

# THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to  
The Living of the Higher Life

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- (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 psυχical powers latent in man.

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सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

## THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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### POINTS OF THEOSOPHICAL EMPHASIS

#### II

[Reprinted from THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, March 1949.]

WHAT of the needed "points of emphasis" for the present and the future? What new foci of Theosophical principles will be most useful in consideration of the trends of thought and feeling of the day? The concept of One Religious World and One Political and Racial World has only been partially incarnated in the *active* consciousness of the human race, and all things of purely passive beauty lose their charm after a time. These were indeed Theosophical ideals, and they still are, but as independent foci they have been carried as far as they presently may be—farther, perhaps, than would have been best—without corollary illumination. For the "One World Religious and Political" idea, just like the idea of a vast reservoir of undeveloped psychic capacities in each man, was meant to be checked and guided in its manifestations by the very Theosophists who first sought to make these truths apparent to the public consciousness. Because Theosophy itself is the Great Synthesis, it follows that all those who call themselves Theosophists must be on guard against all over-simplifications of philosophy and psychology. The "over-simplifiers" of this century, as of all times and mental tides, are those who believe that some superficial division between men will result in the separation of the righteous from the unrighteous, the enlightened from the unenlightened.

The Spiritualists of the last century felt themselves to be in

possession of the *only* avenue to truth worth pursuing, and their ensuing impatience with religious or scientific men led finally to a contempt for all those who were drawn to other means of pursuing the truth about human nature. Therefore the Spiritualists, instead of developing the *synthesizing* potentialities of their discoveries, isolated themselves, becoming as bigoted and intolerant, in many instances, as the very orthodox religions from which they at first desired to liberate humanity. Today they are a sect and nothing more, *while, as H.P.B. stated*, "the whole issue of the quarrel between the profane and the esoteric sciences depends upon the belief in, and demonstration of, the existence of an astral body within the physical, the former independent of the latter."

The enormity of this loss of opportunity is but one striking example of the dangers of over-simplification. The Spiritualists, who *might* have gently insisted upon a fair hearing for the astral-body concept, while keeping a balanced, rational relationship with men of science and religion, took a misleading detour, thinking that if they rushed along with loud proclamations, the world must admit that *they* were the first to find the road to truth. But the world denied them, *for they had denied the world* in refusing to work for a programme of education in respect to psychic matters which would allow a natural synthesis of whatever true perceptions existed also in the religious and scientific fields.

It is not unrewarding to devote such extensive consideration to the derelictions of the Spiritualists, in an endeavour to determine Theosophical "points of emphasis" for the future, for the *exclusive attitude* of the Spiritualists has often unfortunately become associated with groups of Theosophists. Instead of remembering that they are here, in the terms of H.P.B., to make "the Great Synthesis" possible, they have often felt, with a certain smugness, that since *they* possess the way, the truth and the light, they need but concern themselves with their own spiritual development while they wait for the world to beat a path to their door. But what is truth? Is it not always defined in terms of that which is made useful in advancing the soul evolution of mankind? Can one have the truth, the *whole* truth, and not be using it constantly to work for synthesis of understanding with his fellows? The man who thinks that truth may be isolated and preserved for a few, not made the centre of constant revolutionary effort in relation

to society at large, has over-simplified his conception of truth, and therefore cannot, himself, possess truth.

Now to return to the Universal Brotherhood of Humanity concept. As a concept it is but a focal point, a beginning of an initial desire to adopt a certain attitude of mind. Certainly, that attitude of mind must be adopted if one seeks to discover truth or to benefit society in any way. But to think that "the Great Synthesis" may be attained simply by the formal adoption of an attitude of mind is obviously mistaken. After its inauguration, the appeal of the Universal Brotherhood *idea* became apparent to almost all groups. It has become the slogan of innumerable religious sects, both orthodox and unorthodox.

There are those who believe in One World economic, and those who believe in One World religious, and they both speak in terms of Universal Tolerance. These powerful agencies are "for unity"—but the historically educated know that, in practice, their unity would be a unity under certain forms of compulsion. Political and religious liberals are usually quick to see the falsity of these proclaimed bases of unity and brotherly harmony, yet how often do they pin their own relatively more enlightened faiths upon huge organizations, to which the individual conscience must become subservient! And yet the danger of every organization is the same, that men who belong to it will come to fear and dislike deviations. Now, perhaps, the Theosophists will find themselves emphasizing the need for diversity rather than the need for unity, so that eventually a *non-illusory* unity may be attained. Theosophy itself may become a rallying-point for forces of social *disunity*, for revolutionary "anarchical" ideas and other strange-sounding ideas of pioneering individuals. In such case, will Theosophists who become friendly to all these dissident forces be departing from the platform of the original T.S.? That will, of course, depend upon the individual Theosophist—not upon the *sound* of his immediate formulation of any position which he feels he must uphold before the World as the dynamic representation of Theosophical principles in the context of the needs of his time.

In the furtherance of the great objective of Universal Brotherhood, the working Theosophists of the last century found themselves constantly opposing the doctrine of "individualism." Now many Theosophists may find themselves *rallying* to a cry of "individualism." Why? Because in the attainment of the fundamental objective, that of

Universal Brotherhood, one must work for both increased self-reliance and increased recognition of interdependence.

With the great World Boom called the Industrial Revolution, concentration settled upon the individual amassing of wealth. The day of economic empires had begun, and the majority of men indeed sought to be "self-reliant" in clawing their way to affluence. Here was "individualism" of an exceedingly warped variety, a mask for the laws of the jungle applied to the race for wealth. The Theosophist who spoke in terms of Brotherhood and Interdependence—who insisted that the successfully wealthy regard all they had attained as held in stewardship for the poor, never forgetting their responsibility—voiced a most unpopular doctrine, and one, as so often, worth while in proportion to its unpopularity. Theosophists were then properly standing as representatives of the collective conscience of mankind, seeking to remind mankind that belief in man's destiny in law-of-the-jungle terms was not a natural belief at all, but simply an excuse for greed.

The United Lodge of Theosophists still possesses the lectures and letters of Robert Crosbie, who, in the formation of the U.L.T., stated over and over again that *impersonality* must be made the key-note. Men who sought to be Theosophists, must, in other words, resist the towering waves of the wrong sort of individualism. But did this mean that Theosophists were ever to come to the pass where they would say, "I cannot act independently. I am a part of this family, this corporation and this nation; and I must subordinate my own personal or individual feelings entirely and follow my destiny"? It very apparently did not mean anything of the sort to Robert Crosbie himself, who *stood out and was separate* from the Theosophical Society in which he had played an important role, in order independently to lay the groundwork for the U.L.T.

The U.L.T., of course, shows itself to be designed to assist in promoting the necessary balance between independence and interdependence. One cannot, in Theosophical terms, ever excuse oneself from making soul-obedience to both of these. But the points of emphasis may indeed legitimately change—if always designed to bring out balance in man's conception of man. The diligent Theosophical student will not need to follow a "party-line" in respect to what things most need emphasis at a certain time, nor will all students emphasize exactly the same things at the same time. The

intuition must be developed to see, at *all* times, what implication of the Theosophical philosophy can be of most unique service in a given situation.

Certainly much encouragement is needed for those in the world who still find in themselves some courage to resist the tide toward a complete regimentation of society, the tide toward cleverly devised mass propaganda designed to make entire populations psychologically submissive to nationalist programmes.

But in the light of Theosophy it can be seen that no single point of emphasis at any time truly represents the Theosophical philosophy in its entirety. Yet at *all* times Theosophists may remember that their principles stand for the Great Synthesis, and that their continuing duty as well as continuing opportunity is to discover those applications of Theosophy which are uniquely needed for synthesis, in the time and circumstances before them. This in itself is the surest safeguard against those over-simplifications of truth which ever subvert truth and smooth the way for the corroding influence of self-satisfied creedalism.

In which of life's situations do Theosophical principles need to be used for preserving, in which for destroying, popular ideas and attitudes? In each society what "points of emphasis" will turn men from a *Tirthika* view to the view of soul? What *unique* suggestiveness is found in Theosophical principles for application to our personal lives and loves, to our relationships with children and household? What of a *unique* nature do Theosophical principles suggest in respect to education, to economics and to politics? As students think these questions through, and courageously endeavour to make their application despite any strong counter-trends of public opinion, they will both avoid the dangers of over-simplification of the Theosophical Message and best serve the cause of Universal Brotherhood.

