

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

A Magazine Devoted to
The Living of the Higher Life

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

सत्यात् नास्ति परो धर्मः ।

"There is no Religion higher than Truth"

THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT

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THE FIRST STEP

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IN the ocean of worldly life, man strives for happiness. His knowledge and experience of the past years of the present incarnation are consubstantial with the longings of his desires and ambitions, the urges of his senses and organs. Faith and religious feeling spring from and are subservient to the forces of his environment. Many men live in this state of waking life and their dream state is but an extension of their mundane strife and striving. Then death comes and the incarnation is over. Of such *The Voice of the Silence* says:

Behold the Hosts of Souls. Watch how they hover o'er the stormy sea of human life, and how, exhausted, bleeding, broken-winged, they drop one after other on the swelling waves. Tossed by the fierce winds, chased by the gale, they drift into the eddies and disappear within the first great vortex.

The real nature of life on earth is not sought after by millions; they are either lulled into the belief that the mysteries of god and gods are not to be questioned or they accept blindly the dictum of the modern agnostics—"Not known so far."

In every age Gnostics have existed and in their dictionary the terms "unknown" and "unknowable" have no place.

The *Gnosis* is Theosophy; the Esoteric Philosophy is recondite, profound, vast, but man's mind and heart are fully capable of understanding its elementary principles. Those human souls who, hovering "o'er the stormy sea of human life," feel, as they grow

"exhausted," that there must be a meaning to life, a purpose in the universe, a way out of this Cimmerian darkness, begin a search. Soon or late they come upon the teaching epitomized in *Isis Unveiled* (II, 124), that

- 1, everything existing, exists from natural causes; 2, that virtue brings its own reward and vice and sin their own punishment; and,
- 3, that the state of man in this world is probationary.

All life is probationary. The glimpsing of this truth is the beginning of wisdom. Study of and reflection on these three fundamental principles of human evolution test the inquirer's zeal, the seeker's persistency. If these three principles appeal to reason and the heart's instinct, what next? The notions of creeds, of customs, of scientific agnosticism and of materialistic psychology have to be abandoned. The seeker has to admit that he himself and no one else is responsible for the conditions of life, physical, mental, moral, in and through which he must struggle to emerge on the surface, where the sunlight is met. In this effort he will soon come upon the important truth given in *The Voice of the Silence*:

This earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow, wherein are set along the Path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy Ego by the delusion called "Great Heresy."

Be it noted that the acceptance of the fact that all life, and therefore one's own, is probationary, and the resolve to learn more, brings one to that stage where one recognizes that he is a pupil, a learner, and that the Master is within himself. Says H.P.B.:

The "great Master" is the term used by Lanoos or Chelas to indicate one's "HIGHER SELF." It is the equivalent of *Avalokitesvara*, and the same as *Adi-Budha* with the Buddhist Occultists, ATMAN the "Self" (the Higher Self) with the Brahmans, and CHRISTOS with the ancient Gnostics.

The overcoming of the defects born of personal and environmental knowledge, and the development which brings perception of the traps which ensnare the Ego by a disregard of the true philosophy of Universal Brotherhood—these cause the God in us to become our guide and friend. The Master within is patient to wait and watch for the awakening of the personal man; and compassionate to warn, to

encourage and to guide him once that the personal man accepts the Master as the Inner Ruler. Study of and meditation on the nature of the Self bring the pupil and learner to the stage described thus in *The Voice of the Silence*:

The light from the ONE MASTER, the one unfading golden light of Spirit, shoots its effulgent beams on the Disciple from the very first. Its rays thread through the thick, dark clouds of matter.

Now here, now there, these rays illumine it, like sun-sparks light the earth through the thick foliage of the jungle growth. But, O Disciple, unless the flesh is passive, head cool, the Soul as firm and pure as flaming diamond, the radiance will not reach the *chamber*, its sunlight will not warm the heart, nor will the mystic sounds of the Akasic heights reach the ear, however eager, at the initial stage.

The personal man is enveloped by "the thick, dark clouds of matter"; through that envelope the Light penetrates because of loyalty to the truth perceived and faith in the Master within. However dim the rays which penetrate the jungle growth of animalism and the separative tendency of cold intellectualism, the pupil is appealed to undertake further exercises for his inner development. Flesh "passive," head "cool," Soul "firm and pure"—the achieving of these calls for arduous effort and takes the practitioner a long time. The flesh represents the urges of the senses and the organs; they are active in the personal man; they are in command; they rule. They are positive, they have to become passive or receptive. When they are active they heat the head, and confuse the thinking principle and enslave it. Only a cool head, a calm mind, a tranquil heart, can control the flesh and make it listen to truth, to reason, to righteousness. To develop a cool head we need "the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom to brush away the dust of our illusions," *i.e.*, appropriate study to learn how to make the head cool. The Soul within is firm and pure and the strength and steadfastness of that Soul must be appealed to. This necessary appeal, made with faith and conviction, brings the response to our lower mind and makes it cool and concentrated.

It is indispensable that the learning aspirant and practitioner apply the basic idea of Occultism, that true growth is an unfoldment from within without. We have to grow as the flower grows, from inward outwardly.

This prolonged exercise constitutes the first step in its completeness. It may take many years; it may take a lifetime. In attempting to learn the full lesson implicit in the taking of the first step, we are also learning that time has to be conquered. Not past, present and future, but only that aspect of the present which is the Eternal Now, need be our concern.

WE can assert, with entire plausibility, that there is not one of all these sects—Kabalism, Judaism, and our present Christianity included—but sprung from the two main branches of that one mother-trunk, the once universal religion, which antedated the Vedic ages—we speak of that prehistoric Buddhism which merged later into Brahmanism.

The religion which the primitive teaching of the early few apostles most resembled—a religion preached by Jesus himself—is the elder of these two, Buddhism. The latter as taught in its primitive purity, and carried to perfection by the last of the Buddhas, Gautama, based its moral ethics on three fundamental principles. It alleged that 1, everything existing, exists from natural causes; 2, that virtue brings its own reward, and vice and sin their own punishment; and, 3, that the state of man in this world is probationary. We might add that on these three principles rested the universal foundation of every religious creed; God, and individual immortality for every man—if he could but win it. However puzzling the subsequent theological tenets; however seemingly incomprehensible the metaphysical abstractions which have convulsed the theology of every one of the great religions of mankind as soon as it was placed on a sure footing, the above is found to be the essence of every religious philosophy, with the exception of later Christianity. It was that of Zoroaster, of Pythagoras, of Plato, of Jesus, and even of Moses, albeit the teachings of the Jewish lawgiver have been so piously tampered with.

—*Isis Unveiled*, II, 123-24

ASCETICISM OF BODY, MIND AND SOUL

MUCH misunderstanding prevails in the world on the subject of asceticism. The very first thing to be learnt is that the one desirous of becoming an ascetic must be left free to choose his own discipline, to determine his course of action. To be in a position to do this wisely he must have knowledge—a right understanding of the psychology of asceticism and a correct philosophy—ere practices and exercises are undertaken. The most important thing in the life of an ascetic is discipline. Without discipline there can be no true asceticism. The choice of discipline and its application to life will make or mar the budding ascetic.

Theosophy emphasizes the need to understand what asceticism truly is, before venturing on any ascetic practices. If by asceticism one means running away from the duties of life, being vague in mind and memory, becoming irresponsible to one's *karma* and *dharma*, then Theosophy warns against it. There is false asceticism and true, and the distinction needs to be clearly understood.

