But there are nuances of this feeling that differ from scientist to scientist. Einstein's religious attitude, which forms the subject of Dipankar Home's article in *2001* for August 1990, was essentially in the form of a rapturous and reverential amazement at the harmony of natural laws. As Einstein himself put it, "The general public may not be able to follow the details of scientific research, but it can register at least one important gain: the confidence that human thought is dependable and natural law universal."

The goal of science [the article states] is not only to discover rules which furnish the correct correlation and prediction of empirical facts...It is the striving after the logically systematic unification of the manifold that stimulates profound reverence for the rationality manifested in the mechanism of the universe around us. The "humble attitude of mind towards the grandeur of reason incarnate in existence" is what Einstein

stated to be the "religious feeling in the highest sense of the term." It is in this spirit that scientific reasoning can be envisaged to aid religion in achieving its primary goal of liberating mankind from the bondage of egocentric cravings and selfish motives and it is this outlook that motivated Einstein to make the following perceptive comment: "The further the spiritual evolution of mankind advances, the more certain it seems to me that the path to genuine religiosity does not lie through the fear of personal God or blind faith; after people give up the doctrine of a personal God and accomplish the necessary refining process they will surely recognize with joy that true religion can be ennobled and made more profound by scientific knowledge."...

For most scientists, the search for coherent laws ends in mathematical equations. However, for some of the profound minds, such as Einstein's, equations alone are not enough to satisfy the scientists' wonder and they point to something else, the reality underpinning the mathematical formalism. It is this that Stephen Hawking, one of the most talked about scientists of our time, is after when he asks: "What is it that breathes fire into the equations and makes a universe for them to describe?" Again, it is this that the celebrated physicist Richard Feynman had in his mind when he said: "To those who do not know mathematics, it is difficult to get across a real feeling as to the beauty, the deepest beauty, of nature." This reveals an attitude of kinship with nature rather than an exploitative power over her....

Einstein spoke of a "cosmic religious feeling" which has inspired genuine scientists of all ages. This has nothing to do with the naive concept of God conceived in terms of human images. Without such a profound feeling, he said, science is lame; likewise, without true science, which is characterized by a longing to behold Harmony and Oneness in the universe, religion is blind.

In recent times, the idea of religious fundamentalism seems to have become a tool used by politicians and political parties to serve their own purpose. Communal violence and tensions have been unleashed under the guise of defending the fundamentals of certain religions. Writing in *The Times of India* for August 20, Indira Rothermund contends that fundamentalism has no legitimacy in Hinduism, also commonly known as Hindu *dharma*. Those who equate religiosity with Hindu *dharma* and then juxtapose it with fundamentalism, start on wrong premises. It is necessary therefore to understand what the two words "Hindu" and "*dharma*" connote.

The word Hindu, according to an eminent historian, is not found in

ancient Indian texts, but was coined by the invading Arabs in the 8th century A.D. and was applied to people who lived on or beyond the banks of the river Sindhu or Indus. The term *dharma* too is secular in its core meaning and is a fundamental concept in ancient Indian thought. In Vedic times, *dharma* referred to "that which is firmly established, law, morality." Ms. Rothermund writes:

What is the *dharma* that would enable man to submit himself to the good of all? *Dharma* may be translated, as Radhakrishnan says, as that which "gives coherence and direction to the different activities of life. It is the complete rule of life, the harmony of the whole man who finds a right and just law of his living. Each man and group, each activity of soul, mind, life and body, has its *dharma*."...

Each man's endeavour to follow his own *dharma* (*swadharma*) is a kind of *yagna* (sacrifice) when it is aimed at the good of all....The equilibrium established by *dharma* rests on the interdependence of all individuals who have to realize their rights and responsibilities. This equilibrium is not "automatic" and it may be disturbed....

Dharma gives the necessary degree of unity to the society which consists of a diversity of interests. However, the apparent diversity or the differentiated parts of the Hindu social system are united by the force of *dharma* because *dharma* upholds the inherent identity of all and establishes a deeper solidarity. *Dharma* is, therefore, "the central or fundamental concept of Hindu culture," according to the Sankaracharya of Kanchi.

The term "fundamental concept" should not evoke the misplaced connotation of fundamentalism. Fundamentalism has been interpreted as "religious fundamentalism, without a clear definition of the term, and the true function of religion, which is to bind all beings and all things into one grand whole, is completely forgotten. As Gandhi repeatedly pointed out, true awareness of the inherent oneness of all will resolve the problem of "narrowness, selfishness, exclusiveness, which is the bane of modern nations."