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TIME, like a seven-wheeled, seven-naved car, moves on; His rolling wheels are all the worlds, His axle is immortality.

—Atharva Veda

## CULTURE OF CONCENTRATION

EVERY one of us possesses, to a greater or lesser degree, the power of attention and knows how to apply that power. The burglar who breaks open a safe shows a degree of concentration; so does the businessman who wants to be a success, as also the housewife busy cooking a meal. It is not that we do not know what concentration is, yet we continually complain that we lack it. And that lack very forcefully strikes us when we observe that even a lunatic locked up in an asylum is often there because of his fixation on a particular idea, which happens to be regarded by the generality of mankind as ludicrous, or even dangerous.

Mere one-pointedness, then, cannot possibly be real concentration. The elements of concentration may be defined thus:

(a) One-pointedness means attention and application to a single line of thought or endeavour. The lunatic who thinks that he is Jesus Christ or God is one-pointed indeed, so much so that he applies his belief to all he does and in all he says; and when he outrages a sufficient number of people who do not think that he is Jesus Christ or God, they see to it that the authorities lock him up. However valuable this factor of one-pointedness, or attention and its application by itself it does not make one truly concentrated.

(b) Knowledge is the second factor: *e.g.*, the businessman may have one-pointedness, but if he does not know enough about his line of business he will be a failure. The fundamental difference between a sane person and a madman is that the former is attentive on the basis of knowledge, the latter is not. All of us possess a degree of concentration or one-pointedness, and it brings success when there is a foundation of knowledge. Every woman who is efficient in the kitchen succeeds not only because she is one-pointed, but also because she *knows* how to cook.

(c) Next, true concentration produces contentment, happiness and bliss. The woman in the kitchen, to continue the above example, may be an excellent cook, but if she is not happy with what she is doing her pot will not boil as it should. She knows how, but she does not feel like it; it is a burden and a bore. Even a common task like cooking has to be looked upon as good Karma which can enable one to serve others spiritually. So also how many businessmen there are

to whom their work seems like drudgery, day in and day out! This feeling acts as a hindrance to their work and their concentration goes for nought.

In these three factors lies the true basis of concentration. Truly successful concentration requires one-pointedness, knowledge, and happiness. Wherever one or more of these are absent, there no concentration can be.

Next, we have to examine the factors that cause pain, ignorance and the wandering of the mind, so that we may eliminate them:

(1) Physical bodily disease and pain are a hindrance to concentration. It is more difficult to be one-pointed when one has a toothache than when one has not; but it does not mean that one cannot or should not try to be one-pointed in spite of a toothache. Krishna says in the Seventh Discourse of the *Gita* that among those who worship him are the afflicted. Again, in the Thirteenth Discourse he advises us to meditate upon sickness, decay and death. All of us have to learn the very first lesson of the Higher or Spiritual Life, that man is not the body, that body which is subject to pain and disease, to decay and death. If we were to wait for the practice of concentration till the body is free of all aches and disease, we would be waiting in vain. As a matter of fact, says the science of Theosophy, it is because the Thinker or Soul, the Real Man, does not look upon his flesh and blood, his sinews and nerves, as distinct and separate from himself that pain overtakes him. So, if we desire perfect concentration, let us learn to separate ourselves from our body, learn to forget the body, for at least half an hour a day. Let us say to ourselves, every morning and every night, "I am not this body; I am the Self who must use the body, purify it, elevate it." Such an exercise is the first step, for it compels us to learn that we are the masters of our bodies, and if it is ill, subject to aches and pains, it is because we maltreat it, and we do so because we are ignorant. So let us use our ill-health to learn the lesson that it is not the real "I" in us who suffers. We would not pamper this body if we realized that it is the Temple of the Soul. So if we want right concentration, let us learn to dissociate ourselves from the body—not become negligent and careless towards it, but acquire the art of training it.

(2) Next, we find that when we want to concentrate on any piece of work, or on any idea, sense-impressions—sounds and sights

coming from outside—disturb us. One of the greatest curses of this civilization of ours is the thoughtlessness with which men and women disturb the serenity of nature—by ear-shattering sounds they call music, by boisterous hilarity they call enjoyment, by noise pollution of all kinds. Outside impressions are apt to disturb us, and we have to acquire the faculty of not getting disturbed. It is one of the most difficult of tasks, for this disturbance is really caused not solely by outside factors but by something within. The receiving station for these outside impressions is in our Astral Body, the *Linga Sharira* or *Pranamaya Kosha*, the real seat of our sense-organs. Our *Jnana-* and *Karma-Indriyas*, our senses and organs of action, receive impressions and make response; they whirl round and round in us like *chakras* or wheels and their control is a question of time. If we can control them fully we would know how to stop any noise, any sight, any smell reaching them. But not being Adepts, we are in the process of evolution, and this second constituent of our being brings us the second lesson of the Higher Life—patience, "patience sweet, that nought can ruffle," says *The Voice of the Silence*. The way out of this difficulty is to remove oneself to as quiet and harmonious a place as one's circumstances permit, and then to patiently train the real senses and organs to attend one-pointedly to the task in hand.

(3) There is a more upsetting difficulty: when we have learnt by patience not to be disturbed by outside impressions, we find that our own inner vibrations play havoc with our concentration. Our lethargy and laziness, or our overactivity, either puts us to sleep or prompts us to go to something else. Our third principle of *Prana*, energy or vitality, is either *tamasic*, *rajasic* or *sattvic*. If *tamasic*, it causes sleepiness in the body when we want to concentrate. If *rajasic* or active, while we desire to be one-pointed on some topic, it prompts us to go to some other and makes our mind restless. Harmony or rhythm or *sattva* has to prevail in the body, at least in some measure, if we are to succeed in concentration. Indolence-*tamas* and overactivity-*rajas* lessen and ultimately depart if we practise *Shila*, that balance which results from acquiring a sense of proportion. *Shila*-harmony comes to birth by cultivating the virtue of temperance, moderation, the middle path in *all* things.

(4) Still more difficult to overcome are our desires and passions, the sense of possession and attachment, which cause disturbances of

a hundred kind. Our desires are of so many types that the moment we shut our senses and quiet our brains, they show themselves and disturb our concentration. The fifth Discourse of the *Gita* says that the main hindrance is not our senses or the objects of sense, but their contact with the outside world. Our desire prompts the eye to see an object, and the contact between the eye and the object causes mischief. "Those enjoyments which arise through the contact of the senses with external objects are wombs of pain, since they have a beginning and an end...the wise man delighteth not in these" (*Gita*, V, 22). The expression "wombs of pain" is significant. This is where pain is begotten. Just as a woman requires a womb to produce a child, so a person without Kama cannot have pain. To get rid of this terrible hindrance of Kama which overthrews millions in their attempt to be one-pointed, we need the virtue of *Vairagya*—desirelessness, indifference to objects of sense and possession, dispassion, detachment—all of which give us different glimpses of that mighty virtue.

*Vairagya*, desirelessness, is the mark of the true *Vairagi*, and this is what we must aim at. What makes mischief is not the objects of sense in and by themselves, but our attachment to those objects. There are two ways of practising *Vairagya*, a virtue absolutely necessary for concentration: elimination of unnecessary possessions, and cultivation of that which is necessary. Our vices and weaknesses are unnecessary—eliminate them; our virtues and powers are necessary—retain them. Learning to use fully all that we have in the interest of others develops in us the quality of desirelessness. The simple life is not a rigid, puritanical life, which shuns the beauty of things. Nature is beautiful, is full of beneficence, but that beauty and beneficence nature bestows as a gift on all. So, in acquiring desirelessness, let us practise real charity, *Dana*, which, as the *Gita* says, is the giving of proper gifts at the proper time, to the proper person, and by those who are not desirous of a return. Even charity requires the key virtue of dispassion. Real charity purifies Kama.