Asceticism and discipline must touch the whole of life. That is the first principle. If we are ascetic in body and not in our inner nature, then we are "false pietists of bewildered soul." If we claim that we are pure in thought and feeling and that it matters not to us what we say and do, we are deluded, and worse—dangerous, to ourselves and to others. A person may take a vow of silence, but he does not deserve to be called an ascetic until he knows the nature of his thinking. Unless asceticism is practised in soul, mind and body, it is false asceticism. True asceticism affects the whole man, and not just one or two aspects of him. Secondly, in true asceticism the discipline of life flows from within outwards. The ascetic disciplines his soul and his mind before he undertakes bodily practices, and that discipline must be rooted in knowledge and in understanding. Bodily practices should be the last to be adopted. If, for instance, vegetarianism alone can lead to soul-development, then cows and horses would be sages! If meditation meant a certain posture, every agile monkey, every bird on wing, must be accounted a *tapasvi*! It sounds absurd, but many aspirants to the ascetic life do just that and stop at bodily practices. So discipline should be not only for the whole of life but also in the right order, namely, from within without. If we remember these two

fundamental rules, we shall be in a position to distinguish between true and false asceticism.

Asceticism means discipline. Most men and women live haphazardly; they have no discipline in life, no goal, no objective, no set path, and know of no steps to be deliberately taken. They get up, go to work, eat, enjoy life, and sleep—till death overcomes them and none of these processes have any meaning or purpose for them. This is not human existence; this is vegetable and animal existence. Thought and reason imply the power to choose, to plan, to live and act deliberately. In choosing and in planning his life, the individual naturally comes to adopt some discipline, and his real progress is marked by the rules of this discipline.

Theosophy is the science which gives the knowledge and enables one to plan one's life. The general scheme of this plan is based upon the two principles mentioned earlier—namely, the whole of life must be considered and touched, and the procedure is from within without. All three factors of soul, mind and body have to be taken into account, and bodily practices follow mental exercises, just as mind-control succeeds and does not precede soul-study.

Next, there are two methods, one negative, the other positive. One deals with mortification—elimination of what should not be; the second deals with creation—unfoldment of qualities and faculties that are required for the purpose. For all three departments of our nature—soul, mind and body—there are mortifications leading to elimination or destruction; and then the creative work—the unfolding of powers and virtues.

(a) To begin with the soul: The very first step is to ascertain what soul is not and what it is, before any soul-development is undertaken. That the soul is not the body is not difficult to grasp; that it is not the mind is not so easy to understand. People confuse mind and soul, and modern physio-psychology regards both as resultants of the body. More difficult still is the idea that what we call our "I"—Mrs. So-and-So, or Mr. So-and-So—is not the soul. Not only is mind distinct and separate from the soul, but even the personal, separative "I" which enables a person to distinguish himself from all other selves is not the soul; it is but a mask of the true soul. Mortification of that personal "I"—*Ahamkara*—has to be undertaken.

On the positive and creative side, would-be ascetics do not succeed

in overcoming their personalities because they have not inquired into, or not sufficiently grasped, what soul really is. The two common difficulties are: (1) personality is not always recognized as that which needs to be controlled and mortified, and (2) when it is so recognized, lack of knowledge about the soul is the greatest stumbling-block. When our understanding of the real nature of soul is either absent or faulty, much confusion results. *Moha-Maya*, delusion-illusion, is invariably caused by absence of knowledge of the soul's true nature. Therefore study of the highest nature of man is the very first step. *Ahamkara*, the soul of pride and selfishness, cannot disappear unless the nature of the real soul is understood, at least in some measure.

So the discipline of the would-be ascetic begins with knowledge of the false "I" to be mortified and eliminated, and of the true soul who is creative and whose powers and faculties have to be unfolded. Theosophy teaches in full detail what are the constituents of the false "I" and of the true soul. We might say that the basis and foundation of the false "I" is *Kama*, desires and passions, while the basis and foundation of the true self is *Sat* or *Atma*, wherein lies immortality or true existence. *Kama* and *Atma*, *Asat* and *Sat*, passion and compassion, are the basic characteristics of the false soul and the true respectively. The true Self, *Atma*, has two aspects of *Buddhi* and *Manas*—heart-intellect and mind-reasoning. *Sat* too has two aspects—*Chit* and *Ananda*—Ideation corresponding to *Manas*, and Joy corresponding to *Buddhi*. Theosophy teaches that the real soul is *Atma-Buddhi-Manas*, or *Sat-Chit-Ananda*. The lower soul or personality is fourfold—*Kama*-desires; *Prana*-vitality; *Indriya*-senses and organs; and the soul of the three, *Ahamkara*. *Asat*, the false "I", has three *gunas* or qualities—*sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*.

A careful study of these two souls, the lower and the higher, is necessary if we want to mortify the lower and by creative activity realize the higher. That is where we begin—not by becoming vegetarians or by assuming postures or by breathing exercises, but by mortifying the personality, by studying and considering the nature of the true soul or individuality.

(b) Next comes asceticism of the mind. Man is man on account of his mind. An evil man is evil-minded; a good man is good-minded. In each one of us mind is dual—the lower and the higher. Lower or personal mind comes under the sway of *Kama*, desires and passions;

higher or divine mind is that on which the light of *Atma-Buddhi* falls. The lower mind is called *Kama-Manas*, the higher is named *Manas-Taijasi*, the Radiant *Manas*. The lower has to be mortified, purified, while the powers and faculties now lying latent in the higher have to be developed. In our civilization, the mind is neither mortified nor purified; its separative assertiveness is indulged in and it is even considered right and righteous to do so.

A verse in the Sixth Chapter of the *Gita* tells us about the exercise to be undertaken to mortify the lower mind and to unfold the higher: "To whatsoever object the inconstant mind goeth out he should subdue it, bring it back, and place it upon the Spirit." This is effective both for mortification of the lower and unfoldment of the higher. We must recognize on the one hand the inconstant nature of mind, and on the other the constant and immortal nature of the real man. Concentration often fails, and meditation is unsuccessful, because the step that should be taken first is not taken. That first step, as we have seen, is acquiring some knowledge about the real nature of the soul. People complain of their own lack of faith, but true faith can be developed only by study of the nature and function of the immortal Inner Ruler. When we feel the throbbing of our pulse and heart, we know that our body is alive; similarly, by study and reflection we feel the pulse-beat of the soul which is our real Self, and then we know that we are divine and immortal. Having found the purifier and destroyer of the lower mind, we become certain that we will succeed in overthrowing *Kama-Manas* and in radiating the light, *Tejas*, of the higher. Many are the battles to be fought with this mind of ours, and many also are the wondrous surprises in store for us, but mental asceticism begins with persistent effort at destroying the personal mind by the aid of the Divine in us.

So let us not think, hour after hour, in a personal way; let us incorporate in our discipline purification of the mind from egotism and pride, from self-praise and self-talk, from selfishness of every kind. Let us think that all our possessions are not ours; our home and children, our wealth and belongings, our love and knowledge, are for *all*. And among the things that we possess is our body, with its senses of perception and organs of action.

(c) The body has no value, no purpose, no meaning save and except as a dwelling-place of the soul. Yet most men and women look

upon themselves as the body. The first mortification of the body is to note its transitory and mortal nature; to realize that, however beautiful in appearance, it will one day turn to dust. And having seen that, the body needs to be given its true value. The senses and organs are the instruments of the real man, or soul, and through these *Indriyas* or external agents we obtain knowledge and perform actions. The soul is a mighty *deva* or god, and the senses and organs are compounds of living *devatas* or elementals. The *Gita* says that presiding over the senses are certain deities; these deities are a special kind of highly evolved and highly organized *devatas*. By our thoughts and feelings we improve them or corrupt them. Take speech: our vocal chords, our tongue and our lips are highly sensitive organisms; ultimately they are compounded of living *devatas* whose nature or *svabhava* is derived from the divine hierarchy called the Army of the Voice—*Vach*. True asceticism requires that we keep our organs of speech clean and pure, healthy and virtuous, so that the elementals composing them are helped to evolve on their own path of evolution. When useless or obscene words are uttered, we wound these elementals or presiding deities. Words are living messengers; they create and they destroy—alas! in our civilization it is mostly the latter.