Envy can have destructive effects on individuals. In our times, the focus on acquisitiveness, the obsession with money and greed, combined with the cutthroat business climate and the difficulty many have reaching personal goals have "opened the floodgates to envy," writes Jane Ciabattari in the December 1989 issue of *Psychology Today*:

As disappointment grows, and as ambitions and desires are thwarted, social conditions are ripe for a destructive epidemic of envy, the all-too-human emotion defined by *Webster's* as the "painful or resentful awareness

of an advantage enjoyed by another joined with a desire to possess the same advantage.

Envy is not a gentle emotion. It's not "I want what you have, too." It's aggressive: "I want what you have, and I want you *not* to have it. I'll spoil or destroy it." Envy is unlike jealousy, which is based on love and focuses on possessing the loved object and removing the rival. Envy originates in hate and can be all-consuming, even murderous, in intensity. Envious people live in a perpetual state of anxious, competitive comparison, focusing on what others around them have, and what they themselves lack....

According to the Jungian approach, envy attacks if someone is not in tune with the Self, with one's inner core....Stanford University psychologist Carl Thoresen sees dire implications unless society calls a halt to "me-first" living and "individualism gone berserk."

According to Thoresen, the more this self-absorbed attitude, with its continual sense of comparing oneself to others, is modeled by parents, the more it is absorbed by children....A win-loss approach to living sets in motion a vicious cycle, essentially grooming children to be envious....

Envy can be disastrous for a culture when it becomes the norm. For one thing, envy run rampant shatters a sense of community. Energy is diverted into attack and defense rather than into a kind of joyous recognition that there is enough to go around. Even if there is not enough, a sense of community and sharing can ease the deprivation. But envy in a culture of entitlement can encourage mediocrity, backbiting and in-fighting; it can discourage innovation and diffuse energy that could be used productively.

In his article, "Culture of Concentration," Mr. Judge deals with the hindrances raised by certain negative emotions on the Theosophical student's progress on the Path, and among them is envy:

Envy is not a mere trifle that produces no physical result. It has a powerful action, as strong in its own field as that of anger. It not only hinders the further development but attracts to the student's vicinity thousands of malevolent beings of all classes that precipitate themselves upon him and wake up or bring on every evil passion. Envy, therefore must be extirpated, and it cannot be got rid of as long as the personal idea is allowed to remain in us. (*U.L.T. Pamphlet No.18*)

Out-of-body experiences (OBEs), reported from diverse ages and cultures, are phenomena in which a person seems to perceive the world from a location outside his or her physical body. Vithal C. Nadkarni writes in *Saturday Times* (August 11, 1990) of his investigations into the subject:

OBEs can happen spontaneously, when you are relaxing or meditating. Or they can be precipitated by dramatic circumstances, such as psychological crises and near-death experiences....Some people claim they can induce and control OBEs. Accomplished yogis, for instance, are said to be able to leave their bodies at will. They are also said to be able to "project" their doubles, to be at two places simultaneously!

Centuries ago, the Chinese called OBEs "magical flight." More recently the theosophists have called them "astral projection." Proponents of ESP dub them travelling clairvoyance because of controversial claims that people have actually influenced objects or acquired information "paranormally" during their journeys out of the body....

Modern medicine and psychology view these phenomena differently. Rather than accept ESP or that something leaves the body, or that we possess a duplicate or double, they say that the *experience* of being out of your body is not equivalent to the *fact* of being out.

Mundane explanations are sought by present-day researchers and the OBE is treated as a psychological process rather than a paranormal one. The whole course of scientific investigation would, however, take a different turn once it is accepted that there is a vital, magnetic principle within the visible physical body, capable under certain circumstances of extrusion and objectivity. This is the astral body, familiar to students of Theosophy since 1875. Theosophy says, moreover, that the whole issue between occult and materialistic science hangs on the proof of the existence of this principle.

The voluntary and conscious withdrawal of the astral form from the physical body, leaving the physical senses alert and giving the appearance of an individual in a "brown study," is possible to the adept (*Isis Unveiled*, II, 588). H.P.B. has warned, however, that "the power of projecting one's double consciously and at will...might prove fatal to men at large and to the possessor of that faculty in particular." "To project this ethereal body, at no matter what distance, to render it more objective and tangible by condensing over its fluidic form the waves of the parent essence, is the greatest secret of the adept-magician. (*Isis*, I, 281)

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

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

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