(5) When we have controlled desires, we encounter another phenomenon, which is the root of the trouble—the reproductive nature of the mind. That which we call our mind modifies itself constantly; it is affected by health or ill-health of the body, by sense-impressions, by the quality of our energy or *prana*, by desires and passions; and when all these are controlled in some measure, it has to

reckon with the thoughts and ideas that spring up from within itself. When a person reaches this stage, he may become a genius, a creative artist, a philosopher, a mathematician, but if he is not careful with his morals, he will fall if he tries to train that mind any further. What is required as a protection at this stage is true Knowledge, *Jnana*-Wisdom; not the power to create something new, but the power to grasp and apply, to understand and practise that which is ancient and time-honoured. *Viveka*, discrimination between the eternal and the temporal, between the personal and the impersonal, between the *Ahankaric* and the *Atmic*, is possible only when we give suitable daily food to the mind, by way of study. We read the newspaper before we read the *Gita* or other devotional books. We will not gain real concentration, our desires and passions will not be controlled, if the mind is devoid of spiritual nourishment. Woe to the one who develops the power of concentration while he has selfishness and pride and acquisitiveness in his nature. Spiritual ruin stares him in the face. We may all be thankful that we have not the real power of concentration while we still possess moral weaknesses.

To recapitulate, we must develop: (1) the perception that we are the Soul and not the body; (2) *Kshanti*-patience, remembering that we have lived many lives of error as of virtue, and that time is the healer; (3) *Shila*-harmony in thought and word and deed, resulting from moderation—the golden mean in all things; (4) *Vairagya*-dispassion—right valuation and use of all we are and all we have, after elimination of all that is unnecessary; (5) *Viveka*-discrimination, born of study of the age-old truths which tell us the real nature of the Soul or the Self, the Immortal Purusha within the Heart.

These five should be dwelt upon daily. Here is a real exercise—to find out from our devotional books the verses dealing with these virtues, repeating them with understanding and attention, and then dwelling upon them for a while every day. Not just memory of words but memory of ideas will help us all through the day. Then, before going to sleep, let us examine if we have practised them during the day; let us not be discouraged if we find many failures; presently we shall succeed. But the lower self has to be examined by the light of the Higher Self and of the Divine Virtues. While going to sleep and on waking up, the mind must turn to the Higher Self in the Heart—the Krishna or Christos or Fire of Ahura Mazda within us. When the

body sleeps, the mind stops functioning, but not the Heart, where, freed from the senses, freed from passions, freed from the wandering mind, the Soul is active, meditating upon its fathomless source, contemplating its divine nature, unfolding its latent powers, gathering the blessings of peace and the benediction of wisdom. There the Soul can learn Truth, behold Compassion, hear the Song of Life in purity and beauty. The life of dreams, true and prophetic dreams, is the life of the concentrated Heart.

In the Heart is concentration, *i.e.*, when the Heart controls the mind. Let us worship (be worthy of relationship with) the Divinity residing in our Heart. Within the Self is the Guru, the Master, and the Self lives in the Hall of Wisdom, the Cave of the Heart, the region of Spiritual Consciousness. Let us not fall prey to dangerous doctrines, nor listen to those who profess to teach meditation for a fee, or for the pledge of obedience. Our own Karma is the fee; and, paying it, we are free men and women, acting by the power of the Concentrated Heart where alone the Great Gurus of Light are to be found. Let us arouse in the Heart the yearning and love for those Lords of Light who tower above humanity as the Himalayas tower above the hills. By such practice as has been outlined above, we shall reach Them, learn from Them, and return to serve Them.

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LIFE is one. Spirit is one. Consciousness is one. These three are one—a trinity—and we are that trinity. All the changes of substance and form are brought about by Spirit and Consciousness and expressed in various forms of life. We are that One Spirit, each standing in a vast assemblage of beings in this great universe, seeing and knowing what he can through the instruments he has. We are the Trinity—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; or, in theosophical parlance, we are *Atma*, *Buddhi*, and *Manas*. *Atma* is the One Spirit, not belonging to any one, but to all. *Buddhi* is the sublimated experience of all the past. *Manas* is the thinking power, the thinker, the man, the immortal man. There is no man without the Spirit, and no man without that experience of the past; but the mind is the realm of creation, of ideas; and the Spirit itself, with all its power, acts according to the ideas that are in the mind.

—ROBERT CROSBIE

## THE FIRST STEPS

IN *The Voice of the Silence*, the pupil is made to ask his Teacher as to what he should do to reach to Wisdom. The answer is in explicit terms and admits of no ambiguity. The Teacher advises the pupil to "search for the Paths." This answer is supplemented by words of caution followed by instructions as to how he should set about the search for that which he has not yet seen and which is not directly disclosed by his Guru. The stanzas which follow the answer of the Teacher lay down the conditions that must be fulfilled before the pupil can qualify himself for the deeper knowledge, the higher understanding. These are conditions that can neither be waived nor taken lightly. They are laws in super-nature and the preliminary effort at providing them demands the undergoing of a long and arduous course in self-discipline. The student who enters upon this training steps out into a strange new world. It is the same world as it was before the discipline was undertaken, and yet it is not the same. The former moorings, the erstwhile solid foundations slip away and the Soul finds itself cut adrift without a haven of refuge anywhere in sight. It is the first real test of the individual's courage and of the stability of his faith. Many a student has lost heart as years have chased endless years with never a sign of progress. In desperation, he has called the goal unattainable, has abandoned quest and effort and has succumbed to a somnolence of the soul. With the ceasing of the will to try, the incarnation becomes abortive for the reason that the songster is muted and the song of the Lord is lost to ears that are made deaf to the higher vibrations.

For those who feel that the goal is worth the pain and the anguish of repeated failures, *The Voice of the Silence* gives valuable guidance in the practice of discipline. The Rules it sets forth are signposts; they "point out the 'Way'...as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness." These rules are no mere impositions nor are they barriers raised to trip the unwary. They serve a purpose and give momentum to the disciple's progress. They are by their very nature inviolable and deserve special consideration—a deeper pondering on the reasons why any soul who violates them is barred from progress till he realizes that no transgression is possible or can ever be permitted.

Before one ventures upon the perilous paths of discipleship, one is expected to take stock of one's entire being, and the first item of the inventory is the heart. Is it a jealous heart? A selfish, or a cruel, or even a cowardly heart? In the would-be disciple who comes from the great roar of the outside world, the heart would portray both the good and the bad according as the inclinations oscillate between that which is desirable and that which is not. It is this heart that has to be made clean and then preserved safe and protected from substances that soil and cling. What makes the heart unclean? What steps should be taken to preserve to the heart its pristine purity? The answer to these questions is wrapped up in the understanding of the steps that the pupil is expected to take and that are set out in the same and subsequent stanzas of *The Voice of the Silence*. Some of these steps could be taken even by those who have no pretensions of becoming Occultists. They may be roughly summarized thus:

1. Efforts must be made to discern the real from the false, the ever-fleeting from the ever-lasting. No longer may the senses or even the reasoning intellect be relied upon, and this for the reason that no instrument that is itself ephemeral can be of any use to open up the vistas of the permanent. Each acquisition, each karmic heirloom, has to be picked up, analysed and questioned about its competency to survive the journey to the other shore. The power of discerning the real from the false comes only by way of a series of progressive awakenings. The soul, when it awakes, shakes off the accretions of ages and stands nude and bereft of what the world calls desirable. Yet, the forward step is not one of mere negation of the undesirable. It requires a positive approach, a questing for new weapons, vehicles, potencies. For, the signs and passwords that permit the pupil passage across the threshold of the new world are to be striven for and obtained by the use and exercise of potencies higher than terrestrial. The brain and its cerebrations, the feelings and their emotional overtones, the senses and their intoxicating, inebriating propensities, have to be given up and replaced by a studied calmness and a total reliance on that which is born of *yagna-dana-tapas* (sacrifice, charity, austerity) mentioned in the *Gita*. For, in the measure in which the pupil becomes familiar with this trinity and makes it a living power in his life, in that measure will dawn upon his questing soul the possibility of finding an entry into the higher realms of wisdom and

of acquiring proof bordering upon certainty that intuition can be reached and that out of the Silence a resonant voice will arise.

2. The pupil must learn to separate Head-learning from Soul-wisdom. A painful and laborious process this at any time until one has accumulated to oneself numerous existences. The pupil is asked to relegate that which at one time he valued as his most cherished possession—the knowledge of the physical world; its formulae and intellectualisms, its arts, sciences and faculties. To deny to each of these their erstwhile pride of place, and then moreover to keep that place vacant for a still unknown claimant, demands a fortitude and faith bordering almost upon the fanatical. Ignorance belongs to the boor, the fanatic and the mentally lazy. Head-learning is the property of the one who hungers for knowledge, but who, not having lit his lamp, sees the Universe in the deceptive half-light of a knowledge gleaned by others and founded purely on the testimony of the senses. This knowledge is perishable because it belongs to the earth and is stored in the physical mind, that terrestrial portion of the soul which at death parts company with its heavenly counterpart.