What is true of voice and words and tongue and lips is equally true of eyes and ears, hands and feet. Every part of the body, every organ and organism, is a busy hive of evolving *devatas* or elementals. What the mighty Adepts and Mahatmas are to us, that we are to these elementals. Mahatmas uplift, help and elevate us; likewise we can and should uplift, help and elevate the kingdom of the elementals. But in our ignorance we become ungrateful; we receive gifts but give nothing in return, and we thus become "even as a thief," as the Third Chapter of the *Gita* states. We are fed, but we do not feed; we are nourished by the gods, but we fail to nourish them. So the real asceticism of the body, which brings it radiance and health, is to treat it as a mighty hive of ever-active workers, each class having its own presiding deity.

Our body, then, must become radiant by the power of the Spirit that dwells in us. The real Ascetic's tongue illumines our minds; his hands bring succour and strength; his eyes see with compassion; his ears hear with justice; his feet purify the earth he walks on; and his very presence brings peace and joy. That is the high ideal we are

called upon to realize.

What then are the rules of asceticism that we should follow? First, mortify the personal self, the *Ahamkaric* personality. Second, unfold the faith that within us dwells the Immortal Ruler. Third, free the mind of *kama-krodha-lobha*—passion-anger-greed. Fourth, let the mind become radiant with the light of *Paramartha Satya*—Wisdom-Compassion. Fifth, recognize the mortal and diseased condition of the body. Sixth, see that the body is a congenes of living elementals, or *devatas*, and that by right use we must elevate them, and not transform them into *bhutas* or malignant elementals by misuse of thoughts, feelings, words and deeds.

In the task of study and application, of mortification of the lower and unfoldment of the higher, all of us need the aid and the instruction that comes from Real Gurus. Such Gurus are in reality the true *Jivanmuktas*, real Mahatmas. It is easy to pose as a teacher and to obtain a shoal of chelas. Human beings, like fish, are easily caught in a net, but Real Gurus are difficult to meet, as the Seventh Chapter of the *Gita* points out; but the Inner Life is not possible without the aid of the Real Gurus. Because it is hard to find Them, people give up the search, or denounce Them, or fall prey to false claimants. Ever in the world, these Mahatmas keep the door open; it is for us to find the Gate to Life Everlasting. Study of the right philosophy will give us the correct rules of practice, will save us from the pitfalls of bizarre ascetic practices and show us the Path of true Asceticism. It is of such a Yogi that Krishna spoke in the Sixth Chapter of the *Gita*: "The man of meditation as thus described is superior to the man of penance and to the man of learning and also to the man of action; wherefore, O Arjuna, resolve thou to become a man of meditation." It is then that we leave behind the kingdom of the dead and abide in the Kingdom of Light—not to rule, but to serve. So let us come out from among the dead of this world and seek the Great Gurus in the World of the truly Living!

SIN is the assertion of the separate self, the making of difference where in truth none exists.

—SRI KRISHNA PREM

THEOSOPHICAL DON'TS

[This article by Mr. Judge first appeared in *The Path* for December 1894.]

THE following suggestions arise from experience and are due to facts in the Theosophical world.

Don't speak or write as if morality and ethics were unknown before H.P.B. wrote the *Voice of the Silence*. Some of our devoted band have been heard to speak in such a way that hearers thought the speaker meant to convey the idea that only in the *Voice* or other similar books of ours could be found the high and correct ethics by which one ought to guide his life. Buddhism, Christianity, and all the other religions teach the same morals, and literature is full of it.

Don't say that all the Theosophical doctrines were first given out by the Mahatmas through their Theosophical chelas. Attributing everything solely to the Mahatmas is foolish, as it is easily controverted. And do not be forever saying, "We are taught this and are told that." The number of doctrines found mentioned for the first time by the Mahatmas through H.P.B. are few, extraordinary in conception and scope, and easily recognized.

Don't explain everything by one theory. To wit: do not be so inadequate as to brush off the whole of Spiritualism with one word, "all spooks and shells." You will be wrong if you do so, and the result will be antagonism.

Don't say that science is all wrong and that men of science are materialists. Huxley has done us good service; he has but lately admitted consciousness to be a third factor in the universe, not a part of force and matter; and Spencer has many a good thing in his works. Besides, if you want H.P.B. on the matter, you can read her words that the truth is to be found in a union of science with occultism.

Don't think or say that phenomena are good stepping-stones to Theosophy. They are not, for those who stand upon them will fall from them to their hurt.

Don't run down the spirit of true Christianity, nor imagine that we can get ministers and congregations *en masse* to change into Theosophists. The true spirit of Christianity, as meant to be taught in the beginning, is doubtless Theosophy, but truth is not aided by running amuck among the faith of a whole people.

Don't say that H.P.B. has been reincarnated unless you know it and are able to prove it. To say you think so is not proof. She may or may not be, and either way the work must go on.

Don't talk as if messages from the Masters are all precipitated on rice paper, the writing incorporated in the paper, and such child's talk, indulged in only by those who do not know. And forget not that precipitation proves only that something was precipitated. It can be done by mediums and by various sorts of occultists.

Don't think or say that the only true occultism is found in the East, or that we must go to the East for it, or that the West has none of it. Remember that the greatest known Adept was a Western woman, a Russian, and that the energy of the lodge of Masters was first expended here in the West in this age. If so, is it not reasonable to suppose that the West has its occultists even though hidden? Recollect also that H.P.B. received in her house in New York before witnesses Western men of occult science who worked wonders there at times. Perhaps it is as has been hinted many a time, that the true thing is to be found in a union of the East and the West. The terms Guru and Chela have been misused so that all too many are looking to India for help, from which they will get but little until the West is itself full of wise students of occultism who know the meaning of being placed by karma in the West. The fact is, again, that in the East the men are looking to the great Russian woman for the very spiritual help that first shed its rays upon the West unmistakably. Again, there is extant a letter from the Mahatma K.H. to a Western man wherein it said that he should work in his own land and forget not that Karma so demanded.

Don't teach that vegetarianism is the road to heaven and spiritual growth. Was not the great Nazarene right when he intimated that, the kingdom of heaven being within, it did not come from eating or drinking? And has not our old friend H.P.B. written suggestively that cows and elephants are pure vegetarians? Reflect on the fact that some of the very best people on earth were meat-eaters and that wicked or gross thoughts are more hurtful than the eating of a ton of flesh. In fact,...

Don't fail to exercise your common sense on all and every occasion.

THE TRIALS OF THE NOVITIATE

The gem cannot be polished without friction, nor man perfected without trials.

—A Chinese Proverb

...personal virtue could claim no merit, unless it had passed through the furnace of temptation.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

EVERY tyro in Theosophy knows that the earth is a school where the Soul learns the lessons of Life. Before a pupil can graduate from a school or a college, it is incumbent on him to get through a series of tests and examinations. Does it not stand to reason that in the school of Life, too, unless the Soul encounters tests, trials and temptations progress would not be possible for it? Many are the living "dead" in our civilization, those who, though occupying physical bodies, are stagnating and "dead" from the point of view of the Soul. They are so immersed in the ephemeral pleasures and the deceptive allurements of mundane life that they miss the opportunities Karma offers them of fulfilling their mission as learners in the school of Life. They crave for a smooth-sailing life and grumble when misfortune befalls them, little appreciating the truth of the statement: "Woe to those who live without suffering." Such men and women fail to recognize the educative value of tests and trials and succumb to temptations.

Students of Theosophy and all those endeavouring to come out from among the "dead" into the realm of the "living" take a different view. To them Life is but "a series of stages toward an ever-growing perfectibility," and progressive awakenings always bring difficulties, tests and trials of various kinds. The path of the aspirant is verily the Path of Woe. It has traps to ensnare the Ego at every stage.

It is a known occult law that every advance made along the Path of Soul-progress arouses the forces that are opposed to that consummation. This is true both individually and collectively. When a person enters upon a crusade with his own faults and foibles, he arouses two sets of forces: he is opposed on the one hand by all his friends, relatives and acquaintances who consider him a fool for entering upon a course of life contrary to the one which the generality of mankind is following; and, on the other, by his own lower propensities and weaknesses which till then had been lying dormant.