Shin-Sien, the sixth Patriarch of North China who taught the Esoteric Doctrine of Bodhidharma, likened the mind to a mirror that attracts and reflects every atom of dust and has to be watched over and dusted every day. The pupil is called upon to keep vigilance over his mind, and if the clogging, tainting exhalations of the ephemeral are gathered on its surface, he has to brush these away by the help of the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom. The use of any other cleansing agent may prove abrasive for the mind and may in certain circumstances smudge and soil a larger surface in the erasing process as is so often the case in ordinary life with pencil erasers.

3. The pupil is called upon to seek for the Impersonal within himself and having sought out that Impersonal to seek in it for the "Eternal Man." In the quest of the Highest, the importance of the body and its sensations cannot be ignored; for the body is the only window through which the light of that Highest can come and touch the world of matter. There are schools of thought which advocate that breaking bone and rending flesh and muscle unites a person to his "silent Self." There are others who think that the highest goal is reached merely by the cessation of sin and faults. The school of thought to which the Masters belong holds views contrary to these. Nor does Theosophy

advocate the path of inaction. Says *The Voice of the Silence*: "Shalt thou abstain from action? Not so shall gain thy soul her freedom. To reach Nirvana one must reach Self-Knowledge, and Self-Knowledge is of loving deeds the child." And again: "If thou would'st reap sweet peace and rest, Disciple, sow with the seeds of merit the fields of future harvests. Accept the woes of birth."

Ere the body can be turned into a shrine, it has to be purged of all dross. Each atom and organ, each orifice and sense has to be made to turn its face towards the Light. You do not do anything to darkness nor manipulate it to turn it into light. You have to move out of and away from darkness by seeking the ray that illuminates. So with the body and the fleshly appetites to which man is heir. But the removal of darkness from the Soul is not an end by itself. It does not cleanse the heart. It does not build the fane. It is but a preliminary, a stepping-stone upon the way. It is when the gateways of the human abode are no longer darkened that, even from afar, the Impersonal is perceived to be what it is—a radiant being of light, a thing of beauty, a promise in this sorrowful world of that which transcends both grief and pleasure. Within this Impersonal is the Eternal Man—the luminous being that moves from incarnation to incarnation, the indwelling *Kshetrajna* of the *Gita*. It is he who possesses the knowledge garnered through countless births and is the one who enjoys the aroma of the fruits gathered during each terrestrial existence. He knows what is the real as opposed to the unreal. He is the "true man" of the Northern Buddhists in whom are locked the keys to the higher mysteries.

When the pupil enters upon his quest in reality, the action of Karma changes. The law recognizes the pilgrim in him and so manipulates the circumstances of his life as to facilitate a quick scattering to the winds of the false learning and the useless encumbrances gathered and then preserved over the ages. The child when it grows up has to lay aside childish things. It may be painful, but it is vital to its evolution. It is equally painful for the person to leave his familiar haunts of joy and enter what he must in his ignorance consider a stage which negates gladness. The Good Law which is intelligent beyond human comprehension now moves swift and fast. The Soul has to be induced to pass quickly out of its adolescence and the "Great Sifter" does its work unmoved by tears

shed over broken toys. One's broken idols together with the warp and woof of one's fantasies are blown away as chaff from the wind.

Says *The Voice of the Silence*:

Follow the wheel of life; follow the wheel of duty to race and kin, to friend and foe, and close thy mind to pleasures as to pain. Exhaust the law of Karmic retribution. Gain Siddhis for thy future birth.

When the pupil has added to himself numerous existences, his experience teaches him that to work for fame, position or even knowledge is to work for a reward. Such work becomes tainted with selfishness, since in each case he desires to set himself as a thing apart from the rest of humanity. True knowledge can come only as a result of sacrificial work gladly done for all mankind. Wisdom is like the dew from above that blesses the earth beneath. It blooms when the soul reaches the apex of its ascent towards Buddhi. The pupil who risks his progress towards the Light, or who loses pace and even halts to aid a brother pupil whose feet are heavy with mire, is the true pupil. He sows kindly acts and these must bear their results in time. "The selfish devotee lives to no purpose. The man who does not go through his appointed work in life—has lived in vain."

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THE true creators of human civilization are those immortals who have sought communion with Nature, who have sought to find from Nature her profoundest secrets and make them available to their less gifted brethren.

—SIR C. V. RAMAN

## THOUGHTS ON SERVICE

THAT the world is in need of help can hardly be denied. Humanity is suffering, individually and collectively, from lack of physical necessities, mental nourishment and moral stamina; and, more serious still, from lack of knowledge of the way out of the manifold difficulties that beset it.

The essential principle which forms the basis of our philosophy, and which those who are moved by compassion for suffering mankind should bear in mind when aspiring to serve, is that humanity is a unit and the weal or woe of one affects the weal or woe of all. Willing as people are to sacrifice and to serve, the dire heresy of separateness comes in the way and makes their field of service a limited one. "Life is built up by the sacrifice of the individual to the whole," wrote H.P.B. The real key to the service of humanity, then, must lie in the phrase: "a profounder conviction of Universal Brotherhood."

Service of our fellow men is the alpha and omega of Theosophy. In fact, the prime object of Those who have been behind all endeavours to promulgate the ancient Wisdom-Religion from time immemorial is service of humanity. The first object of the present Theosophical Movement was the formation of the nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood. "The practical working of this rule," says H.P.B., "was explained by those who laid it down, to the following effect":

He who does not practise altruism; he who is not prepared to share his last morsel with a weaker or poorer than himself; he who neglects to help his brother man, of whatever race, nation, or creed, whenever and wherever he meets suffering, and who turns a deaf ear to the cry of human misery; he who hears an innocent person slandered, whether a brother Theosophist or not, and does not undertake his defence as he would undertake his own—is no Theosophist. ("Let Every Man Prove His Own Work": *U.L.T. Pamphlet No. 31*, p. 12)

The simple injunction of *The Voice of the Silence*, "To live to benefit mankind is the first step," is somewhat lightly passed over by many. Simple and easy to comprehend as it may seem, when it comes to basing our conduct on it, it is found to be full of subtle meanings, complexities and difficulties. Thus all are agreed that to render service is the right thing to do; but ask the question, "What exactly

is your idea of service?", and there will be any number of answers.

Most people regard rendering help as synonymous with disbursing money, without looking to the sufferer's real need. The "help" thus given enables and encourages many to continue in parasitism and it weakens their will to attempt any more strenuous and useful activity.

What, then, is the criterion? Real service is that which helps people to help themselves, or that which is of assistance to those who are incapacitated by old age, physical or mental defects, or other factors outside their control which prevent them from helping themselves. In other words, we should never relieve others of the duties that are theirs and that they are capable of performing; we should never do for them what they ought to do for themselves; never act so as to make it easier for them to relax the efforts by which their characters would be strengthened and purified. Those who aspire to serve should always bear in mind that incalculable mischief may arise from the wrong kind of help.

To serve a person we must look beyond his wants to his needs. This requires study and careful thought. Service is, therefore, a science requiring a basis of knowledge regarding man's nature and his relation to Life, manifested in and about him. We cannot serve another until we have diagnosed his trouble, which may be the result of any one of a number of causes; and this makes of service an art most difficult to practise.

If we endeavour to help people to help themselves we shall always be on safe ground. By far the most effectual of all aid is that which strengthens and equips a person to face bravely all that may befall him, and, when in difficulty, to find a way out of it for himself rather than expect others to pull him out. For this we need to give him right knowledge of the nature and purpose of life; that will lead him to right action and to firmer reliance on the law of Karma. Above all, if we desire to serve we should ourselves lead the Theosophic life—exercising self-control, practising impersonality, performing duty, and doing all things "as a sacrifice unto the Highest," for example is better than precept.