The way he faces these opposing forces or "furies" is the test or trial of the aspiring neophyte. He has been clearly told: "The more thou dost advance, the more thy feet pitfalls will meet." The warning H.P.B. gave to the would-be chelas of the early years of the Theosophical Movement also applies to all those of the present generation who are making a conscious and deliberate endeavour to advance along the path of spiritual living. She wrote in her article, "Chelas and Lay Chelas":

No man or woman knows his or her moral strength until it is *tried*. Thousands go through life very respectably, because they were never put to the pinch. This is a truism doubtless, but it is most pertinent to the present case. One who undertakes to try for Chelaship by that very act rouses and lashes to desperation every sleeping passion of his animal nature....The Chela is not only called to face all the latent evil propensities of his nature, but, in addition, the whole volume of maleficent power accumulated by the community and nation to which he belongs...his struggle for goodness jars upon the whole body of badness in his environment, and draws its fury upon him...in this moral battle, if the Chela has one single hidden blemish—do what he may, it *shall* and *will* be brought to light....Vice puts on its most alluring face, and the tempting passions try to lure the inexperienced aspirant to the depths of psychic debasement....The real man comes out.

A Master of Wisdom has also warned

that the path to Occult Sciences has to be trodden laboriously and crossed at the danger of life; that every new step in it leading to the final goal, is surrounded by pitfalls and cruel thorns; that the pilgrim who ventures upon it is made first to confront and *conquer* the thousand and one furies who keep watch over its adamantine gates and entrance—furies called Doubt, Skepticism, Scorn, Ridicule, Envy and finally Temptation—especially the latter; and that he, who would see *beyond* had to first destroy this living wall; that he must be possessed of a heart and soul clad in steel, and of an iron, never failing determination and yet be meek and gentle, humble and have shut out from his heart every human passion, that leads to evil.

Tests, trials and difficulties, therefore, needs must be faced ere the latent germs of moral qualities within the individual can come to

fruition. Each one of us has vast potentialities—potentialities we ourselves may not be aware of. We can never know what we may be capable of doing or not doing under different circumstances until we have been tried. In order that our real nature may be drawn out, we need to be tested and tempted in a thousand different ways. In the case of the candidates for chelaship, the testing process is hastened and the would-be chela suddenly finds himself assailed by all manner of temptations and surrounded by all kinds of circumstances which would determine whether or not he is capable of taking the "right-hand path." In the case of the average human being, the process is a slow one and may take years, nay lives, before every unsuspected potentiality latent in him can be made to reveal itself.

Tests, then, are opportunities to see for ourselves what we are. Yet we view a test, when it comes, with misgivings, and a difficulty as something to be avoided if possible. Difficulties we all meet; we cannot avoid them. In order to progress we need to view them in the right way, as tests and opportunities to evolve or strengthen the innate virtues and knowledge. But how many of us know the art of turning "the common dust of servile opportunity to gold"? An opportunity missed is a test failed and a difficulty created for the future. What human beings do not voluntarily do, with the aid of available knowledge, that the Law of Karma which is justice compels them to do in another way. People are so fervently seeking opportunities to obtain pleasurable impressions and so anxiously avoiding disagreeable and painful ones that they scoff at the idea that difficulties and karmic precipitations have to be accepted cheerfully, as avenues for further growth and service. Seeming misfortunes or sudden strokes of "ill luck" are our tests and carry within them the seeds of spiritual benefit. Everything that comes to us contains in it the thing we need; this must be so if the purpose of life is to learn. St. Paul has said:

...we glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience; and patience, experience; and experience, hope.

The inner attitude with which we pass through our tests and trials brings its reward. They give us, fundamentally and first, the opportunity to develop *Titikṣā*, a Sanskrit term implying "long-suffering" or patience—not the patience which is shot through with self-pity and false resignation, but the type of patience of which the Mahatma

wrote: "Great man is he who is strongest in the exercise of patience." We can be truly benefited by the precipitations of Karma if we make proper application of these words of H.P.B.:

Titiksha is the fifth state of *Raja Yoga*—one of supreme indifference; submission, if necessary, to what is called "pleasures and pains for all," but deriving neither pleasure nor pain from such submission—in short, the becoming physically, mentally, and morally indifferent and insensible to either pleasure or pain.

The surrender of the personal will or volition to the Divine Will of the Higher Self is necessary for the aspirant. "Nōt my will but thine be done," should be our motto. Without dispassion, *Vairagya*, we are apt to make mountains out of molehills, or to go to the other extreme and generate cynicism. This does not imply a careless disregard of difficulties, a false indifference towards them, but a courageous facing of them all, without doubt, murmuring and despair. Unless we had within us the stamina to face and the capacity to overcome them, they would not have come our way. For every difficulty there is a way, for man is greater than any circumstance. "Even this will pass away" is a good motto to remind us of the transitory nature of all trials and troubles. If we take a higher ground, mentally, and lean back on the Self, if we put our consciousness on the Spirit and on spiritual truths, we can look at the very worst that may happen dispassionately and without being moved, and "dispel the hosts of Mara like the sun that illuminates the sky."

The present moment is the most opportune one to begin to build in ourselves fortitude and spiritual stamina to meet any and every test, trial or temptation when it comes. For has it not been said, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall"? "It is one thing to be tempted, another thing to fall," wrote Shakespeare. The humble and the pure-hearted need fear no fall. By establishing peace within and rendering true service on the outer plane, by gaining knowledge and unfolding love, devotion and unselfishness, by exercising constant vigilance over our thoughts and acts, we shall make ourselves invulnerable. We have to make the best use we can of the present and "take no thought for the morrow."

Every man thinks that the trials and temptations which assail him are precisely the ones that are the hardest of all others for him to bear, but they are so simply because they are the very ones he needs most.

Despondency is bound to arise in the heart of every Arjuna when he enters upon the inevitable battle with his own lower nature. He may meet with apparent failures, but his real test is in the effort and motive, not in the result. If he does not cease trying, victory *will* be achieved. "Human passions and sins that are slaughtered during the trials of the novitiate...serve as well-fertilized soil in which 'holy germs' or seeds of transcendental virtues may germinate," wrote H.P.B.

Remember, thou that fightest for man's liberation, each failure is success, and each sincere attempt wins its reward in time. The holy germs that sprout and grow unseen in the disciple's soul, their stalks wax strong at each new trial, they bend like reeds but never break, nor can they e'er be lost. But when the hour has struck they blossom forth. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 69)

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SELF-DISCIPLINE

AMONG the generality of mankind the understanding of the idea of discipline is as erroneous as it is varied. Theosophy being the Science of Life and the Art of Living has very definite knowledge to give on the subject.

At one extreme there are those who think that discipline is of little value. "Are we not free beings?" they argue. "And if so, is it not logical that we should have liberty to do as we please, feel as we please, think as we please?" This is a logical position from the mundane point of view, but highly illogical if a little thought is devoted to the subject and an analysis of man's nature is made and the problems that confront him are considered.

Then there are those who believe in discipline imposed from without. Such are the followers of discipline imposed on them by their church, their political party, their social organization. While certain benefits accrue from such imposed discipline, it is highly dangerous, for it cultivates blind belief and kills self-confidence. Those who follow such discipline are the weak and the duped, who allow themselves to be exploited.

There is still a third class of people who feel the need of disciplining themselves in some sort of a way, but not knowing the what and the how of it they allow their ambition, egotism and pride to assume the position of the disciplinarian and to control their mind, their heart and their body. And when one aspect of our lower personal self tries to discipline another, we only succeed in making a mess of our lives.