If service is to prove effectual, the motive for service needs to be examined. Some are moved to serve by the desire for self-growth; others energize themselves to work out the surplus energy of their natures; still others are inspired to be altruistic by the compassionate

longing to better the lot of their fellow men. The eagerness to give one's very best without hope of reward or self-benefit is the necessary qualification to be cultivated. Of course we gain as we give, we grow in selflessness as we sacrifice, but if we calculate it that way and take service as a selfish opportunity to further our own progress, our highest aspirations for the welfare of humanity become tainted and we meet with frustration. Therefore it is that we are warned against considering our own progress. The motive of our service must be that we may be the better able to help and teach others—not that we may climb.

It is often said: "Willing as we are to serve our fellow men, what can we actually do, restricted as we are? He who does all that he can and the best he knows how, does enough. Mr. Crosbie has something to say on the subject which all of us would do well to bear in mind:

Supposing each one determined to do all he could for every other one wherever he could, do you think that *anybody* would suffer? Not one! There would be more to help than those to suffer. But we are afraid that if we so act, the other man will not. So we do not move at all along that line. (*The Friendly Philosopher*, pp. 351-52)

To enter the Path of the Great Service in full self-consciousness when our hour strikes, it is necessary to tread the path of little services, faithfully and persistently, all the while. The Path of Theosophy is the Path of Renunciation. The most inspiring teaching of Theosophy is about the selfless labour of the Masters, the Servants of Humanity *par excellence*, who, renouncing the bliss of Nirvana, choose to keep the company of mortals. Ever since H.P.B. introduced to us this lofty concept of "our Living Mahatmas" as she called Them, much has been said about serving Them and reaching up to Them. And They Themselves have given us the clue for achieving this: "If you want to serve us, serve our humanity." Are we, through little services rendered now and here, preparing ourselves for that moment at the end of our journey when, having won the bliss of Nirvana, we shall be able to declare willingly: "For others' sake this great reward I yield"? This is the question each one should ask himself.

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## THE DRAWING POWER

STUDENTS of Theosophy sometimes wonder why so few respond to its message. It is an old cry, a perennial question, and though both Mr. Judge and Mr. Crosbie have pointed out that numbers do not matter, still it is a problem that continues to cause worry to many students. They might say, "It must be our fault." But just saying this and wringing one's hands will not get one very far, and will only increase the general atmosphere of discouragement. What, then, can one do?

Students study, try to live the life, and are fired by enthusiasm for the Movement. What kind of enthusiasm, however? The Astral Light, the Universal Agent—by means of which we act upon and respond to our fellow beings, and indeed all nature—has a two-way action in its currents. The astral fluid can be concentrated and projected to others, to heal and to bless (as also to curse). But the current can be reversed to draw the vital fluid from others to ourselves, either consciously or unconsciously. In a lesser degree, we all know how tiring some people can be, though they seem to radiate vitality, while the presence of others gives refreshment. In the same way, there is the enthusiasm that expands from within outwards, and lights up and inspires all those it touches. But there is also the "enthusiasm" that draws from without into its own orbit and centre, that tries to bring round those it contacts to the object on which its own heart is set. The fanatic and the bore are but the sharp and the flat, the *rajasic* and the *tamasic* aspects of this "enthusiasm." The very desire to attract, to absorb, might bring about resistance. Let us then learn to give without expecting a return.

The student will find food for thought in these words of Mr. Judge's:

...the mind of man is capable of bringing about results through means of other minds about him. If we sit and think that nothing can be done, then our subtle mind meets other minds within the radius of our sphere—not small—and shouts into them: "Nothing can be done." Of course then nothing is done. But if unselfishly and earnestly we think *Theosophy*, and desire that others should, like us, be benefited by it, then to the minds we meet in stray moments of the day and in many hours of the night we cry "Theosophy," and "Help and hope for thee." The result must be an awakening of interest upon the slightest provocative occasion.

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## LIGHT ON THE PATH

[P. Sreenevas Row's annotations on the closing Section of *Light on the Path*, entitled "Karma," are continued here from our last issue. They appeared originally in *The Theosophist* for November 1885.]

### SECTION III. CLAUSE I

AS explained in the Introductory clause, human existence is made up of Karma. It is impossible to conceive of human existence without Karma. This is the result of Nature's eternal law of causes and effects, the causes themselves being the effects of antecedent causes in an indeterminate succession, forming a circle, a wheel of life as it were, rolling on from eternity to eternity. It is on this account that the Aryans declare that Karma is *Nitya* (eternal); and our Text propounds the same theory in the following words:

Consider with me that the individual existence is a rope which stretches from the infinite to the infinite and has no end and no commencement, neither is it capable of being broken. This rope is formed of innumerable fine threads, which, lying closely together, form its thickness.

Briefly said, the above Text means that Space and Time are infinite; and that human existence—speaking generically—which is spread over such infinite space and infinite time, must be infinite likewise. Time and space, it must be understood, are not nihilities nor vacuities. They are the measurements of extension and duration in the abstract. Space is filled with Ether, and Time is full of an everlasting succession of events.

Space is declared to be a form of the Universal Soul (*Taitereya Upanishad, Siksha Valli, VI, 1, etc.*); and it is therefore eternal (*Devi Bhagavata, IX, i, 5*). It is thus boundless, and no calculation of its magnitude is possible. But, in order to give the reader something better than this abstract idea, I shall quote the following verses from the *Siddhanta Siromoni*, one of the ancient Aryan works on Astronomy:

The earth and its mountains, the Devas and Danavas, men and others, and also the orbits of the constellations and planets; and the *Lokas* (regions) which are arranged one above the other, are all included in what has been denominated the *Brahmanda* (Brahma's egg, the Universe). Some astronomers have asserted the

circumference of the circle of Heaven to be 18,712,069,200,000,000 *yojanas* (one *yojana* is nearly 10 miles) in length. Some say that this is the length of the Zone which binds the two hemispheres of *Brahmanda*. Some *Pauranikas* hold that this is the length of the circumference of the *Lokaloka-parvata* (mountain). Those, however, who have had a more perfect mastery of the clear doctrine of the sphere, have declared that this is the length of that circumference bounding the limits, to which the darkness-dispelling rays of the sun extend. But, whether this be the length of the circumference of the *Brahmanda* or not, this much is clear to me—that each planet traverses a distance corresponding to this number of *yojanas* in the course of a *Kalpa* *i.e.*, a day of *Brahma*, and that it has been called the *Khakaksha* by the ancients. (Chapter III, Sections 66 to 69)

Upon this subject, one of the Western Philosophers, Dr. Dick states that "the space which surrounds the utmost limits of our system, extending in every direction to the nearest fixed stars, is at least forty billions of miles in diameter; and it is highly probable that every star is surrounded by a space of equal, or even greater extent.

While such is the amazing magnitude of our system, our *Brahmanda*, we are assured that there are *thousands and thousands of such Brahmanda in existence.* (*Vishnu Purana*, II, vii, 27)

Further, I shall attempt to illustrate the infinitude of space from another standpoint, taking my figures from Professor Dick's philosophy. Among the bodies impelled with the greatest velocity which human art can produce, the ball propelled from a loaded cannon stands first and it has been found by experiments that the rate of its motion is from 480 to 800 miles in an hour, subject to the resistance it meets from the air and the attraction of the earth. It is said that the cannon ball moving at such great speed would require 4,700,000 years ere it could reach the nearest star!

But the light that flows from the sun travels about 1,400,000 times more swiftly than the motion of the cannon ball. And supposing that anyone is endowed with a power of motion as swift as that of light and that he continues such a rapid course unceasingly for 1,000,000,000 years, he may then probably approach "the suburbs of creation"; and all that he has surveyed during this long and rapid flight would be no more proportion to the whole Divine empire than the *smallest grain of sand* does to all the particles of matter of the same size contained in ten thousand worlds!

Such is the infinity of space that it exceeds all bounds of human thought, and we are simply lost in wonder at its immeasurable extent.

And then the Time is equally infinite. This also is a form of the Supreme Soul (*Vishnu Purana*, I, ii, 18; *Bhagavad-Gita*, XI, 32, etc.) and this too is eternal (*Rig Veda*, I, 164, 2; *Devi Bhagavata*, IX, i, 5). To give the reader some idea of the infinitude of time, I shall state certain facts taken from the book on Hindu Astronomy above alluded to, and the notes of the learned editor together with the Puranas extant on the subject.

The period which intervenes between the evolution of the Universe in some form or other (*Srishti*), and its dissolution (*Prakritapralaya*), when all the discrete products of nature (*Prakriti*) are withdrawn into their indiscrete source (*Mulaprakriti*), constitutes the whole period of 100 years of Brahma's age, as it is allegorically called, and is known as the *Maha Kalpa*.

One day out of this long life of Brahma is called *Kalpa*; and a *Kalpa* is that portion of time which intervenes between one conjunction of all the planets on the horizon of Lanka, at the first point of Aries, and a subsequent similar conjunction. A *Kalpa* embraces the reign of fourteen Manus, and their *sandhis* (intervals); each *Manu* lying between two *sandhis*. Every *Manu's* rule contains seventy-one *Maha Yugas*—each *Maha Yuga* consists of four *Yugas*, viz., *Krita*, *Treta*, *Dwapara*, and *Kali*; and the length of each of these four *Yugas* is respectively as the numbers 4, 3, 2 and 1.

The number of sidereal years embraced in the foregoing different periods are as follows:

	Mortal years
360 days of mortals make a year ... ..	1
<i>Krita Yuga</i> contains ... ..	1,728,000
<i>Treta Yuga</i> contains ... ..	1,296,000
<i>Dwapara Yuga</i> contains ... ..	864,000
<i>Kali Yuga</i> contains ... ..	432,000
The total of the said four <i>Yugas</i> constitutes a <i>Maha Yuga</i> ... ..	4,320,000
Seventy-one of such <i>Maha Yugas</i> form the period of the reign of one <i>Manu</i> ... ..	306,720,000
The reign of 14 <i>Manus</i> embraces the duration of 994 <i>Maha Yugas</i> , which is equal to ... ..	4,294,080,000
Add <i>Sandhis</i> , i.e., intervals between the reign of	

each Manu, which amount to six Maha Yugas, equal to	... ..	25,920,000
The total of these reigns and interregnums of 14 Manus, is 1,000 Maha Yugas, which constitute a Kalpa, <i>i.e.</i> , one day of Brahma, equal to	... ..	4,320,000,000
As Brahma's night is of equal duration, one day and night of Brahma will contain	... ..	8,640,000,000
360 of such days and nights make one year of Brahma, equal to	... ..	3,110,400,000,000
100 of such years constitute the whole period of Brahma's age, <i>i.e.</i> , Maha Kalpa	... ..	311,040,000,000,000

That these figures are not fanciful, but are founded upon astronomical facts, has been demonstrated by Mr. Davis in an essay in the *Asiatic Researches*; and this receives further corroboration from the geological investigations and calculations made by Dr. Hunt, formerly President of the Anthropological Society, and also in some respects from the researches made by Professor Huxley.

Great as the period of the Maha Kalpa seems to be, we are assured that *thousands and thousands of millions of such Maha Kalpas have passed, and as many more are yet to come* (*Vide Brahma-Vaivarta and Bhavishyre Puranas; and Linga Purana, ch. 171, verse 107, etc.*); and this in plain language means that the Time past is infinite and the Time to come is equally infinite. The Universe is formed, dissolved, and reproduced, in an indeterminate succession. (*Bhagavad-Gita, VIII, 19*)

Some people consider all such speculations to be futile because the Infinite cannot become the legitimate object of man's consciousness, since man's senses, which alone form the avenue to the whole domain of human consciousness, never come into contact with the Infinite. But this objection is utterly invalid; for, as is very forcibly shown by Professor Max Muller in his Hibbert Lectures, it is very clear that with every finite perception there is a concomitant perception of the Infinite; whenever we try to fix a point in space or time, we feel that we are utterly unable to fix it in such a manner as to exclude the possibility of a point beyond that. In fact, our very idea of limit implies an idea of a beyond, and thus forces the idea of the Infinite upon us. And, as far as mere distance or extension is concerned, it is difficult to deny that the eye, by the very act by which it apprehends

the finite, apprehends also the Infinite. The more we advance, the wider grows our horizon; but there can be no horizon to our senses, except as standing between the visible and finite on one side, and the invisible and infinite on the other.

Thus the infinite is implied in the manifestation of our own sensuous knowledge; and we arrive at the idea of the infinity of space and time. If this be so, the infinity of human existence is self-evident, for mankind, composed of eternal soul and eternal particles of matter, and biding on the surface of infinite space, and during infinite time, cannot but be infinite itself. True, the existence of an individual A or B cannot be said to be infinite, as the embodiment of his soul began at a certain period and will terminate at another period. But A or B is not the only human being in the universe. There are millions of millions of beings like him; and each one of them is born, he dies, and is again born in thousands of successions, contracting affinities which bind one to another in various ways during such innumerable existences; so that the lot of one embodied soul may fairly be said to be cast with all those similarly embodied; and the good or evil of the individual unit becomes the good or evil of the world as a whole. Hence the Karma of one is inextricably interwoven with the Karma of all. Man's enjoyment or suffering have reference not only to *his own* Karma (*Rig Veda*, I, 162, 22 and VI, 74, 3); but also to the Karma of his *forefathers* (*Rig Veda*, VII, 86, 5); and even to the Karma of *others*. (*Rig Veda*, VII, 52, 2)

In this sense, taking mankind generically, the human institution is everlasting and infinite, and its Karma is equally so, for we cannot conceive of human existence without Karma, and it cannot break. It may be dissolved at certain Pralayas, but it is again revived at the next evolution, the seed being ever present. "The creatures," says the *Vayu Purana*, "who at the close of the preceding kalpa had been driven by the mundane conflagration to the *Janaloka*, now form the seed for the new creation" (VIII, 23, etc.); and this is true not only of the souls, but also of the result of their past Karma. "The seeds of Karma generate other seeds, and others again succeeding, and they bear fruits good or evil according as the seeds are good or evil." (*Mahabharata*, *Anusasana Parva*, Ch. VI)

But at the same time it must be remarked that the result of human existence is not the work of a day or even a cycle. It is the aggregate

sum of actions committed during innumerable previous existences. Each action may in itself be as slight as can be conceived, like the minutest filaments of cotton—such that hundreds of them may be blown away by one single breath; and yet, as similar filaments when closely packed and twisted together form a rope, so heavy and strong that it can be used to pull elephants and even huge ships with, so the articles of man's Karma, however trivial each one of them may be in itself, would yet by the natural process of accretion combine themselves closely, and form a formidable *Pasa* (rope) to pull the man with, *i.e.*, to influence his conduct for good or evil.

This illustration of *Karma-pasa* (rope of karma) by means of the cotton rope occurs beautifully in the *Vishnu Purana* (VI, v, 53) and in the *Hitopadesa*. Hence it is a common saying among the Aryans that man is *karma-baddha* (bound by karma).

Now the Treatise proceeds to explain the nature and character of the threads of Karma.

(*To be continued*)

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A MAN is a bundle of relations, a knot of roots, whose flower and fruitage is the world.

To be great is to be misunderstood.

Discontent is the want of self-reliance: it is infirmity of will.

Nothing can bring you peace but yourself.

Everything in Nature contains all the powers of Nature.  
Everything is made of one hidden stuff.

It is as impossible for a man to be cheated by anyone but himself, as for a thing to be and not to be at the same time.

A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of Nature.

Every sweet has its sour; every evil its good.

The only reward of virtue is virtue; the only way to have a friend is to be one.

The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.

—EMERSON

## MUTUAL CULTURE

Theosophy teaches *mutual-culture* before *self-culture* to *begin* with. Union is strength. It is by gathering many theosophists of the same way of thinking into one or more groups, and making them closely united by the same magnetic bond of fraternal unity and sympathy, that the objects of *mutual* development and progress in Theosophical thought may be best achieved. "Self-culture" is for isolated *Hatha Yogis*, independent of any Society and having to avoid association with human beings; and this is a *triple distilled* SELFISHNESS. For real moral advancement—there "where two or three are gathered" in the name of the SPIRIT OF TRUTH—there the Spirit of Theosophy *will be in the midst of them*.

—H.P.B. in "The Original Purposes and Aims"  
(THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT, May 1966)

THE above quotation from H.P.B. is very apt, if we take into account the modern trend for "self-development." Everywhere we see courses in "self-awareness" and "self-assertion." No wonder the world is steeped in separative views. H.P.B. is here making the Theosophical viewpoint very clear: if we are to realize a true Brotherhood of Humanity, then our thoughts should be turned away from self-centred practices and towards action in unison. Unfortunately, a great many of these "new age" movements, although sincere, may be actually intensifying the sense of personality rather than diminishing it. It is a pity that such groups have not been made aware of the ideal of "mutual culture," nor have they seen their way to applying that ideal to their activities.