What, then, is real self-discipline? Who is the disciplinarian? What self is it that is disciplined? A little thought on these questions leads us to the conclusion that there are two natures or two selves in us. Self-discipline is the discipline of the lower self by the Higher Self, for, as the *Dhammapada* puts it,

Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will find a Lord very difficult to find. (Verse 160)

The first step in self-discipline is to understand the implications of this verse in *The Voice of the Silence*:

This earth, Disciple, is the Hall of Sorrow, wherein are set along the Path of dire probations, traps to ensnare thy Ego by the delusion called "Great Heresy." (p. 4)

This heresy, as a footnote explains, is the belief "in the separateness of Soul or *Self* from the One Universal, Infinite SELF." Unless this teaching is understood, real self-discipline cannot begin. The application of the great doctrine of Universal Brotherhood, therefore, is the foundation of the life of a self-disciplined man. The Higher Self, the nobler Self, has to discipline the lower and the petty self, but that discipline cannot begin unless we know what the nature and character of that Higher Self is and recognize that it is a ray of the One Universal Self. Self-discipline is based on self-knowledge. It becomes necessary, therefore, to study metaphysics and to see cosmic ultimates, for then we know that the Higher Self knows on its own plane and can transfer that vision to the plane of the lower self, if the latter fulfils the necessary conditions.

In the exercise of self-discipline three departments of our nature have to be dealt with—body, heart and mind. We should begin with the mind, it being the direct first instrument of the soul. We have to reach "that fixity of mind in which no breeze, however strong, can waft an earthly thought within," and to do so we are told:

Withhold thy mind from all external objects, all external sights.
Withhold internal images, lest on thy Soul-light a dark shadow they
should cast. (*The Voice of the Silence*, p. 20)

The perception of that Soul-light, the realization of our true nature and an employment of the powers that belong to it is the object of all advancement. What hinders us is the thinking principle, "the Rajah of the senses," the great producer of illusion. The mind has been called "the great Slayer of the Real." "Let the Disciple slay the Slayer," says *The Voice of the Silence*. The discipline of the mind consists in following out this injunction. The disciple, who is the Real Man—the Spiritual Man—has to act as such, and for that he needs a proper instrument in the shape of a well-controlled and well-directed mind. Our minds, which are like mirrors, have become covered over with the dust of our illusions. This dust has to be brushed away with the gentle breezes of Soul-Wisdom, and to do so we are asked to blend the Mind and the Soul. Then follows a becalmed condition of the

mind, and that mind of ours which was once contracted, perverse and devilish becomes the reflector of the light of the Divine within.

The discipline of the heart—the seat of feelings and emotions—comes next, for it is an instrument of the mind. Unless the mind is controlled in some measure the heart cannot be controlled. Our hearts are often erratic, sometimes volcanic, at other times sluggish, rarely awakened. Of the man whose heart is not at rest it has been said:

The uncontrolled heart, following the dictates of the moving passions, snatcheth away his spiritual knowledge, as the storm the bark upon the raging ocean. (*Bhagavad-Gita*, II, 67)

The man whose desires enter his heart, as waters run into the unswelling passive ocean, which, though ever full, yet does not quit its bed, obtaineth happiness; not he who lusteth in his lusts. (*Ibid.*, II, 70)

The discipline of the heart consists in awakening it with the help of the mind and lighting it with the fire of intelligence. The feeling nature has to be controlled and purified by the greatest of all purifiers—Spiritual Knowledge. With Knowledge must be combined Compassion, that feeling of infinite tender mercy, and thus we come to possess that Higher Feeling by which we perceive accurately and understand the truth of things. But those fast fixed in the lower emotions cannot acquire Knowledge or unfold Compassion, and their minds perverted by wrong feelings will bring them wrong understanding and they will indulge in wrong practices. Hence the need for training, culturing, disciplining the emotions, so that with their help great virtues may flower forth. The aphorism that should always be remembered is: Make your mind compassionate and your heart intelligent. And thus, mind and heart united, we come to the discipline of the body.

The discipline of the body consists in recognizing that it is but a vesture for the soul and, having recognized this, in obtaining mastery over it. We have to guard against the senses making a playground of the mind. The senses and organs which impel to action in every direction have to be restrained, for then only can one dwell at rest in the "nine gate city of his abode." The body has been called "the true river of Lethe," for "souls plunged into it forget all"—their divine origin, their sacred mission and their final destiny. The relation of the body, the physical sheath, to the inner, the real man, has to be seen.

The body has to be looked upon as a temple, in which the immortal Spirit dwelleth. It follows that blind asceticism is a folly and is utterly useless for spiritual development. Those deluded and false ascetics who practise severe self-mortification and torture the powers and faculties which are in the body are of an infernal tendency, says Krishna. The *Gita* also tells us what the right type of mortification is:

Honoring the gods, the brahmans, the teachers, and the wise, purity, rectitude, chastity, and harmlessness are called mortification of the body. Gentle speech which causes no anxiety, which is truthful and friendly, and diligence in the reading of the Scriptures, are said to be austerities of speech. Serenity of mind, mildness of temper, silence, self-restraint, absolute straightforwardness of conduct, are called mortification of the mind. (XVII, 14-16)

The sixth chapter of the *Gita* speaks of the Divine Discipline which can only be attained by the man who follows the path of moderation in all things. In order to gain that power of steadfastness which holds the man together he has to be centred in the true Self and become like unto a lamp which is sheltered from the wind and flickereth not. This Supreme Discipline is to be attained by helping Nature and working on with her, and Nature in her turn reveals herself in all her glory to the disciple who has learnt the lesson of true discipline, and leads him on to the goal.

This Divine Discipline has been taught by Divine Teachers who come to this sorry world of ours from time to time, not to exploit the minds and hearts of people but to awaken and energize them, so that they may become masters not only of their own selves but of the Universe, and become avenues through which the rays of the pure Spirit may shine.

THE earth I tread on is not a dead, inert mass. It is a body, has a spirit, is organic, and fluid to the influence of its spirit, and to whatever particle of that spirit is in me. She is not dead, but sleepeth.

—THOREAU

ON GROWING UP

THERE are few graver threats today to the higher values of life, if not to civilization itself, than the carrying over of infantile attitudes into adulthood. Instinctive predilections and unreasoning prejudices are natural in the child and therefore are excused, even accepted sometimes with amused tolerance. But there is nothing amusing in the infantile adult. He is a walking menace to world peace.

What are the characteristics of infantilism? The assumption that one's prejudices are sacrosanct, unchallengeable. A refusal to face facts. A fixed determination to have one's own way regardless of propriety and feasibility. Failure to see that one's own good or that of one's group is intrinsically no more important than the good of others. Ignoring the fact that results follow causes as inexorably as the wheel of the wagon follows the hoof of the bullock.

A marked manifestation of adult infantilism is religious bigotry and race prejudice. Such infantilism has to be seen plainly for the menace that it is.

Let us rid ourselves of the juvenility which feels frightened to know lest it be proved inferior. We are too naive. We must grow up. The world that presses upon us is not a world for the very young. It is a world where adult wisdom is wanted and where knowledge is essential. We must cease to be ignorant and local-minded. We have to get rid of a lot of childish prejudices and false prides and fears.

There has been growth, but it has been lop-sided. Mental advance has outstripped moral perception and emotional control. Most people would concede in the abstract the superiority of democracy and justice over fascism and exploitation, but mention religion or colour and the line is drawn. Men and women must face their bias and be on their guard lest that tendency to unfairness work to the world's undoing.

There is talk of the 21st century ushering in a new world order, but it will need new people to run it. New minds for old; liberal minds for narrow ones; friendliness for prejudice. It is the "advanced" nations in particular that will have to learn to deal on terms of absolute equality with peoples throughout the world. Well for us if the lesson is self-taught and not enforced by blood and agony, and that lesson is to see all peoples not as coloured or white, men or

women, Hindus or Muslims, Christians or Jews, rich or poor, but as fellow-men.

The infantile attitude is also reflected in the failure to realize that in the East there are civilizations far older and as great if not greater than Western civilization. They are eminently worth knowing and saving. But the danger which infantile attitudes hold is not just a danger to this civilization or that. Civilization itself might well go down in the worldwide clash to which such attitudes unchecked bid fair to lead.

THE spiritual is not something apart from the natural, as a kind of detached movement; it is rather the natural itself, rising toward its ideal form through the free activity of the moral person. The natural can be understood only through the spiritual, to which it points; and the spiritual gets contents only through the natural, in which it roots.