The above quotation would indeed cause a revolution in human thought if it was understood in the true sense. It would create hope in this troubled world, if people could appreciate that there is indeed strength in numbers. Selfishness will rear its ugly head wherever it can, and often take on the appearance of its opposite. This is why we should always be very discriminative as we look at the different ways advocated by self-styled "teachers" as leading to spiritual progress. We should always be thinking of ways to promote brotherly and sisterly love and attempting the breakdown of any feeling of separateness between ourselves and others. The essence of the Theosophical teaching is expressed in the idea of "mutual development." It is a practical way of applying our Theosophical

knowledge and of working together to improve the lot of mankind in general.

Union *is* strength and we should remember that *nothing* is impossible to him who wills; and the effectiveness of that will is enhanced as a result of co-operation with like minds. We need only find ways to make this ideal a living reality in today's moral climate, and encourage others to think more and more along the lines of joint effort in all aspects of life, particularly as regards spiritual progress. It may be wise, for those who are able, to gather themselves into Theosophical "mutual-culture" groups to counter the move towards "self-culture."

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THE constant drain of vitality has reduced the true religion to a very low ebb, and it is to infuse a new current of ideas and aspirations into modern thought, in short, to supply a logical basis for an elevated morality, a science and philosophy which is suited to the knowledge of the day, that Theosophy comes before the world. Mere physical philanthropy, apart from the infusion of new influences and ennobling conceptions of life into the minds of the masses, is worthless. The gradual assimilation by mankind of great spiritual truths will alone revolutionize the face of civilization, and ultimately result in a far more effective panacea for evil, than the mere tinkering of superficial misery. Prevention is better than cure. Society creates its own outcasts, criminals, and profligates, and then condemns and punishes its own Frankensteins, sentencing its own progeny, the "bone of its bone, and the flesh of its flesh," to a life of damnation on earth. Yet that society recognizes and enforces most hypocritically Christianity—*i.e.*, "Churchianity." Shall we then, or shall we not, infer that the latter is unequal to the requirements of mankind? Evidently the former, and most painfully and obviously so, in its present dogmatic form, which makes of the beautiful ethics preached on the Mount, a Dead Sea fruit, a whitened sepulchre, and no better.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

## IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

People the world over are much exercised about the violence prevalent in our world and are seeking ways to remedy the situation. Violence, both visible and invisible, not only marks the twentieth century, but all previous centuries of which any historical trace remains. No region of the world or culture known to us has been free from it, although it tends to take on different forms and degrees of intensity. In *International Social Science Journal*, contributions from philosophy, history, psychology and sociology—with provocative titles like "Modern Society and Innate Violence," "Violence, Powerlessness and Individualism," or again "Violence, Gender and Social Change"—help our understanding of some of the questions that arise when we reflect on the subject.

*Unesco Sources* for July-August also deals with this topic of violence and war. For the past thirty years, David Adams, a professor from Wesleyan University in Connecticut, U.S.A., has been working on the causes of these evils plaguing humanity. A graduate in psychology and physiology, he is a specialist in research on the brain, on the cerebral mechanisms of aggression. *Unesco Sources* quotes him as saying:

I believed falsely that if one could understand the brain mechanism of aggression, it would be simple to solve the social problems of aggression.

Error! We have come to the conclusion that our knowledge will not solve social problems because these are situated on another level. But at the same time we found that our research was misused by the mass media, in many cases in such a way as to make it appear that violence is inevitable because encribed in the brain.

I felt, therefore, that our responsibility was not only to do our research but also to make sure our work was properly presented to the public.

With sixteen other specialists (psychologists, psychiatrists, sociologists, anthropologists, etc.) who met under the auspices of the Spanish Commission for UNESCO, Adams is one for the authors of the Seville Manifesto, whose message can be summarized in these words: "Biology does not condemn humanity to violence and war. Contrary to the myth that violence is inherent in human nature, it is

not genetically programmed."

Adams is engaged in popularizing this scientific certainty and is rallying the support of major international organizations specialized in the social sciences. Young people are their target, because much needs to be done to change the attitudes of the youth. Whether from North or South, too many of them believe it is useless to work for peace as war and violence are inevitable, whatever we do.

Such casual acceptance of violence creates a climate which can in fact arouse susceptible people to further violent acts. The causes of violence, however, are not easy to pinpoint. Though the impulses to aggression and violence have always been intimately linked with frustration, yet frustration alone cannot account for the problem. To reduce the incidence of violence in the world, one has to work for its opposite—peace; and peace begins in our minds. What is needed is a fundamental shift in the attitude of the entire culture, and right education is required to bring this about. The basic attitude underlying a peaceful culture must be love, and love must begin with the individual. Unless we practise it in daily life, we cannot transform the institutions to which we belong, let alone our culture as a whole. To bring about such a change of heart is no easy task, yet it is worth every effort if the world is to be made a more livable place, for us and for future generations.

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Humanity's growing preoccupation with energy matters reflects itself in many ways. *World Goodwill Newsletter* (1992, No. 2) considers the theme of energy from a different perspective—the subjective, spiritual and thought energies which are the concomitants of human consciousness.

There is, for instance, the energy of love, "the coherent force that makes all things whole." With sufficient love any problem can be solved, for love changes relationships, heals divisions and reveals the world around and within us in a new light.

There is the energy of creativity, which has led to great discoveries. The potential for creativity exists in each individual. If this creative potential could be released and directed to the dire problems that confront humanity today, a new form of human society, global in

scope, could arise.

Money, too, could be considered as an energy, a blind force as available for selfish as for altruistic purposes. In the search for more ethical and sustainable ways of conducting human affairs, attitudes to money are changing, and as money is seen increasingly as an energy to be used in the service of selfless goals, this attitude will have a profound impact on public opinion in the years ahead.

One of the articles in the *Newsletter* looks at the way in which energy flows through channels of human thought, transforming the environment in line with governing desires and beliefs. Our thought-life can become a powerful means of service. For instance, the thinking of those who vision progress towards a global society, which provides for all in a climate of freedom, peace and friendliness, directs energy to this goal. As the article observes:

By means of thought, human beings can devise and implement ways of adapting, improving, building upon the given world. Thought gives people the means to change the world they live in....Energy, following thought, has flowed into the creation of modern technological societies....

Was it in the 1950s and '60s that the first big misgivings about our relationship to the environment registered in the thought-currents of humanity? The buddings and sproutings of nuclear technology became in those years a focus for dissident thinking. A growing dichotomy appeared in the thought-life of the race, a thought-life beginning to manifest collectively as "public opinion." On the one hand, material progress continued to be seen as an end in itself, a view supported by vested interests. On the other hand, a new awareness was emerging in human thought: awareness of an intelligent adaptability—a *wisdom*—inherent in the overlapping eco-systems of the planet itself. This wisdom appeared lacking in humanity's use of the life-energy in which we participate. Energy follows thought: once *realized* in thought, this new awareness began to manifest in human attitudes, choices and actions. The science of ecology was born. It grew vigorously to the level of political existence, and became an issue pregnant with possibilities for change....

The energy crisis is in reality a thought-crisis. The problem concerns fossil thinking far more than fossil energy. The same reasoning can be seen as valid where human societies are concerned. Wars, poverty, want: do these not also demand that energy be

attracted to new and creative channels of thought? Public opinion can, as we have recently seen, galvanize with energy some dangerously outworn forms of racial and religious prejudice. It can also be the vehicle of planetary wisdom. Because energy will ever follow thought, public opinion can change the world we live in.

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Avijit Pathak's reflections on the Barcelona Olympics (*Indian Express*, August 17) centre round the issue of sport as an ethic. In today's competitive sports, the ideal of sportsmanship is being steadily replaced by the winner-take-all philosophy, with the adverse psychological consequences such as attitude involves. "We have accepted the militarization of sports, and with it its ugliness."

As a matter of fact [says Pathak], we are witnessing a new meaning attached to sports. It is endowed with power, politics, and aggressive nationalism. There is no such thing as a "sports culture."

Life, in the world of hegemonic capitalism, we all know, is perpetual war. Competition is its essence; success is its language; aggressiveness is its gesture.

This rationale is so terribly powerful that everything, be it sports or aesthetics, gets incorporated into the same fold. Life is victory; defeat is death; and death is ugly.