As a consequence, the field of ethics is life itself, and, immediately, the life that now is. And our moral task is to make this life, so far as possible, an expression of rational good-will. In this work we have a double guide. Internally, we have a growing moral ideal; externally, we have a growing insight into the tendencies of conduct. Neither of these can be deduced from the other, and both are alike necessary....

For life has two poles. It demands for its perfection both outward happiness and inward worth and peace. A conditioned life like ours cannot reach an ideal form, unless it be in harmony both with its objective environment and with its subjective ideals. Either of these elements, when viewed apart from the other, is an abstraction of theory, and a source of confusion, if not a mischief. If we consider only the inner worth and peace, ethics runs to leaves. If we consider only the outer fortune and happiness, ethics runs to weeds. There is no need to ask which factor is first, as both should be first, last and always.

—BORDEN PARKER BOWNE

THE ONE ETERNAL TRUTH

There is but ONE Eternal Truth, one universal, infinite and changeless Spirit of Love, Truth and Wisdom, impersonal, therefore bearing a different name with every nation, one Light for all, in which the whole Humanity lives and moves, and has its being. Like the spectrum in optics, giving multi-coloured and various rays, which are caused by one and the same sun, so theologies and sacerdotal systems are many. But the Universal religion *can only be one*, if we accept the real, primitive meaning of the root of that word. We, Theosophists, so accept it; and therefore say, "We are all brothers—by the laws of Nature, of birth, and death, as also by the laws of our utter helplessness from birth to death in this world of sorrow and deceptive illusions. Let us, then, love, help and mutually defend each other against this spirit of deception; and while holding to that which each of us accepts as his ideal of truth and reality—*i.e.*, to the religion which suits each of us best—let us unite ourselves to form a practical 'nucleus of a Universal Brotherhood of Humanity WITHOUT DISTINCTION OF RACE, CREED, OR COLOUR.'" (H.P.B. in "What Good Has Theosophy Done in India?": *Lucifer*, April 1888)

THE objects and the spirit of true Theosophy can hardly be expressed more accurately than in the above quotation. In fact, what the Theosophical Path is, is conveyed to us in these few sentences. Humanity in its foolishness refuses to listen and therefore condemns itself to live in darkness, unaware of the bliss that awaits it if only the teachings of the world's Great Teachers are taken seriously. The "Kingdom of Heaven" is surely within us, but it can also be around us if we live rightly and make the world a reflection of our best thoughts. The society that we live in now has proceeded from the mind of man, so it is there that we should lay the foundations of a regenerated civilization based upon spiritual values. Shall we unite with the discursive elements in civilization, or shall we attune ourselves to the "Secret Heart" that is saturated with compassion, love and gentleness that alone can save humanity from the vicious tendencies that threaten to destroy it?

It is within our power, to a greater or lesser degree, to alter the course of humanity. We have, of course, to contend with Karma, and this will govern the degree of our effectiveness in the field of world

regeneration; but our task is to *try* and it is no use thinking that we should just allow Karma to take its course, as it is working for the overall good. It is tempting to adopt this attitude, but it is certainly not compassionate. Reason might suggest that it could actually be harmful to interfere with the workings of the Karmic law, and it is true that unwise actions in this direction can spawn untold mischief. So what is the answer? In *The Voice of the Silence* we are told that "Inaction in a deed of mercy becomes an action in a deadly sin," and the Masters have also stated:

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.

All this does not suggest that we are to ignore the suffering of our fellow men or that we should philosophize and leave them to work out their Karma. To think in this way would be unsympathetic, even cruel, and not at all in line with the altruistic ideals of all the Spiritual Teachers down the ages—the genuine ones at least! The power to restore broken harmony on all levels is within each one of us, and if we do not live the life that will enable us to exercise this power, then we can hardly refer to ourselves as Theosophists. The difference between a student of Theosophy and a Theosophist is great, but many of us readily mix up the terms and believe that to call oneself a Theosophist all that is needed is study of the writings of H.P.B. and the Masters. Nothing could be further from the truth, as the above quotations and many more sayings of H.P.B. and the Masters show. We need to live the life and have a heart full of loving-kindness in order to bring a little light into the life of our fellows.

There is light at the centre of our being and let us not "hide it under a bushel." We need to let it shine so that darkness does not envelop the world. Volunteers are needed to prevent those who follow the destructive trends of the "Age of Kali" from gaining supremacy. We need to be willing to do what little we can to keep intact the "Guardian Wall" that protects man from far greater misery and

sorrow. Even small efforts are useful and we all have a part to play in the grand drama of evolution. We need only to grasp the importance of our role. We cannot separate ourselves from the rest, and we should act from that understanding. We should realize that there are those who are less fortunate than we are, physically, mentally and morally, and we should try to do what we can to bring them up to the level of at least what is expected of a normal human being.

If we are aware of the standards set in the sacred scriptures of the world and can communicate them to others in a non-dogmatic way, then we are on the road to functioning as true Theosophists. We shall awaken to the fact that as there is no such thing as separateness in reality, to strive for one's own progress is pure selfishness, no matter what the followers of the outer kernel of the various religions try to tell us. They can make the selfish path sound very attractive, or may even say that we must ourselves be perfect before we can teach others. But this is only partially true. Even at the outset of the journey, if we have chosen the true way, we should be working for humanity in whatever little way we can. Otherwise we can hardly call ourselves Theosophists.

Even so-called failings can be turned to the advantage of the aspirant. All depends on how we react to certain situations. If we make mistakes or do things that are contrary to what is expected of us, then we are either embittered by the experience or we learn from it. Others may judge us and our actions from their own limited understanding, and if we are affected by their censure then there is little chance that we will ride out the storm and succeed in our quest. We need to "take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence" and utilize every experience, pleasant or unpleasant, to achieve our end. This is the only way we may survive the trials that await us. Feelings of guilt and shame at our failures are destructive forces that will drag us down if we allow them to take possession of our minds. We need to pick ourselves up each time we fall or fail, fixing our consciousness on all that is high and holy and edging our way up towards the goal.

It is no idle talk that the Path of Occultism is the most difficult that man can tread. The goal is not won easily and we must expect the severest trials imaginable, but at the same time a growing awareness of the Truth; and this is worth all our efforts, particularly if we can apply what we have achieved towards the good of humanity. Doubts

will assail us, but we should keep our thoughts fixed firmly on the highest that we can conceive of and work towards an ever-deepening understanding of reality, keeping the living spirit of Truth continually burning in our hearts. We should have compassion for those who have no such ideals to sustain them, and should always be willing to bring them closer to a better understanding of human nature. If we would serve the collective spirit of humanity, then we can do no less than this. Our own suffering will help us to understand the suffering of mankind in general. We should be aware that our efforts to reach the light will awaken many "sleeping dragons" and we will have to fight many a battle against our lower nature, at first probably losing many more than we win. Despite this, we should fight on, until, in a few years or a few lifetimes, we emerge the victors. We need to work for humanity constantly and never despair, even under the worst of trials. This is easier said than done, some may say; and it is true that at times we may find ourselves swamped with difficulties, physical, mental and moral. The advantage of Theosophical living is that it gives us an awareness of our divine nature, and consequently we have something to fall back upon despite the problems we come up against. Once again we should have pity for those who have no such belief and have lost their way.

It is the "One Eternal Truth" that should be our guide constantly, for It alone can unite us and show us that we are all the same inwardly. This one simple reality, if grasped by humanity in general, would alter the whole structure of civilization. It would become impossible for man to exploit nature for his own ends, for he would realize that *his* ends are identical with those of nature. It would also dawn on him that if he hurts others he hurts himself. This straightforward fact, which forms the basis of all genuine spiritual and Theosophical thought, is the one thing that is capable of rescuing humanity from the stormy ocean of materiality in which it is now drowning. Serious action is needed to remedy the world's plight and it is essential that everyone who feels capable of helping humanity, even in a limited way, puts into practice the inspiring words of H.P.B. that head this article. In these few sentences is the essence of the Path. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

THE INNER EQUILIBRIUM

OUR head thinks and learns. Our heart chooses and energizes. Our hands perform deeds. It is by a just equilibrium of these three that we establish harmony in our life. If we neglect one or another of these aspects of ourselves we risk learning the lesson by suffering.