Be it hockey or swimming, football or athletics, victory and victory alone is the motive. And this extraordinary emphasis on victory causes terrible stress. It affects players, denies them their spontaneity, forces them to take performance-boosting drugs to undergo a process of rigorous training. Each participant in this kind of sports-war knows how he is continually watched, disciplined, examined, hierarchized.

Because beneath it lies the anxiety of the nations. Each medal, like each nuclear weapon, adds to the power of the nation....The point is that for fifteen days the world witnesses not just beautiful sports; it witnesses an aggressive demonstration of group narcissism and power....

Perhaps another factor that has further intensified the culture of narcissism is the new role that television is playing to spout signs and images. Barcelona is no longer a distant land; it cannot be easily forgotten. It has entered our drawing rooms; television has made us feel the excitement of the war; television has shown us

what it really means to be victorious. With television we have witnessed the mythologization of success....

Not to have medals is like having a meaningless existence. But this has to be resisted, because, this neurotic obsession with victory and the consequent negation of a true sports culture reflects a sick civilization....

One thing has to be realized. The increasing codification of sports, in the ultimate analysis, is bound to demoralize everyone since it is the denial of our shared humanity.

Is it possible to strive for perfection without the neurosis we experience in the Olympics? Such questions are hardly asked. The effect of competitive sports—on the psyche of individual contestants as of the nations they represent—is far from trivial and needs to be looked into.

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Katharine Milton, who teaches anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, has for the past ten years had extended stays in the company of recently contacted Amazonian Indian groups, studying their traditional ecology and features of their tropical forest environment. The groups she has visited live far from any cities, towns or commercial enterprises, and are so little known that few outside their immediate geographic area have heard of them. These people typically live in small villages of fewer than a hundred inhabitants, in some cases in groups of only fifteen or twenty. They have few possessions, and accumulation of possessions would, in fact, be an impediment to their seminomadic life style.

The disrupting effect that contact with civilization produces on these people is the theme of Katharine Milton's article in the *March Natural History*.

Living with these people [she writes] has given me the chance to see how even modest changes in their traditional lifeways—the introduction of something as innocent in appearance as a metal cooking pot or ax, a box of matches or some salt—can be the thin end of a wedge that will gradually alter the behaviour and ecological practices of an entire society....

Unlike our economic system, in which each person typically tries to secure and controls as large a share of the available

resources as possible, the hunter-gatherer economic system rests on a set of highly formalized expectations regarding co-operation and sharing....Individuals do not amass a surplus. For instance, no hunter fortunate enough to kill a large game animal assumes that all this food is his or belongs only to his immediate family....

Despite the way their culture traditionally eschews possessions, forest-living peoples are strongly drawn to the new and abundant items offered to lure them from isolation....The intrusion of every item—mirrors, cloth, scissors, rice, machetes, axes, pots, bowls, needles, blankets, even bicycles and radios—not only adds to the pressure on individuals to produce trade goods but also disrupts some facet of traditional production....With the introduction of steel tools, particularly axes, indigenous groups suffer a breakdown in the web of co-operative interdependence. In the past, when stone axes were used, various individuals came together and worked communally to fell trees for a new garden. With the introduction of the steel ax, however, one man can clear a garden by himself. Collaboration is no longer mandatory nor particularly frequent.

Indians often begin to cultivate new crops, such as coffee, that they feel can be traded or sold easily. Another is rice....Traditional crop foods, the successful cultivation of which has been worked out over generations in the forest environment and which are well suited to the soil conditions in particular regions, may become scarce, with the result that the diet becomes unbalanced and health takes a downward turn....New diseases also appear....

Once the technological roller coaster gets moving, it's hard to jump off or even pause to consider the situation. Some say, so what? We can't all go back to the jungle, we can't all become forest-living. No, we can't. But as I stand in my apartment in Berkeley, listening to my telephone's insistent ring and contemplating my unanswered mail, dusty curtains, dripping faucets, and stacks of newspapers for recycling, I'm not sure we wouldn't be far happier if we could.

Such is the price of "civilization"!

---

Development shatters every aspect of the life of traditional societies. Indeed, it is a process which is "more likely to generate unhappiness, violence and tyranny than social harmony." One problem that arises

is that as soon as a traditional society embarks on the path to economic development, its population explodes. Edward Goldsmith, editor of *The Ecologist*, examines the factors that give rise to this situation:

It happened in Britain, where the population was under eight million when the industrial revolution began and where it increased by more than seven times before it eventually stabilized. It is happening throughout the third world wherever economic development takes place....

In particular, development destroys a society's cultural pattern and its associated social structure. The society thus disintegrates and becomes atomized, as in the industrialized world today. Such a society can no longer govern itself, nor provide its members with the security that it previously provided; instead, it must now be governed by a government bureaucracy. Such a bureaucracy, however, can never compensate people for the inestimable social capital provided to them by the social groupings to which they previously belonged. Nor can participation in the formal economy, usually as grossly underpaid casual workers, compensate people for the loss of their land—which is inevitably taken over to accommodate more economic land uses. All this creates the most terrible misery and insecurity, and in order to survive, people are forced to seek an alternative strategy for providing them with some sort of security, however precarious. One such strategy is to have more children, who can be hired out as labourers or who can even be trained to beg and steal in the cities....

A growing population is not intolerable *per se* but because of the increasing impact it must have on the natural environment. This impact is greatly magnified by the increase in material consumption made possible by economic development. To seek to reduce population by systematically encouraging economic development is thus self-defeating since it can only increase natural consumption and thus environmental destructiveness.

Esenstadt considers that because "modernization entails continual changes in all major spheres of a society," it involves of necessity "processes of disorganization and dislocation with the continual development of social problems, cleavages and conflicts between various groups and movements of protest and resistance to change." Disorganization and dislocation thus constitute a basic part of

modernization, and every modern and modernizing society has to cope with the problem.

---

There is much more to colour than meets the eye. Colours are an important part of our lives, affecting us as they do physically, mentally and emotionally. Some colours excite us, some soothe and please. "The Psychological Impact of Colours" is discussed by Ashok Samarth in *Indian Express* for July 10:

We are constantly surrounded by colours, we communicate with them; we identify with them; we select our clothes, cars, houses and even eatables, based on colours. Colours make us happy, hungry or thirsty. They welcome or repel.

Artists and designers who use colour often develop a sensitivity to its use and produce a harmonious relationship quite unconsciously. They can use colour to increase or decrease the illusion of space and light, and also to influence human reactions.

Not only are illusions created when colours are used together in certain combinations, but extensive research has proved the effect of colours upon the human mind and body. Light and colours are used in schools to facilitate learning and in hospitals to reduce tensions and to quicken recovery. Recognition of the ability of colours to soothe or to excite is also useful to the designer. Various colours have a strong emotional effect on people.

There is indeed what has been called a "language of colours." It is now generally admitted that there are basic meanings and associations of each colour. Light and colour cause startling changes in many living things, and colour-therapy is based on these observations. Colour, sound, scent, all have their direct effect on our psychological nature as also on the elemental lives. The mysteries of colour are as profound as are the mysteries of sound, and Theosophy considers both these as "vibrations." Sounds and colours have been called "spiritual numerals"; and H.P.B. quotes the Hermetic axiom that "the cause of the splendour and variety of colours lies deep in the affinities of nature." (*Isis Unveiled*, I, 514)

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"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"**

**VOLUME 62 : NOVEMBER 1991 – OCTOBER 1992**



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# The United Lodge of Theosophists

## DECLARATION

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

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

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

It regards as Theosophists all who are engaged in the true service of Humanity, without distinction of race, creed, sex, condition or organization, and

It welcomes to its association all those who are in accord with its declared purposes and who desire to fit themselves, by study and otherwise, to be the better able to help and teach others.

*"The true Theosophist belongs to no cult or sect, yet belongs to each and all."*

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Being in sympathy with the purposes of this Lodge, as set forth in its "Declaration," I hereby record my desire to be enrolled as an Associate, it being understood that such association calls for no obligation on my part, other than that which I, myself, determine.

The foregoing is the form signed by Associates of the United Lodge of Theosophists. Inquiries are invited from all persons to whom this Movement may appeal. Cards for signature will be sent upon request, and every possible assistance furnished Associates in their studies and in efforts to form local Lodges. There are no fees of any kind, and no formalities to be complied with.