St. Paul says:

...to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not. For the good I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do. (*Romans*, VII, 18-19)

Why? Because we are not perfect men and women. The mind, the heart and the hands that we use were acquired by us in the past. They are not yet infallible. We are a compound of good and bad tendencies, of limitations and aspirations. All these belong to our personality. But we are not this personality, not our desires; we are THAT.

A practical example will help us to understand better. A person learning to type may at the initial stage think he is making little progress; but, once the discipline is acquired, it is easy to gain a good speed. We have the same experience in our effort to live the Life. We have to act as the integrated beings we really are, and seek harmony between the different aspects of our nature. This is a difficult task, and often discouragement obscures our mind. But if we persevere, the difficulty will be overcome and our effort will be rewarded.

In the second of her *Five Messages to the American Theosophists*, H.P.B. quotes the words of a Master of Wisdom:

Let not the fruit of good Karma be your motive; for your Karma, good or bad, being one and the common property of all mankind, nothing good or bad can happen to you that is not shared by many others. Hence your motive, being selfish, can only generate a double effect, good and bad, and will either nullify your good action, or turn it to another man's profit.... There is no happiness for one who is ever thinking of Self and forgetting all other Selves.

Our head must think of the best method to accomplish or learn something. Our heart gives the impulse to sustain this effort, not for our little self, but for the Great Self. Our hands enable us to work on the outer plane and thereby we help others to see the Path better.

Is not the same idea reiterated in the U.L.T. Declaration, which

lays stress on the trinity of study, application and promulgation? If these three are to go hand in hand, the head, the heart and the hands need to work in unison.

THE Theosophical Movement was a necessity of the age, and it has spread under its own inherent impulsion, and owes nothing to adventitious methods. From the first it has had neither money, endowment, nor social or governmental patronage to count upon. It appealed to certain human instincts and aspirations, and held up a certain lofty ideal of perfectibility, with which the vested extraneous interests of society conflicted, and against which these were foredoomed to battle. Its strongest allies were the human yearnings for light upon the problem of life, and for a nobler conception of the origin, destiny, and potentialities of the human being. While materialism and its congener, secularism, were bent upon destroying not only theology and sectarian dogmatism, but even the religious conception of a diviner Self, Theosophy has aimed at uniting all broad religious people for research into the actual basis of religion and scientific proofs of the existence and permanence of the higher Self. Accepting thankfully the results of scientific study and exposure of theological error, and adopting the methods and maxims of science, its advocates try to save from the wreck of cults the precious admixture of truth to be found in each: Discarding the theory of miracles and supernaturalism, they endeavour to trace out the kinship of the whole family of world-faiths to each other, and their common reconciliation with science.... We officers and fellows of the Theosophical Society are encouraged to hope that, with the wider dissemination of the facts, we shall see very large accessions to our cause from the secularist rank. Surely this must be considered a gain by the friends of spirituality as opposed to materialism—those, at any rate, who think that morals, peace, and prosperity will be promoted by the universal belief in a life after death (whether eternal or broken up by a series of reincarnations on the same earth), and in man's possession of a higher, undying SELF, latent spiritual powers, and consciousness.

—H. P. BLAVATSKY

IN THE LIGHT OF THEOSOPHY

While some population experts take a dim view of growing global numbers, advancing technology, mushrooming consumerism and shrivelling resources, and see these trends as a threat to humankind in the not too distant future, others are far more optimistic. The latter see a growing population as actually having a positive effect on the quality of human life in the decades and centuries ahead. In their view, every new person who appears on earth not just drains his share of the planet's resources but brings his muscle and his mind to bear to invent new technology, to increase food production for himself and others, and in general to solve the problems that afflict humanity.

The June 1993 issue of *The World and I* (Washington, D.C.) publishes a series of articles that attempt to illuminate the issues involved in population growth. The article, "Much Ado About Nothing," by Sheldon Richman, views population growth as promise, not problem. Richman's thesis, briefly put, is that though doomsayers and apocalyptics for many centuries have decried the growth in human population, their fears are built on sand. If world population were actually increasing at an unremitting geometric pace, as Malthus predicted, there might be cause for alarm. But Malthus was wrong. Population has grown in spurts in response to improved economic and health conditions, and growth then slows until the next big surge. In recent decades, the rate of world population growth appears to be tapering off. It was 2.1 per cent a year in 1970 and is 1.7 per cent today. The global fertility rate (the average number of children per woman) was 5.0 in 1950-55; it fell to 3.6 in 1980-85.

What is more, Richman argues, vigorous population growth neither inhibits economic development nor degrades the quality of life. This is borne out by facts and figures; for example, the World Bank says that, from 1966 to 1980, real gross national product per person grew in the developing world at an average rate of 3.4 per cent—faster than population growth in many of those countries. On quality-of-life issues, children (viewed as little more than "new mouths to feed" by the pessimists) add enormously to the quality of life for most parents in the world—boosting household income and providing old-age security, for instance.

Ultimately, says Richman, the factor that determines whether a

society prospers or stagnates is not its population density or rate of growth. It is its institutions, and whether or not they give significant free rein to human ingenuity.

The population problem has been overblown by the pessimists and their theories of the "doom of mankind" have been exposed by the finest thinkers. Population figures are determined not merely by the available resources. The fear that world population will keep on multiplying *ad infinitum* is as baseless as the fear of a depletion of natural resources or of a food crisis for the world *as a whole*.

Those who are born and bred in the Christian faith, and have been trained in the idea that a new soul is created by God for every newly-born infant...ask whether in such case the number of incarnating Monads on earth is limited; to which they are answered in the affirmative. For, however countless, in our conceptions, the number of the incarnating monads—even if we take into account the fact that ever since the Second Race, when their respective seven groups were furnished with bodies, several births and deaths may be allowed for every second of time in the aeons already passed—still, there must be a limit. It was stated that Karma-Nemesis, whose bond-maid is Nature, adjusted everything in the most harmonious manner; and that, therefore, the fresh pouring-in, or arrival of new Monads, had ceased as soon as Humanity had reached its full physical development. No fresh Monads have incarnated since the middle-point of the Atlanteans. Hence, remembering that, save in the case of young children, and of individuals whose lives were violently cut off by some accident, no Spiritual Entity can reincarnate before a period of many centuries has elapsed, such gaps alone must show that the number of Monads is necessarily finite and limited. (*The Secret Doctrine* II, 302-3)

How, then, account for the present increase in the world's population? The length of stay in the post-mortem states varies from individual to individual, and, as Mr. Judge says, "whenever there occurs a great number of deaths by war, pestilence, or famine, there is at once a rush of souls to incarnation, either in the same place or in some other place or race" (*The Ocean of Theosophy*, p. 83). One might add that in our materialistic civilization based on denial of the soul and of an after-death existence, the period of *devachanic* assimilation is necessarily shortened.

Most people take it for granted that humans are more important than the apes. This assumption, some thinkers today argue, is regrettable and has more to do with double standards than biology. As part of a radical approach to animal welfare and conservation, several eminent biologists, philosophers and writers have launched a campaign to liberate the apes from laboratories, zoos and other forms of exploitation. A "citizen's charter," or "Declaration on Great Apes," signed by them was published this June with a series of campaigning essays entitled *The Great Ape Project*. The book is a manifesto for a revolution in our treatment of the chimpanzees, gorillas and orang-utans. (*New Scientist*, June 5)

This project should be welcomed by all those who hold that the moral boundary generally drawn between ourselves and the great apes is indefensible. There is now sufficient information about the intellectual capacities of these apes, their rich and varied social and emotional lives, their close and supportive family ties, thanks mainly to the work of Jane Goodall, famed for her pioneering studies of free-living chimpanzees at the Gombe reserve in Tanzania. There have also been successful attempts to teach the apes human languages. Recent DNA studies, too, support our closeness to them and go to show that both we and they belong to the same genus. "The traditional distinction between apes and humans misrepresents the facts," says Jared Diamond, an ecologist and physiologist at the University of California at Los Angeles.

There are other cogent reasons why the great apes deserve special treatment. "They have a spark of the purely human essence in them," says *The Secret Doctrine* (II, 193). The egos imprisoned in ape forms are known in Theosophy as the Delayed Race, compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms.

The ape we know is not the product of natural evolution but an *accident*, a cross-breed between an animal being, or form, and man.... Thus, it is most important to remember that the *Egos* of the apes are entities compelled by their Karma to incarnate in the animal forms, which resulted from the bestiality of the *latest* Third and the earliest Fourth Race men. They are entities who had already reached the "human stage" before this Round. Consequently, they form an exception to the general rule.... The present apes... are truly "speechless men," and will become speaking animals (or men of a lower order) in the Fifth Round, while the adepts of a certain school

hope that some of the Egos of the apes of a higher intelligence will reappear at the close of the Sixth Root-Race. (*S.D.*, II, 262)

Should schools be responsible for teaching moral values? The question is being urgently posed by educators and policy-makers alike. At a meeting of ministers of education and officials responsible for economic planning in Asia and the Pacific, held in Kuala Lumpur from June 21-24, widespread concern was expressed over the erosion of values in society and the absence of moral sensibility in the educational process. The tone was set at the inaugural ceremony by Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Encik Ghafar bin Baba, who asserted that for education to become a lasting venture, it had to be anchored in morals and in a sound discipline.

Unesco Sources (July-August 1993) reports:

Speakers agreed on the need to address the problems thrown up by modernisation; the conflict, for instance, between tradition and contemporary ways of living that sometimes worked against development....

Discussions centred on how best the problem could be approached. Didn't the responsibility lie equally with the family, the community, social and religious institutions and the media? Wasn't school teaching often negated at home or by role models in society? Should the state take up the challenge or steer clear of the whole business?

Values in the affective domain are also difficult to achieve and even more difficult to measure. Who would train teachers for this sensitive job and didn't they risk becoming "judges"? Where did teaching stop and preaching begin? "Enshrining values in the school curriculum is one thing," said the Australian delegate. "A code of conduct (to which it may lead) is quite another..."

The Indian delegate argued for an internationalist rather than nationalist attitude. Nor should values be taught separately but should penetrate the teaching of all subjects at all levels.

The discussion on morals in education threw up more questions than it provided answers. But the fact that the matter was squarely raised, and that it has been a pervasive one in other discussions on education, is a hopeful sign. The basic question is. What constitutes

moral education and how should it be approached? Mere moralizing, or even holding out the examples of noble lives, is not enough in itself. It is essential that at some stage during his training the child should be helped to find the answer to the question, "Why should I be moral?" For, if he does not know the reasons why he should be moral, his goodness may turn into expediency and the impact of vicissitudes and environment may make him skeptical of the values of goodness and morality.

It is not enough merely to say, for instance, "In this world never is enmity appeased by hatred; enmity is ever appeased by Love." The Buddha added, "This is the Law Eternal." The developing mind of the child needs this emphasis on implacable *Law*. Then will he know that there is no escape from the *results* of actions once he has acted. Knowledge of the Law provides the reason for acting rightly, harmoniously, unselfishly. Equally important is a proper understanding of human nature which can lead to a genuine respect for human individuality and provide the basis for a correct sense of values.

What schools should teach are the ethics of the Buddha, of Jesus and of all the Great Teachers. Their ethical teachings all agree. But it should also be remembered that usually a child feels by means of its conscience what is wrong and what is right; what it needs is a rational confirmation of its innate moral sense. This aid cannot be given to children by teachers who have themselves not perceived and adopted a moral and metaphysical basis for thought and action.

The chief object of general education is neither the increase of knowledge nor of skill nor even the attainment of what may be described as "passive" virtue. It is rather to enable people to do better, to behave better, to use their increasing knowledge and skill in the service of the common good.

The circadian or biorhythm theory is but a restatement in modern garb of the ancient doctrine of cyclic law governing all living things, including human beings, in all departments of their nature. In recent times, knowledge that the human body has its own natural rhythms, its ebbs and flows, is being exploited to the full by sportspersons in many countries. This is why, says sports medicine practitioner,

Dr. Pradeep Prahlad (*The Sunday Times of India Review*, July 25), more records have been broken in the last decade and a half than ever before. The planned and scientific method of work-out or exercise programme followed by sportspersons is known as "periodisation."

What is periodisation? It is the method of practising for a game in periods, or cycles, for months or years together, on a continuing basis, in order to whip out the maximum possible performance from the body, with the minimum amount of injury—so that by the time the final event dawns, an athlete will have honed his body to such an extent that winning becomes effortless.

Circadian rhythms are the body's natural rhythms which are controlled to a great extent by the effect of light and darkness on the body. There are many factors that govern the body's metabolism—sunrise, sunset, darkness, the phases of the moon and so on. The moon controls the movement of fluid in and out of our cells, much in the same way as it controls the tides of the seas. This, along with variations of light and darkness, and other factors like meal timings, gives the body its peaks and falls. Even without the periodicity of meals and other breaks, the rhythm continues with its 24-hour variations. Like the body, the mind also has its peaks and valleys....

Although subtle, these regular 24-hour changes within the body determine its ability to perform....The ebb and surge in a person's performance at different times of the day could mean that split-second difference between success and failure.

Many of the processes of the human body demonstrate a rhythmic pattern. Various theories have been advanced, but the exact nature and location of the internal timing mechanism are practically still unknown to modern scientists.

The cultivation of one variety or another of wheat extends far back into prehistoric times. Today, the world's wheat crop is immense; it ranks first in production totals among the world's grains, and it supplies more than 20 per cent of the total calorie consumption of the human race. Yet little is known to our botanists about the origins of this plant. "This," writes Raymond Sokolov in his article "The Good Seed" (*Natural History*, July 1993),

is a very odd state of affairs, considering how our lives are built on the hybrid grasses of the *Triticum* genus. The origins of wheat, and almost everything important to know about this useful plant, are buried in prehistory or hidden away in today's mammoth fields and behemoth mills. The same could be said of all the other staple grains, but wheat is the pre-eminent case....

The outsider may be surprised at how much first-rate theorizing has been done about such an apparently straightforward development as agriculture. But the stakes are high: agriculture seems to go hand in hand with a settled life, in villages and then cities; and a settled life is the main prerequisite for civilization... Unfortunately, the physical evidence for this great shift—perhaps the most fundamental advance in human history—is thin and can be interpreted in many ways. Thus the temptation to theorize.

The origins of modern wheat will continue to remain a mystery, for the Theosophical teaching is that wheat is not a product of the earth. "*Fruits and grains, unknown to Earth to that day, were brought by the 'Lords of Wisdom' for the benefit of those they ruled—from other lokas (spheres),*" say the Occult Commentaries. H.P.B. adds:

This will be doubted and denied in our proud generation. But if it is asserted that there are no grains and fruits *unknown to earth*, then we may remind the reader *that wheat has never been found in the wild state: it is not a product of the earth*. All the other cereals have been traced to their primogenital forms in various species of wild grasses, but wheat has hitherto defied the efforts of botanists to trace it to its origin. (*The Secret Doctrine*, II, 373-74)

On the issue of how and when agriculture originated, the occult teaching is once again completely at variance with modern science. Ancient traditions speak of what *The Secret Doctrine* calls "our Divine Instructors," the benefactors of mankind in its infancy, who are credited with having given the first impulse to civilization and directed the mind with which they had imbued men to the invention and perfection of all the arts and sciences.

The Kabiri [divine personages who once ruled the earth] were the instructors of mankind in agriculture, because they were the *regents* over the seasons and Cosmic cycles. Hence it was they who regulated, as planetary Spirits or "Angels" (messengers), the *mysteries* of the *art* of agriculture. (I, 642 fn.)

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"THE THEOSOPHICAL MOVEMENT"**

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

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 ideal among Theosophists in the furtherance of Unity.

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